

Minutes  
Long Term Facilities Planning Committee Meeting  
October 17, 2013

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

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

\* Arrived at 4:10 pm

**Action Item:**

**Approval of Minutes:**

**Motion 2013-26:** Moved by Amie Galipeau, seconded by Cathy Bonang, to approve the October 9, 2013 minutes.

Motion passes (13-0)

**Superintendent Remarks:**

Superintendent D'Agostino asked Mr. Mullen if he had received any questions, since the last meeting, from committee members. Mr. Mullen said he did not. Dr. D'Agostino asked the committee if, upon all the data received and reviewed to date, they were in agreement that three high schools could fit into two.

**Motion 2013-27:** Moved by Mr. Racca, seconded by Ms. Galipeau, that three high schools can fit into two.

Motion passes (14-0)

Superintendent D'Agostino said the next step for this committee is to decide which high school to consolidate. Upon a request by the committee from the last meeting, Mr. Mullen distributed an October 1 enrollment report, grades 9 – 12, from 1998 through 2013 for the three high schools. He brought to the committee's attention that the graphs show when the schools peaked and the years which they began to decline. (Enrollment Report attached.)

The difference from 1998-2013 is as follows:

Veterans is minus 281

Pilgrim is minus 257

Toll Gate is minus 252

The total difference is a minus of 790

Mr. Bushell said that district-wide, K-12, 1998-2013 there is a negative of 2,463 and a declining number that is expected to continue. Dr. D'Agostino said that October 1, 2012 the district had an enrollment of 9,615. October 17, 2013 this district has an enrollment of 9,313.....a loss of 302 students from last year.

Dr. D'Agostino introduced Stephen O'Haire, Transportation Supervisor, to present scenarios as to what transportation would look like relating to the possible closing of secondary buildings. Mr. O'Haire passed out a spreadsheet which highlighted regular and special education busing routes as a means of transporting Pilgrim students to Veterans and Toll Gate and transporting Veterans students to Pilgrim and Toll Gate. The spreadsheet included busing costs if transporting Aldrich and Gorton junior high school students to two high schools. (Mr. O'Haire's spreadsheet is attached.) Mr. O'Haire said he looked at the feeder school system based on this year's 8<sup>th</sup> graders becoming next year's 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. He stated that Pilgrim has 6 elementary feeder schools and he would suggest that Norwood and Holliman students go to Toll Gate and the other 4 schools to Veterans. Veterans has 5 elementary feeder schools, with Lippitt and Park to go to Toll Gate. He used 60 as an average routed on a high school bus. He divided special education students based on their address and added 1 special education bus "as a precaution;" stating that he does not see special education busing having a huge impact to the budget.

- To close Pilgrim he would need an additional 11 buses for regular education students and 1 additional bus for special education students. Total busing cost increase, for Pilgrim, is \$835,000.
- To close Veterans, he would need an additional 9 regular education buses and 1 special education bus for a total increase of \$699,000.
- To close Aldrich and Gorton, based on a high school closing (Pilgrim and/or Veterans), 3 additional regular education buses and 1 additional special education bus would be needed. Total cost of \$289,000. \*Noted: If a high school is not closed, previous communications of needing 6 additional buses if Aldrich is closed and 7 additional buses needed if Gorton is closed.

Dr. D'Agostino said there is a possibility to provide extra bussing for transporting more younger students because of additional bus routes which would be added. Extra buses should cut down on delays as well. Mr. O'Haire pointed out that timeframe adjustments would be necessary.

Stephanie Van Patten asked about students who attend Veterans and go to the Vocational Technical school....would we be saving money? How many students from Pilgrim and Veterans go to the Career Center? Steve O'Haire said that it would not be a material savings but rather reduce the cost of fuel. We (WPS) are charged a flat fee @ 100 miles a day per bus. Amie Galipeau asked, what about if we split the consolidation population numbers more evenly? Steve said he would have to figure out what makes more sense. Stephanie Van Patten asked, will we try to keep the feeder schools the same? Dr. D'Agostino said we don't want to redistrict the lines. He said that Church Avenue separates Gorton from Aldrich. He stated, it would be good if we can have the same buses pick up all the kids, or a "cluster" of kids. Mr. Bushell said that upon closing the elementary schools they promised parents a 5

year “grace period.” Mr. Racca said the last closed school was John Greene and it will be approximately 6 years before it would affect those areas again.

