

Newtown Public Schools
BOE CFF/CIP Facilities Finance Sub Committee Meeting
October 12, 2023 6:00 pm
BOE Conference Room

REVISED AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER

BUSINESS

Item 1 Approval of BOE CFF/CIP Minutes of September 20, 2023

NEW BUSINESS

- Financial Report and Transfers
- Reed Chiller
- Transportation Update
- Facilities Update
- Superintendent's Update

PUBLIC COMMENT

ADJOURNMENT

Newtown Board of Education
CFF/CIP/Facilities/Finance Sub-Committee Special Meeting Minutes
September 20, 2023 6:30pm
BOE Conference Room

PRESENT: Deborra Zukowski, Alison Plante, Christopher Melillo, Tanja Vadas, John Barlow, Steve Goodridge, Board of Finance

CALL TO ORDER: Mrs. Plante called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

BUSINESS

Ms. Zukowski moved to accept the BOE CFF/CIP minutes of August 17, 2023. Mrs. Plante seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously for the approval of the BOE CFF/CIP minutes of August 17, 2023.

NEW BUSINESS

Facilities Update

Mr. Barlow stated there was not a lot to report. He indicated he is starting to compile information for his budget for year 2024-2025.

Mr. Barlow talked about the ribbon cutting for the MG playground and said it went very well. He stated there is one outstanding piece of equipment that is missing and backordered. The foundation has been put into place and once this piece comes in they will un-mount the foundation and install it.

Mrs. Plante asked if it was affecting the use of the new equipment now.

Mr. Barlow said no that it was a stand-alone piece.

Mrs. Plante stated she has heard great reviews from parents, kids and the PTA. Everyone is very happy.

Mr. Barlow said he defers all of the thanks to his maintenance staff, Park & Rec and Public Works Dept. for all they did.

Hawley – Mr. Barlow stated we have the substantial completion letter. There is an addendum which is a list of 5 items that they need to continue with finalizing commissioning, painting and patching. Because of the timeline as to when we received the switch gear it pushed everything back.

He stated Principal Moretti expressed to him some concerns regarding feed-back in that we have spent money on air conditioning and it does not work. Because of the timeline of when the switch gear came in there should have had between 30-40 days at least to do all of the commissioning to work all of the bugs out of the system. Instead, there was 1.5 weeks so they are still working on it and addressing issues as they come up. He has communicated with Downes on this and the system has begun to stabilize as far as air quality and air conditioning in the rooms. He said it's not just an air condition system but an air quality system.

Mr. Melillo stated we knew and were told by Downes there would be at least 30 days minimum to balance the system. He stated all of this should have been done prior to moving back into the building but we did not have the luxury of time.

Ms. Zukowski asked if this work was being done during the school time or after school.

Mr. Barlow stated basically they are out of the building now and anything that needs to happen happens after hours so there is no disruption. He said the sad reality is we have run out of time this year to continue the work on balancing out the air conditioning system as we need the warm hot days.

He said we may have to push it off to the spring and defer to work on the heating system side of and get that all balanced and work on the cooling side in the spring.

Mrs. Plante asked if there would be any budget implications for them coming back in the spring.

Mr. Barlow stated no.

Mrs. Plante confirmed that nothing is wrong it is just part of turning on the system.

Mr. Barlow stated everything else is routine maintenance at this point. He stated we finally got ahead of some of summer maintenance and now we are into our routine maintenance that happens all of the time. He further said the state of all of the buildings is great.

Ms. Zukowski asked about the town building inventory that the former facilities director was involved in. Mr. Barlow said he is familiar with all of it and is on the committee and has been to 4-5 meetings already. He said it is a projected 3 year on-going project and what the town is trying to achieve does not exist anywhere. He stated there is a proposal that will be coming up in front of the council at some point which will involve a funding piece but everyone is not sure about a commitment for the funding. All of NPS building information has been uploaded by the previous facilities director. He said right now we are sitting idle because it is all of the towns departments to figure out how they are going to take their individual systems and match them up. Mrs. Plante asked Mr. Barlow to keep the Sub Committee posted as to when the council presentation will land.

Mr. Barlow brought up the discussion of a new truck for one of the staff who is also the electrician. He presented some pictures of the ongoing rotting issues with the 20 year old truck. This truck currently has 120K+ miles on it with most being snow plow miles. He stated this cost was submitted in the budget last year but was dropped out due to funding purposes. He talked about all of the issues with the transmission, the body of the truck rotting etc. and stated it is not safe and needs to be replaced.

Ms. Zukowski asked about options new vs. used.

Mr. Barlow stated he could go with the used option and could get a better rate on, typically he has never seen municipalities go to the used truck market which the trucks are basically already half worn out.

He presented two quotes. The first quote was from the former facilities director and Mr. Barlow had to get an updated quote for an F250 truck. He stated the original quote was \$69K but has now gone up to \$82,846. He also went to Tasca Ford, which is on the state contract and received a quote for an F350 truck with all similar options as Hartford truck equipment and that was \$67,121. These are the only two quotes he has at this point and they are both state contract quotes.

Mr. Barlow recommended to go with Tasca because the price is what it is.

Ms. Zukowski asked about the difference in the 250 vs the 350 truck with regards to needs for maintenance.

Mr. Barlow said they are basically the same truck but the chassis in the 350 is more heavy duty and is better for snowplowing.

Mrs. Plante asked if the prices reflect a regular pick-up body or a utility body.

Mr. Barlow stated it was a utility body and what we currently have is a utility body. He further said he is not asking for anything other than the basic truck, utility body and the plow.

Mrs. Plante asked where the money would come from.

Mrs. Vadas stated that we do not have the money in our general fund and we would not know until April but we can't wait for the 2024-2025 budget so they are proposing to take the money from the BOE non-lapsing account.

Mrs. Vadas presented a spreadsheet with the years and transfers that went into the non-lapsing account and where we are pending the approval of the current transfers to the non-lapsing account.

Ms. Zukowski then addressed her concerns of what was anticipated for spending with a possible facility study, the chiller at Reed, and the possibility of purchasing a truck.

Mr. Barlow stated he did not recommend we take money out of the non-lapsing fund at this time for the chiller. He would like to relook at the chiller in the spring when we would have a much better view of what our budget is and then make decisions.

He stated the \$120K is locked in with Omnia for the chiller.

Mr. Melillo stated he would like to make a recommendation. He stated we are asking to deposit \$184K into the non-lapsing fund with \$100K of that money put into special education. He stated the \$84K is not earmarked for anything but unanticipated expenses. The \$84K could be the truck as it is an unanticipated expense. The money that was put into the non-lapsing account last year for the chiller is still there.

Mrs. Plante stated we have sufficient funds to cover the truck, chiller and facility study. She stated what we are saying is we are keeping the funds in the account for the chiller and keeping our options open. We do not need the chiller at this time. By the spring we hopefully will be contracted for the facility study so we will know what that cost is.

The discussion continued around the facility study and when it should be started.

Mrs. Plante stated she agreed that she thought we should start the facility study this year.

Mr. Melillo stated we can still do the truck as the price was at \$67K and we need the truck, and do the facility study and hold on the chiller to see what our needs are around that.

Mrs. Plante stated mathematically we could do all three.

Ms. Zukowski stated we will know for sure about all three come April.

Ms. Zukowski asked Mr. Goodridge what his thoughts were regarding the Board of Finance thoughts on this.

Mr. Goodridge stated he would have to have a discussion with the Board of Finance and to also keep in mind that there is an election coming up and there would be basically a new board. He stated even though the Board of Ed recommended the \$120K towards the chiller from the funds that the Committee designated he thought it is still listed on the CIP as the full amount and if it is explained to the BOF fully he thought it could be considered. He thought it might be beneficial for Mr. Barlow to come and give a complete explanation to the BOF.

Mr. Barlow talked about the building temperature at Reed on the one chiller and how the temp was approaching 76-77 degrees during the heat wave and that was the best he could get the building cooled to.

He stated we do need that extra chiller and he is not advocating pushing off the chiller but is more concerned about the fact that this is our emergency savings account and dipping it down. So he feels we should sit back on the chiller until we have a better feel.

Ms. Zukowski made the statement we sit back on the chiller and go ahead with the facilities plan and the truck.

Mrs. Plante stated we all agree on the truck and wish we had budgeted for the facilities study.

Mrs. Plante stated she would like to see that we go out to vendors and get quotes for the facility study on cost and how long it takes and when they can start. Then we come back to this in a few months and then we can wait until January or February to start the study and it could be done by May and still inform the CIP which may buy us some time.

Mr. Barlow stated he has an RFP that needs to be updated and can give to the Purchasing Director to get quotes.

Ms. Zukowski stated the last time we had a CFF meeting we talked about the \$84K that we would tell the Board of Finance and Legislative Council 'pound wise and penny wise to use that money on a facility study'. She also stated out of the two we really need the truck but she does not want to give up the facility study and we should do it now before we have to justify on the following CIP.

Mrs. Plante agreed.

Mrs. Plante stated in a few months the RFP would have gone out and we would have quotes back and then we will have enough information to assess.

Mr. Barlow stated after talking with the Town Financial Director we break the Middle school out of the \$450K to make the money go as long as we can.

Transportation Update

Mrs. Vadas stated the buses are running. She spoke with All-Star and we originally started with 7 spares this year, Brookfield had to borrow 2, we have 2 out on medical and 1 is out sick, 2 are giving notice and leaving. With that, Brookfield will be returning our 2 spares, we are hoping that the 2 out on medical leave will be returning soon and the 1 on sick leave will be returning soon. She stated we are getting by and all the routes are filled including using our spares.

Mr. Melillo stated we have an upcoming meeting with All-Star to go over operations again. He also stated buses are running on time right now.

Ms. Zukowski asked about the rules on buses going down on cul-de-sacs, dead end roads, and for stopping within a neighborhood and safe to walk for buses to stop every tenth of a mile.

Mr. Melillo stated he would check on the state laws for the rules for buses and stops.

Superintendent Update

Mr. Melillo stated he had no updates as he gave them to the Board the previous night at the Board meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ADJOURNMENT:

Ms. Zukowski made a motion to adjourn meeting. Mrs. Plante seconds the motion. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanne Morris

**THESE ARE DRAFT MINUTES AND ARE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE BOE
CFF/CIP SUB COMMITTEE**