MINUTES OF THE OUT OF DISTRICT SITE VISITS SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE CHERISHIRE TOWN COUNCIL SCHOOL MODERNIZATION COMMITTEE (SMC) MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2020 at 6:15 P.M. IN DODD MIDDLE SCHOOL CAFETERIA, CHESHIRE CT 06410

Present
Rich Gusenburg, Anne Harrigan, Sylvia Nichols.
Absent: Matthew Bowman
Robert J. Oris, Jr. Town Council Chairman, ex-officio member
Staff: Arnett Talbot, Asst. Town Manager; Jim Jaskot, Finance Director; George Noewatne, PW Director. Dept of Education Supt. Jeff Solan, COO Vincent Masciana. Michael Woods, Dodd Middle School Principal and John Perosino, Vice-Principal

1. ROLLCALL
The Clerk called the roll and a quorum was determined to be present.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
The group Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

3. SELECTION OF CHAIR
MOTION by Ms. Harrigan; seconded by Mr. Gusenburg.

MOVED to elect Sylvia Nichols as Chair of the Out of District Subcommittee.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

4. INITIAL DISCUSSION OF CHOICES FOR SITE VISITS

5. INITIAL DISCUSSION AND PREPARATION OF POTENTIAL QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED.
The committee discussed what it is looking for when visiting/touring school districts similar to Cheshire with an eye to many different scenarios. It was agreed that one list of questions should be prepared, which would be presented to each school district staff. Supt. Solan and Mr. Masciana participated in the discussion.

Questions would include the following:

- How decision was made for new building or renovation/additions for elementary, middle school, high school building(s); insight on this issue
- Decision on grades 6-7-8 middle school or 7-8 grade middle school
- Financing approach to the project
- Did the district use an owner’s rep/architect/or other advisory group
- The new school and/or renovated school buildings conforming with education needs going forward
• Look at classrooms, core facilities such as cafeteria, library/media center, music and art and theater learning space, student group activities, tech education, programming changes
• Special needs spaces – occupational therapy, physical therapy, self-contained classrooms; standard classroom space; group learning space; how students are accommodated; flexible grouping
• Future needs/programming changes for next 5-10 years
• Projected enrollment numbers out 10-20 years; how this is determined
• Was there redistricting or staying within neighborhood schools
• How to base size of a building based on projected enrollment
• Providing proper space with good lighting, air quality, HVAC system
• Project priorities; anything creative done; professional resources during the design process
• Priority considered for renovation and construction process
• Anything experienced since opening the new/or renovated facility; second thoughts; what should/could have been done differently
• Anything done that was creative
• Professional resources, if any, consulted during the design process
• Insight on decision to renovate or new construction, what was considered, and why go in the direction chosen
• Considerations made for special ed programs as alternatives to out-placement
• How was the project sold to the community; how did it get approved at referendum
• Whether exterior work was done, driveways, traffic patterns, turf fields, etc.
• How to manage dislocation of students…problems, costs, temporary spaces.

Supt. Solan and staff will assist in scheduling the out-of-district daytime visits, which should be geographically sensitive. In DRG-B, the split is 50/50 for middle schools 6-7-8 and 7-8 grade levels.

Ms. Nichols noted it is the O/O/D committee’s responsibility to see what is out there, and what is needed and can be accommodated in Cheshire. She stated the out-of-district meetings information will be presented to the full SMC, to include recommendations/issues offered, options, how they were managed, finances, construction issues. The committee will not focus on matters of HVAC, types and how many lights (LED?) are needed…the committee function is to determine the kinds of buildings and the process the communities went through.

The committee discussed issues relative to the Cheshire schools – acreage of the school sites, square footage of the buildings and classrooms, cost of the project, the district’s older buildings and possibility of a 2nd floor addition to a building.
Ms. Harrigan talked about the presentation to the BOE Curriculum Committee by the Art Director (K-12), highlighting the poor conditions of the district art space, lack of appropriate art space, poor lighting, art classes held in temporary trailers at Norton School. She said that lab space must be looked at in the middle and high schools.

With regard to “ed specs” Ms. Harrigan advised that in the last report this was done only for a middle school.

Mr. Oris commented on art space being part of the prior report, and if not, it should have been in this report. The district needs to have a comprehensive plan for a long period of time. He pointed out that final project decisions will be made by the Town Council.

Supt. Solan informed the committee that the South Windsor CT school district has renovated and built schools in the last five (5) years, and is a “Model” for other districts. The North Haven, Meriden, and Southington districts have renovated schools or newly constructed schools (high school, middle school, elementary) and would be on the list of districts to visit and tour.

Ms. Nichols suggested visiting schools that were done with companies like Colliers or other consultants… and how the process was managed through completion.

Regarding another turf field, Mr. Masciana said the CHS field is holding up very well after eight (8) years, and has a 12 year life span. Mr. Oris said a new turf field at Bartlem Park might be coordinated with the Chapman Property.

6. SET NEXT MEETING(S) DATES
The committee set a meeting for Monday, January 27, 2020, 6 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in Town Hall, Room 207. The agenda will include selection of site visits and review of questions for the visits.

7. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Ms. Harrigan; seconded by Mr. Gusenburg

MOVED to adjourn at 6:50 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk