

**East Haddam School Building Committee Meeting
January 18, 2006
Adopted January 25, 2006**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Selectman Brad Parker 7:04 p.m. at the Nathan Hale High School – Cafeteria

A) The Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

B) Attendance

Board of Selectman (BOS)

Members present:

Brad Parker
Randy Dill
Pete Govert

School Building Committee (SBC)

Members present:

Todd Moss
Melissa Ziobron
Denise Gable
Kerri Willis Budzik
John Gibson

David LaFemina
Craig Parker
Mary Beth Mordecai

Members absent:

Dana Barnes

Board of Finance (BOF)

Members present:

George Giesey
Mark Fortier
Tony Shetensky

Dave Meade
Bob Bennett

Board of Education (BOE)

Members present:

Pamela Gourlie
Everett Herden

Tracey Gionta
Melissa Ziobron

Thomas Miett
Nick Iacovelli
Mary Beth Mordecai

Manny Misenti
Bob Mather

Others present:

Jennifer Mangiagli, KBA
Stephen Melingonis, KBA
Chuck Grabowski, Newfield Construction
Tom DiMauro, Newfield Construction
Dave King, KBA
Robert Carroll, Central Office, Board of Education Business Manager
Whitney Talcott, KBA
Dr. Steve Durham-Superintendent

There were approximately 25 audience members present.

New Business

A) East Haddam 4 – 8 Budget Update

Selectman Brad Parker introduced himself and thanked the various Boards, Commission and public for attending the meeting. He stated that the reason for the meeting was for the four Boards and Commission to have a working session to work through issues involved with the School Building project. He stated there would be limited time for public comment at the end of the meeting.

Selectman Parker reviewed land acquisition with the Boards and Committee. He stated that the Board of Selectman voted at a recent meeting to start the proceedings for eminent domain for land purchases. He stated from the time of the referendum, there have been extensive communications with the land owners. He stated the town had performed two appraisals on the property; information had been extended between the town and land owners. He stated that most of the time, there was no response. He stated last summer he did meet with the Donellons and that all information (copies of maps and all developed information) was given to them. He informed the Boards and Commission that they went out and got their own appraisal. He stated the Donellon's appraisal came back at double the town's highest appraisal. He informed the Boards and Commission there didn't seem to be any negotiation available with the Donellons. He stated through discussions with their appraiser, they discussed that the price seemed too high and it was reduced to slightly less than double of the town appraisal. He stated from that point on, they were unwilling to come down on the price and only wanted to negotiate upwards in price.

Selectman Parker stated that in mid August, the other parcel's property owner called and asked to come into the office with his son. This was after many unanswered calls and letters. The son was to be the representative of the property. Selectman Parker informed the Boards and Commission that the Selectman's office had made it clear to the son that

the town was very interested in the land and would be pursuing the property for a school. He stated that they were informed that they wanted to attain the property in the most agreeable fashion. He stated more time was requested in an effort to acquire research on the value of the land. Selectman Parker had agreed to give them 60 days (from mid-August). He stated they did not reply until mid November requesting additional information. He informed the Boards and Commission that the town made available the information which they had and it was forwarded to their engineering firm (not an appraiser). Selectman Parker stated they did not respond in the month of December jeopardizing the project's time line because the project needed Planning and Zoning and Wetland approval. He stated the cost of the project was also an issue because the more the town waited to acquire the property, the more costly the project would become due to inflation, escalation of material and manpower.

Selectman Parker stated that if the property owners are not happy with the price for eminent domain, they can appeal it and the court system decides what a fair price is. Selectman Parker stated the town is not looking to get something for nothing, or to cheat anyone out of anything. He stated that if the fair market price is higher than what was offered, then that is what the town will pay.

Selectman Parker informed the Boards and Commission that he had asked for the meeting in an effort to have a group discussion to work in the same direction. He stated how information is received is often not the actual occurrence and that by meeting together, they can all hear the same thing at the same time. He stated that after the meeting, he would hope they would be working towards the consensus of the group.

Todd Moss, Chairman of the School Building Committee introduced Chuck Grabowski and Tom DiMauro from Newfield Construction and Dave King, Jennifer Mangiagli, Whitney Talcott and Stephen Melingonis from KBA. Mr. Moss reviewed the following documentation:

- East Haddam 4-8 Middle School Project Budget Summary Update January 12, 2006.
- East Haddam 4-8 Middle School Proposed Value Engineering Items/ Proposed Additional Items January 12, 2006.
- EHMS Other Project Costs Budget, January 12, 2006.
- East Haddam 4 – 8 School Budget Detail.

