

**East Haddam School Building Committee Meeting**  
**Informational Meeting**  
**March 22, 2006**  
**Adopted April 26, 2006**

**Attendance**

Members present:

Todd Moss  
Kerri Willis Budzik  
Mary Beth Mordecai  
Craig Parker  
John Gibson  
Melissa Ziobron  
David LaFemina  
Denise Gable

Member absent:

Dana Barnes

There were approximately 150 audience members in attendance.

**Informational Meeting Presentation**

Mr. Moss performed a presentation as represented by the power point presentation, filed at the Selectman's office.

**Audience of Citizens**

Mark Walter questioned if there was a deadline for state reimbursement. Dr. Durham replied there is no timeline to secure the additional monies to move forward with the project. He stated that construction should not start until after town approval for the additional funds required for the project. Responsive to a question from a citizen, Mr. Moss replied that the town's people have approved \$24,800,000 on June of 2004 and a grant application was submitted following the approval for the funding. He stated that the application went to the state legislature as part of the budget processing and was passed. The town was notified a year later, July of 2005 of the approval. He stated that once the town approves the additional funds, an additional revision grant will be submitted, the project will still be eligible for reimbursement, but would need to go forward to the state legislature as part of the budget process. He stated it would allow the project to continue without delay

Jennifer Feliciano questioned the acquisition of the property with regards to the eminent domain process. First Selectman, Brad Parker responded that the negotiations of the property were extensive and still on going. He stated the town tried to negotiate but did not receive responses from the property owners. He stated that the Board of Selectman and a member of the School Building Committee, along with the town attorney had sent many communications to the land owners, most of which were not responded to. He

stated the town had two appraisals performed on the properties; and at the last minute, one of the property owners did acquire an appraisal (the smaller parcel). He stated that to date, the other land owners have not acquired an appraisal on their property. He stated the figures which the town has for appraisals were very far apart from any communications received from the landowners, hence the decision to proceed with eminent domain. He stated that state statutes have time limitations for eminent domain regarding issues of economic development use or public use other than schools; and that there are not time restrictions for eminent domain proceedings with regards to schools. Selectman Parker stated that it was the town's intent for eminent domain for the use of schools and that the land owner is saying that it is being used for other uses. He stated that the town is in the legal process currently and expects it to be settled soon. He stated that he could not speak publicly about negotiations due to the legal issues, the town is confident that their view of the intent of eminent domain (for school use) is correct and to date the property deeds are filed in the Town Clerk's Office in the name of the Town of East Haddam.

Responsive to a question from Mrs. Feliciano, First Selectman Parker responded that there were variable options available to the town. He stated that if it is ruled that the 6 month time restriction is valid, the town could go back for another vote on the parcel and then proceed with the project. Ms. Mordecai stated that the School Building Committee had many discussions with regards to the amount of land requested and it was the consensus of the Committee that it would not be fair to the land owners to take the best pieces of land and leave the unusable pieces to the landowners. She stated if the land was to be acquired just for the school than there would be no time issues.

Responsive to a question from Dan Alexander, Selectman Parker responded that the initial ruling should be determined by mid-April. Mr. Moss reviewed the following project budget summary in response to a question from Mr. Alexander replying affirmatively that there are contingencies set aside for the project.

Construction costs	Final Budget 3/8/06	24,839,438
CM Fee@ 2.2%		546,468
CM Contingency	3%	745,183
Estimate Contingency	1%	248,394
Escalation Factor	.75%	<u>197,846</u>
Total Construction Costs		26,577,329
Other Project Costs		<u>5,870,125</u>
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET		32,447,454

Mrs. Budzik stated the Committee wanted feedback about the town's opinion if the project should go out to bid prior to referendum. She stated that there would be actual contracts with the sub-contactors before the final number would be presented at referendum. She stated that the impact on the schedule verses going with the best estimates from the consultants needs further discussion by the Committee. Mr. Alexander questioned if there was a plan in place for reducing the number of change orders, stating that it contributes to one of the biggest areas of cost over runs. Mr. Moss

responded that the CM as Manager is the constructor and will give a guaranteed maximum price for the work based on the drawings. He stated the GMP method will help alleviate the potential change orders as opposed to a lump sum contractor bid. Mr. Moss replied that the School Building Committee would make recommendations but that the actual process for the additional funding would be made by the Selectman. He stated if the project stays on schedule, the town would need to vote on the additional funding in July of 2006; for the project to maintain the January 2008 occupancy date. Mr. Moss stated that the Committee is looking to go out to bid with contractors to have the actual costs associated with the project for town approval.

