

# Board of Education

## Ellington, CT

November 14, 2019

A special meeting of the Ellington Board of Education was held on Thursday, November 14, 2019 in the Gymnasium at Ellington High School.

Present were Mr. Blanchette and Purcaro; Ms. Dzen, Picard-Wambolt, Mullin, Socha, Underwood, Kupferschmid (arrived 7:31 p.m.) and Nord (arrived 7:37 p.m.); Dr. Scott Nicol, Superintendent of School and Mr. Brian Greenleaf, Director of Finance and Operations.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Michael Purcaro, Chairperson

Agenda Item:

1. Overview of the EPS Facilities Study Master Plan Executive Summary (including Windermere School) with special guest members of the Boards of Finance and Selectmen, Planning and Zoning Commission, and the Permanent Building Committee.

Dr. Nicol welcomed the members in attendance from the Boards of Finance and Selectman, Planning and Zoning Commission and the Permanent Building Committee.

Key themes driving the work of the Facilities Study Master Plan include aging facilities, enrollment projections and the academic vision for the district. Dr. Nicol reviewed that the mindset in the approach of the long-term facility study must be with the vision of the year 2040. It is important to think of the future in academics and what building needs would may look like to support student learning at that time.

A review of the Facilities Committee Members was provided. The committee members were Gary Blanchette, Brian Greenleaf, Doug Harding, Brian Hendrickson, Lisa Houlihan, Tracey Kiff-Judson, Scott Nicol, Jack Tuner and Peter Welti. The committee met five times from September 2018 through September 2019 including three community forums that were live streamed. They took place in October 2018, December 2018 and January 2019.

Dr. Nicol reviewed key upcoming dates for the Facilities Study. On December 12, 2019 there will be a Windermere Elementary School discussion at Ellington

High School with special guests from the Boards of Selectman and Finance, Planning and Zoning Commission and the Permanent Building Committee.

On January 13, 2020 there will be a presentation at the Board of Selectmen meeting with the possibility of an initial Board of Selectmen vote on the Windermere building project.

Mr. Greenleaf presented on the long-term planning that is involved with the facilities stating that the planning isn't for months or years, it is for decades.

A review of enrollment history since 1998 was reviewed as well as two different paths of enrollment projections. In reviewing enrollment history there was a steady incline with a dip in 2012, which was five years after a recession, this is a normal decline. The trend inclined again leading up to this year which had a minor decrease in enrollment.

There were two paths of projections to review, one was a more conservative projection completed by NESDEC with an increase of 200 students and a more aggressive projection completed by DRA Architects with an increase of 500 students by the 2028-2029 school year.

Mr. Greenleaf presented on the facilities assessment based on state guidelines with a conservative approach. Crystal Lake School is in very good condition, no need for a facility upgrade. Center School is acceptable for educational needs however it needs some improvement for the conditions of the facility. Windermere is acceptable for educational needs but has a strong need for facility improvement requiring a renovation or replacement. Both Ellington High School and Ellington Middle School are constrained for educational needs and need improvement in the facility conditions.

Some constrained educational concerns at Ellington High School were shared. Some of the examples were science labs that are undersized and have layout concerns, the gymnasium has many scheduling conflicts and programming implications and the entrance/front office does not meet safety and security design guidelines.

A question was posed on whether parents would agree with the facilities being constrained currently. Some may say that they are adequate for now, however some may have particular concerns depending on their child's interests. For example the EHS band and music rooms are too small and they utilize hallway space and gym students are utilizing foyer space for gym class.

Mr. Greenleaf reviewed the four options that are available for approval.

1. Capital improvements only
2. New/Renovate Windermere (PK-6), New 4th Elementary School, Targeted Renovations
3. New/Renovate Windermere (PK-5), New High School, EMS to current high school (6-8), Renovate current EMS to elementary
4. New/Renovate Windermere (K-5), New High School, EMS to current high school (6-8), Old EMS school/town use

Option 4 was the recommendation from the Facilities Study, however no vote or option has been selected by the Board of Education or the Town of Ellington.

Several options for the decision making process timeline were reviewed. Options were based on enrollment projection paths, for low enrollment growth the projects could be complete in 2043, for moderate growth completion could be in 2031 and for high growth completion could be in 2028.

A brief overview of the Windermere project addressed the immediate capital needs, safety and security concerns and the inefficient design. Items that will be discussed at the Windermere Facilities Meeting on December 12, 2019 include the cost/benefit analysis for renovation versus new building, detailed timeline of the decision process and projected debt services.

A motion was made to adjourn at 7:48 p.m.

1<sup>st</sup>. K. Socha

2<sup>nd</sup>. L. Nord

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Kris Picard-Wambolt  
Secretary