

Press Release
For Immediate Release
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GRS Cooperative Building Committee and School Board Reconvene After District Meeting

According to Ben Mayerson, Chair of the GRS Building Committee, “We were obviously disappointed with the bond vote for the construction project. However, we respect the results of the vote.

This point was made when the Building Committee and School Board met recently for the first time since the district meeting to plan the path ahead in light of the vote. “The health and safety issues didn’t go away with the vote,” according to SAU20 Superintendent Paul Bousquet. “The Board and the Committee will need to seek an alternative plan. The voters told us how they felt about the plans or perhaps more specifically the price. I do feel however that we still have a strong consensus from the public that something has to be done, about all the problems that exist at the GMHS, which hasn’t seen any substantial repairs or maintenance in almost 40 years. Problems at the Edward Fenn are just beginning to surface and we need to address any issues in the near future in order to avoid a repeat of the GMHS situation. There was always one reason or another not to invest funds into the building and now all those years of neglect has come back to haunt us.”

The real challenge in the coming year for the Administration and School Board will be to address the immediate needs of the GMHS and Edward Fenn Elementary, which was recently cited by the NH DOE for fire safety issues and a crumbling chimney. “We have limited funds in the capital reserves earmarked for repairs,” according to Bousquet. “It’s not very much, but I have an obligation to address the immediate concerns that have been documented by the State, administration, and concerned parents.”

In the meantime, the Building Committee will be commissioning a survey to be sent out to all residents of the three town cooperative, to help determine what was good about the recent proposals and of course what wasn’t. The survey will give citizens an opportunity to give input as to possible directions that the Building Committee and the School Board may take to address the building issues. “To me, it wasn’t all bad,” says Mayerson. “We had half the voters say yes to the proposal. They’re still out there, and they are watching and waiting to see what will happen next. Since March 21st, we have heard from literally dozens of concerned citizens who want to know what it will take to convince a majority of the voters that the schools must be modernized as soon as possible, for the sake of the kids, community, and our wallets.”

Construction costs are on the rise, and the repairs which Superintendent Bousquet refers to may not be eligible for any State Aid. “At this point we may be in this alone,” says Pauline Plourde, Business Administrator of SAU20. “With the possibility of losing our 56% State Aid, we could be responsible for 100% of the costs.”

The Building Committee looks forward to getting back to work, but that can’t happen without the active support and input of the community. “We need to hear from all members of the cooperative district,” says Mayerson. “Those who voted yes or no, we invite you to stay involved. Come to committee meetings or even consider joining us. We need to know what you want us to do now. Any serious suggestion is fair game, except doing nothing. The schools have suffered that fate for far too long already.”

If you are interested in joining the Building Committee, contact the SAU20 office at 466-3236. Whether you are a member or not, the meetings are always open to the public. Visit the Building Committee’s webpage at www.sau20.org/building for more information. Most of all stay involved!