 MINUTES OF THE TEACHER/STAFF INPUT SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE CHESHIRE
TOWN COUNCIL SCHOOL MODERNIZATION COMMITTEE (SMC) MEETING HELD
ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2020 at 6:30 P.M. IN TOWN HALL, ROOM 115,
CHESHIRE CT 06410.

Present
Jen Bates, Rich Gusenburg, Anne Marie Kemp
Staff: Dept. of Education Asst. Supt. of Schools Marlene Silano

1. ROLL CALL
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. Bates; seconded by Ms. Kemp.

MOVED to elect Rich Gusenburg as Chair of the Teacher/Staff Input Subcommittee.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

4. DISCUSSION RE: STRUCTURE, CONTENT, AND SCHEDULING FOR
INPUT SESSION FOR CHESHIRE PUBLIC SCHOOLS TEACHERS AND
STAFF.

Mr. Gusenburg said the SMC wants full input from the staff at each of the district
schools. The subcommittee will schedule “after school” informal meetings, inviting
teachers and staff to participate, and provide their input on the positives and negatives
of a school building and facilities. BOE Central Office staff will schedule the meetings
with each of the district schools. A record of all meetings with minutes will be
maintained; the meetings will not have audio/visual recording.

Supt. Silano concurred with holding “after school” meetings which will enable cafeteria
staff/manager, teachers, custodial and support staff to attend and participate. She
recommended having questions before the meetings to give people time to contemplate
and respond to them. This gives those unable to attend the opportunity to pose
questions for the committee.

Each of the school meetings would commence with the committee Chair Gusenburg
citing the procedures and process of the full School Modernization Committee, and talk
about the purpose of the school meeting. The subcommittee welcomes questions,
positive and/or negative comments about the school facility, input on the classrooms,
core facilities (library, media center, cafeteria, gym), special education facilities, p.t./o.t.
spaces, parking, playground areas, perceptions and input on middle school grade levels
(i.e. K-5, 6 to 8)…with everyone having the opportunity to go on the record.
Ms. Kemp suggested giving an overview of the “role of the SMC”, talk about challenges in the current physical plants, what is needed to serve students in the future, and what teachers and staff like and do not want to lose in this process. She commented on the older schools having a culture which staff does not want to lose, and bringing this back to the full SMC for consideration.

With regard to teachers feeling free and open to speak at the meetings, Ms. Bates asked about administrators also being present.

Supt. Silano noted that administrators want to have their voice in this process, and everyone wants to share what they feel. The focus of these meetings is on “brick and mortar”, not the way schools operate…it is about the physical structure. The SMC should take into consideration the future plans for an individual school building…capital project or summer project…with recommendations from staff.

Mr. Gusenburg said it must be made clear that the committee is gathering input on the world of the teachers and staff, what they know, what is working right now, what is holding back current instructional programming, what can SMC do with planning to enhance this programming. However, there must be honesty in stating the fact that funding is not out there to do everything.

Mr. Gusenburg commented on a school “needing more classrooms”, how to accommodate these extra classrooms/students into the other core facilities. He commended teachers in being creative in making things work.

At the individual school meetings, it is expected there will be questions, issues and concerns about classrooms, core facilities, air quality issues, maintenance and cleaning of the facility…and other things related to the school building itself.

Handicapped Accessibility – the committee agreed this is very important and there must be assurance of full accessibility in every school.

Committee Availability for Meetings – Mr. Gusenburg is available in the morning and afternoons, with advance notice. Ms. Kemp is available Wednesday afternoons and most mornings; Ms. Bates is available Monday morning, is flexible most afternoons (except Tuesday).

Cheshire High School – due to the large number of teachers and staff at CHS, the meetings should be scheduled over two (2) days so everyone has opportunity to participate.
Once the meetings for the eight (8) district schools are completed, the committee will prepare a report with categories/graphics and present it to the full SMC.

**Introduction of SMC for Meetings** – The committee reviewed the details for the start and flow of the school meetings.

- Present a statement on what the SMC is all about;
- Explain what the Teacher/Staff subcommittee is about;
- Inform people about the data being collected and how it will be used;
- Once a plan is in place, teachers/staff/public will have opportunity to express their issues and concerns;
- The school committee meetings are open to the public, but there is no public comment;
- There are school security issues to be considered for the individual school visits;
- PTO Presidents can attend the school meetings, but are not part of the staff;

**Public Comment**

Jamie Ferguson, Copper Beach Drive, said teachers should have opportunity to share their information privately, i.e. in the teacher break room with SMC members.

Ms. Kemp commented on the SMC members having SMC e-mail addresses for public contact. Mr. Gusenburg offered to make his phone number available for public contact.

5. **SET NEXT MEETING (S) DATES**

Following a brief discussion, the committee agreed on the following meeting day and time.

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2020, 2:00 P.M., IN THE BOE BOARD ROOM AT HUMISTON SCHOOL.**

6. **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by Ms. Kemp; seconded by Ms. Bates

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk