

470 South Eagleville Rd.

Mansfield, CT 06268

860-487-3954

27 June 2010

TO:

Town Council

Elizabeth C. Paterson, Mayor

Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building  
4 South Eagleville Road, Mansfield, CT 06268

RE: Proposed School Building Project

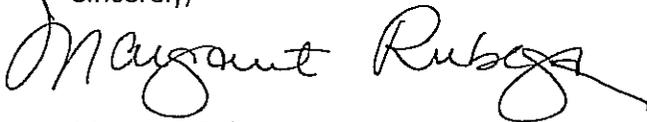
Dear Council Members;

As I will be unable to attend the 28 June Town Council meeting, I am writing you to declare my support for the Board of Education's recommendation that the town enact Option E (the two-elementary-school option) of the proposed school building project. As a Mansfield resident since 1999, with one child attending the Middle School, and one attending Annie Vinton, I can attest to the need for updates to the physical plants of all our schools, and I am convinced that it is likely false economy to continue to patch the existing elementary schools. I have attended quite a few of the informational/public/ and BOE meetings on this subject, and have been among those strongly, and vocally opposed to Option D (the one-school option); while it is nominally "cheaper", it will cost too much in terms of the reduction in educational quality associated with putting small children in a big school. I have been impressed with the openness and responsiveness of both the Building Committee and the BOE as a whole, and simply thrilled to see so many of my fellow citizens come out to meetings to demand that children and education come before money, even during a recession.

I believe that Option E represents the best available solution from a practical, educational and fiscal point of view: it will allow the town to achieve significant energy improvements, with reimbursement from the state to reduce the cost, while avoiding instructional disruption during construction, and account for declining enrollments while still putting children in schools of a size (~ 300) that research has shown to be educationally advantageous, yet still small enough to retain the "neighborhood" quality that means so much to children and their families. I support Option E, and believe that you should too.

Finally, I want to point out that while some aspects of the plan to build new elementary school(s) have been contested, I have heard no one oppose renovation of the Middle School, and I certainly support it. I believe that it is sufficiently important that it any referendum on it should NOT be tied, on the ballot, with the elementary school building project --- there is no reason they cannot be separated on the ballot, and plenty of reason that they should be, if there is any doubt of significant support for the elementary school buildings. The Middle School renovation is uncontroversial, relatively inexpensive, and should not fail to be passed just because there may be opposition to Option E, or to any plan for building new elementary schools at all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Rubega". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the "g".

Margaret Rubega

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Bill Caneira <wcaneira8614@charter.net>  
To: TownCouncil@mansfieldct.org  
Cc: Mark LaPlaca <laplacam@mansfieldct.org>  
Sent: Sun, June 27, 2010 11:07:10 AM  
Subject: comments regarding School Building Project

Message

Hello,

I will be unable to attend the public hearing Monday night, but I wanted to submit my comments to you. Attached are notes from an April meeting when I addressed the BOE during the portion of their meetings allotted for public commentary. I have made minor modifications to the notes, but the basic theme is the same. With 1 child in the Mansfield school system and another joining shortly, I am one of several parents who has significant concern about Option D, and is opposed to it.

I know the BOE recommendation was for a different option (I am pleased it was NOT for Option D), but I wanted to share my comments nonetheless.

The attached notes are only a single page, with a concluding paragraph at the bottom. I would ask you to please review it if you have time. I have been involved in nearly all of the SBC and BOE meetings on this topic in 2010 and regret that I cannot make the meeting tomorrow, but I hope that these written comments will be considered in the same light.

Thank you very much for holding a public hearing to give folks the chance to voice their opinions on this important matter.

Thank

These notes were used to address our BOE at an April 2010 meeting, to vocalize concerns regarding the one-school Option D. They have since been modified slightly.

