

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING
CONTINUED DISCUSSION ON FACILITY OPTIONS FOR ADAMS MIDDLE
SCHOOL AND GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL
MONDAY, AUGUST 11, 2008
GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY, GUILFORD, CT**

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Bill Bloss called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. Board members present were Bill Bloss, Barbara Dudley, Linda Sanacora, Keith Bishop, Kathleen Nolan, Mary Beeman and Ted Zuse.

Administrators present were Tom Forcella and Anne Keene.

2. Continued Discussion on Facility Options for Adams Middle School and Guilford High School

Community Task Force on School Facilities Co-Chairs Mary Jo Kestner and Mauro Rubbo presented the Task Force recommendations for Adams and GHS to the Board.

Ms. Kestner and Mr. Rubbo stated that it is the opinion of the task force that the facilities at Elisabeth Adams Middle School and Guilford High School are inadequate and in need of immediate attention. Prior to studying Adams and the high school in depth, the Task Force studied the condition of the remaining district facilities which include the four elementary schools and Baldwin Middle School and found them to be in generally good condition with the exception of a few issues. They noted that a properly funded, long range facility maintenance plan is critical to the preservation of the infrastructure and will also serve to defer future capital improvement projects. Further, it is the opinion of the Task Force that Restricted Scope improvements to Adams and GHS are not prudent long term solutions to the facility shortcomings.

Ms. Kestner and Mr. Rubbo continued by stating that given the information gathered to date, especially the educational needs of the district, the rate of escalation in energy costs and construction costs, and the responsibility of the town to provide long term stewardship of its facilities, the Task Force recommends the construction of two new facilities. They further recognize that two construction projects of this scale may not be practical for the town to undertake simultaneously, and that the most pressing health and safety concerns at Adams must be addressed without delay.

The CTFSF recommended the Board of Education proceed with three concurrent actions to address pressing facility needs:

1. Immediate action to address the urgent health and safety concerns at Elisabeth Adams Middle School to be included in the 2009 budget cycle.
2. The immediate assembly of a middle school building committee to resolve the outstanding issues related to a new 7-8 grade facility at Baldwin.

3. To proceed promptly with design and construction of a new high school adjacent to the existing facility on New England Road. The task force has concluded that this site is ideal for the existing high school program.

Dr. Forcella addressed the impact of facility conditions on learning including health and safety issues and the importance of appropriate space to support program needs. He stated that he fully supports the recommendations made by the Task Force.

Mrs. Nolan asked if the proposed actions to address the health and safety issues at Adams would be more extensive than the work currently being completed at the school. Mr. Rubbo responded that the actions needed to address all of the health and safety issues would be more extensive.

Mrs. Dudley stated that the same issues that the town faced four years ago regarding building a 7-8 middle school at the Baldwin site still exist. Mrs. Kestner responded that a more focused effort will be needed to determine the uses for Adams if it is no longer to be used as a school. Mr. Rubbo noted that more research will be needed to address the access issues to the Baldwin site including the addition of a new road.

Mr. Zuse asked if the existing GHS could be used as a middle school. Mr. Rubbo responded that it could but it has been determined that there is not enough room on the existing GHS site for two schools and there does not appear to be land available in town to locate a new high school.

Mr. Bishop posed the question that if the current high school has been deemed inappropriate for use as a high school, why would it be considered for use as a middle school?

Mr. Zuse questioned why the costs for the renovate like new options are so close to the costs to build new schools. Conversation about LEED certification and the unknown expenses that might be incurred while renovating the older buildings took place between the Board and the Task Force chairs.

Mr. Rubbo summarized the general message heard by the audience at a July presentation made by Sightlines to the Task Force. He noted that one of the main points made by the facility and environmental management firm was that renovated buildings will deteriorate more quickly than new buildings.

Chairman Bloss stated that the Board of Education will hold a special meeting on September 15 at 7 p.m. to take action on their facility recommendations to the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen.

Chairman Bloss opened the meeting up to the public for comments.

Ray Luden stated that the town must collectively decide on the future of the school facilities and challenged the Board of Education to work closely with the other Boards and Commissions.

Chris Moore, member of the Guilford PACT read the mission of the group of 250 community members and referenced their position paper presented to the Board of Education. He noted that the mission is to strive for understanding and non-partisan advocacy regarding political issues that affect our educational system by reaching out to citizens and organizations and to seek 100% voter participation from those who are allies in issues that affect education and the schools. Mr. Moore urged all town leaders to come together to address the facility needs at the schools.

Joe Petrowski stated that it is time to spend money on both schools and urged the Board to act properly and without reservation.

Lisa Johnson stated that the members of Guilford PACT want two new schools. She noted that, based on escalating costs for construction and materials it might not be prudent to wait to build a new Adams suggesting that the costs may double.

Sid Gale noted that the Task Force presented recommendations that they believe have the ability to meet voter approval.

Karen Goldberg stated that, as a pediatrician, she is concerned about the impact the condition of Adams may have on the health of students and staff. She expressed concern about the liability of the Town regarding these potential health issues. She stated that she believes that all staff and students should be moved out of the basement and that air-conditioning and proper ventilation be installed immediately.

Mrs. Sanacora asked what "immediate" means regarding the recommendation to address the immediate health and safety issues at Adams.

Dr. Forcella explained that in addition to addressing all of the drainage and water issues, that air conditioners could be placed in the building, particularly in those sections of the older portion of the building where the heat builds up.

Mr. Bishop reviewed the four year history of the Task Force noting the extensive work done by the members. He thanked the Task Force members for their commitment to GPS and urged the Board to be open minded as they continue the process of developing their final recommendations on the school facilities.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Beeman and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Lorri Hahn
Clerk to the Board of Education