These documents are attached to the minutes for further reference.

Mr. Moss stated that to date the value engineering items proposed do not change program and have not been chosen if they were part of the educational specifications or referendum, such as the site and access road. Mr. Moss informed the Boards and Commission that the bulk of the overages are due to construction, furniture, fixtures and equipment (FF& E). The FF & E line items include but are not limited to; desks, chairs, tables, science equipment, food service utensils, computers and technology. He stated that professional fees are currently running under. He stated that a Construction Manager at risk has helped to decrease the professional fees due to the elimination of a Program

Manager. The Construction Manager will be the day to day person on site and liaison to the project.

Mr. Moss stated when the original budget was derived; there was an under estimate of construction escalations of 4%. He stated that the current construction escalations are running 8 – 12 % depending on the material, due to the devastating hurricane season as well as increased construction projects in the State, which decreases available manpower and increases their hourly wage. He stated that FF & E was originally calculated with consideration of re-using items from the current Middle School. He stated that KBA and the BOE were currently surveying what could be brought over into the new school and the projected figure could change.

Mr. Moss informed the Boards and Commission that when the SBC was originally preparing the budget in 2004, they tried to stay within the \$25,000,000 range as was recommended by various Boards. He stated this budget was a bit more aggressive than it should have been and a higher number should have been indicated. Mr. Moss stated there were other factors which contributed to the increase in cost but could not be determined until more information was received. He informed the Boards and Commission that the referendum question read to give a full tournament size gymnasium and that originally the costs were projected for adding 3000 square feet to the building. He stated it actually added more, and the SBC was able to scale down the cafeteria and media center size. He stated the school is actually about 2,000 square feet over the reimbursable rate. He informed the Boards and Commission that extra premium can also be attributed to the new knowledge that the project can't reuse the existing fill material for the road due to geotechnical analysis.

Mark Fortier BOF questioned why there was no dollar amount on the budget detail for off site costs for 12/18/06. Mr. Moss responded the traffic report determined the dollar amount should be less but definitive numbers could not be estimated until further investigation is performed. He stated the original traffic study performed prior to referendum, prepared by Milone and MacBroom; had several recommendations on it which determined that the estimated cost was approximately \$500,000. He stated that when the revised report and recommendations were made, it was determined that the cost would be less. Responsive to a question from Mr. Fortier, Mr. Moss replied that there is a decrease in bonding costs due to the fact that the preliminary information provided a higher number than the actual dollar amount. Mr. Fortier stated current bonding costs are approximately \$75,000 per bond and that two would be needed. He questioned the escalation percentage. Mr. Moss responded it is indicated in the lump sum, including Newfield's work to date and cost of the job based on what it would be to buy today. It carries an additional 3 % to get the project from December to June, which would be the start date.

Everett Herden BOE questioned the School Building Committee if there was any reluctance to removing or reducing any of the proposed value engineering items; and if so, which ones. He also questioned if the reductions changed the character of the building. Mr. Moss responded the reductions were not heart breaking, did not change the

educational spaces or give up quality. He stated the Committee wants to present an attractive building. Features were not eliminated but reduced. For example, some of the awnings and canopies were made smaller, not taken out. Mr. Moss stated he could not think of anything that he would put back on the proposed value engineering list. Responsive to a question from Dave Meade BOF, Mr. Moss responded the reductions in the value engineering items do not affect the operating costs of the school. Mr. Moss used an example, stating the Committee had decided against gypsum board for that particular reason.

Mary Beth Mordecai SBC/BOE confirmed that she felt comfortable with the value engineering items, stating she had her feelings reinforced through discussions with KBA. Denise Gable SBC referred to the items which were deferred or pending stating that these were items which the committee are unsure of and don't feel confident eliminating. Kerri Budzik stated that ongoing operational costs were factored into the analysis. Melissa Ziobron BOR/SBC stated that she was concerned with the elimination of acoustical block in gymnasium.

George Giesey BOF questioned other project costs in the budget FF & E, stating that it seemed to be a large figure. Mr. Moss responded the number is large but his experience indicates that \$2,000 – 3,000 should be budgeted per student. He stated the price includes all new everything such as trash cans, computers, smart boards, white boards, over-head projector screens, desks, chairs, etc. He stated some of the items are educational specifications. Responsive to a question from Mr. Giesey, Mr. King responded that existing computers and furniture was in the process of being evaluated to determine what could be reused and brought over to the building. Mr. King stated that typically technology prices decrease over time and it is best to bring these items out to bid later during the project.

