

Approved 10/5/09

**HAMPDEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING MEETING MINUTES
September 21, 2009**

Timm called the Public Hearing to order at 6:08pm. The meeting was held up for a few minutes in hopes of better attendance. Elected officials and a few townspeople were present.

Members present – Timm Marini, Chair, Carol Fitzgerald, Doug Boyd and Jamie Collins.

Absent – Jeff Smith

Copies of the warrant for the special town meeting to be held on October 5th for the high school project were made available to the public.

Superintendent Marty O'Shea had several different handouts available along with a drawing of the proposed new high school. The Hearing was opened to questions.

Cliff Bombard, the Town Accountant questioned the 61.73% pre-approved state reimbursement process. The MSBA audits requests for payments as you build per Marty. No surprises are anticipated.

Cliff asked where did the \$82 million figure come from. The Ashland School model design was adapted to fit our needs. There were a combination of factors considered and they have construction estimates across the board.

A resident asked why there would only be one question to vote on instead of two. Marty stated that the School Committee agreed it was a single project and should be presented as one. They looked into putting the administrative offices elsewhere, but it was not feasible.

The pool, administrative offices, site work, design and construction are not eligible for grant funding. This cost would be \$5,474,750. The district is eligible for a grant which would pay 61.73% of the cost of the new school which would total \$76,796,379. The total borrowing amount would be \$82,271,129. This will be voted on at the Special Town Meeting on October 5th in both towns with an election on October 20th in both towns.

Marty noted that construction could start as soon as the spring. It is a model school that has been built before. The contractor knows what works and what doesn't.

Town Moderator, Robert Howarth stated that the vote would be to either approve or disapprove. It would be the same in Wilbraham.

Marty added that Hanover High School's cost came in \$10 million under their estimate. If there were surprises or extra costs for Minnechaug, we would have to work with it. They would not ask for more money from the towns.

John D. Flynn noted that if the bids come in lower, the total cost shrinks proportionately.

A resident spoke about the financial concern of tax increases. Marty stated that something has to be done and renovations would probably cost more than building a new school. Everything would have to be brought up to code and be ADA compliant among other things. They tried to put the best deal out there for people to see.

A resident noted that the drawing of the new school has a pitched roof and stated that the current flat roof needed frequent repairs. Also, he questioned the maintenance and upkeep of the current school. Marty stated that the new building would come with a list of capital needs and time frames of when maintenance needs to be done. The staff can keep on top of maintenance to make the building last. Marty also added that we received reimbursement points for our maintenance commitment.

Timm Marini added that the grounds also need to be kept up and should be taken care of to show pride in the school.

Jamie Collins asked if investment in the grounds is included in the cost. Marty noted that the football field, tennis courts and the baseball field would stay. The other fields would be replaced.

John D. Flynn stated that new windows, a more efficient heating system and better insulation would cut down on the electricity consumption and generate savings. Marty added that the new school would also have less square footage than the current school which would mean less consumption.

Jamie Collins asked if the school project was voted down, what maintenance would be needed now. Marty stated that they would have to go back to square one.

A fairly new classroom paging system that is in use now will be moved into the new school. Marty noted that current equipment will be identified as to what can be used in the new school and what can be sold.

Marty stated that an estimate of \$2400 per student was given for furniture, fixtures, equipment...

With no more questions being asked, the Advisory Board thanked Superintendent O'Shea.

The Hampden Board of Selectmen will be hosting two informational meetings before the October 5th Special Town Meeting regarding the high school project and the financial situation of the town.

Carol made a motion to close the Public Hearing at 6:40pm. Jamie seconded. The vote was unanimous.

Submitted by: Deborah House, Clerk