MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL MODERNIZATION COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY, MAY 4, 2020 AT 7:00 P.M. VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE (PER EXECUTIVE ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR OF CONNECTICUT)

Public access made available through live streaming on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4_vey3QjJmwe57R_6K94Dw
Public comments accepted at Comments@cheshirect.org and by voice mail message at 203 271-6638. Video will be available on Channel 14 and on demand at www.cheshirect.org as soon as possible.

Present
Committee Members: Ann Marie Kemp, Chairwoman; Rene Martinez, Vice-Chairman; Jen Bates, Matthew Bowman, Rich Gusenburg, Anne Harrigan (BOE), Andrew Martelli (BOE), Charles Neth, Sylvia Nichols (Council), Jeff Pangaro, Anthony Perugini (BOE), Peter Talbot (Council), Don Walsh (Council).
Ex Officio Member – Robert J. Oris, Jr. Town Council Chairman.
Staff: Town Manager Sean M. Kimball; Asst. Town Manager Arnett Talbot; James Jaskot, Finance Director; Supt. of Schools Jeff Solan; COO (Dept. of Education) Vincent Masciana;
Guests: Arcadis – Brian Oblon, Jack Butkus, Vikas Nagardeolikar, Emily Sifuentes. Colliers – Mark Sklenka, Charles Warrington, Scott Pellman, Kate Turner

Ms. Kemp, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

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. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 2, 2020 MEETING
No action taken

4. INTERVIEWS WITH FIRMS THAT SUBMITTED PROPOSALS FOR OWNER’S REPRESENTATIVE FOR A SCHOOL MODERNIZATION PLAN.

   a. Arcadis (7:05 p.m.)

   b. Colliers (8:05 p.m.)

POWER POINT PRESENTATION BY ARCADIS
Brian Oblon, CT/MA Operations Leader, introduced the Arcadis Team and highlighted their extensive experience and credentials for the committee and the Cheshire project.

Jack Butkus, AIA; Vikas Nagardeolekar, AIA; Emily Sifuentes, Financial Controls.
Mr. Oblon presented information on Arcadis which is an international company with educational experience. The offices are located in Middletown CT with 30 staff members; they work for the public and private sector, focusing solely on owner’s representation; Arcadis provides only services to advise and represent the owner in all instances, and is not the builder or commissioning agent of anything of that nature; the firm provides one service, and has the experience, skills and knowledge to deliver successful projects; the team works together for K-12 school projects throughout Connecticut, with completion of $1.5B of construction projects.

**Partnership with Arcadis** - Mr. Butkus cited three (3) aspects.

- Fiscal aspects of the project for town planning dollars; planning around the existing profile; and K-12 experience in Connecticut.
- Keeping on Schedule; working with OSCGR; Arcadis has strong relationship with OSCGR as source of significant amounts of funding.
- Communication/collaboration/community outreach.

Photographs of Arcadis’ experience in other school districts and projects were displayed in the presentation.

Mr. Butkus cited the Hartford CT school district and his 10 year relationship as project manager, and marketable clients across the State. Mr. Butkus was involved with the development of the Bridgeport CT Master Plan almost 20 years ago, and it has built itself out to what was envisioned.

Mr. Nagardeolekar stated each community is unique. Arcadis will understand the opportunities in Cheshire; the first steps are critical in building the foundation for Cheshire; and with studies there are a number of variables involved. He commented on Arcadis projects, Region 16, with a new elementary school; South Hadley MA elementary school project on the existing campus, engagement with the school committee; and relationship with the Sandy Hook CT school project.

Ms. Sifuentes said the Cheshire project must be on time, on schedule, under budget, and successful. The town needs funding and the project to be closed; the successful project is completed when the audit is done.

Ms. Sifuentes reported that Hartford CT had six (6) audits for projects $12M to $54M, with no monies returned to the State, and next year Arcadis is ramping up for two projects worth over $100M.

Mr. Butkus reviewed Arcadis’ successful experience with a high school in Chicopee, MA which was housed in a 100 year old historical building, and the planning effort for all the items affecting a 100 year old building. This is similar to a current Cheshire building.
Project Understanding - Mr. Nagardeolekar reviewed the status of Cheshire school buildings. The average age of Cheshire schools is +65; the oldest school was built in 1912; the newest school was built in 1971. The job of Arcadis is to validate information, refine it, explore/develop options to address immediate and future educational needs in Cheshire, maximize the value of the funding and set the district up for 21st Century learning. There will be a look at the district’s desire to address educational equity. OSCGR has much experience with communities and vision of how to partner up with communities.

Taxpayers – Ms. Sifuentes said from day one to referendum, the taxpayers must know what the project will bring to them. They must know it is a good investment, what they are voting on. Arcadis staff will meet with town financial staff, review the debt service profile, projects still open or closed, and put projects on a long term or short term bonding, how the project is seen from now to 10 years. A plan will be figured out for taxpayers to know what they are voting for in the referendum. Arcadis will help Cheshire to be accountable for all the expenses.

Community – Mr. Oblon talked about the schools as a hub for the community, the buildings being more than a place of education for children, and said the buildings have a large community draw. School buildings are also recreational facilities; they have early and after school programs through the YMCA; park and recreation activities using fields and buildings; and these buildings will support these activities. It is an important point to be recognized.

Plan Development - Mr. Nagardeolekar discussed the flexible and adaptable plan to meet the 21st Century needs and the educational aspirations of the town. The plans must account for change with respect to programs, education and observe inputs from recent events such as COVID-19…which has had an impact on how schools and technology are utilized. Cheshire is unique; enrollment is growing which is testimony to the desirability of the town; we do not want to over-build and the plan must be the right size for Cheshire. We must be smart in the designing and account for items such as the distribution and number of facilities throughout the community, and aspects of core spaces, future opportunity for refinements and additions.