Responsive to a question from Manny Misenti BOE, Mr. Moss replied the intent is to start the bid in the spring and start construction of the school in June or July of this year. Mr. Misenti questioned if the current dollar amounts are used, what the process would be for the additional funding. Dr. Steve Durham responded that once the budget is determined, the overage would require a revised grant application. An increase in the budget requires a grant application to be filed with the State. The State is good about approving the grant, especially considering current school construction conditions. The grant would be approved for 10% over budget. The following year, anything over the 10% would require a special grant. The only caveat of the special grant over the 10% overage would require the Town to pay all expenses until the grant is approved by the State, at which time the reimbursable rate would be refunded. It was stated the projected move in date is the spring semester of 2008. Mr. Moss stated the move in date is pending the agreement of the budget and that revisions and delays could change the date. Chuck Grabowski, Newfield Construction confirmed that the schedule was currently on time for the spring semester of 2008 move in date.

Randolph Dill BOS questioned if the SBC had considered changing the main access road from Clark Gates Road to Sillimanville Rd and referred to an approximate potential

savings of \$400,000 Mr. Moss responded that the decision can not be made by the SBC but would need to be made via referendum. Mr. Moss stated the building configuration would need to be flipped as well as fields repositioned at additional architectural fees and could affect the time line. Mr. Dill stated it would be acceptable to access the school from the back. Mr. Moss stated that the consultants had recommended if the access were to change, it would be best to flip the building. Responsive to a question by Selectman Parker, Mr. Moss replied that the ball fields would need to be moved to accommodate the new access road. Responsive to a question by Mr. Dill, Mr. Moss responded the SBC can change aesthetics to the building but they can not change things which effect the educational specifications or the plan voted on from referendum and that this advice has come from the town attorney.

Mr. Gibson SBC stated that the access road from Clark Gates is close to 50% reimbursable because it is included in the acreage in the grant application. He stated the traffic study indicates that access from Sillimanville Rd would require more travel on North Moodus Road. He stated when more traffic is added with the current Banner Lodge project, there will be substantial off site improvements necessary. He stated road improvements are not reimbursable by the state and the bottom line cost is an unknown. He stated if the access road comes from Clark Gates Road, North Moodus Road improvements would not be necessary. He stated there is not as much savings as perceived because the town would be trading 50% reimbursable rate for the access road from Clark Gates Road to nothing for the access from Sillimanville Road

Mr. Dill stated there were not definitive numbers represented on the traffic study and that it provided very little information. Mr. Moss responded there is a discrepancy to what the traffic study asked for and what Mr. Thumm thinks it should contain. Mr. Moss stated that Mr. Thumm was looking for concrete decisions which were not the purpose of the traffic report. The intent of the traffic study was to get the counts so that some one else(another traffic engineer) can take the information to make more specific recommendations, so that the Department of Public Works can go out and build the roads to those specifications. Mr. Dill stated based on the inconclusive traffic study, access from Clark Gates Road should still be reviewed. Mr. Moss stated he would discuss the options and traffic study with Mr. Thumm and the SBC. Ms. Mordecai stated that changing the access road would affect the time line and perhaps the move in date. Mr. King stated the drawings could be revised within six to eight weeks and would entail additional fees.

Bob Mather BOE stated he had three concerns: reduction of the cafeteria, any removal of acoustical block and flat roofs. He stated he understood the need to cut costs, but didn't think that these would be a beneficial long term reduction in the cost of the project with regards to future expansion, past experience and a maintenance standpoint. Mr. Moss stated that over 60% of the roofs are pitched within the plan and that the other roofs are not flat and has a slight slope which enables water overflow to drain off.

Dave Meade BOF stated he agreed with Mr. Mather's comments and that he would like to see capital expenditures allocated upfront on the project in an effort to see long term

savings. Mr. Moss stated the sound block is a premium to the project and that there are several ways to add acoustical blocks to the project which would be less costly. He stated that banners and flags act as great acoustical blocks. Mr. Moss stated that KBA has met with the administration regarding to the cafeteria size and found that the current size works. He stated there is room on the plans for future expansion to the cafeteria.

