

Minutes
Long Term Facilities Planning Committee Meeting
September 9, 2013

Superintendent D'Agostino called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm with the following in attendance.

Richard D'Agostino	Mark Carruolo	Mary Townsend
Dennis Mullen	Catherine Bonang	*David Testa
Robert Bushell	Ed Racca	Nancy Plumb
Amie Galipeau	Jacqueline Harris-Connor	Patti Nazareth
William McCaffrey	Lynn Dambruch	Stephanie Van Patten

*Absent

Action Item:

Approval of Minutes:

Motion 2013-19: Moved by Mark Carruolo, seconded by Cathy Bonang, to approve the August 29, 2013 minutes.

Motion passes (14-0)

Superintendent Remarks:

Dr. D'Agostino commented on the Providence Journal article regarding the new Claiborne Pell Elementary School in Newport, which Stephanie Van Patten and other committee members emailed him about. He said the article did not mention that the Newport School Department (NSD) received a \$30 million bond reimbursement, which is 70% of the total cost of the new school facility and, therefore, the cost to the City of Newport was \$9 million for this state of the art school building. They (NSD) received two thirds of the monies back due to the obligation of reimbursement for free and reduced lunches...Newport has 68% of the school population receiving free and reduced lunch. In comparison, WPS has a 38% population receiving free and reduced lunch. The superintendent pointed out that Newport elementary schools host about 800 students, whereas Warwick's Pre-K through 6 population is about 5,021 and to accommodate enrollment we would need a minimum of 6 schools...the City of Warwick could not support that level of debt. By developing our existing schools, he stated, we can actually attract new taxpayers into the City.

New Business:

Mr. Mullen distributed a packet of material to include the following information for all junior and senior high schools:

1. Schedule
2. Room Utilization Chart
3. Course Detail Report
4. Empty Room Chart

Mr. Mullen talked the Committee through each report using Veterans HS data as the example.

The Course Schedule summary detailed course sections, total seats, average seats, open seats, requests scheduled, percent scheduled and conflicts. The Room Utilization chart detailed Room #'s... the periods they are being utilized...what classes are being taught by which teacher, and the periods these rooms remain empty. The Course Detail Report shows every course #, seating limit, total number of students in that course (including weighted), number of special education students and the remaining number available to that course. The Empty Room Chart depicts the Room #'s, the class periods and an "E" assigned to them when the room is empty. He stated, even if a teacher uses that room to "prep" during their administrative period, it is still considered an empty room because there are no students in class.

Mr. Mullen told the committee to take this data home and study it. Email him with any questions and he will respond, via email, as soon as possible. He suggested they look at the "core" subjects as those depict the largest number of students because they are required subjects. Mr. Racca asked if all the schools data is the same. Mr. Mullen said they are very similar. Mrs. Plumb asked if the same courses are offered at all 3 high schools. Mr. Mullen said that is a yes and no answer. The courses offered depends on what students register for. Mr. Bushell said that over the years they (administrators) have reduced the number of different courses offered in the schools. Mr. Racca asked if any classrooms in the secondary schools remain empty throughout the day. Mr. Mullen said the schools have utilized some of those rooms in various ways....for example, as conference rooms, teacher rooms, department conference rooms. Mrs. Van Patten inquired if there is one high school over another which has more available capacity. Mr. Mullen responded that all three are pretty much on par.

Stephanie Van Patten asked what other factors should this committee take into consideration for consolidating schools. The Superintendent said to look at the size of the school's population, the location, areas of growth in the city and what is the best and most cost effective transportation routes. Cathy Bonang said this committee needs to take into consideration the total facility....fields, parking, etc. Dr. D'Agostino said ideally it is fitting three schools into two. The numbers and building's capacity ideally support this. Mr. Bushell said that closing a secondary school is "more global" than closing an elementary school. This committee, he stated, should consider cost avoidance of fire code upgrades, electrical and plumbing improvements, etc. Mrs. Plumb said in perusing this data, it looks like there is a lot of available seats. Mrs. Van Patten asked if the committee is starting with senior and then junior high schools. Dr. D'Agostino said the focus, right now, is on high schools. The empty high school building can be totally repurposed for available housing of 2 junior high schools.

At the last meeting the committee requested a closure scenario. Dr. D'Agostino distributed a scenario that he and central administrators put together of a high school consolidation plan. This plan, to include three phases from 2013 through September 2015, is as follows:

High School Consolidation Plan

1. Phase I – Date: TBA – Planning Stage

- Identification of students to be consolidated
- Identification of teachers to be consolidated
- Identification of administrators to be consolidated
- Identification of support staff to be consolidated
- Assignment of teachers to rooms
- Identify furniture, equipment, technology needs
- Transfer of teacher classroom equipment, etc.
- Student/teacher schedules developed
- Teacher orientation
- Student orientation
- Bus routes established/students notified
- Parent/student orientations/informational meeting

2. Phase 2 – Date: September 2014

- All students will be transferred to their receiving school (grades 9-12)
- Tracking of students will be monitored by both building administrators and central administration, as well as superintendent and follow through reporting to school committee
- Students in grades 10-12...option of receiving home school diploma or the new receiving school's diploma
- During SY 2014-2015, consolidated sending high school will undergo major renovation in preparation of repurposing plans to house junior high school students.
- Updates to the building will focus on the following areas:
 - Building mechanics – heat, electricity, air conditioning, plumbing, sewers, parking, etc.
 - Upgrades to gym, cafeteria, kitchen and music rooms, art classes, technology classes, auditorium
 - Upgrade technology that is consistent with 21st century technology standards
 - Cosmetics...new paint, floors, doors, etc.
 - Security...review and update as needed
- Repeat of Phase 1 planning stage with focus on junior high school students

3. Phase 3 – Date: September 2015

- All junior high students at Aldrich and Gorton transfers to rededicated high school (grades 7 & 8)
- Transferring students will be monitored by both building administrators, central administrators, as well as superintendent with follow through reporting to school committee

The superintendent said that central administrator's first choice is to include all students. "Rip off the bandaid" as opposed to "splintering" the kids. The longer term goal to close 2 junior high schools is to move those students into the closed high school after a major renovation is complete. Update the building mechanics, upgrades to gym, cafeteria, auditorium. Upgrade of security and new paint, floors, doors, etc. Upgrade technology which is consistent with 21st century standards. The incoming students would be attending a "new" state of the art facility that is clean, bright and welcoming.

Mrs. Van Patten asked if kids would be moved into Winman....maybe balancing the population out. Dr. D'Agostino said nothing is written in concrete. This could be looked at. Mrs. Plumb said that combining Aldrich and Gorton there would be a total number of students of approximately 900 where Winman would be about 520. It is important to remember, the superintendent stated, that Winman was built for grades 7, 8 and 9 which provides flexibility for long term planning. Once we have established direction, he stated, then we can focus on junior high school configuration, a possible middle school model and look at all day kindergarten.

Mr. Mullen reminded the committee to look at the room utilization data and the chart indicating empty rooms. He told the committee that he asked all the principals about the data relating to their schools and each principal told him that is what their school looks like. He reminded the Committee to email him or Patti MacDonald any questions and he would get back to them as soon as possible.

Mrs. Harris-Connors and committee members talked about what would happen to those kids (JHS) when split between 2 high schools. Mr. Racca asked about the elementary students going into junior high schools...would they then go to the high school together? If elementary schools were shifted to a dedicated high school, would it then be more equal? Dr. D'Agostino said you don't want to "handcuff" yourself....kids tend to be resilient. The school's names would remain the same...example: Pilgrim High School would become Pilgrim Junior High School...a feeling of familiarity will exist. Mrs. Harris-Connors and the committee as a whole agreed that it would "iron itself out" within the first year. Dr. D'Agostino said that graduating students could choose a "symbolic" diploma which would have their original school's name or choose the name of the current school.

Nancy Plumb suggested committee members have the opportunity to visit senior high schools and look at each facility. Dr. D'Agostino said he would arrange for committee members to tour each high school and ask the principal to be in attendance for any questions they may have. It was agreed that on September 24th, 4:00 p.m., committee members who wish to tour Veterans High School will meet in the front foyer at the school.

Motion 2013-20: moved by Dennis Mullen, seconded by Robert Bushell to adjourn.

Motion passes (14-0)

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm