

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 28, 2011
GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY, GUILFORD, CT**

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Bill Bloss called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. Board members present were, Keith Bishop, Mary Beeman, Bill Bloss, Alan Meyers, Chris Moore, Barbara Dudley, Susan Renner, John Ireland and Ted Zuse. Administrators present were Tom Forcella, Anne Keene, and Rick Misenti.

Chairman Bloss stated that the Board will not limit the time that speakers may address the Board but asked that they be considerate. He stated that the Board is currently considering the facility options that have been reviewed by the Options Review Committee to address the facility needs of the high school and will hold a special meeting on April 6 to select an option to recommend to the Board of Selectman for a June referendum. Chairman Bloss stated that the decision is ultimately in the hands of the voters.

2. Presentation - Proposed Facility Options for Guilford High School

Mr. Misenti addressed the Board and the public stating that there are many deficiencies in the high school facility including poor air quality, protruding nails, dark and crowded hallways, insufficient science labs, cold air temperatures and a cafeteria that segregates students by its design. He noted that despite the many physical problems with the school, students' academic performance continues to excel. The principal also stressed that the current school building does not support the district and superintendent's goals of collaborative learning and Professional Learning Communities.

Michael Ayles, Chairman of the Board of Education Options Review Committee addressed the Board and the public stating that the high school can no longer function effectively as an educational facility. Mr. Ayles presented slides reviewing the members of the committee and a history of past studies and recommendations regarding the high school and middle school facilities. He noted that it was important to consider a new high school as all potential option must be considered. He also stated the importance of reaching a decision prior to June 30, 2011 to be able to receive current State reimbursement levels for school construction projects which are expected to decrease after this date.

Ryszard Szczypek of Tai Soo Kim Partners presented a slide presentation to explain the four facility options that the Board of Education is considering based on the recommendations from the Options Review Committee. Mr. Szczypek began his presentation with a quote from the 2010 NEASC report which stated that Guilford High School's "physical plant is not capable of meeting the many and diverse needs of students..."

Mr. Szczypek continued his presentation with an overview of the internal and external deficiencies of the high school including overcrowding, minimal daylight, insufficient and outdated classroom spaces, energy inefficient wall and window construction, and deteriorating structures. He provided an analysis of the program space needed at the high school based on the Educational Specifications, supplied a score sheet of rankings of the original seven facility options presented to the Options Review Committee (ORC) and then presented the four options the ORC determined to be the best to present to the Board of Education for consideration.

Mr. Szczypek presented the Baseline Option, the Renovate-Like-New Option, the Renovate-Like-New + Replacement Option and New Construction Option. He compared the square footage required and proposed with each option based on the Educational Specifications. The Baseline and Renovate-Like-

MINUTES – GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Monday, March 28, 2011

New Options do not meet the 207,907 SF requirement as no new space is added. Both of the other two options meet the requirements.

Mr. Szczypek also reviewed a history of fuel expenses and provided a projection of fuel expenses with each proposed option noting savings over the existing facility with each option.

Mr. Szczypek then presented projected costs for each option including gross projected costs, estimated state reimbursement, net cost to town and future repairs and maintenance. The breakdown for each proposed option is as follows:

Baseline:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Gross Project Costs: | \$37,428,900 |
| Estimated State Reimbursement 8%: | (\$2,994,312) |
| Net Cost to Town: | \$34,434,588 |

Future Repairs and Maintenance: \$32,581,019

Renovate-Like-New:

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Gross Project Costs: | \$67,240,300 |
| Estimated State Reimbursement 30%: | (\$20,172,090) |
| Net Cost to Town: | \$47,068,210 |

Future Repairs and Maintenance: \$7,365,600

Renovate-Like-New and Replacement:

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Gross Project Costs: | \$76,658,340 |
| Estimated State Reimbursement 28%: | (\$21,644,644) |
| Net Cost to Town: | \$55,013,696 |

Future Repairs and Maintenance: \$4,255,596

New Construction:

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Gross Project Costs: | \$87,970,800 |
| Estimated State Reimbursement 29%: | (\$25,560,881) |
| Net Cost to Town: | \$62,409,919 |

Also included, but not added into the projected costs, were the following additional options for all but the Baseline Option:

Geothermal Wells: \$1.5mm, Cogeneration: \$1.5mm, Photovoltaic Panels: \$1.2mm, Emergency Shelter: \$500,000, Solar Hot Water: \$250,000.

Mr. Ayles concluded the presentation with information about current and future dept service explaining that projections include debt service for all previously completed and authorized project spending, requirements for FY 2011-12 proposed Town and School bonding projects, excludes any other new capital spending, and excludes projections in Grand List change over the period.

Mr. Ayles stated that assumptions about the GHS project costs are that the Town's share is based on the State's reimbursement rate of 30% if submitted by June 30, 2011; financing during construction period would be carried out through the issuance of 3 Bond Anticipation Notes at short-term interest rates; bonding would take place at the end of FY 2015 with first debt service payment to start in FY 2015-16;

MINUTES – GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Monday, March 28, 2011

interest rate would be based on 4% average yield, 30 year bonding term; and bonding would be structured with level annual principal payments resulting in declining debt service for the term of the bond.

Comparisons of taxpayer cost for the four proposed options through 2026 as provided by the Town of Guilford based on a house with an assessed value of \$350,000 were presented. Mr. Ayles noted that there would be no impact on the taxpayer until 2016. He stated that the Town projects that the highest tax impact for the first three options would be in year 2019 for the first three options at \$238, \$326 and \$379 respectively and in year 2022 for New Construction at a cost of \$429 to the average taxpayer.

Mr. Ayles concluded his presentation by showing a map of major high school projects in CT and New Haven County since 1990 noting that Guilford and Wolcott are the only two town in the county that have not had major projects during this time period.

3. Public Forum

Chairman Bloss then invited the public to speak.

Jennifer Milano identified herself as a member of the Board of Education's Options Review Committee. She stated that the committee had gone through a thorough and thoughtful review process and that the options have been reviewed by four independent estimators. She reminded the public that State reimbursement will drop after June 30, 2011.

Ms. Milano stated that she believes that just renovating is not a responsible option. She stated her support for a new high school because it will meet all of the needs faster. She stated that it will cost less now to build a new school due to the lower construction costs.

She stated that the "no" vote last June was only by a margin of 300 votes and the turnout was very low. She urged the Board to let the voters decide.

Barry Felson requested that the impact on the taxpayer of the Baseline Maintenance option be shown over 30 years and not just the initial expenditures since there will be significant additional costs over this time frame with this option.

Mr. Felson questioned the 20% contingency on new construction. Mr. Szczypek stated that this is an appropriate level as there are still uncertainties at this stage. This percentage was also agreed on by all independent estimators.

Chris Gottschalk stated that he was in shock after touring Guilford High School and recognizing the high performance of the students that attend the school. He questioned if what is being proposed is enough to address the future needs.

Chairman Bloss stated that the Town demographic study projects that the population will remain stable and the Board is confident that the proposed options will address future needs.

Mr. Szczypek confirmed that the Renovate-Like-New + Replace and the New Construction options are based on the Educational Specifications and must meet State guidelines for space requirements.

David Knapp stated that it is shocking to tour Guilford High School and that he believes that it is a waste of money to only put money into maintenance for the school. He stated that he has seen all schools in Connecticut as a past school textbook salesman. He stated that he believes that Guilford deserves up to date facilities as our neighbor, Madison, has.

MINUTES – GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Monday, March 28, 2011

Gus Kellogg, Guilford High School Class of '87 and past member of the Community Task Force on School Facilities stated that state reimbursement is an important consideration in the process. He also stated the importance of quality of life for students and property values for homeowners. He stated that he was very impressed after a recent visit to Valley Regional High School and appalled at what our students and staff have to work in.

Mr. Kellogg stated that the maintenance only option is irresponsible. He stated that the Renovate-Like-New + Replace is appealing but urged the Board not to sell the taxpayers short. He stated that New Construction is the best option as it will provide energy efficient buildings and will best fit the academic needs. He added that a new building will be a flagship and investment for the community.

Paula Baraket, a real estate agent in Guilford, stated that she was totally shocked at the condition of the high school after touring it. She stated that the value of homes depends on the schools. She stated that she has no children and has no problem voting for new schools. She stated that she believes that new construction is the answer and that the decision needs to be made by June.

Gus Kellogg identified himself as an architect and stated that it is time to do something. He urged the Board to recommend a new facility.

Sid Gale stated that he observed the CTFSS and complimented Tai Soo Kim Partners on their work. He stated that he believes that a new building for a net cost of \$62 mm that will last for 50 year is a “no brainer.” He stated that renovating will create issues in the future. He also stated his concern that the renovation options may not be eligible for 30 year bonding (only 20 years) which will increase debt service.

David Roberts, representing the property owners, expressed concern about increased taxes at the local and state levels. He stated that taxpayers need to be convinced that the Town administration is serious about saving money. He suggested that the town should eliminate and combine functions and look to regionalize with neighboring towns.

Dr. Moore asked Mr. Roberts if there is consensus among the taxpayer group about which option is best for the high school.

Mr. Roberts responded that whatever is done, the taxpayers need to be protected.

Nils Daley identified himself as a 26 year resident of Guilford. He stated that we are in a great recession and that homes are devalued. He recommends that some maintenance be done on the high school and that now is not the time for the other options to be considered. He stated that the Town's debt is too high and that taxes need to be reformed. He stated that Baldwin was voted down in 2003. He referenced the election in June and stated that people voted it down. He reminded the public of the Budget referendum.

Brian McGlone asked what we have given up since the estimate for a new school has gone from \$112 mm to \$87 mm.

Chairman Bloss stated that the estimated for contingencies was very high in 2007 at 35%. He also noted that the current construction market has been impacted by the economy bringing costs down. He stated that no corners have been cut and that he has the highest degree of confidence in the proposed estimates.

Greg Kinsella identified himself as a 23 year resident of Guilford with three children having gone through the school system. He stated that he wants to pay taxes recognizing the importance of a first-rate

MINUTES – GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Monday, March 28, 2011

school system. He stated his belief that building new is most logical. He stated that the kids and the educators have done the right thing and it is time for the Town and the Board to do the right thing.

David Summerlin stated that he has lived in Guilford for 34 years and that his daughter graduated from GHS in 2009 and his son is a sophomore. He stated his support for new construction. He stated that we should keep up our civic pride after building a new community center and a new library.

Mr. Summerlin read a statement from his wife, Kate Summerlin, who stated that she values education and that our schools should reflect our commitment to learning. She stated that her only regret is that her children will not benefit from a new school but she believes that it is the right decision.

Joe Petrowski stated that he has lived in Guilford for 30 years and said that he wants consumer protection with regard to State reimbursement.

He asked if the Town would be willing to build a larger auditorium without getting State reimbursement.

Mr. Petrowski stated that in June he voted yes to \$400,000, not for a new school, but to get an accurate number for what it would cost to address the needs.

Betty Freeborn expressed concern about the rise of the sea level and its potential affect on the high school site.

Chairman Bloss stated that other sites at lower elevations had been considered and ruled out. He stated his confidence that the current high school site is located on a hill and that rising sea levels should not be an issue.

Amy Sullivan stated that she has three children in elementary school. She stated that the high school is a dump. She stated her concern that teachers will begin to go elsewhere. She also stated her concern about the disruption that a renovation project will cause for students and staff.

Barry Felson stated that he moved to Guilford in part because of the promise of a great school system. He stated that “this place is a dump.” He challenged people to come to the facility and work for a week. He stated his support for a new school and the inclusion of geothermal and other sustainable energy options.

Bob Jacob, a 16 year resident, stated that we should build a new school that we will begin paying for in five years. He stated his belief that the economy will improve. He stated his observation that most people seem to want to eliminate the Baseline option. He stated his concern about letters to the editor. He stated that people must trust their neighbors and communicate with each other about this important issue.

Mike Mikolay stated that everyone says that we must do something. He stated that based on the comparisons he believes that New Construction is the right choice.

Russell Campaign, Guilford High School Class of '89, identified himself as an architect and explained that he tries with his own practice to work with the existing building. But, he stated that Guilford High School needs to be taken down. He stated that the Town needs to look to the future, stabilize this asset and stop pouring money into it. He believes that a new high school needs to be built.

Bill Shank stated that he supports the new option. He compared the value of the high school to the average value of homes in Guilford.

MINUTES – GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Monday, March 28, 2011

Elsa Green, a retired music teacher, stated that she has been astounded at what has been produced with music, art and theatre at GHS in the current conditions. She stated that we need a new facility and that taxpayers need to rally.

Chairman Bloss stated that the Board of Education will hold a Special Meeting on April 6 to consider and act on the options presented. He encouraged the community to stay involved in the process.

Dr. Moore urged voters to vote on the Budget referendum on April 12, 2011.

Mrs. Beeman urged public feedback via phone and email to the Board on the facility options.

Chairman Bloss noted the presence of Board of Selectman members at the evening's meeting.

Dr. Meyers reminded the public that the GFFE Spelling Bee will be held on Friday, April 1 at the high school.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Meyers and seconded by Mrs. Beeman, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9: 50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Lorri Hahn
Clerk to the Board of Education