

SHERMAN BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON CAPITAL PLANNING
MONDAY - APRIL 19, 2021
MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM

Vision Statement

**We enable all Sherman Students to become the best possible version of themselves.
We provide an environment where our children develop into empathetic, self-directed,
critical thinkers who don't give up when faced with challenges.**

The Special Committee on Capital Planning meeting of the Sherman Board of Education was called to order by Mr. Vogt at 7:04 PM on April 19, 2021 via Zoom.

1. PRESENT:

For the Board: Mr. Vogt, Mr. Laughlin, Mrs. Diotte, Mrs. Seeger, Mr. Neunzig
Committee: First Selectman Lowe, Ms. Merkel, Mr. Bonner, Mr. Silvay and
Mr. McGuire
Administration: Dr. Melendez
Staff: Ms. DePuy and Mr. Lombardozzi

2. DISCUSSED:

Mr. Laughlin explained the differences between a construction manager at risk and a design, bid, build approach. He noted the advantages of a construction manager at risk approach when approaching a more comprehensive and complex project, this approach would appreciate a not to exceed cost at bid award locking in the agreed upon price with the construction manager assuming any risk and the financial responsibility for overages should they occur. While contingencies are also built into pricing for a design, bid, build approach there likely would be more risk associated with a project by project method which had multiple contractors working on specific trades at different times who were not coordinated.

Mr. Laughlin then presented further refinements to an option for a comprehensive plan. He explained that he and Ms. Merkel, as designated architectural liaisons, had studied the school layout in order to develop a more refined option for consideration by the architectural team. The newest iteration would potentially involve moving the 5-12 playground from its current location and placing it in the area currently containing a parking lot beside the current main entrance. The current playground location would become parking and potentially allow for a connection from the front to the back of the building improving vehicular circulation and access. This iteration also theorized options for reorganizing classrooms within the school to better utilize existing square footage and reduce any amount of new construction that would be needed to replace the aging and more poorly rated sections of the facility. This iteration also attempted to reduce overall project costs and required bonding to approximately \$16.5M to \$17M.

Mr. Laughlin made it clear that these are unconfirmed estimates based on high level assumptions from prior project estimates, further review and verification is required. This will take place once architectural work progresses, all iterations of project options were only meant as illustrative examples highlighting potential orders of magnitude related to scope, size, and cost. These efforts were being made in order to garner feedback prior to billable work

commencing, it is likely that elements of the current iterations will change as the planning process progresses to its next phase.

Mr. McGuire asked if this new parking plan would pose an issue for the school's septic system and Mr. Laughlin responded that it was certainly a consideration and further review by the architectural and engineering teams would be necessary.

Mr. Lowe asked what the purpose of redesigning the layout was. Mr. Laughlin responded that it would result in improved vehicular circulation and also take advantage of the existing site topography providing a more enclosed playground and play space. Ms. Merkel added that parking and traffic flow were not a prime driver of this suggestion, rather when looking at all plan iterations these changes could better align aged based classroom groupings should relocation of classrooms and the cafeteria be feasible. She added that it is simply a bonus, as a consequence of meeting educational needs and that these assumptions would be subject to further plan review as the planning process progressed.

Mr. Lowe asked for further clarity regarding the playground locations. Dr. Melendez stated that he understands the committee is trying to make a wise decision so that the future work is not done in a poor manner. He asked how this would affect the timeline for a new playground and how it should be explained to those anticipating it being installed during the summer. Mr. Laughlin stated the need to communicate very honestly about potential changes as a result of the planning process and reiterated the need to make some time of more moderate investment in plays spaces as an interim step that must be determined. Ms. Merkel stated that she concurred, and that potential changes needed to be addressed honestly with an actual site plan for the public to consider and analyze. She continued that she believed installing a large amount of equipment now and spending additional money to relocate later is likely not in the best interest of taxpayers.

Mr. Lowe asked about the anticipated timing of when a final plan would be presented to voters, and what next steps would be should it not garner approval. Mr. Laughlin explained that at this point, an attempt was being made to review illustrative examples prior to engaging architectural services. He discussed a draft timeline that would attempt to provide an initial plan for review in June and explained the goal would be to contrast a comprehensive option and its estimated cost/impacts with the cost/impacts of repairs over time, likely in a 10 year timeframe. Mr. Lowe stated that he believed that presenting a plan to voters should happen as soon as possible so that we can determine what we will do.

Mr. Lowe proposed the concept of completing immediate needs now while delaying a more comprehensive plan for a year or two. Mr. Vogt responded that this approach presents challenges as you start work on items like HVAC and roofing, and that addressing those in a project by project approach creates a variety of unknowns and compounding issues as other systems and components would need to be addressed together. He also raised the likely prospect that addressing projects individually would cost more money in the long term than taking a more comprehensive approach. Mr. Lowe expressed he understood that thinking but was not yet convinced of it at this time. He also stated that these concepts are just ideas at this stage.

Mr. Laughlin pointed out that these were ideas, but the baseline facts about building conditions and options to move forward were brought forward by two separate architectural firms and reviewed with the Office of School Construction Grant Review in meetings and site visits. Mr. Silvay asked Mr. Lowe about alternatives that would not create cost and labor redundancies in the future. Mr. Lowe stated that he believed a project by project approach for roofs, HVAC, windows and flooring could be feasible. Mr. Silvay noted that while he agrees that could be feasible but would likely depend on the scope of HVAC work throughout the facility.

Mr. Laughlin presented a list of updated estimates for interim repair options. They included progress on next steps in repairing the fire pump and replacing failing fire doors. Additional quotes for roof repair options and repair of tripping hazards, both interior and exterior. Quotes to patch the roof so that can get done in the near term were also being obtained. The goal remained to have an interim set of emergency repairs ready for consideration and approval in May. This would permit flexibility in discussing next steps if voters determine a comprehensive option should not proceed. The planning process will produce a verified cost estimate for a comprehensive plan that can be compared to a project by project repair approach over a longer timeframe.

Mrs. Seeger asked how the new iterations were derived. Mr. Vogt responded that Ms. Merkel and Mr. Laughlin, as architectural liaisons, worked to analyze prior plans and present an illustrative iteration for feedback. She also inquired about associated cost estimates to which Mr. Vogt clarified at this time all estimates were uncomfried and based on high level estimates of prior cost estimates, final estimates would be confirmed by the architectural and estimation teams as planning progressed.

Mr. Bonner thanked Mr. Laughlin and Ms. Merkel for their work in formulating illustrative options for review. He stated that he was very impressed by the planning work that had been conducted and viewed potential modifications allowing for vehicular circulation as an advantage of reallocating existing space with the addition of the new. He stated he understood Mr. Lowe's concerns and that if a good plan was produced that could be supported by Town Boards, the new members of the Committee could bring that back to their respective groups to gain support, and vote of approval could be attainable. He further stated that getting a good plan in place was the current objective, and that it seemed that was the direction things were moving.

Discussion then turned to review of a draft schedule for planning work to progress with the architectural team. Mr. McGuire asked if Tecton could meet the timeline required and Mr. Laughlin responded that he believed they could and that initial estimates were for approximately a four week engagement period. Mr. Laughlin also stated that through this whole process attempts have been made to get feedback about cost and scope. He further explained that while it has been a slow process there has been the advantage of garnering feedback that can be used to further refined new plans that have more moderate cost and tax impacts while also meeting educational needs.

Mr. Vogt asked that the committee consider adopting the draft schedule for further planning. Mr. Lowe voted nay, Mr. McGuire abstained, and all other members voted in the affirmative.

3. ADJOURNED

Meeting adjourned at 8:27 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Vogt
Chair, Special Committee on Capital Planning
Sherman Board of Education