

Gorham Randolph Shelburne Cooperative School Board
Wednesday, December 6, 2006
Minutes of Meeting
Gorham, Middle High School, 7:30 p.m.

Board Members Present: Jo Carpenter, Chair, Jean Tremblay, Anne Hill, Gregg Corrigan, Jay Holmes, Michelle Cormier, Paul Parteno, Kathleen Kelley, Donna Goodrich, Reed Leberman

Student Member: None

Administration: Paul Bousquet, Superintendent; Pauline Plourde, Business Administrator; Keith Parent, Principal GMHS; Karen Cloutier, Principal Edward Fenn; David Goyette, Maintenance Director/Transportation Coordinator

Building Committee: Ben Mayerson, Chair

Press: Gail Scott, Berlin Daily Sun

Recorder: Elizabeth Forestall

- I. Call to Order: Jo Carpenter, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.
- II. No public comments.
- III. Building Committee Recommendations for the Edward Fenn Elementary. The following discussion took place:

Ben Mayerson indicated that the majority vote has recommended option #5A which is a hybrid of Option #1 and Option #5. The plans were distributed to all members of the Board. This is the recommendation brought forth for the reconfiguration of the building. The proposal for the parking lot is to avoid activity in the morning and to bring it further away from the busiest section of the school at that time. This recommendation comes directly from the Principal.

Jay Holmes asked was it necessary to keep buses at the Edward Fenn rather than at any of the other schools. David Goyette explained the necessity of having them at the Edward Fenn as there is power to plug the buses in during the winter season. Ben Mayerson said it would not be an impossibility of parking the buses elsewhere but would not want them at the High School parking lot because of the activity. Keith Parent stated that the High School parking lot is used at night.

Michelle Cormier asked about the configuration and the difference between having the cafeteria at the front of the building or having the gymnasium at the front and the cafeteria at the back. Karen Cloutier explained that if the current gymnasium stays where it is the stage has to also stay where it is. That means that adding on a cafeteria to the front of the building defeats the purpose by having two separate rooms. If stage is in the cafeteria you could have performance while the gym is being used. Ben Mayerson said it would be a much larger gymnasium sized to also handle Recreation Department activities. The larger space would solve health and safety issues as there will be more room between the basketball court and the wall. Reed Leberman brought up that Option 6 came about because the original option #5 had the gymnasium running 90° to where it is now but with a lot of extra cost.

Motion made by Jean Tremblay to accept this Motion presented as Option 5A based on recommendations of the Building Committee. Motion seconded by Donna Goodrich; all in favor, motion passed.

Ben Mayerson explained that these costs are estimates. Will not have any discussion until concepts are addressed. Only direction can be where we are at now or down. The present estimates from Lee Kennedy are:

Edward Fenn School	-	\$ 6,608,626
High School	-	20,778,994

Jay Holmes – We have paid for services and gotten what we wanted as far as building concepts. Would it now be prudent to put out for competitive bidding to try to cut costs? He questioned whether we now own the plans and was told that we do. Pauline Plourde explained that we could not as we have a contract with Banwell and Lee Kennedy. We are bound to them. In March they will continue on as our professional construction manager and architect. They will handle the bidding and hiring of subcontractors. Ben Mayerson said their contract states they must get competitive quotes from subcontractors. We will need a general contractor. Banwell and Lee Kennedy will get a percentage of what the total project is.

Paul Bousquet stated if the Board says this is too much money then the price has to come down. Pauline Plourde said there are different options on how to finance this project. Paul Bousquet said can negotiate the bonding.

Kathleen Kelley thinks that the planning for maintenance of these buildings was not done. She would caution to think about how we are going to further this over the 25-year period. Some equipment will need to be replaced which will impact our budgets. Jo Carpenter stated we will need funds in capital reserves. Paul Bousquet stated that Kathleen Kelley is correct. He has ideas on how to put money away for the future. We need to start saving by the end of the year because this could happen again. Jean Tremblay questioned aren't there reserve funds set up for the Coop. Jo Carpenter said yes there are. We face a dilemma. We look at this having a big effect on the tax rate. Shelburne has a new tax rate. How are we going to pay our taxes when the school comes on line. They don't want the tax rate to go up but they are accepting the fact that something needs to be done with the schools. I think we need to give the Building Committee direction to cut this project back from \$27 million and look at \$20 million or we should come in at just under \$20 million. We have some good concepts. We will put it back to the Building Committee, teachers, members and all work together to come up with a figure that will be more reasonable. This Board needs to let the Building Committee know our direction.

Michelle Cormier questioned what our next step should be? I find \$27 million not palatable. I am in consensus with Jo Carpenter. Ben Mayerson suggested that as facilitators that you turn to the administrators, the architect, the principals, the superintendent and business administrator and get together and go over these plans

and discover what you have and what you need and cutting it back from there. The determination must be made by the educators.

Michelle Cormier does not want to see any programs sacrificed and Paul Bousquet agreed with that. Ben Mayerson suggested going through the whole thing again and setting a low parameter. Kathleen Kelley said that in order to go from \$27 million to \$20 million you would have to cut space and therefore it would cut programs. We don't have a lot of fluff space. Ben Mayerson said you will have to look at every square foot in the building to see what can be changed but you can't touch the size of the classrooms. You could save on square footage of specific rooms, such as the principal's office. Jo Carpenter will trust our educators and administrators not to cut any programs.

Paul Partenope discussed warrant articles as one way to present this to the public and to fund the Building Committee.

Karen Cloutier advised that we should be very careful of the messages we send depending on what the options represent. We could mistakenly send a message to the public that we can live without something. We are going to affect programs. There are ways here that we can play with and cut costs.

Jay Holmes brought up the issue of temporary classrooms being needed and using the added space in the gym to accommodate temporary space. This would save the \$2 million earmarked for this purpose. Ben Mayerson explained the temporary classroom figure is an estimate for the worst case scenario. Jay Holmes is concerned that 300 square feet for Mr. Parent's office is too much and not needed.

Donna Goodrich recommended that before starting to make changes, she would need a figure to shoot for and trust the committee in this process. Reed Leberman said Blair stated that we needed to have a set figure. The professionals are expecting that we do this. Jo Carpenter said that the fiscal responsibility is ours. The people expect us to bring to them some guidelines that this is too much to support. The public will not support this figure.

Ben Mayerson stated if this gets voted down you can add on 10% when you decide to go through this again. Banwell and Kennedy are competent. They work within the parameters that are set for them. If we don't steer them in the right direction they will continue on this way.

Jay Holmes wants the Building Committee to sit down with the educators to see what can be figured out to lower this cost. We need to trim this figure. Paul Bousquet said the \$20 million figure came out of the forums. We need to send a project to the voters that they can handle financially. Jo Carpenter stated if we want to take to bond in March we don't have much time.

Karen Cloutier said at the last Building Committee meeting and meeting with Blair he mentioned a target. You need to know what you are aiming at. I need help aiming toward something financially. What do you think this Committee can handle. I need that target. We do have ideas of where we can trim but need to know what to be working towards. Donna Goodrich suggested giving it to the administrators to do the first round of cuts. Let them take the project and do what they need to do. Can we talk to Banwell about portable classrooms? Keith Parent stated he could make this work with no portable classrooms. That would save \$2 million.

Paul Bousquet – What I hear is that you will trust us to do our best to pare this figure down and not affect school programs. Greg Corrigan wanted to know what can be pared down and still satisfy our needs. Then we can have the professionals tell us what their number would be.

Reed Leberman questioned the bond vote for \$11 million and what the tax impact was going to be, which would have been \$5.50 per thousand. Kathleen Kelley would support a target if we did something like trying to come in with a similar tax rate as presented in 2003. It could be adjusted by inflation, the length of the loan, etc. That would be appropriate. Jo Carpenter stated between \$18 and \$22 million.

Karen Cloutier stated she felt comfortable in seeing that we have a starting point. Can meet and look at what we could cut. Jo Carpenter wanted to know if this could happen before the next meeting on December 19th and Ben Mayerson said that was a must. Jo will need Building Committee report for the 12/19 meeting.

Jean Tremblay said possibility of having a special meeting if we are not ready for bond in March to which Paul Partenope disagreed as he said there has been a long-standing reluctance of judiciary to allow for special district meetings.

IV. Non Public Session not needed.

V. Other

Jo Carpenter brought up the total employment at the Edward Fenn and Gorham Middle High School as 99 with 3 additional contracted employees bringing the total to 102. Twenty dollar gift certificates for these employees would cost \$2,500.

**Motion made by Michelle Cormier for the Board to empower the Executive Committee to purchase these gift certificates identified in this discussion.
Motion seconded by Greg Corrigan; all in favor and motion passed.**

VI. Adjournment: **Jean Tremblay moved to adjourn at 8:55 p.m. which was seconded by Jay Holmes; all in favor, motion passed.**

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Forestall