Mrs. Ziobron stated she was concerned with the traffic study. She stated that reviewing KBA documentation of January 4, 2006 she was concerned with the impact on Clark Gates Road and Fred Thumm's comments. She suggested that Mr. Thumm would come directly to the SBC to address his concerns. She stated the off site road improvements trouble her and that the dollar amount which is given to the public should be complete, including the off-site road improvements. Selectman Parker stated the traffic study had been discussed and a more detailed traffic study has been requested so that Mr. Thumm could give a cost estimate. Mr. Dill requested that he be a part of the discussions with Mr. Thumm, stating he had concerns about the Andrews Road connections to Route 149 and the two "S" turns on 149 near Andrews Road. Selectman Parker responded affirmatively.

Mr. Misenti raised concern about entering Clark Gates Road into 149 and strongly suggested that everyone take a bus ride going both ways to have hands on experience as to what the ride would be like. Responsive to a question by Mr. Herden, Mr. Moss replied that the upper and lower grade's class rooms are 700 square feet as per the educational specifications. Mr. Herden requested that serious consideration be made to increasing the cafeteria size. Mr. Moss stated that the SBC would have KBA revisit the option with administration. Mr. King stated that the size of the cafeteria is twice the size of the current high school cafeteria.

Pamela Gourlie BOE stated that there is a large variety of experts on the building committee that have put in a tremendous amount of thought and time into the project and is trying very hard to maintain the integrity of the building for aesthetic reasons as well as not compromising the educational specifications. She stated that everyone feels it is very important to be wise in spending the dollar now and not compromise anything that will affect the long term cost of the project. She stated the money should be spent up front to build the school for future needs.

Mr. Meade stated he had concerns with the escalator factors and moving forward with the project and questioned how the SBC planned to come up with the numbers without compromising the project. Mr. Moss stated the escalator factors were derived by KBA and their extensive experience with similar projects throughout the state. Mr. Moss referred to various Committee Members and their experience which will be helpful with the project. Mr. Meade stated that the school should be built the right way. He stated that it should be able to be accomplished right at today's dollars giving long term cost savings. He stated long term operational costs such as heating, lighting and electrical consumption should be reviewed for long term cost savings. Mr. Moss stated that "Green Technology" had been reviewed by the Committee. Craig Parker SBC stated he would

further investigate geothermal systems/ ground source systems to determine what would be best for the long term operational costs for the school.

Responsive to a question from Bob Bennett BOF, Dr. Durham replied that the educational specifications were developed based on guidelines by the State of Connecticut which gives the square footage per pupil and per grade as well as recommended guidelines for the size of the core facility. He stated initially when the educational specifications were developed; the Board had a much larger school and had reduced it. He stated the educational specifications had been revised several times and will meet the projected maximum enrollment for 8 years. The long term projections have decreased.

Pete Govert BOS thanked the School Building Committee for the time and effort which they have put into the project. He stated he was interested in energy efficiency with regards to operating costs. He stated that any technologies which are out in the industry which could help save money are well worth looking at. He referred to PV panels on schools.

John Gibson SBC stated that consideration should be made to air condition the whole school. He stated the upfront cost would be cheaper than retrofitting the system at a later time. He stated that a learning environment where there are high temperatures is not conducive for the best educational experience for the students or teachers. Craig Parker agreed that the best time to install a full air conditioning system would be now and that duct work could be installed now for installation at a later date.

Selectman Parker thanked the Building Committee for the work which they have put into the project. He summarized that the consensus of Boards was to build the school as cost efficient as possible without jeopardizing the quality of the project. He stated the SBC needed to review the numbers and come back with real numbers for further review. Selectman Parker opened comments to the public.

Guy Mazzotta stated that he object to having the main access from Clark Gates Road and associated costs involved with removal of ledge and off site costs. He stated he was concerned with the sharp curves related with Andrews Road. He stated he was against flat roofs and asked the SBC to consider a steel roof. He stated that 33 acres meet the criteria of the school and questioned why so much land was being purchased. Arthur Merrow reiterated the importance of building a good quality school. He stated the citizens deserve an excellent building that will serve the whole town and that it is important for education. He stated that he agreed with upfront costs involved with energy conservation for long term operational cost savings. He stated he was in agreement to pitched roofs and acoustical treatments in the gymnasium. Responsive to a question by Mary Miett, Mr. Moss responded that item #6 on the value engineering items (Karnack damproofing in lieu of specified air vapor system) does not sacrifice quality, but just takes advantage of a less expensive brand. Mrs. Miett stated she agreed that the whole school should be air conditioned. She stated it would enable more use of the school in the summer. John Anderson stated consideration should be made as to the costs

associated with building the school in relationship to taxes. Cindy Houston thanked the SBC for their hard work on the project. She requested that the SBC stay within the timeline and not change the move in date.

