

**Town of Simsbury Board of Finance
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, December 20, 2016 at 5:45PM
Simsbury Town Offices – Main Meeting Room
933 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, Connecticut**

PRESENT: Linda Schofield, Jeff Blumenthal, Derek Peterson, Robert Pomeroy, Kevin Prell, and Moira Wertheimer.

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Finance Director Sean Kimball, Simsbury Public Schools Business Manager Burke LaClair, First Selectman Lisa Heavner, Henry James Memorial School Principal Brian White and other interested parties.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Vice Chairman Linda Schofield called the meeting to order at 5:45PM.

2. WELCOME TO NEW BOARD OF FINANCE MEMBER DEREK PETERSON:

Mr. Peterson was introduced, welcomed to the Board of Finance and provided a brief overview of his background. He reported that he has resided in Simsbury for sixteen years, works locally for a pension fund advisor and noted the many various boards and commissions he has served on for the Town of Simsbury.

MOTION: Ms. Wertheimer, Mr. Blumenthal second, to change the order of the agenda, moving *Election of New Board of Finance Chair* to follow the *Pledge of Allegiance*; unanimously approved.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. ELECTION OF NEW BOARD OF FINANCE CHAIR:

MOTION: Mr. Prell, Ms. Wertheimer second, to nominate Rob Pomeroy as Chairman of the Board of Finance; unanimously approved.

Mr. Pomeroy assumed the Chairman role at this point in the meeting.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 18, 2016 and November 15, 2016:

The October 18, 2016 Minutes should be amended as follows:

First page, fourth paragraph, the individual seconding Mr. Pomeroy's motion should be reflected as Mr. Blumenthal;

First page, seventh paragraph, second line, the portion of text that reads, "...*She reported that she had heard through a message from fellow BOF member Linda Schofield, indicating that she thought it was for Spend to Save investments...*" should instead read, "...*She reported that she had heard through it was for Spend to Save investments...*"; and

Second page, seventh paragraph, sixth line, the portion of text that reads, "...*their needs, present to the Board of Selectmen...*" should instead read, "...*their needs, present to the Board of Education...*".

MOTION: Ms. Schofield, Mr. Prell second, to adopt the October 18, 2016 Minutes as amended and to adopt the November 15, 2016 Minutes as presented; unanimously approved.

6. PRESENTATION ON HENRY JAMES PHASE III CAPITAL PROJECT:

Simsbury Public Schools Business Manager Burke LaClair and Henry James Memorial School Principal Brian White provided a presentation with updates on Phase III of improvements created and proposed for the Henry James School. Mr. LaClair reminded the Board that the focus of Phase I was the Main Office and the first-floor hallway and that the focus of Phase II was primarily the second floor but also included some areas of the first floor, too. He explained that he is working with the architect firm of Kaestle Boos Associates as they formalize going out to bid for the project, which is eligible for partial state reimbursement.

Mr. LaClair explained that the major focus of Phase III has always been centered around a new Library/Media Center, changing the Science classroom to a classroom lab which allows for greater flexibility. Mr. LaClair noted that the auditorium was the most recent element which was part of the educational specifications being worked on for this project. He also noted that there is a large area in the Tech Ed/Family and Consumer Science wing that is in need of updates as it has not been touched since 1957. Mr. LaClair noted that these include only general updates such as flooring, ceiling areas and lighting. He noted that the finishing of the sprinkler system for this building is also a significant part of the cost estimate of \$22,824,407. A sketch of the proposed modifications was reviewed by Mr. LaClair.

It was observed that the only new square footage created will be through the Library/Media Center and the Auditorium. Mr. White reported that the current Library space is approximately 2,750 square feet. For perspective, Mr. White explained that the current enrollment at Henry James is at about 700 students and that the current Library can accommodate a class of about 25 students at one time. He explained that access to the Library is very limited during the school day. Mr. White reported that the size of the proposed Library space is 5,800 square feet.

In response to inquiry from the Board, Mr. LaClair briefly reviewed how the state determines what is eligible for reimbursements, noting the difference between what is considered old versus that which is new and how rates of reimbursement are calculated and the factors that may effect these. He explained that the percentage of eligible reimbursement amount is being reviewed on a finer level as the architects work on refining the cost estimates.

