

Future Forecast Committee  
Council Chambers  
May 24, 2016  
9:00 A.M.

Present: J. Erardi R. Morey  
J. Davila A. Uberti (absent)  
T. Einhorn L. Rodrigue  
R. Harriman-Stites J. Vouros  
K. Holden L. Weidenhamer  
C. Moretti G. Faiella  
D. Petersen  
T. Vadas  
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Dr. Erardi said the next two meetings would be around analytics with Ron Bienkowski and Tanya Vadas presenting information on savings, soft costs and transferred costs. The conversation began around not closing a school. Deborah Petersen attended regarding special education programs.

Mr. Vouros was concerned about the middle school closing and the grade 7-12 concept. He is opposed to just the eighth grade going to the high school. He asked if they would be completely separate from the rest of the high school.

Dr. Rodrigue said that depends on the vision. There are magnet schools with seventh and eighth grade in the same building but separate areas. They normally function by space and delivery of services. Our high school wasn't purposed for that but the discussion focuses on F-wing. An educational rationale should be decided first and we would have to research information. She would not like to separate seventh and eighth graders.

Dr. Weidenhamer said that among costs we need to contemplate is when we need to build another school with land available from the town. What do we do when the elementary enrollment goes up?

Dr. Wiedenhamer preferred options B and E as it removed pressure at the elementary level. What would happen if we wanted to hold onto the middle school to use part of it for educational purposes, keep the elementary with grades five and six, have grade seven in a section of the middle school and have the eighth grade at the high school. Mrs. Harriman-Stites asked if the K-5 option would work if we redistricted the entire town for K-5 students.

Dr. Erardi said that piece is still in front of us. There is room at Sandy Hook School but we have moved our preschool there. Redistricting is a year-and-a-half project.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites feels that having a school and police department in one building was not a great plan.

Dr. Erardi said the charge of this committee is to be advisory to the Board. It makes sense that the middle school subcommittee comes back with suggestions and why certain scenarios were eliminated. It sounds like there is growing support for the 8-12 option. Research information can be obtained through CIAC for schools in Connecticut with this option in place.

Dr. Rodrigue feels that if we move to that option a lot of space in the high school would have to be repurposed. We would also need to research the additional costs involved in moving a grade level to the high school.

Dr. Erardi said that for the middle school report at the next meeting there needs to be additional information around the 2018-2019 school year, what is on top and not on top, and the reconfiguration of the 8-12 option.

Mr. Einhorn mentioned that there are some unique needs for eighth graders that are different for ninth graders. This needs careful consideration.

Mrs. Holden thought there might be an impact on sports and clubs in the middle school.

Dr. Erardi said the eighth grade would have their sports programs. They would not be eligible for high school teams.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites asked how feasible it was to put all middle school students in the high school as a school within a school.

Dr. Rodrigue said we would get Mr. Faiella involved to look at spaces at the high school.

Mr. Vouros asked who would work with Dr. Rodrigue and Mr. Faiella to see if the middle school could move to the high school.

Dr. Erardi said the middle school committee should reach out to Dr. Rodrigue and Mr. Faiella.

Mrs. Davila confirmed information needed for the next meeting which included research on the 2018-2019 school year with the K-5, 6-8, 9-12 option without portables at Reed, the top two or three recommendations, and research on the 8-12 option in Connecticut schools through CIAC.

Mr. Moretti began the discussion of the option of not closing a school. There is no empty space in the schools because of repurposing the areas. There are four considerations regarding not closing a school and possibly sharing space with the school district, the town, private use or a combination. We feel private use is most problematic because of security. Regarding educational purposes they looked at the classrooms and the number in a building. Current uses are reading libraries, computer labs, spec. education classrooms, math/science labs, OT/PT, multi-purposes for gifted and intervention.

Dr. Erardi asked for any conversation around looking at the perception for the high school for the next 15 years. The high school has yet to experience a decline but we are projecting decreasing enrollment. This plays into the K-8 option.

Dr. Rodrigue suggested looking at opportunities that exist and the cost involved. We could research different models and look at an alternative school when these students are brought to the high school.

Dr. Erardi asked what happens if no schools close.

Mr. Moretti said we need to know what the middle and high schools need for space and any school district usage in the buildings such as moving the Board of Education offices to one of them. For town usage Mrs. Llodra said there are departments that can utilize space. There can be private usage revenue making opportunities but there a number of negatives.

Mrs. Petersen said for programs being put in place now at the elementary schools the space is there. At the middle school there is just one classroom right now. We have to keep in mind that the transition piece is difficult for students.

Mr. Faiella said that regarding private usage the middle school has space in the C-wing that could be cordoned off.

Dr. Rodrigue has been looking at bringing in other students to transform the after school program by inviting other schools that may have a similar program but on a smaller scale. Other towns may look at our program and pay a fee for their students to attend.

Dr. Erardi said that Mrs. Petersen launched this project which will be a revenue-based program.

Mr. Bienkowski said that he preferred not to deal with staffing costs at this time and would limit the financial information to facility costs.

Dr. Erardi said the May 31 conversation will be on middle school options and will start with a discussion around analytics. June 6 there will be a community forum with a discussion on the facility study.

Submitted by: Kathy June