

**Press Release
For Immediate Release
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First Round of GRS Cooperative School District Building Forums Yield Many Solid Results

The GRS Cooperative Building Committee and School Board have gathered valuable public feedback from the four recently held public forums. “We walked into the meetings with no definitive solutions to the current building issues,” says Ben Mayerson, Chair of the Building Committee. “We needed the public to review the facts, and help guide us on to the path to solve our buildings’ challenges.”

David Laurin, President of Banwell Architects, presented a brief overview of the Ed Fenn and GMHS building conditions, including roof deterioration, lack of ventilation, insufficient wiring, and insufficient ADA compliance, to name a few. While reviewing the existing spaces in the buildings, David added his observations of where additional space would be recommended. “David has met numerous times with the administration, faculty, staff, Building Committee, and School Board,” said Jo Carpenter, Chair of the GRS School Board. “Over the last two months, we have worked through the figures, refining the numbers.”

“The public forums gave us some very definitive opinions,” says Mayerson. “Participants in all three towns brought us very valuable input. Members of the Building Committee and School Board listened intently and took extensive notes, at all the meetings. This is exactly the kind of feedback we needed. Careful note was also taken regarding the feelings people have about where the GMHS should be located.”

On June 12, David Laurin presented his conclusions to date, including his professional analysis of the buildings themselves. “There is no denying it; the GMHS needs a lot of work. The good news is that the Ed Fenn is generally in very good condition” comments Carpenter. “David concluded that some portions of the current GMHS complex are salvageable, but at the same time he recommended other parts be razed to build a more spatially and energy efficient school. Our responsibility is to take the public’s input from the process, combine that with the work of the Building Committee, and make the best choice for what kind of school construction project we should move ahead with, including where it should be located. The Building Committee has been providing the Board with excellent background and data, to help us move ahead to bring this project to fruition.”

Currently the GMHS is on a probationary accreditation status, with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. “Many of the identified shortcomings with our accreditation relate directly to the building conditions,” says Mayerson. “It is imperative that we protect our accreditation and restore it to the full approved status”

The next step for the Building Committee is to review the Banwell report and the notes from the public forums. “The Building Committee intends to make a formal recommendation to the School Board pertaining to the location of the GMHS, construction delivery method, and other related topics,” says Mayerson. “By the end of June, we hope to provide the School Board with those recommendations, move forward to hire an architect, and begin the conceptual design phase. Our schedule calls for a return to the public in the fall to present potential design solutions and their associated costs.”

Visit the Building Committee’s webpage on the SAU #20 website, at www.sau20.org/building, to view the letter from the NEASC regarding the GMHS accreditation status and for more up-to-date Building Committee information.