Mr. Ferrucci reported to the committee on the fiscal impact of consolidating secondary school buildings. He said he “chunked” it into categories. Mr. Ferrucci disseminated a memorandum which highlighted annual building operating costs, transportation cost considerations, staffing considerations, other savings (extra-curricular and interscholastic activities, reduction of food service deficit), and avoided costs. Mr. Ferrucci said that because of close similarities between the buildings being considered for consolidation, a specific building closed has little fiscal impact over the closure of another. (Mr. Ferrucci’s memo is attached to the minutes.)

Mr. Ferrucci said the building operating cost data was initially provided to the committee in January 2013 by Mr. Laplante, Director of Buildings and Grounds. Mr. Ferrucci said that he has reviewed FY2013 year-end expenses for this category and all seemed fairly accurate thus was continuing to present this as the correct budgeted amounts. Mr. Ferrucci said this category of costs covers things such as gas, oil, electric, security and other building specific costs not related to student use. Current annual building operating costs:

- Aldrich - \$257,760
- Gorton - \$212,274
- Pilgrim - \$376,845
- Veterans - \$410,574
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Mr. Ferrucci spoke about transportation costs by referring to Mr. O’Haire’s presentation and included a summary of his cost estimates within the fiscal impact report.

Mr. Ferrucci talked about the savings pertaining to staffing considerations. He pointed out that due to similarities in staffing patterns, again no notable difference impacting projected staff cost savings when comparing consolidation of high schools and/or junior high schools. He stated that due to contract constraints, the total reduction in staff is limited (if both options are attempted in one year).

- Close a senior high school - \$2,928,000
- Close a junior high school - \$1,685,000

\*Please refer to Mr. Ferrucci’s attached memorandum for a complete breakdown of reduction figures, to include certified staff members (teachers and administrators salary & fringe benefits) and non-certified staff members (clerks, secretaries, custodians salary and fringe benefits). Mr. Ferrucci pointed out that there may be continued staff reduction in the future either due to further consolidation within the schools and/or due to the continuation of student enrollment decline.

Mr. Ferrucci then spoke about Other Potential Savings:

Close a high school:

- Extra-curricular and interscholastic activities - \$300,000
- High School -Reduction of food service deficit - \$30,000

Close a junior high school:

- Reduction of food service deficit -\$30,000

Mr. Ferrucci told the committee that with the previous food service provider, SODEXO, we ran a deficit of \$220,000, which we (WPS) had to subsidize. With the new company, Aramark, he projects a deficit of \$120,000. Mr. Ferrucci noted that he anticipates cost reductions through consolidating locations to be \$30,000 per location closed. If two schools are ultimately closed, the schools operating budget would have \$60,000 more because the school lunch program would not need the subsidy.

Avoided Costs:

With the closing of a building, the future cost to maintain or repair that building goes away. He stated that two of the four schools (Pilgrim and Veterans), under consideration for consolidation, are compliant with current fire codes. Mr. Ferrucci provided summary capital project budgets per building which are in addition to the fire code work required. He stated that the source of these budget estimates are from previous capital studies presented to the committee. A summary of all the projected bonding cost was noted.

Mr. Ferrucci included an attached Summary of Cost Savings based on the potential consolidation of two high schools and utilizing the vacated building to house two junior high schools. (For a complete breakdown of these figures please see attachment to his email.)

- Pilgrim High School as a junior high school – projected savings from current operating budget - \$4,319,034
- Veterans High School as a junior high school – projected savings from current operating budget - \$4,455,034
- Annual Operating Cost Avoidance for up to 20 years (fire code bonding (\$2,209,554) and other capital improvements bonding (\$7,805,157), total bonding not needed (\$10,014,711.) This avoided bonding means \$801,120 will not have to be added to the school operating budget in the future for these building related concerns.

Mr. Ferrucci closed by stating, we could have an opportunity to redeploy these resources into the remaining buildings to better enhance what we will have available for the future.