- Educational Quality
  - 650-700 students is far too large for an elementary school, especially given research indicating that 300-500 is the best size
  - We are risking an incredibly successful, nurturing environment that we already have in our 3 neighborhood schools
  - Our children's earliest and deepest impressions of school are at risk
  - The sense of community/connectedness will likely be lost
    - teachers and administration will not be able to know kids by name and their needs
    - virtually impossible to have "town meetings", thanksgiving dinners, movie nights with the entire student body
    - jeopardizing the buddy system forged between new and existing students, and between grades (ie: K and 4)
    - the school will inevitably be treated like an organization instead of a community
    - teacher collaboration will be harder, both peer and supervisory
    - principals will not be able to be as involved with the student body
    - transportation will be problematic – pickups will take longer, bus times will increase (and are already problematic)
  - How much effort will be required to retain the small school feel in a school this large?
  - Increased caseloads for a smaller special education staff?
- Safety
  - How will students be monitored in the lunchroom, at recess, in the halls? Accidents, choking and bullying will be harder to spot/address.
  - How will the safety of the children be ensured during the mass entry and exodus each day with vehicles and buses about?
  - Can we ensure security: that only the appropriate people are in the building, and escorting the students? Can we do this without instilling more fear into the children and loss of parental volunteering/involvement in the classroom?
  - 1.5 nurses to care for 650 SMALL children?
- Economics
  - Considering the POTENTIAL costs of reusing the existing 3 school buildings, does Option D begin to equate or exceed the costs of the alternatives?
  - Given the concerns about traffic on Rt 89 and 195, are potential road expansion needs considered in Option D?
- Quality of Life
  - What will the existing buildings be reused for? How will this impact surrounding neighborhoods?
  - Is the suggested location logical and centralized enough for all families?
  - Will the new school cause folks to move away FROM or avoid moving TO our town, affecting our tax base, our property values?

#### Conclusion:

Option D is unacceptable for an elementary school in Mansfield. According to our parents, as heard in public forums and surveys, it will be too large for students this young, and raises concerns about educational quality and safety. As evident by our teacher surveys, it will be difficult to manage and impair collaboration, again threatening educational quality. There have been concerns about location, traffic, and building reuse that have also cast doubt on this proposal. Visits were made to schools of comparable size, but opinions were divided, as witnessed (again) in survey results and in informal conversations with parents and teachers.

Furthermore, there are alternatives, including Option E, which calls for two new schools. This option is somewhat costlier than Option D (while cheaper than other listed options) but results in the desired student body size per school.

Mansfield needs to find a financially responsible option that achieves the necessary reduction in operating costs without sacrificing the educational quality that has become a hallmark of our community.

**RUDY J. FAVRETTI**  
**P.O.BOX 403**  
**STORRS, CONNECTICUT 06268**  
*E-mail: [trystwood1066@charter.net](mailto:trystwood1066@charter.net)*  
*Telephone: 860-429-6027*

TO: Mansfield Town Council  
FROM: Rudy J. and Joy P. Favretti

28 June 2010

We write in response to your invitation "to receive comments regarding the recommendations presented by the Mansfield Board of education in its May 24, 2010 report." Our response is a strong NO to their proposal "...to build two new elementary schools , replacing and closing our three existing elementary schools." We are in favor of their recommendation to "conduct renovations at the Mansfield Middle School..."

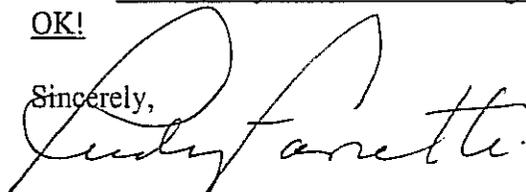
Our reason for this decision is that we think that renovations should also be made at the three elementary schools to meet the objectives set forth in the Board's report "including security concerns, roof replacements and other basic facility needs in addition to enhancing the library/media centers ..."

We must get over being a throw-away society! We thought the town had arrived there during the many sessions and discussions when Mansfield was developing its "Mansfield 2020:A Unified Vision Strategic Plan" in 2007-2008. Sustainability and "going green" were major topics of discussion. We thought that the town had gone green and sustainable. It was a great disappointment to us that the Board's proposal recommends abandoning/destroying three buildings averaging 55 years in age; this is not green or sustainable! We are the only nation in the world that, in general, does not re-adapt such structures to meet changing needs. This is wasteful, not just for the structures themselves, but also of the taxpayers' money.

