

# **BUDGET / FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING**

## **MINUTES**

**Tuesday, November 12, 2013**

**Mt. Hope High School**

### **Present**

**Subcommittee: Susan Rancourt, Chair, Marjorie McBride, and Paul Silva**

**School Committee, Administration and Staff: Karen Lynch (5:48 p.m.), John Saviano, Lynn Wainwright (6:05 p.m.), Melinda Thies, Mario Andrade, Pauline Silva, George Simmons, and Walter Burke**

**Susan Rancourt, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.**

### **Application for Grant Funding**

**MOTION: Paul S. made a motion to approve the application for grant funding; seconded by Marj M.**

**DISCUSSION: George S. stated that Walter Burke would like to secure a grant for the drainage issues at Mt. Hope High School. Walter B. stated that DEM is running three grant opportunities of**

**\$400,000 (50/50 matching); \$150,000 (75/75 matching) and \$100,000 (90/10 matching). Walter B. said that the \$100,000 grant is primarily for passive or historic sites and would not necessarily be a fit for this project. He is proposing the grant for \$400,000 where the DEM would provide \$200,000 and the School Committee would match with \$200,000. Melinda T. and Walter B. recalled that the District will need to front-load the full \$400,000 and then wait for reimbursement of the \$200,000. The due date for applying for the grant is November 15th. Walter B. stated that this grant is a Parks and Recreation Grant and can only be applied for by the Town, not the School Department. Walter B. commented that he is willing to donate his time to write the grant. He then showed a sampling of grants he has written previously and stated that he has received five or six grants in the past.**

**Walter B. commented that the fields at Mt. Hope High School are virtually unplayable due to water issues which have also caused structural damage to some buildings. He said that this grant opportunity would save the School Committee money and provide better quality fields for the students and prevent future structural damage. Walter B. stated the plan that the District paid to have drawn up in 2010 to address the drainage issues was reviewed by Save the Bay who suggested a little bit of tweaking.**

**He commented that the drainage project would need to be done one section at a time; starting logically at the top of the property at the**

Lacrosse Fields. Marj M. added that water management must be addressed first. Walter B. agreed that the water situation and drainage are the most important aspects of this project and the initial work must begin where the water enters the property. He added that the work would continue as far as the dollars would take and then as each section is completed, another grant would be applied for in order to move forward until it's completion at Chestnut Street. Walter B. emphasized that each section of work must be connected to the other. Marj M. asked if the building structural issues can be taken care of with this grant as it is a result of the water issues. Walter B. responded the grant cannot be used for any school building work. He said the grant may be able to cover needs "around the building". Walter B. stated that the only way to complete this project would be a partnership between the Town and the School Committee.

Paul S. asked if another grant were to be obtained by the School Committee in tandem with the proposed grant, could that money be used toward the matching funds. Walter B. stated that indeed could be done.

Walter B. reiterated that the grant is due next week. He is suggesting taking the current drainage proposal plans that were drawn up in 2010 and having George Gifford colorize the design and enlarge to present to the DEM.

George S. asked what tweaking needs to be done to the 2010 plans.

Walter B. responded that through the grant there will be dollars to consult with an engineering group. He would like to see the School Department work with the engineering group to come up with the best way to implement the phases of the project. Walter B. stated that this meeting would need to take place before start of the project. Walter B. said that he likes Par Engineering. Melinda T. asked if the \$65,000 invested in the 2010 plan could be used toward part of the cost of the matching \$200,000. Walter B. replied that it could not. Paul S. commented that it wouldn't hurt to ask.

Walter B. commented that typically a School Department would not be considered for a grant like this, but because the deed for the property is held by the Town of Bristol, the District would be eligible.

Marj M. brought up the issue of not getting housing aid if grant money is used. Walter B. responded that this would be a Town project administered by himself in partnership with the School Committee to complete the work. Paul S. added that the District would be receiving \$400,000 worth of work and only spending \$200,000 which is equivalent to 50% of the housing aid. Pauline S. stated that the Asset Protection Plan approved by RIDE is for \$10 million which includes \$1.8 million for the fields. She added that RIDE put housing aid on hold, but would give 76%. Marj M. commented that the 2010 plans were already approved by RIDE even though housing aid was put on hold for this project. Pauline S. stated that the Asset Protection Plan expires June 30, 2018 and the

**moratorium expires June 30, 2014.**

**Karen L. asked if RIDE would work with us especially since there are structural issues. Pauline S. responded that the charge from RIDE is for those issues that need immediate attention. She added that SMMA reported to RIDE what needs to be addressed. RIDE is fully aware that the School Committee will come back to ask that these issues be addressed once the moratorium is lifted. The question was asked whether the District would have to re-apply through RIDE since the work is already approved by them.**

**Walter B. stated that even though the grant is due soon, the project wouldn't begin until August or September of 2014. He added he would have two years to complete the project. Walter B. said once the project is completed, a request for reimbursement will be made.**

**Walter B. stated that he will not write the grant unless he has a secure commitment from the School Committee to move forward.**

**Paul S. asked if since the grant dollars are awarded to the Town, and the School Committee will be spending their own dollars whether that is why it isn't matched. He then asked if the School Committee could still ask for reimbursement. Paul S. then asked if the \$150,000 DEM grant could be requested.**

**Walter B. gave a break down of the costs for the project:**

- **\$1.2 million for the 2010 design**
- **\$2.4 million if turf is used for all practice fields**
- **\$1.8 million for irrigation and natural grass**

**Walter B. stated that he wants to look into the practicality environmentally of using turf and whether it would be better or not.**

**Susan R. asked George S. for his thoughts on the grant proposal. George S. responded that he is inclined to keep his thoughts to himself at this time. He stated he can see both sides by looking long-term at the state funding formula, but he also said he sees the opportunity this grant provides.**

**Melinda T. commented that the School Committee will be meeting with the Joint Finance Committee and the importance of weighing both sides in terms of potential dollars to be received and pursuing a project that has been planned for years. She added that the School Committee's message tomorrow night will be quite different.**

**Pauline S. asked if this grant opportunity would present itself in the future. Walter B. responded that these grants only come up every two or three years which is why he is strongly promoting it.**

**Marj M. commented that public perception of the District is that we are the "rich kid on the block". She went on to say that there is good reason the District has the money where they do.**

**Susan R. commented what a great opportunity grants are when they come along.**

**Paul S. commented that the School Committee spent \$65,000 to have the plans drawn up for this project four years ago. He would rather publicly announce he wants to apply for assistance in order to secure the structure, not just the field drainage issues. He added that otherwise, the \$65,000 was spent for nothing.**

**Lynn W. asked if anyone will be able to use these fields. Walter B. responded that yes, anyone can use the fields whether it be from the Town of Bristol or any member of the Bristol Warren School Department.**

**Hearing no further discussion, Susan R. asked for a final vote which was unanimous to move forward with the application for grant funding for drainage issues at Mt. Hope High School.**

**Adjournment:**

**MOTION: At 6:30 p.m. Paul S. made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Marj M. seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**kd**