In response to an inquiry from Mr. Peterson regarding how many additional students could be served from the new space in the Library/Media Center, Mr. White explained that the middle school doesn't currently have any common spaces, something that is central to the team concept. He explained that with middle schools, an attempt is made to create smaller learning environments, or teams, within a larger school to aid in the transition from when children leave much smaller school settings of elementary school, enter middle school, and then ultimately prepare to enter high school. Smaller learning environments, or teaming, facilitate this, according to Mr. White. He explained that currently there is no space large enough to have a team of students congregate. Mr. White noted that with the current proposal, including the auditorium, the school would have a space large enough to have a team of 100 students to gather. He explained that prior to this design that includes a new auditorium, a much larger Library/Media Center had been proposed.

Ms. Schofield questioned whether a team of one hundred students can currently meet anywhere within the school, such as the gym or cafeteria. Mr. White explained that the cafeteria is in use throughout the day for classes, noting that it is utilized for study halls outside of the lunch

waves. He explained that three sessions of physical education are held in the gymnasium daily, allowing for only two periods that it is free. Mr. White reported that currently when there is a need to meet for teams, a foyer is used where the students assemble on the floor.

Mr. White then described what CLABs, or classroom-laboratories, are and showed on the drawings where these will be located. He also provided a brief overview of what he noted as the rationale behind the proposal for an auditorium addition. Mr. White reported that approximately 700 students take Music and explained the limitations that are present in terms of performance space and scheduling challenges with access to the high school's space. He explained that Henry James is provided with a schedule of blocks of time, reduced to hours, that are assigned about a year in advance. Ms. Schofield questioned whether Henry James ever uses Eno Hall. Mr. White explained that they do not due to capacity challenges. For example, due to the size of the program, two back-to-back choral concerts are held as there is not enough space for attendees.

Mr. Blumenthal requested that Mr. LaClair provide the Board with any calculated savings that might be associated with the additional space such as decreased costs to use the high school space. He also questioned whether there will be any increases in programming and/or increases in budget for more expanded offerings or any FTE decrease due to the person who did all of the scheduling. Mr. White noted that there would not be any immediate savings specific to staffing but noted that as reductions occur with enrollment, levels of staffing are consistently reviewed. He explained that he does not anticipate expanded programming but that the district may be allowed more diverse programming in terms of student choice and the types of music programs offered.

It was noted that the Board will be seeking to review the operating costs of both the Library/Media Space as well as any proposed new additional space.

7. CNR POLICY DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL:

The Board had brief discussion regarding the CNR policy. It was noted that this policy is consistent with how things have historically been purchased and a brief review of a list of included items, as provided by Mr. Kimball, occurred.

MOTION: Ms. Schofield, Mr. Blumenthal second, to adopt the Fund for Capital or Non-Recurring Expenditures Policy Statement; unanimously approved.

8. UPDATE ON RETIREMENT PLAN SUBCOMMITTEE:

Mr. Pomeroy reported that the Retirement Plan Subcommittee was meeting the day following this meeting, December 21, 2016. He noted that the Subcommittee is discussing OPEB, in that it has been primarily invested in index funds. Mr. Pomeroy noted that the Subcommittee will be discussing considerations to have this fund more professionally managed.

9. APPROVAL OF SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION FOR SOLAR ARRAY AT SHS:

Mr. LaClair reported that this \$34.5K grant dates back to the Town Clean Energy Task Force. He explained that it was essentially earned by residents who chose clean energy options and was tied to the Town signing the Clean Communities Pledge which functioned as a prerequisite to receiving the grant. Mr. LaClair explained that the Task Force has chosen to locate this solar array at the high school as it would allow students to learn about the process through live meter readings. Mr. LaClair reported that the total cost is just over \$57K, payable through the grant and non-lapsing account monies. Mr. LaClair reminded the Board that \$18K has been previously earmarked for this project.

Mr. Prell questioned what the effect of this project would be in terms of operating costs. Mr. LaClair reported that the estimated savings are \$2500 on this system, sized at just under 15kW located on the new gymnasium area. Mr. LaClair reported that there are no known annual maintenance costs and truly does fit the Spend to Save definition.

MOTION: Ms. Schofield, Mr. Blumenthal second, that the Board of Finance create a supplemental appropriation of \$57,074, allowing for the expenditures of the Solar Array project at Simsbury High School, combining two sources into one project and providing the authorization to move forward; unanimously approved.

10. OTHER ITEMS:

Mr. LaClair reported that a second quarterly update will be provided to the Board of Education at their January 24, 2017 regular meeting. It was noted that the same will be provided to this Board after the Board of Education receives the update.

11. ADJOURN:

MOTION: Mr. Prell, Ms. Schofield second, to adjourn at 7:21PM; unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela A. Colombie
Commission Clerk