Project Approach/Discovery and Assessment – Mr. Oblon noted that Cheshire has a wealth of information which has been reviewed by Arcadis, with more to be turned over if the firm is the consultant. He commended efforts of the committee, visiting out-of-district schools, meetings with teachers and staff and the feedback on what works, does not work, and concerns. This information will be used going forward, and taken to the SMC with Arcadis’ finding, thinking, and recommendations to move into the option development.

Option Development – Once all the information is reviewed and distilled, Arcadis can move into option development. Mr. Butkus said Arcadis will address the town’s needs
in a practical and comprehensive approach. There will be guidance for education soundness, and there must be a win-win for the students and community.

Referendum and Marketing – When the committee comes to a consensus on the desired plan and first schools, Arcadis will bring in fresh eyes, get the best quality information (environmental professionals, geo-technical) for a building which may be altered as part of the first foray into the plan. If it is a new building, look at the land acquisition, site conditions, etc. to compile the most appropriate numbers from the start. Mr. Butkus said we do not want another referendum to adjust a budget that was inappropriate from the start. Prior to referendum, information will be gathered providing confidence to the community, bring funding partners from OSCGR into the conversation to review the intentions of the first project. They need to provide input on their support and maximum grant reimbursement for the town. If the referendum is successful with a “yes” the project heads into the grant application process.

Following referendum approval, Ms. Sifuentes said Arcadis will put together the grant application, work with town departments (Finance for ordinance/resolutions etc. for Town Council for approval). There will be work with the Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools to make sure educational specifications are approved and set. The budget is finalized in the grant application; once the application is ready and submitted to the State, we can be sure it is in the Legislature for approval and the project starts. Time is money; once we have all approvals, work can begin; reimbursement starts and cash flow begins.

Mr. Butkus reviewed the community outreach portion of the presentation. He commended the town for re-crafting the current SMC. Arcadis has been interested in work for Cheshire back in 2015-2016; had initial conversations with Mr. Masciana and Supt. Solan on the master planning effort of 2017. This effort stumbled and much was learned from the experiences. The town is going in the right direction with a broader constituency involved in the SMC. Arcadis will share information early with the community, often and consistently and with SMC, using social media and web sites and other mechanisms.

Arcadis has tools for community outreach and support, virtual meetings, photos and graphics...all achieving the goals of town meetings where everyone can come together. Mr. Oblon commented on fly overs, data push, etc. out to the community, responses to questions, building momentum at the beginning and through the entire project. Arcadis will bring its experience to better the project and help Cheshire in its desire to bring the project to referendum to start the modernization program.

Mr. Oblon thanked the committee for their time and emphasized Arcadis’ professionals have a commitment and promise to be accountable to the SMC and the Town of Cheshire.
Questions (Chuck Neth)

1. What experience, if any, have you had with previous projects for the Town of Cheshire.

Mr. Oblon – In 2015 Arcadis worked on the Cheshire Pool enclosure, and is the only project worked on in Cheshire. Arcadis looked at the CHS cafeteria food service and dining experience, which was challenging with lots of movement and serving many students.

2. How do you plan to evaluate and take ownership of the work the Town and The Committee has already completed to date including interviews with stakeholders, visits to other facilities and building assessments.

Mr. Oblon – Arcadis has spent time looking at the available information. There is lots of data/meetings and more data is out there from 2017 effort-Phase 1, things done throughout the years, watching many meetings on the web site, and other known problems which have not been vetted in the public. Taking ownership is sitting down with SMC, staff, looking at notes and videos, visits to schools, working with the Cheshire team on what else is needed, how to get there, who is hired, and work in a collaborative way.

Mr. Butkus said there are notes from the 2015 Cheshire work/meetings with Supt. Solan and Mr. Masciana, assessments being made and suggested efforts; some things were missed opportunities; and they can be used as warning signs along the path as Arcadis works to develop something new for Cheshire.

3. The RFP listed a pre-referendum services phase of 6-8 months. Based on the personnel level of commitment presented in the proposal, explain how your team will staff the project and maintain this level of commitment for the 6-month duration of this phase.

Mr. Oblon said this is what we got (6-8 months) considering November election day…6 months to the day for decisions of the community to not lose another year. In assessing the tasks in preparation of their proposal, it was expected the effort would be spread over a longer period of time. Arcadis has the internal capacity with the four professionals and more outside resources to assist in digesting and developing the plan and stay on that schedule. The community outreach portion of the 6 month period will be most challenging. It will, probably, be behind the original spring/summer deadline for a plan, and go into the fall.

As far as staff goes, Mr. Nagardeolekar said Jack Butkus is the point person to make it streamlined and flow properly, and he may dedicate the necessary time to be there and be the voice. If he cannot be there, one of the team will be there and do what is necessary to get this done. There is a commitment on the part of everyone; they know what needs to be done; and there is no issue with making a commitment. He will be
working on it just as anyone else, a cog in the wheel, and is confident there are issues with making a commitment. Jack is the point person and other staff is the supporting mechanism into a positive situation through referendum.

4. Based on the conditions of the market today and the downturn caused by the pandemic, do you see a need to modifying the time line in the RFP.

Mr. Oblon replied that if the town was open to the idea to vote at another time...and says this because of conversations with other municipalities that are wary of referendum day on election day...and this is a different mindset. At some meetings at the schools, folks were saying this is the right time, a national election, maximum number of people coming out to vote. Other towns have different stories...if we hold the referendum on its own day even with costs for something like this...the only people likely to come out are those in favor of it and there is better chance if it seems like a close vote. Negatives will stay home and positives will come out. I don’t know the chemistry of the municipality whether this is a concern or not if that were to be a decision.

Since the grant application was not anticipated to be submitted until June 2021 rather than this year, there is no driver that says the referendum has to be this November. He is not suggesting to delay it but sharing experience with other municipalities. Even if the town was to submit an application in June 2020 it would have until election day in November to hold a referendum. It is not necessarily advantageous from a cost standpoint to put off the decision. With the way the marketing is now there have been some projects interrupted, some jobs have been closed down, Arcadis is fortunate to see its projects continue, construction is a category considered critical, progress has been maintained on the projects.

With some projects delayed there could be a pent up demand, which in the short term, may increase costs. In the near term for the next couple of years, if people are shy at the municipal level of committing bonded dollars because of these things that have happened in the market, the construction market may cool off a bit and prices a year or two hence might be attractive than today. The way we stand, we have time to develop the program, design the project whatever it may be, so there is 1.5 years in front of us before anyone expects the project to go out to bid. It will be beyond that crunch time and into what may be a lull after the projects that were interrupted get back on track.

Mr. Butkus said it is hard right now to know because we don’t know what will happen again in the fall...there are unknowns; it is hard to give the solid recommendation at this moment. We do not know what will happen in the future, in the fall, when there could be another flare-up or something else.

5. The Groton Schools Program listed in the Project Experience seems to be similar in size and scope to the services being requested by the Town of Cheshire – can you please elaborate on the Groton Schools Program and share your experience thus far.
Mr. Oblon – our experience with Groton goes back about three years now. We were not involved in their first referendum where the 2020 program was approved. There were reasons for them to go to referendum twice more – one was when the site for the first of three projects, a new middle school, had issues with purchase of the property, conversion from open space land the town had and coming up with a land swap with a conservation agency that was advocating not to convert the project use. Procedural issues were involved; even though the attorney general was in favor, had signed off, there were other things the town’s legal folks felt should go back to referendum again. We had to prepare the information for that effort.

In the second phase of the project, two elementary schools project, the intent of the time of master planning and referendum to renovate two middle schools into elementary schools. Arcadis got involved, had conversations with the OSCGR talking about renovation, the cost analysis, or alternative of building new vs. cost of renovating an existing structure. Although some research had been done to that by the folks who had done the master plan, there were risks vs. raw construction dollars, the decision by OSCGR was not to fund a renovation but will fund new with less risk for everyone. The original referendum wording was not flexible to build new even though there was cost savings in the end. Arcadis helped prepare another referendum to go out on this question alone; the dollars did not change; the budgets did not increase in either case middle school or elementary; but needed to go through the compilation and support for the referendum for the reasons stated. Since then we have moved along with the construction of the middle school which will open for students in August. We broke ground last week on the two elementary schools, building footprint portions of those sites, and wait to hear if the Governor will reopen schools for the rest of the school year or not. The project has maintained schedule; a year was cut off the schedule in the original master plan so the elementary schools can begin a year earlier.

6. As you analyze each of our buildings, how will you determine if it is most feasible to renovate a building or replace that building with new construction. Is it tied to the demands mentioned or is there other things looked into.

Mr. Oblon – First of all, we look at it realistically, things based on conditions; we understand there are different maintenance responsibilities out there; and in a renovation as new project to be taken care of. In Groton there were some features in buildings that were fiscally insurmountable or did not make fiscal sense. One of the elementary schools was in better shape overall than the other. Unfortunately, the structurally steel of the building was such that in order to resize classrooms appropriate for a middle school class, make them larger for lower grades, PreK, K, 1 and 2 classroom sizes larger in square footage, it was not feasible. We would have had to move structure all over the place, tear a wing down, not saving money the renovation would provide. You really need to look at it, pull back the veil, look at the details more than is on the surface. Of course, there is the other conversation with the grant folks at the State…requests, what will be funded…coming into the realm of what are the risks, what will we find, certain things you don’t want to know about until deep into the project
and students are out of the building. Other things are easier to take care of. There is the question of does it make sense to do an empty renovation, have swing space, redistricting, work around students in place.

7. One of the issues driving the plan for new construction has been the change to a 6-8 middle school. How will you support the committee in analyzing this issue and help to make an instruction and a fiscal decision.

Mr. Oblon – Sometimes the instructional decision helps make other decisions. We went through the walk-through of the middle school, heard some of the comments, some shortcomings of the original building, understand the tightness of the site, trying to add to what is there which may or may not work, building something else on the site might work. Overall, there needs to be a collaborative process; we cannot work in a vacuum; input is needed from the Superintendent and Board of Education; understanding of where other districts are going realigning of grades; the opportunity they provide to you. There were times of building, consolidating an elementary school bringing students out of the middle school to end up with a 6-7-8 population. We will have those conversations, keep an open mind, find a solution that is practical and flexible and educationally sound.

Mr. Nagardeolekar – one of the things there is that a lot of this is data driven information, presenting the data and pushing it out. So, however you are going to support the committee’s desire is developing the data, looking at all the information, and drawing some correlation so when you have these conversations with constituents or this is pushed out to the public domain they can see the cost benefit analysis. They might save on bus routes because they are driving at a different time, have a 15 minute stagger…or…anything like that. Data driven information is going to support you in the best way possible because people look at data and understand data. This is different than hearing/saying Brian wants that so that is what we are going to do…saying this is what the data tells us, and if we do this these are the potential savings or potential costs. That is where people can really dig their teeth in…can really hold onto that.

8. Some of the projects in your experience section (Chicopee, Hadley) had project durations, particularly Chicopee, had durations of 6-7 years. Can you share what caused such long project schedules and what lessons learned or experiences will apply in our programs.

Mr. Oblon – Chicopee effort took quite a while, construction was not that long, it was a durational project. It took a while to get started, lots of hurdles to get through, it was a historical building which triggered many different reviews along the way that needed to be done. At the same time they were trying to fit in a small school running in there. Police Department was using it as a testing area, shooting range. There was a cell tower driven by Verizon…so many moving parts, so many things going on there. It really took a while to get the plans solid, get all the stakeholders in line, not only the
town, but utilities, cell phone company, and all those people. It was an interesting project because of that...so many people outside the district that needed to have an impact on it...it took a while. Construction went on as necessary, with a few hiccups in a 100 year old building, flooring issue that caused a delay. Honestly, it was a structural thing that no one would have known until everything was ripped up, and when ripped up it was a whole lot of stack and deal with some of that. That is the gist of it; the planning effort took super long; construction was sort of normal besides the one delay; closeout was pretty regular. Overall, it was just an effort of getting all the ducks in a row and dealing with historical issues and other issues outside of the town.

Mr. Butkus – Now for something completely different. In Groton we will have three buildings brand new and done from referendum day to ribbon cutting in less than five years. There, the expectations did not change; the programs did not have to be re-thought as experienced with some clients as we start down the path and reimagining the content of a program which has physical attributes that need to be redesigned. It was very fortunate the Groton program they really bought into it, both educationally and the community before they passed a referendum. Since then, we cut a year off their original timeline, which saved $4.5M just over 5% out of a $90M worth of elementary schools.

Mr. Neth noted the proposal form (exceptions taken) did not have a separate sheet attached. Please forward this sheet to the Town Manager’s Office, Ms. Talbot.

Ms. Kemp thanked the Arcadis staff for their presentation remotely, and if there is follow-up, Mr. Neth or Ms. Talbot will contact them.

POWER POINT PRESENTATION BY COLLIERS INTERNATIONAL GROUP
Mark Sklenka, Managing Director; Charles Warrington, Director K-12; Scott Pellman, Senior Project Manager; Kate Turner, Project Manager K-12.

Mr. Sklenka thanked the SMC for allowing Colliers to introduce its team, experience, approach to the Cheshire program and project, and present to the SMC this evening.

Mr. Sklenka stated he is Managing Director, has attended many SMC meetings and district tours. The company is based on the philosophy that many are greater than one, and bringing in the skill sets from the various 140 professionals it has will benefit the Town of Cheshire.

Knowing the Cheshire project, Colliers has assembled a competent, experienced team for this market. They include engineers, architects, construction professionals, facility representatives, and resources to help and guide to the end solution for the Cheshire project.

The four member team, their history and experience:
Mark Sklenka, Managing Director; Charles Warrington, Director K-12; Scott Pellman, Architect, Senior Project Manager; Kate Turner, Project Manager K-12.

Experience – is key; Colliers team has extensive experience in the K-12 market; has done 400 education projects in Connecticut; construction value of $3B; for some recent K-12 projects, Colliers came in pre-referendum, developed and shaped a program which would get to a town vote.

Mr. Sklenka attended many SMC meetings, tours, taking copious notes, and heard what was being said...information related to school facilities, or guiding principle what Cheshire is looking for in an owner's project manager.

Highlights – Guiding the SMC through decision-making process; helping SMC make the right decision for Cheshire; developing the priority list/strategies; learning from the various tours; manage State reimbursement process and maximizing the reimbursement with Collier’s K-12 market experience. Awareness of the financial aspects of what Cheshire can afford, and cognizant of this as options are developed. Hiring architects not creating monuments to themselves. Be flexible as long term plans change.

Each school has mixed conditions. Cheshire High School is in decent shape; Highland School is in decent shape; Chapman School is in tough condition; all schools have problems to be addressed; from a facilities perspective all have mixed conditions.

Project Understanding – Mr. Warrington has attended meetings and met with SMC. In looking through the RFP and additional information it gave a deeper sense of the district needs. There are eight (8) schools in the district, on average 50 years old, with some improvements over the years, need some attention and this will have to be evaluated. Looking at the Perkins-Eastman studies and comparisons and capacity, and looking at the space standard and enrollment projections from NESDEC, the high school and middle school are 90% to 95% space standard up to the 8 year maximum looking outwards. This is a good sign in looking at capacity and space standards. For the middle school and high school they are right sized based on enrollment. A further breakdown from NESDEC will be obtained on the elementary schools.

There will be development of multiple options to modernize the existing schools, looking at different variations of renovation, potentially build new, potential redistricting and closing of a school. There will be discussion about the challenges ahead.

The ultimate goal is to do a referendum in November 2020, until Colliers is told otherwise by the Town of Cheshire. The option would be chosen by the end of August for November 2020, taking into account non-advocacy period required by State statute.

Challenges – The COVID-19 has impacted the schedules. The question is where we will be post impact on school construction and this is unknown. Colliers constantly
works with OSCGR to keep abreast of everything. The schedule is very challenging, and to meet the November time frame, estimating late August/early September, to develop multiple options/plans, specs, budgets, and Council vote on a selected option.

Closing Schools – Many communities push back on this option and do not want to close schools. This option will be carefully looked at along with associated challenges.

There is a matter of priorities…which schools have the biggest need…which school gets done first and which is done last…and impact on taxpayers.

Phase 1 Pre-Referendum – There will be review of existing studies from Perkins; conduct interviews and field visits with the district; some information has already been pulled on enrollment studies (NESDEC 11/2019); getting a feel where the district is at; confirm existing conditions, building areas, ensure proper information; looking at size of sites for understanding acreage against EDO050; review NESDEC enrollment projections (already reviewed); through time high school appears to be decreasing; PreK-8 increasing in next 8 years; request elementary school by school enrollment (not included in report); recommendation to stay with NESDEC on enrollment studies as they already have information that can be updated in short time frame.

Enrollment Projections – Mr. Pellman noted one of the critical aspects is enrollment projections and the determination of what can and cannot be done. The chart displayed showed average age of Cheshire schools – 69.25 years; renovation of some elementary schools in the late 1990’s; capacity ranges from 56% to 70% based on number of classrooms x 20 or 24 students per classroom; CHS renovation in 1996.

EDO50 State Form on File – The form shows some discrepancies with lower populations filed. A classroom of 20 cannot be counted if being used for special education or resource room. This gets use capacity of 56% to 70% utilization. Elementary schools have some flexibility, renovating all of them, closing one, keeping all open or using one for swing space…there are many options to be explored which is a benefit.

Enrollment – This is a critical factor. There is a State form for space standard depending on the size, population and grade level of the school. You select off a chart, enter into a spreadsheet, and it tells you how large your school can be based on a certain population. Cheshire student population declines until 2022 and then rebounds; high school continues to increase; by 2029 there will be 2,400 students at the elementary school level vs. 1,900 at this time.

If a grant application is filed in Spring 2021 the form projected numbers will be used. If its max at that point and continues to decline, middle school rebounds back up to 699 in 2028-2029, elementary schools are at 2,400 in 2027-2028. Those numbers are plugged in, multiplied by maximum number of students, and it calculates a building size.
The high school and middle school are good sized/appropriate for the student population.

Going to three (3) elementary schools; 2,400 students; 800 students per school; space standard calculates to about 100,000 SF; Highland School is 106,000 SF, and State says it should handle 860 students…and would be the appropriate sized school if three elementary schools are done.

Renovate vs. new Status – When Colliers does a renovation project, anything repair or replacement is not reimbursable by the State. Colliers has close partnering with OSCGR and they walk the schools with them. 2017 reimbursement (new) 37%; renovation 46%; OSCGR looking to consolidation of schools now with construction; Cheshire may have to close a school, and will be asked about capacity for three schools, and these are discussions to be had with OSCGR.

The chart shows school districts receiving renovation status which saved them millions of dollars. Colliers is now working on a package for the Town of Windham, high school with renovation status.

Phase 2 – Option Development. - Ms. Turner reviewed the 11 item check list creating options based on understanding of existing inventory; which schools are better for renovation, logistics involved, finding swing spaces, budget ranges appropriate for the town, long range schedules, developing cash flows, understanding financial caps over the term of the project, and coming up with a ranking structure of all the options, determining the most appropriate and successful option.

Budget Development – In support of the ranked options, a budget will be developed for each one, determining whether the option is viable or not. There is a look at the high and low ends, finding the middle range, develop a budget based on construction costs, professional fees and expenses, cost of consultants, project contingency, understanding the full range of possible budget impacts. There is a look at State reimbursement rate, understand what will be the actual reimbursement, and estimated district share.

Macro Schedule - Schedules are developed on a two-pronged approach with a macro schedule looking at everything for a project, all activities, referendum to construction process. (schedule displayed).

Milestone Schedule – This schedule shows all things that have to happen; it helps achieve the macro schedule, i.e. November referendum, how to meet that deadline, meetings, approval processing, all the targets that must be hit, and keeping the team accountable.

Option Information – Once the information is put together for the different options, the team works with the committee to develop evaluation, criteria, budget costs, disruption
to students, community, educational support of curriculum…taking all this information to look at what is best for the school district.

**Phase 3-Refinement of Preferred Option** – Once all the prior work is done, there is additional work, i.e., geo-technical information, hazardous materials to insure no surprises, and insuring the final budget is solid and tested. The team assists with development of educational specs; sustainability; energy efficient costs; develops financial cash flow analysis throughout the project.

**Referendum Campaign** – Meetings will be held with the community; communication is important; listen to the people for their support; define clear costs, impact to taxes; establish a PAC, generate interest, work with PAC and PTO’s, constituents throughout the district. Once the referendum is set there is a black-out period where the committee and Colliers cannot answer questions. A well established PAC that understands all the critical talking points can respond to questions and issues and what is trying to be achieved.

**Post Referendum Grant Application** – The application is completed on-line; Colliers works with the Supt. of Schools; forms are filled out by Colliers ahead of time; gathers all the information; prepares the public school cost construction database with a grant application estimate/format and enter on-line; an SEG053, site study will be needed, along with educational specifications; the team will be with Cheshire all the way; the grant application will be submitted in late May or early June to OSCGR with all required documents.

**Fees** – Mr. Sklenka informed the committee that Colliers took a look at their fees and made a few adjustments based on starting later than anticipated, holding onto the November referendum date. All fees are estimated, and Colliers is willing to work on an hourly basis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff/Man Hours/Rate/Phase 1 and 2 services</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
<th>Phase 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$41,330</td>
<td>$29,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$14,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**New World** – For the last 6 weeks Colliers has been meeting remotely, and guiding some clients to run remote meetings. Colliers must be prepared to share all information for decision making in a remote fashion until stated otherwise. Over 6 weeks a structure and time frame has been developed for meetings. Multiple platforms can be used. The key is maintaining communication…of utmost importance to any project…keep communications flowing.

Mr. Sklenka reviewed Collier’s team and the firm’s extensive experience in this market, the right team assembled for the assignment, protection of the school district’s interest, having multi-disciplined staff members (architects, engineers, building inspectors, estimators) and experience in the OSCGR process.
Questions (Chuck Neth)

1. **What experience, if any, have you had with previous projects for the Town of Cheshire.**

   Mr. Sklenka – Colliers has not specifically worked in Cheshire on the OPM side.

2. **One of the issues for new construction in the town is change to a 6-8 middle school, how would you support the committee in analyzing this issue and help to make an instructional and fiscal decision?**

   Mr. Warrington originally misunderstood the question as K-8 school and retracted his response.

   Mr. Warrington stated that space standards are 95% the middle school. There would be an analysis of space and how much of an addition is needed, and the square footage required to bring 6th grade to middle school. This would be the first move to a middle school in a master program; this loosens up the four elementary schools to three elementary schools - PreK-K-5, and at the same time look at capacity to redistrict the elementary schools.

   Mr. Pellman commented on the disparity between the Perkins Eastman numbers vs. the State numbers, Dodd having 14 acre site, minimum athletic and parking areas. Building a new middle school it is 15 acres, plus one acre per 100 students, and all this must be looked at by the team and committee.

3. **Related to Refinement of Preferred Options and Marketing represents a significant of the total proposal. Can you provide more detail on what you understand as your role and responsibilities during that phase and also elaborate on how you may market the project for referendum?**

   Mr. Sklenka responded on the makeup of their fee which has been refined. Once you have a preferred option there must be talk about due diligence of making sure we are accounting for every potential dollar of that option. If we are selling a $20M project, must make sure the $20M is all that is needed for that project. Colliers manages the process and consulting services that are needed. Information is shared with the Town; there is understanding of how the numbers are being derived; refinement of preferred options drives these numbers; it takes time to manage consultants, create data and marketing the plan.

   For marketing we are putting together a plan that best worked in other districts. Whether it is utilizing PACs, social media, coming up with talking points, strategies to get out the message to the community, determining the right resources...print media, public information sessions, media mix. Collier is actively working behind the scenes helping the town and committee campaign for the project, attending meetings and
providing all of the technical information to the community, how it came to the $20M number, show schedules and phases of the project. It is the SMC and Superintendent selling the project, and Collier’s job to put them in the position to successfully campaign and get the message heard by the community.

Simsbury CT is a peer community to Cheshire and Mr. Sklenka sat through a 6-8 model middle school meeting there. He heard 80% of parents state negative comments for a 6-8 middle school model, wanting 5th graders kept in the elementary school. Colliers will share with Cheshire information from other districts.

4. In regards to litigation disclosures, can you confirm/clarify your response to disclosure #4 related to Arbitration/Litigation…has either the proposer or any of its principals (regardless of place of employment) been involved for the last most recent 10 years in resolved or pending arbitration or litigation. You answered no. Is this a misrepresentation of the question, and if no what do you believe are the reasons that you have been able to successfully navigate this lawsuit crazy day and age?

Mr. Sklenka – I’ve been here for 18+ years, and cannot remember over the last 10-15 years…I remember one case many, many years ago when a contractor went and did something and everyone got thrown into the mix. For some reason or other Colliers has been successfully avoid litigation…whether because we have been successfully managed these projects. As client representatives, owner representatives, our job is to keep the town from being dragged through the mud. For whatever reason, either through effective management, negotiation skills, there have been no issues with arbitration or litigation or mediation or anything. Colliers understood the question.

Mr. Warrington said dealing with projects, doing the jobs right, getting RFPs or RFQs out, contracts, we are strong with architects, contractors and others. Managing the process, doing it right, with experience in the management you avoid lots of that. No firm wants to extend a project beyond the original schedule, and want to complete the project on time, under budget, and move onto the next one, and the reputation helps you move further. If we manage it correctly from our end, hopefully, that mitigates a lot of that.

5. Based on the conditions of the construction market today and considering the downturn caused by the pandemic, do you see need to modify, or advantage in modifying the committee’s timeline as outlined in the RFP?

Mr. Sklenka replied staff has talked in the last four weeks, thinking of what is happening now and beyond. In a recent article as result of COVID the curve is coming down, projects out to bid coming in 10% to 20% under budget. Contractors sense a downturn, are being aggressive, and want to pick up work, and this makes some sense. Once we get past this scenario of how we will build buildings, get comfortable with spending dollars again, they think there could be a boom going above what is originally projected. Its hard now to talk because you are so far in advance of any of this. If a
project is scheduled to go to bid today and a client was wondering about delaying a year, the graph suggests not to do that, because it could be more expensive than the original track.

The Cheshire project is two years away from getting bids even if bid in the November referendum. It is hard to predict now how long the economy will stay in the down turn, and hopes it will not stay down that long and get back to where we were. Colliers is tracking it closely and providing guidance to avoid pitfalls. The recommendation is to continue going, do not delay, and if the economy stays stagnant, maybe by the time of going to construction it will start to go up again…but maybe not to the point where it would have without this pandemic.

6. Regarding timeline of the November referendum, do you think you can assist the committee.

Mr. Sklenka said yes. It will require a lot of meetings, decisions to be made in a quick manner to maintain the milestone schedule, work plan that was developed. Meetings will have options presented, and leaving the meeting with a decision. Making these decisions could make the November date. Colliers job is to help the committee make those decisions, leading a meeting with the information necessary.

Mr. Warrington – Colliers is already looking at the information, and can get through Phase #1 quickly assessing existing conditions. The key is decision making and going forward.

7. For the South Windsor program, can you touch on Colliers involvement in the public outreach activities for that project.

Mr. Sklenka – The Superintendent in that district does a lot of work, is out selling the project to the groups, organizations, entire community, democratic party, republican party. Our job is to get her the information…State, budget, technical details, schedules. In addition to that when there are public information sessions, Colliers is there leading and guiding the technical information portion of the presentation. There is talk about how the budget was developed, how the schedule was developed, how to manage all the parts and pieces. In one phase they closed a school. Colliers worked with the redistricting, was behind the scenes, delivering the message in a way, anticipating the pushback and questions and be proactive about this. We must be careful to not be out there cheerleading the project because Colliers is seen as the consultant benefiting monetarily from it.

Mr. Warrington said South Windsor is a successful program. Supt. Dr. Carter is at every meeting, tracks the number of meetings and hours she attends them, and it is clearly beneficial. South Windsor has a strong PAC, strong presence in the community, is aggressive and the referendum passed at 88%. This speaks to all the
efforts, background information, Superintendent’s efforts, Town Council, Board of Education on board, and three referendums successfully passed.

Mr. Sklenka said if Cheshire wants a successful referendum follow the guidelines utilized by South Windsor. It has worked extremely well for that district.

8. For the Madison program referenced in the project experience explain how Colliers used previous due diligence and study materials and how that experience may be applied to the services being requested by the Town of Cheshire.