Mr. Moss stated the SBC had presented what they know and from what he had heard, people had seemed to say spend the money now and get it right. He stated the project is stuck to constraints and time lines and questioned what the SBC's direction should be. He questioned if the Committee should look at access from North Moodus Road, investigate LEAD items and sustainable design, air conditioning the whole building or providing the infra-structure for providing air conditioning the facility in the future. He questioned if the Committee should add back the \$990,000 that the Committee had value engineered out of the project. He stated the Committee needed guidance with how to proceed. Ms. Mordecai stated the issue needed to be pushed, should the SBC make the decisions and bring them back to the Boards. Mr. Moss stated this would create another round of decisions which would affect the timeline and move in date.

Selectman Parker stated what he was hearing from the Boards is that they want the SBC to build the building right the first time and investigate the Sillimanville Road access. He stated the people in the community need to feel confident that the right decision was made with regards to the access road. Selectman Parker stated it is not necessary to redesign the building or start again, people are happy with the work which the Committee has accomplished. He stated roofs should be pitched. He stated the Committee would need to come back and if the number is higher than referendum it would need to go through the Board of Selectman, Board of Finance and a Town Meeting. He stated the Town's people would get the final say. Pete Govert requested that the Committee look at long term energy efficiency within the school; i.e. fixtures, geo-thermal, PV systems, windows.

Responsive to a question by Mrs. Ziobron, Selectman Parker responded that how the additional costs associated with the school project will be approved has not been determined. He stated that history with other similar projects indicates the process may be referendum, but that it has not been determined or discussed. Mrs. Ziobron stated the public needs to be convinced why additional funds are needed for the project. She stated that a proactive plan needs to be in place to inform the public of the benefits of the increased costs associated with the project. Selectman Parker agreed.

Mark Fortier stated he was surprised that no one had expressed shock at the numbers presented. He stated if the numbers are to be presented to the public, everything needs to be done to explain the numbers. He referred to the presented numbers in comparison to the original referendum numbers. He stated more detail is necessary for future presentations.

Mr. Misenti requested that Mrs. Ziobron read his comments. The comments are attached to the minutes.

Mr. Moss responded affirmatively to Mr. Fortier that back up material could be provided to the Board of Finance. Mr. Fortier requested that the Board of Education review the educational specifications for possible reductions in costs. Responsive to a question by Mr. Fortier, Selectman Parker responded that once the SBC put their numbers together, detailed information would be presented to the Board of Selectman then to the Board of Finance. Selectman Parker stated he felt that there should be a public hearing and public input. He stated that the Board of Selectman has not discussed if there should be a town meeting or referendum, but that he believes that referendum would be the best choice based town history.

Mr. Dill questioned if the numbers could be brought out to bid to get a real number rather than estimates. Mr. Moss stated the project is 2 to 3 months away from getting any hard numbers and that every process and re-issue of documents requires additional cost to the project. He stated if the estimates come over budget, it would cost additional funds to re-draw the plans and go back out to bid. Mr. Fortier stated the cost estimates could be over conservative and before they are presented, they should go out to bid. Selectman Parker questioned Mr. King and Mr. Moss, based on their work history, if they have seen going out to bid to get real numbers done often and if so, has it has worked. Mr. King stated that KBA has 5 projects requiring additional costs needed to be approved by their towns and that all but 1 of them have chosen to go out to bid prior to asking for additional funding. He stated that additional costs will be incurred by changing the plans. He stated that a second bid could come in even higher due to the inflationary market. He stated that going out to bid first and seeking local approval does decrease the unknown factor. Mr. King stated that negotiations with the low bidder are limited and that the State requires re-bidding. Selectman Parker questioned if going out to bid before referendum for hard numbers would have an affect on the schedule. Mr. King responded that it would be the most advantageous action to take.

Mr. Herden stated that he hoped the project did not turn out to be all about money. He stated the conclusion that he had gotten from the meeting was for the Building Committee to build a quality school for the least amount of money. He stated that it was up to them to make the decisions before the project goes out to bid. Selectman Parker stated if the project goes out to bid first, there will be a hard number to tell the public at referendum and it would not be a guess. Mr. Meade stated the original project cost of \$25,000,000 was an over zealous dollar amount which the Building Committee inherited prior to the Committee being formed. Mrs. Budzik thanked Mr. Meade for his comment. She stated that the Building Committee didn't come up with the budget in a vacuum; they were established with input by the Board of Finance and others in town.

Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Dill at 9:15 p.m. to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Govert and unanimously passed.

Filed at Selectman's office
Tape recording of the meeting