

**GUILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 2011
GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY, GUILFORD, CT**

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Bill Bloss called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Board members present were 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.

2. Presentation of Proposed Facility Options for Guilford High School by Tai Soo Kim Architects

Rick Misenti addressed the Board stating that there are three common threads to successful schools – the student body, a talented faculty and community partners. He stated that there are many deficiencies in the high school facility including poor air quality, cramped conditions, 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. He asked the Board to consider what the students and staff might achieve in a healthy building. 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.

Armand Fusco addressed the Board as a member of the Board of Education's Options Review Committee. Dr. Fusco stated that he has visited many schools and knows good and bad buildings. He reported that he toured Guilford High School and was shocked at its condition and believes it to be a disgrace to the community. He noted that the student who accompanied him and Assistant Principal Marc Guarino on the tour expressed her embarrassment over the facility.

Dr. Fusco described many of the areas of the building in his own terms including calling corridors the "inner sanctums", the chorus room the "iceberg room", the shop area the "vintage museum", and the auditorium the "cavern." He suggested the cafeteria and gymnasium were also in terrible condition.

Dr. Fusco expressed concern that the issues identified at the high school be properly conveyed to the public so that there is a clear understanding of the needs. He also expressed concern as a member of the taxpayer group that the Board of Education meet with the other Town Boards to combine functions to save money, or as he described it as the "one town concept."

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 options 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-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 debt service projections for the Renovate-Like-New, Renovate-Like-New and Replace and New Construction Options.

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; 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.

Dr. Moore asked about contingencies and Mr. Szczypek replied that contingencies were estimated at 15%.

Chairman Bloss asked why the two renovation and new construction options are so close in cost to each other.

Mr. Szczypek explained that the most costly portion of construction is exterior walls which would be included in the three options as well as replacement of mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems.

Dr. Moore asked about comparing the square footage of roofs between the four options.

Mr. Szczypek replied that there would be the least amount of square footage of roof in the New Construction Option.

Dr. Moore asked which option addressed the needs for community use best.

Mr. Ayles explained that, based on the weighted ranking system that the Options Review Committee (ORC) had used as one method of evaluating the options, that the Renovate-Like-New and Replacement Option grouped the public spaces together and made them the most accessible.

Dr. Moore asked if there was a consensus from the ORC on the best option.

Mr. Ayles and Mrs. Beeman responded that the ORC would not be making a recommendation as it was not their charge.

Dr. Moore asked Mr. Ayles to review the rankings for the options. Mr. Ayles responded that the Baseline Option ranked 39, the Renovate-Like-New options ranked 51-59, Renovate-Like-New and Replacement Options ranked 103-112 and New Construction ranked 125-131.

Chairman Bloss asked where the students go during the phasing of the renovation options.

Mr. Szczypek responded that for all of the options except for New Construction twelve portable classrooms would be placed on the site for the duration of the project.

Mr. Zuse asked where the cost for asbestos abatement is reflected in the different options.

Mr. Szczypek explained that the cost is built in over twenty years in the Baseline Option and included in the costs for the other projects.

Chairman Bloss asked if it is reasonable to consider staying in the existing building and spending less than the Baseline \$34mm.

Mr. Szczypek responded that there are many challenges with the existing building including walls, lighting, and air quality.

There was a discussion about energy usage and potential long-term savings by replacing mechanical systems.

Mr. Zuse asked if furnishings and technology were included in the cost estimates.

Mr. Szczypek responded that \$1,500 per pupil was allocated for furnishings and \$1,200 per pupil for technology.

Mr. Zuse requested additional financial information on the Baseline data from Mr. Ayles.

Dr. Moore asked Dr. Forcella if he has decided which option will clearly address the needs of the students and increase their achievement.

Mr. Ireland responded that the district has been putting money into the educational program but not into the buildings. He questioned how long the level of education can be sustained when the building condition continues to decrease.

Dr. Forcella responded that a new building will offer the latest advances in technology. He stated that the building itself can be a learning tool. He stated that the current facility does not support collaborative learning. He stated that a modern high school should offer pre-engineering courses and not just shop courses. He stated that academic intervention spaces should be available and science classrooms should be modern and larger.

Dr. Forcella explained that high performing cultures work in collaborative environments and that research supports that if kids feel good about their environment they will perform at higher levels.

Mr. Ireland asked about the importance of retaining teachers.

Dr. Forcella agreed that, particularly in competitive disciplines, Guilford has experienced the loss of a candidate to a school district with more modern, supportive facilities.

Dr. Meyers asked the Board if the Options Review Committee should continue its work now that it has completed the review phase. He explained that many committee members are willing to continue their work by communicating and educating the public on the ongoing process and eventual option selected by the Board. The Board agreed that the committee should continue its work.

Mr. Zuse suggested that a survey be considered to give the Board feedback prior to making an option decision on April 6.

It was decided that the ORC will discuss this at their next meeting.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Beeman and seconded by Mrs. Dudley, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9: 25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Lorri Hahn
Clerk to the Board of Education