Mr. Warrington has been working directly with Madison on their programs. The due diligence for the first referendum was for Ryerson Elementary School. Colliers developed preliminary borings on site because of proposing a new school…wanting to know if there is ledge, unsuitable soils, ground water…did a geo-technical investigation, not too in depth. They had an on call hazardous materials consultant who knew the existing building and provided valuable input. Since that time we have abated and demolished a couple of schools and renovated schools. There is lots of good technical information, background costs. I am a licensed professional civil engineer in Connecticut, and can access data bases, mapping, wetlands impact, review maps, look at site, size of the site. Colliers understands the guidelines required for a certain type of school. Elementary school needs 10 acres plus an acre per each 100 students; middle school is 15 acres plus one acre per each 100 students; high school is 20 acres plus one. Colliers has become experts in the education sector, are not professional educators, but has seen enough programs in school projects, see into the future and have experience with multiple types of projects, factors and problems. The Madison referendum did not pass, and they are closing down one elementary school, which was a strong proponent of that referendum.

Ms. Kemp thanked the Colliers Team for their presentation.

5. DISCUSSION RE: PROPOSALS
Ms. Kemp asked about where the committee wants to go from here, possibly forming a select group to review the presentations, put together a rubric to actually measure against the criteria, and make a selection of a consultant.

Mr. Neth stated it being beneficial for everyone to state their thoughts and takings from the presentations and proposals. The firms covered responses to the questions and in their presentations. He suggested an open dialogue on the presentations from committee members.

Ms. Kemp stated the presentations helped, and she was happy to see some flexibility on Colliers’ pricing, the price is significant. Both firms bring lots to the table. Colliers has more experience but the cost is concerning, she is glad for flexibility. Regarding timing, she appreciates both being optimistic and still get to November referendum. We need
to look at the timeline more realistically. Both firms felt they had the resources to move Cheshire along quickly and aggressively.

Ms. Nichols said this will take some thought. At the out of district visits there were conversations with people who worked with both companies. Her initial response this evening is that Colliers seems to be a more hands on group, more available to people doing the project. Arcadis had a financial person in a large part of the presentation; Colliers did not, although they have that department so that is a concern for her. Colliers has a good forward looking approach, showed interest so far, as has Arcadis. There are pros and cons to both firms.

Mr. Martelli stated Colliers spent lots more time with SMC, visiting all the schools. He is not impressed with the Arcadis presentation, but liked the financial information on bonding, debt service to the town, etc. If we are going to look at Colliers, we need to meet with them and talk about budgetary numbers as their cost is double that of Arcadis. Mr. Martelli has concerns about the timeline.

Ms. Harrigan said the presentations were helpful. She liked Arcadis' presentation which was better, liked what they had to say. The fact that Colliers has been attending our meetings, shown interest, is a prerequisite for considering them more. Ms. Harrigan does not have a good sense of what we will get from each of the firms due to her lack of knowledge about this profession.

Ms. Bates feels that Colliers has put in much time and effort into the initial phases as being important. They are already up to date on where we are, have lots of information, and their presentation had so much of Cheshire's data. She is impressed by them, but has concerns about the financial impact. For the question on litigation, she does not understand how one firm can have so many and the other can have none. This is just the difference in the companies, but was a concern as well. She agrees with Anne that the Arcadis presentation was more polished, but for substance, Colliers was the better presentation.

Mr. Walsh asked about Colliers number being changed from $110,000 to $70,000. He liked the Collier presentation and the amount of time they will put into this project. He is skeptical about Arcadis' litigation and Colliers having none. Mr. Walsh wants a firm number from Colliers and the number of hours Arcadis will put in for the amount they are charging.

It was stated by Ms.Kemp that Colliers is open for negotiation on the fee structure.

Mr. Gusenburg stated both companies came through as professional, with a number of successful projects in the State, and either one would do well with Cheshire. He has had conversations with Mr. Sklenka and he has attended many SMC meetings, and likes his ideas and process. For the South Windsor district visit, the Superintendent gushed over Collier's work, their support and role played working with the town's
building committee, and Collier’s services and procedures. The money is an issue, and we can get new definition on the bidding prices.

Mr. Neth stated he was more impressed with Colliers presentation than Arcadis, as they are more receptive to what Cheshire is looking for with guidance in the decision making process. Arcadis seems to be more of a construction manager than consultant. Much of their litigation is related to construction personnel injuries. In working with Cheshire, Mr. Neth said Colliers presented themselves better. The fee is a bit higher. He cannot see provision of services required at the Arcadis pricing. In terms of total budget, the town has afforded a budget to hire the best consultant to make the best decisions for the town. Looking at the numbers, we are still under this budget number, so the best decision is a little bit more…but the best decision and still under what it was thought to be.

Mr. Perugini is cautious about how he feels and translates to value and quality being looked at. He thinks one of the firms bid on the last proposal. Both firms were responsive. Colliers is putting more work into it, and is acting as an owner’s rep start to finish…not taking anything away from Arcadis. Regarding the price difference and bids far apart, Mr. Perugini wonders what Arcadis is missing that Colliers is catching, which warrants the bid dollars. Colliers sees lots of work ahead, a compressed time frame could be a factor…and he is leaning towards Collier.

Mr. Bowman stated Colliers did a great presentation, he likes Collier, and firmly believes you get what you pay for. We are going to a project with a potential in excess of $100M, and we are worried about $10,000 to $25,000 initially. Mr. Bowman would rather spend it initially than spend it later because of something another company missed. Watching both presentations, Mr. Bowman supports and favors and is more comfortable with Collier.

Mr. Talbot said both companies did a good job. What tipped the scales for him in favor of Collier was their experience and understanding from participating in so much of the process with the committee already. He favors Collier.