Chris Adams questioned why the road improvements on Clark Gates Road and North Moodus Road were outside the school budget process. He stated that if improvements are needed on the roads that 5 years is too long a time span for the improvements. Mr. Moss responded that the state reimbursement rate only applies within the property boundaries and road work is not reimbursable by the state. He stated that the road improvements would be accomplished to accommodate the school and would be completed congruently while the school is being built. Mr. Adams questioned what road improvements would be made. First Selectman Parker responded that Clark Gates Road is scheduled in the next fiscal year, for it's pavement to be pulverized, widened by 2 feet, repaved and additional drainage will be added. He stated the radius on Andrews Road and Falls Road will be widened. He stated there will be work on the triangle inside Andrews Road. He stated that the estimates are actual numbers based on similar work completed this current fiscal year on roads such as Warner Road and Schulman Veselak Road.

Responsive to a question from Mr. Adams, First Selectman Parker replied that the State Department of Transportation and the State Traffic Commission will determine if traffic lights are necessary, stating that the town does not have authority in determining the necessity for traffic lights. He replied that the traffic study did not indicate the requirement for a traffic light. Responsive to a question by Mr. Adams, Mr. Moss replied that the traffic study's conclusions took into consideration the peak travel times on the roadways and current building on Banner Lodge.

Responsive to a question from a citizen, Mr. Moss replied the traffic study which was performed for the school takes into account the traffic patterns as they would affect the school. He stated he could not speak to why Banner did not account for the school but that the school building traffic study does take into consideration the Banner development as it affects the traffic patterns. He stated there will be staggered times for the bus drop offs and exits from the site. The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders will be on the same bussing schedule as the elementary school and the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders will be on the same bussing schedule as the high school.

Mrs. Gouang requested more information about how the traffic on Clark Gates Road and how it was addressed in the traffic study. A copy of the traffic study was sent to her.

A citizen questioned for a better explanation of the cost over-runs to the project. Mr. Moss responded that originally the School Building Committee had included 1.2 million for furniture, fixtures and equipment. He stated that the Committee originally had estimated that the project would cost \$27,200,000. The figure had included more for the building, higher contingency and an additional \$150,000,000 for the furniture, fixtures and equipment. He stated that when the Committee started meeting with the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectman the amount was reduced. He stated that the Committee was optimistic in reducing the figure and that looking back, made the wrong decision in reducing the budget amount. He stated that the Committee had not taken into account the large increase in escalation. Mr. Moss stated that the additional costs associated with the project can also be contributed to a better understanding of the project including better detailed drawings, over-all site outline, building program and schematics of the project. First Selectman Parker stated that the road was currently 20 feet wide and would be widened 1 foot on each side.

Responsive to questions from Dave Carpenter, Mr. Moss replied that the construction bids prior to referendum would be good for 60 – 90 days. Tom DiMauro from Newfield Construction confirmed that he would require contracts to hold for 90 days. Mr. Moss replied that there are no contingencies set aside for unforeseen delays due the eminent domain proceedings. He replied that the referendum in July would be for the cost over runs. He replied yes, the tax impact of the over-runs would be presented during the referendum. Mr. Moss replied that currently the Committee had not reviewed another site and that he was not familiar if state funding could be transferred to another site. Dave King from KBA replied it had never happened in his experience, but that he thought transfer might be possible. Mr. Carpenter stated that it appeared that the legal problems stem from the additional land for open space. Mr. Moss replied he was not aware if the traffic count took into consideration average speed on the road. Mr. Carpenter stated it would be useful information to have the average speed recorded on all of the roads. Mr. Carpenter stated that the Banner Lodge development should be reviewed in conjunction with the School Building project. Mr. Moss stated that the School Building project has reviewed the traffic impact that the Banner Lodge development will have on the project. Mr. Moss stated that he was unaware if the Banner Lodge development was required to do the same. Mr. Carpenter stated that he would like to have a private meeting with the town to discuss the impact of the combined projects.

Whitney Talcott, KBA stated that the Banner Lodge approval had a line item requirement which stated that they needed to have a joint meeting with the School traffic engineer and the Department of Public Works. He stated that the Banner Lodge counts are taken into account in the school traffic report. Mr. Carpenter stressed the importance of having the developers of Banner Lodge to be required to expend money towards road improvements and that the town should not have to pay a disproportionate amount towards them. Mr. Talcott stated that the cost over runs due to the school project would be on Clark Gates Road. He stated the Banner Lodge road improvements would be required on North Moodus Road. Mr. Carpenter questioned about improvements to the base of the road near the intersection near the church. Mr. Talcott responded only site line issues and that

nothing needed to be done near the church. Mr. Talcott stated that Andrews Road may need improvements.

First Selectman Parker introduced Terri Larson from Webster Bank, the town's financial advisor. She discussed the tax impact of the project. She stated that the amount which the town will have to bond due to the increased price is an additional \$3,600,000. She stated the initial referendum needed to borrow \$14,000,000 and that the total amount which needs to be borrowed will be \$17,600,000. She stated that it is anticipated that the bond will be a 20 year bond. She stated the principal and interest which the town will have to pay back over 20 years will total \$5,450,000 for the additional increased price to the project. She stated that the October 1, 2005 grand list (1.65% increase) was taken into consideration when calculating the mill rate impact. She stated future increases to the grand list were used at a 2.5% rate. She stated the future increase is considered conservative in consideration to rapid growth. She stated the mill rate impact has been calculated for the first 5 years. She stated that the average increase in mill rate for the additional cost to the project, for the first 5 years is 0.4 mills and will go down after the first 5 years. She stated that with municipal projects, the principal is paid first, so that the interest expense goes down over time. David Sloan questioned what the tax impact would be on the entire project. Mrs. Larson responded that the mill rate impact in the first year would be 1 mill. In the second year there will be an increase of 1/3 mill over the prior year. The 3<sup>rd</sup> year will have an increase of 1/2 mill, the 4<sup>th</sup> year will have an increase of 1/2 mill (total 2.4 mills over 4 years), the 5<sup>th</sup> year the mill rate will start decreasing by 2/10 mill each year and continue to decrease each year until the last payment is made.

Wyley Peckham stated that he supported a 4 – 8 middle school. He stated that he feared of losing the project because of the arbitration proceedings. He stated that the current attorney is the same one who worked on the current high school land acquisition. He challenged the attorney's credentials and prior record. He requested that the Committee consider a contingency plan for the project.

A citizen questioned if there would be rock removal and blasting on the project. Mr. Moss responded affirmatively. Responsive to a question from a citizen, Mr. Moss responded that the emergency access road would not be paved. It will be similar to the current high school's emergency access road.

Oscar Dill questioned how many acres would be required for the school site. Mr. Moss responded approximately 34 acres. Mr. Dill questioned how many yards of rock would need to be blasted throughout the site. Mr. Moss stated that test pits, geotechnical reports and location of the school specifically addresses how much rock will need to be removed throughout the site, but that he did not have the information with him. Mr. Moss stated that the borings within the foot print of the school did not indicate blasting. Mr. Moss replied that the borings were 17 to 18 feet deep throughout the whole site.

Mr. Trotochaud questioned if the project would end, if the additional funds are not approved, or if the Building Committee would come back with an alternate plan. He stated that when the current high school's property was purchased, it was done so with

the assumption that a new middle school would be built on it sometime in the future. Mr. Moss replied that the school, as drawn and sized, can not be built for the original referendum amount. He stated that if the additional funding is not approved, the Committee would need to look at plans for the school, the educational specifications and gymnasium (and go back to referendum). Mr. Moss stated that there were engineering studies performed on the current feasibility of building a middle school on the current high school site (2003-2004). The study stated that the site can not handle the septic needs of an additional school or expansion of the current high school on the site. Mrs. Budzik stated that the septic plan for the proposed school accounts for future expansion on the site.

Responsive to a question, Mr. Moss stated that there are grading plans which show the existing grades, proposed grades and 60 borings on site which is sufficient to provide a good profile of the site. Mr. Moss stated that it is typical to hold subs to their estimates for 90 days. It was stated that the rock removal data is available, but that the contractor had not brought it with him and it will be available at the next School Building Committee meeting. Mr. Moss stated that all minutes and accompanying information is filed at the Selectman's office.

Deb Denette questioned if going out to bid would change the time line of the project. Mr. Moss responded that the current schedule accounts for 1 ½ months of town approval which begins in July assuming the project moves on the current schedule. Ms. Mordecai stated that going out to bid would change the referendum date.

Nancy Geisey stated that the children's quality of education should be thought of before the additional cost of the project.

Mr. Carpenter questioned why the school could not be located at the current high school site, stating it should be considered as a contingency plan. He questioned if a town sewage system had been considered. Mrs. Ziobron stated there is a sewage avoidance policy in Moodus according to the WPCA. She stated the main reason why this project could not be on the high school site is because there is not adequate septic. She stated the current high school sites septic can accommodate an additional 300 students. She stated that in order to build for an additional 600+ students on the current high school site, a pre-treatment system would need to be installed or to have discussions with the WPCA about changing their policy. Mr. Moss stated that pre-treatment systems have an additional estimated cost premium of \$500,000 to \$1,000,000, (depending upon capacity) not including the yearly maintenance costs associated with it. Mr. Gibson stated that there is a sewer avoidance policy in Moodus because it is not conducive to homeowners who have wells. Mr. Peckham stated that the technology for a pre-treatment system should be reviewed to expand onto the current high school site. Responsive to a question, Mr. Moss explained the medium replacement required for a pre-treatment system.

Maria Davoodi thanked the School Building Committee for the time and effort put into the project. She stated of the importance of building a state of the art facility which will meet the needs of the children. She encouraged people to support and vote yes at the July

referendum. Mr. Moss thanked the audience for attending and invited them to attend the School Building Committee meetings the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month at the high school room 117.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted;

E. Ruth Ziobron

**Filed at Selectman's office**

Copy of power point presentation on CD