Mr. Mullen calculated the savings of bonded cost to be \$16 million over 20 years.

Mr. Racca asked about food service and which schools have kitchens to prepare lunches. Dr. D'Agostino said Pilgrim and Winman have central kitchens and are the primary distributors to other schools. Mrs. Plumb asked about the capacity percent going to each school building. Dr. D'Agostino said he would like to look closer at a 40/60 or 45/55% split. Mr. Racca asked if it was possible to "equalize" distribution. Dr. D'Agostino said factors of transportation will play a huge roll....where can and cannot buses go....we have many cul de sacs and dead end streets where buses just can't turn around. Stephanie Van Patten expressed her concern of changes for feeder schools and Mr. Testa said the committee needs to consider geographic disruption. Also, he stated, consider the impact on the special education population if Pilgrim was closed and the fact that it has a central kitchen. Dr. D'Agostino said logistics of the city and the expressway, transportation for students to and from the Career Center, as well as the special education population need to be taken into consideration. He considers Pilgrim in the North of the City and Toll Gate in the South...both with immediate highway access. Veterans is located centrally to both Toll Gate and Pilgrim. Ms. Van Patten said she thinks Pilgrim needs the most help, appeared to be the dirtiest of the three high schools. Mrs. Galipeau said "something in the air" bothered her breathing at Pilgrim. Dr. D'Agostino said all three high schools have been neglected and need attention. Overall, the auditorium at Pilgrim was much cleaner than at Veterans. Veterans auditorium needs to be completed refurbished, from ceiling, floor and seats. The roof needs repair. The elevator at Veterans is the only electric elevator in the state....it is 40-50 years old. It will, he said, take close to a year to fix and repair Veterans. Mr. Racca pointed out that Pilgrim has a poor drainage problem and sometimes the fields flood. Dr. D'Agostino said that Pilgrim is mostly cosmetic....painting and cleaning. Jackie Harris-Connor said there needs to be more oversight (custodial)... it is "disturbing" to see the condition of these buildings....how have they been allowed to become so rundown over the years? Dr. D'Agostino said you ask the same question we all are asking....we have a lot of work to do in all our schools. We have neglected schools because we (the district) have been carrying too many schools. David Testa said the issues at the high schools, cosmetic and guts are reflected in the capital improvement budget....we need to look at the structural needs and what makes the best sense for the age of kids going into a building. Veterans is a square building, more compacted for junior high school students to navigate. Jackie Harris-Connor said she thought the classrooms at Pilgrim were larger. Dennis Mullen said it really just depends on what rooms you go in to. David Laplante said they are about the same on average. Dr. D'Agostino pointed out that 6 to 8 special needs rooms have been air conditioned at Pilgrim High School for the ESY program. Veterans High School, he stated, needs more structural work to be done. Nancy Plumb asked the superintendent if he thought we can get everything done to make it (a junior high school) up and running. We have \$4 million to invest....I want, he stated, a building to be in excellent shape, wireless, clean, freshly painted, new lights and auditorium, I want this to "feel like a new school." Mr. Racca asked about closing a high school, renovating and then closing another school the second year. It was the consensus of the committee not to delay.

Ms. Van Patten asked about Vocational Technical students possibly having Toll Gate as their home school and inquired what is the current student enrollment from each high school into the Career Center. Dr. D'Agostino said that Mr. McCaffrey and administration are looking to receive additional vocational programs into Warwick and some of these programs, down the line, may be housed at the high school. (Currently, Marine Trades is housed at Veterans and Child Development at Pilgrim)

Dr. D'Agostino asked the committee if they would like to review the data and return next week to make a choice or were they ready to make a motion today. The committee consensus was to return next week. Dr. D'Agostino said if any member has a question to please contact him or Mr. Mullen, through email or calling the office, and they will answer them immediately. It was the consensus of the committee that the rubrics be used for their own purpose and/or discussion only.

The committee agreed to meet on Wednesday, October 23, 2013, 4:00 pm.

**Motion 2013-27:** moved by Amie Galipeau, seconded by David Testa to adjourn.

Motion passes (14-0)

Adjourned at 5:20 pm