

ROCHESTER-STOCKBRIDGE UNIFIED DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
SPECIAL BUILDING COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2019 – 6:00 PM
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STOCKBRIDGE CAMPUS
UNAPPROVED MINUTES

In attendance, committee members Amy Wildt, Carl Groppe, Bonnie Bourne, Lindy Stetson, Joanne Mills, Robert Gardner, Cricket McCuster, Willis Whitaker and one member of the public, Jess Arsenault

1. Call to Order – Carl Groppe called the meeting to order at 5:59pm
2. Adjustments to the Agenda – There were no adjustments to the agenda
3. Public Comment – None
4. Consent Agenda
 - 4.1 Act to approve Tuesday, October 15, 2019 minutes – Amy made a motion to approve the minutes, Willis 2nd, no discussion, so moved.
5. Action Item – Move on to discussion Items
6. Discussion Items
 - 6.1 Initial Reaction to Report – Carl started off by asking each committee member what their initial thoughts were on the Black River building study report. Cricket commented that she is familiar with reading these types of reports and that this report is comprehensive and well put together. The mechanical, electrical, structural and architectural executive summaries are going to be very helpful. She noted it's good to see what are considered priority items – things that need to be acted on right away versus long term repairs. She noted that the cost estimates could really be plus or minus 50%, it's difficult to come up with these types of numbers and agreed with the study that the figures provided are likely in the ballpark. Lastly Cricket wanted to note that with all the space in Rochester she questions the need to consider any additions. She noted they are in the report because the study was not going to focus on consolidation; the engineers were tasked with designing ways to bring the facilities up to a minimum level of what's appropriate for K-6 to have. Rob Gardner commented that the report is complicated, not just because of the building systems and priority breakdowns but the tough decisions that need to be made using this information. He raised the point that Rochester ended up with empty space due to a declining population and there is no sign of that changing. He also wanted to be sure there is open communication with voters. There are a lot of

politics involved, he continued to say that there should be a vision – a future plan – to help people understand the direction of the district. He also had concerns about where the money would come from for these repairs. Lastly, he posed the question – how important is the school to the town? Bonnie spoke to the amount of items that need repair due to violations or safety concerns; there are a number of priority 1 items to be taken care of. She noted that her focus is the kids and posed the question of how can we offer all Stockbridge and Rochester kids the best education at a cost our tax payers can afford? Bonnie ended with noting this committee is charged with understanding the report and presenting it to the board, not making any decisions. Amy commented that she looked at the bottom-line items of the report, things like existing parking and lighting systems. She said she had some technical questions and noted a few things on the report that may need to be in a different section. She also noted she would like to understand the ventilation systems better. Lindy agreed with Bonnie and Cricket about moving along with priority items. She mentioned some items are already being dealt with in Stockbridge like adjustments to parking lighting and emergency lighting systems. Carl also spoke to the safety issues and added that these should be brought to the board's attention immediately. He also noted the report speaks to replacing several systems – some very costly – but it's hard to look at these repairs without knowing the next steps. How do we get to those next steps on deciding what work needs to be done in each building - like replacing the furnace in the Rochester Elementary may not be a good idea if that building may no longer be used. What can be done to keep it going for now though. Joanne had asked why certain additions were noted in Rochester and not in Stockbridge (should one of the buildings in Rochester not be used), Carl said it's because the engineers were working to maintain status quo – not to take away anything either school already had. Willis spoke to the idea that it is almost impossible to give recommendations or make any building decisions without knowing what the future looks like for the two campuses. He noted whatever facility is not used it should be “marketable” and that many of the #2 priority items on the report are just as important to address. Some of the costs may be higher and some may be less than the estimates in the report depending on how you go about making the repairs. He also noted that the administration needs to be prepared that certain repairs can uncover other fixes not yet discovered. The report will be more useful if the committee knew the direction, or which building in Rochester will be used going forward. Bonnie chimed in to say that in order to make these decisions they really needed to get the figures on what they're looking at for costs of repairs and which buildings are in better shape, etc.. Joanne commented that it really comes down to which building would be used in Rochester. She asked if additions really need to be considered if enrollment is continuing to decline, and if numbers get too low she suggested school choice be an option. Discussion ensued. The group then discussed with

the cost of bringing the current buildings up to code perhaps a more efficient, new, single space should be considered.

6.2 Generate list of questions –

Discussion continued about building configurations and future scenarios, Carl suggested to chunk it down into obvious options. Cricket suggested maybe having a consultant help with decisions. The committee all agreed they do not want to be a part of the politics of these decisions, but they do need to provide some direction and future outlooks. Perhaps another committee needs to be created to handle the political aspects of these decisions. Carl suggested presenting a breakdown of the costs for each building to the board. Rob chimed in and suggested highlighting the items that need to be addressed now. All agreed it's really tough to move ahead with ideas not knowing exactly what the towns each want. Public member Jess Arsenault suggested having a conversation with the Town of Rochester about acquiring the HS building, as stated in the articles of agreement they may be interested in purchasing it for a dollar. She continued on to note that if Rochester community members are having a hard time letting go of the building why not keep it. The town could possibly work out a deal with the district and the WRV Players for reimbursements of only the space they use. Discussion ensued. The committee eventually narrowed it down to 5 configuration possibilities to look into as a starting point. To develop current conditions, repairs and cost analysis for each. Discussion will continue for these ahead of the presentation to the board at the December meeting. Carl wanted to be clear that these are not the only options, and Rob agreed the scenarios may continue to change, but this will give a starting point.

- i. Do minimal priority items to insure a safe environment, no change in where and how kids are currently using buildings this report is just information for us to use.
- ii. Explore the option/interest of Town of Rochester taking the HS building and use using/renting the music room, One Planet room, and art room - What work would that entail.
- iii. Utilize one building in Rochester and one building in Stockbridge. Address priority items.
- iv. Combine the schools into one building – either an existing one (SCS, RES, or RHS) or a new building altogether.
- v. Close all buildings – consider school choice in both towns.

7. Other – Amy suggested using a white board or smart board for the next meeting to summarize each buildings conditions/needs and costs. There was brief discussion about ventilation systems where Willis answered some of Amy and Carl's technical questions.

8. Next Meeting Date
 - 8.1 Tuesday, November 12, 2019 - 6:00 PM @ Rochester Campus
9. Adjourn 8:14pm