Mr. Martinez said both companies have good professionals and lots of experience working on school projects. If you look at both teams they are equal. When it comes to the fee then it is about man hours and level of effort. He has concerns in getting enough attention from Arcadis to do what Cheshire wants to do in a six months, compressed schedule. Mr. Martinez does not believe Arcadis can give a person, even half time equivalent, to do all that has to be done. It is all about man hours for the Cheshire project. He has concerns about the Arcadis fee more than Colliers fee. As far as presentation, Colliers did a better presentation, had better context, and was well prepared. Arcadis had good points. But, Colliers has shown attention and demonstrated follow through the process.
Mr. Pargano said it is clear to him that Colliers higher fee is a plus for them. They showed more experience and were better prepared for what has to be done. The litigation issues did not bother him. Arcadis listed litigation throughout the entire country. Colliers answered for their own local office.

Council Chairman Oris thanked both Arcadis and Colliers for their excellent presentations, and said Cheshire would do well with either one. There was one firm that that stood out to him, and it reflects the personal attention and time they spent understanding what Cheshire is looking for…and that is Colliers. The firm took the time from the beginning to walk the path with us not knowing they would get the job or not; the fee structure is what it is; we are talking about a $100M project, and it is important to start the process with the right firm that understands what Cheshire needs. Mr. Oris would like to see the committee negotiate the fee structure with Colliers, while getting the right firm for what we need. Colliers understands our needs better than anyone else. His sense from Arcadis was a canned presentation with less personal knowledge of the Cheshire situation. Colliers put in more time and Mr. Oris supports selection of Colliers…even though he has no vote on the selection.

Supt. Solan shared his experience and discussions with other superintendents who have been through this process. It echoes the sentiments he has heard after these presentations. Both are quality firms with good people, professionals. The personal attention, detail and guided support offered by Colliers in their entire soup to nuts of the project…no superintendent has had critical comments about Colliers, and this speaks volumes, along with the work they have turned out locally. Supt. Solan’s conversations reflect the sentiments already shared with the SMC.

Town Manager Kimball noted that Simsbury and South Windsor communities have a similar demographic and experience as Cheshire at this time.

Mr. Masciana said the presentations were good. He likes the chemistry between the Colliers team members, and they did a nice job getting through the questions and presentation. Arcadis’ presentation was a little more canned. He added that because this is an RFP there can be negotiations with firms to refine the scope and proposal as the next step.

Mr. Oris commented on the short time frame and advised SMC making a decision sooner than later to get the process started.

The committee discussed due diligence in the RFP committee looking at the presentations and selection criteria in place, a merit point base. Mr. Neth does not want a 7-5 vote, and said the fee can still be negotiated. Ms. Kemp wants a unanimous or near unanimous vote.
The next scheduled SMC meeting is May 20th for a vote on the consultant selection, and Mr. Gusenburg said an earlier meeting could be set for an SMC vote. Ms. Harrigan asked about a side by side comparison on fees and man hours.

Ms. Nichols is confident her feeling is the right one, and the fee can be negotiated. She does not want the fee to derail the process, and an hourly rate is hard to predict. The fee is within the budget; we will get what we pay for; many Council projects have been derailed by watching dollars too carefully, with the project costing more in the long run. Ms. Nichols noted most SMC members are in favor of Colliers, and to hold off longer could put Colliers in a bad position.

Mr. Bowman said the sooner the better. The SMC vote is leaning towards Collier, which has the best handle on this project. The schools Colliers worked with and visited by SMC members are within Cheshire’s type of community and demographics, and he supports getting things going the sooner the better.

MOTION by Ms. Kemp; seconded by Mr. Talbot.

MOVED that the School Modernization Committee pursue Colliers International Group and move forward with negotiations with Colliers on the fee structure.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

6. DISCUSSION RE: NEW TIMETABLE
For the referendum on the ballot there must be a final plan in place by April, and Ms. Kemp noted SMC has lost two months due to the pandemic. There must be Council and BOE approval before September 1st and this is feasible. The process should move forward as aggressively as possible, but does not believe the referendum question will be in November…but in 2021 special referendum.

Mr. Gusenburg talked about the pandemic, possible recession, and impact on going to referendum on the school project. He asked for Council feedback on how to proceed.

Councilor Talbot stated the SMC was put together; the community is aware of the committee; we are moving forward with a school modernization plan. It is incumbent upon the SMC to come up with that plan. Things down the road may affect what ultimately happens, and he says to march forward.

Councilor Nichols said there must be re-evaluation as we get closer to September. She would not want to push it as this is an important plan to get right the first time, and insure due diligence is done by whomever is selected as owner’s rep. We must present a fool proof plan for referendum. Ms. Nichols has two concerns…the national election gets more voters but there is more nonsense going on that could divert the attention of the public to the project at hand. This risk must be weighed.
Stating he does not want to give the impression of going towards a November election, no matter what…Mr. Talbot said if something derails us in the meantime we should not be slowed down.

Councilor Walsh stated we have to move forward, and it is up to the voters to decide. We must present them with a good package. Council is going through the budget process now, looking to a zero mill rate increase. The school project must be sold to the public in the right way, and Colliers is the best company to put together this package and help sell it to the community. Despite what is going on, Mr. Walsh said we have to move forward as schools will not get any better. We have to be prudent on what is presented to the community.

Mr. Perugini said the committee was not just the Town Council’s decision last year. BOE got together to get the SMC formed to move projects along as quickly as possible. The plan was to move the process as expeditiously as it could be done and be efficient. During the next few months if something comes up that is viable we will deal with it. Voters will appreciate and understand the fact that SMC is moving as fast as it can while being transparent.

Stating agreement, Ms. Kemp said the school modernization plan should move forward. There will be a reach out to Colliers to schedule a meeting and some negotiation.

The next scheduled meeting is Wednesday, May 20, 2020, 7:00 p.m.

7. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Talbot; seconded by Ms. Nichols.

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk