

**Future Forecast Committee  
Council Chambers  
May 10, 2016  
9:00 a.m.**

Present:

J. Erardi	C. Moretti
J. Vouros	R. Morey
J. Davila	L. Rodrigue
T. Einhorn	A. Uberti
G. Faiella	L. Wiedenhamer
R. Harriman-Stites	2 Public
K. Holden (absent)	

Dr. Erardi shared information on ADA compliance which indicates that if we take a building off line and then it comes back on line we are not directed by the state to bring that building up to code if there have been alternative opportunities for students and staff in that building.

Mr. Faiella said that if there major renovations to a building you must comply.

Revised Survey:

Dr. Erardi asked how the results of the survey will guide our conversation.

Dr. Rodrigue feels this will give us a general sense of what everyone is feeling in the community.

Mr. Moretti said the most helpful question is around transitions, the number of schools we have and also sharing the buildings with a non-school entity.

Dr. Weidenhamer said it was important to maintain class size but the community may look to increase them.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said that a number of us felt that providing a more centralized location for special needs services was important and maybe should be part of the survey.

Mrs. Uberti agreed and regarding question #6 her concern was putting out an option that may not be realistic. Maybe that's where we should list having additional opportunities. Also, before the example of having students in the same grade come to a school at the earliest grade, maybe we should put in fourth grade going to Reed.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites feels that we have to ensure the community is part of the decision making process.

Mr. Vouros referred to #4 regarding the order of the listing and was concerned the order indicated our preference.

Mr. Moretti suggested alphabetizing the choices

Dr. Weidenhamer asked if we should list the class size guidelines for the public. She feels there may be a push for larger class sizes.

Mr. Vouros said it's key for the public to understand that three or four more children in a classroom tips the whole complexion of that classroom.

Dr. Weidenhamer said we need to persuade the public that the quality of the programs need to be protected.

Dr. Erardi said it's a difficult survey to take without having the background story. We are asking the public to weigh in on fiscal responsibility. He was not certain when we gather the data that we will be in a better space just saying we engaged the community. He was not sure how relevant the last two questions were. #6 is the key question. It's really about dollars and blind decision making. The opening is great.

Mrs. Uberti thought we should wait until we have some solid options before we survey the community.

Mr. Vouros agreed.

Dr. Erardi said information would be sent to the committee on the Hawley Trust.

Mr. Moretti said they used the trust fund to have the reading lounge redone, to fund professional development workshops, and to repair carpeting and doors.

Mr. Faiella said it has also been used to pay for computer tables and chairs and kitchen work.

Dr. Erardi said we use about \$20,000 per year. He introduced Robert Morey who joined the committee and is a community member and proponent of school partnership.

Mr. Einhorn feels the most important piece is the impact on students and learning. As enrollment decreased the areas in the middle school were repurposed. All spaces are being used. Closing would have a significant impact on students.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said that the sustainability of closing an elementary school is in question looking at projections over the next five to ten years. There are concerns about the longevity of that plan.

Dr. Erardi reviewed the K-3 options.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said that Mr. Einhorn played the numbers forward up to ten years starting in 2017.

Dr. Erardi asked them to update the K-3 options to make them relevant for 2017-2018. If the Board asks where the greatest advantage is in closing a building it would be maintaining the elementary schools but expanding them to K-5 and moving the middle school to grades six to eight. Mr. Faiella determined that this could be done without portable classrooms.

Dr. Weidenhamer asked the capacity of Reed.

Mrs. Uberti said 915 is the maximum capacity and that would be crowded.

Dr. Erardi said the 2016-2017 projection was not recommended last year because Reed would have 1,090 students and would need portables.

Mr. Einhorn said the most significant negative piece would be redistricting.

Mr. Moretti said that last year when this conversation occurred there were many questions about Hawley students. We don't want to go about setting one portion of the community against another. He suggests redistricting the whole school district.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites agreed. We didn't discuss social emotional issues regarding the community which was not discussed last year. Melissa Brymer felt it was not in the best interest of the students to close an elementary school.

Mr. Morey referred to the cost for portables and asked if there was enough land at Reed to support an addition if the middle school closed. Can a plan be deferred at such time when the environment requires it?

Dr. Erardi said that would be up to the school board. We are two years into a ten year projection which has been accurate.

Mr. Faiella said an addition at Reed would be very costly.

Mr. Morey said there is an enormous difference in size between a fifth and eighth grader. Would Reed be able to have the fifth grade in a separate area?

Dr. Erardi asked for an elementary summary listing the multiple opportunities to close a school for the next meeting.

Mr. Vouros asked if it would be costly to move the eighth grade to Reed since there are no science labs.

Mrs. Uberti said there is not a lot of science at that level but there are four labs at Reed.

Mr. Vouros asked Mr. Morey about the real estate trends for sales in Newtown and what the impact was of opening the new Sandy Hook School in regards to questions about Newtown.

Mr. Morey said the Sandy Hook question is how the town managed the tragedy. Some buyers have decided to wait and some are fine moving in. The impact on the real estate market in general is that the prices have been flat. The closer we get to opening Sandy Hook the better it gets. The question is what happens when the school closes and is repurposed and what one would be suitable for another use. He feels the MS option is better because of the location.

Dr. Erardi said that Pat Llodra and Betsy Paynter would be at the next meeting. The elementary committee will bring closing comments and their summary. We will begin our conversation on the middle school and he would forward information on the Hawley Trust.

Mrs. Davila provided copies of the revised Assumptions and Projections.

The next meeting is May 19 from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m.

Submitted by: Kathy June