Yes, we realize that making these renovations may not draw as much state funding, but that is not the point. We should not use quantities of energy and resources to build two new buildings when we have three that are adaptable, especially in light of the projected decline in enrollment for the next two decades. Also, the statements made by the then superintendent of schools and his assistant (the present superintendent), emphasized that no new schools would be needed in the years to come (as they testified before the Planning and Zoning Commission during the preparation of the 2006 plan of development.)

The Board's proposal also does not recognize that the trend today in America is towards the re-adaptation of buildings so that we can be green. We suggest that the Board, as it proceeds, have a study done by experts who understand this concept and will come up with economical figures and plans that will achieve the schools' needs with no waste. In turn, they will not be sending the wrong message to our children that waste is OK!

Sincerely,

  
Rudy J. Favretti

  
Joy P. Favretti

Anne Rash

35 Samuel Lane

Mansfield Center

To Members of the Town Council:

As a resident of Mansfield for almost 40 years and an educator, I have always supported the Board of Education's budget and policies. Sadly, I cannot support the current proposal to build two new schools.

Balancing the wishes of the community with fiscal responsibility is a difficult task and I don't envy your position.

I do not believe that the town can financially handle the cost of two new buildings. Most building projects end up costing more than the original price tag and compromises are always necessary. My experience with building projects, most recently as chair of the Community Center project, leads me to this conclusion. When these building issues arise, money must be found. I would worry that the whole Board of Education budget could be affected. It is important to maintain the quality of our current programs throughout the building project

I realize that many folks in town are concerned about the size of one elementary school. I was principal for 13 years of a school that averaged over 600 students. I knew all the students and their families. I believe that one elementary school could be divided into primary and intermediate with two administrators. This would allow 6 or 7 sections of each grade with class sizes comparable to the current classes. Actually, I think the special education, music, gifted, and perhaps, other programs would be enhanced by one location.

I am also aware of the concern of the folks in the Goodwin district. I suggest the Board looks into the possibility of locating an early childhood center at Goodwin. The preschool and, possibly kindergarten, would fit into a renovated Goodwin and keep a school in that location. This would also reduce the student population in the one new school.

I wish you the best as you wrestle with this difficult decision.

Anne Rash

To the Mansfield Town Council  
Re: K-4 School Renovation Project  
June 28, 2010

I am here in support of the one school option. I want to applaud the extraordinary work, the school Building Committee has done for the past four and a half years. The one school option supports all the committee's objectives. This option absolutely creates the most efficient use of our limited resources. Operating one school would provide the district with the best opportunity to maintain small class size and improve the districts' curriculum. More money will be focused on our instructional programs rather than multiple buildings and administrative salaries needed for the two-school option.

Honestly, how can we even consider an option that creates the financial ~~burden~~ <sup>debt</sup> that the two-school option does? ~~If not the one school option, please leave it alone.~~ Our Town can not afford to take on that much debt! The two school option will have an enormous long term impact on our Town. Residents have to realize that we just can not have it all, not in these economic times. ~~Our Director of Finance has provided us with the costs to taxpayers in today's dollars if two buildings were completed this year, an average of \$800 annually per household.~~ We can not put so many of our resources in one place at the expense of everything else. The two-school option will likely give us larger class sizes and will decimate other essential school and town programs. We need to be concerned about our children's entire educational experience, grades PreK – 12, the costs for maintaining our Middle School and regional High School including the needed upgrade to Mansfield Middle School. The Council needs to look at the big picture and be aware of what this is really costing and at what price to our children.

We do need to create a small school environment in a single PreK-4 school where children and their parents feel a strong sense of community and belonging without jeopardizing the future for our children and breaking the bank of Town residents.

Bob Kremer  
67 Charles Lane

To: Members of Mansfield Town Council

Fr: Thomas P. Weinland

Re: School Building Proposals

June 28, 2010

I wish to write in support of a **single school option** for Mansfield's elementary schools. I do so with considerable respect for the efforts of the School Board and other planning committees that have contributed to alternate proposals for the elementary school program.

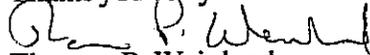
My major concern is the price tag – my understanding is that a single school will cost considerably less to build. I also believe that it will cost considerably less to staff. While Mansfield has been generous in its support of its schools even in these difficult times, I believe that asking the town to support building programs that will cost significantly more than a single new school fails to consider the tax burden the town's citizens will be asked to pay. I fear that ignoring the price tag may well lead to tax revolts in future years, particularly as we face the educational carrying charges of technology and other special programs for multiple schools. The result may lead to larger class sizes and reduction of programs if we were to build (or remodel) and maintain multiple elementary schools.

I find some flaws in the case for multiple schools (AKA neighborhood schools). Presently, my two grandchildren ride a school bus 45 minutes one-way to attend Vinton Elementary School. Few if any students walk to school in this town; a neighborhood school in Mansfield has always been a myth. While a single school might mean long bus rides for some children, I doubt their "bus" time would exceed the 90 minutes my grandchildren (one of them a kindergartner this past year) are asked to spend in school travel.

Obviously a single elementary school will be larger than any one of our current schools. Too large? The professional talent in this town is perfectly capable of organizing a larger school to offset many of the problems that we might imagine will confront kids in such a school. A dual principal organization with K-2 and 3-4 is but one option. Different wings in a building can also mitigate the size problem.

Against these imagined problems are the economies of scale that a larger school can realize. Music, art, physical education, technology and special support programs can all benefit from their placement in a single building. Likewise, allocation of faculty as grade numbers shift can be achieved more easily.

Thank you for your consideration,



Thomas P. Weinland

2 Nutmeg Court  
Mansfield Center, CT

# Memo

To: Town Council  
From: Matt Hart, Town Manager *Matt*  
CC: Town Employees  
Date: June 28, 2010  
Re: Town Manager's Report

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Below please find a report regarding various items of interest to the Town Council, staff and the community:

## Budget and Finance

- *Town Budget Referendum* – The Town of Mansfield Budget Referendum was held on Tuesday, June 22, 2010. Results were as follows:
  - *Are you in favor of the budget as adopted on May 11, 2010?*  
Yes - 645; No - 387
  - *If the budget is defeated, is the town budget portion too high or too low?*  
Town too high – 504; Town too low - 347
  - *If the budget is defeated, is the school budget portion too high or too low?*  
School too high – 409; School too low - 449

## Council Requests for Information/Council Business

- *Senior Services Social Worker* – I have attached to my report this evening a memorandum in response to concerns that Town Council has expressed regarding whether the Senior Services Social Worker is being supervised by a licensed clinical social worker and what liability the Town might have if she is not receiving that level of supervision. In summary, Kevin Grunwald and I do not think that duties of the job constitute clinical social work that would require supervision by a licensed clinical social worker. We do feel that the employee is operating within her area of competency and is receiving appropriate supervision from Mr. Grunwald as the Director of Human Services. Please review our correspondence and let us know if you have further questions.

## Departmental/Division News

- *Human Services/Town Manager's Office* – We are pleased to announce that Cindy Dainton will be our new *Senior Center Coordinator* beginning July 19, 2010. I am looking forward to working with Cindy in the area of senior services and am confident that she will do an excellent job in her new role. On a related note, I would like to thank Marilyn Gerling for the work that she has done serving as our interim coordinator. Marilyn stepped in to help us out during a very critical time and I believe that her grace, pleasant demeanor and steady presence enabled us to maintain programs and services at the senior center while we conducted our recruitment for the full-time coordinator. Marilyn, we thank you for all that you have done for the senior center and our community – we are fortunate to have you!
- *Mansfield Public Library* – Item number 12 in tonight's Council packet outlines a new 50-hr per week schedule for the library, which Louise Bailey and I plan to implement this coming September following the end of summer programming. Ms. Bailey and I believe that the proposed schedule will provide us with the best opportunity to provide programs necessary to promote the library's goals and objectives, particularly in the areas of school readiness and literacy. Please let me know if you have any concerns regarding the proposed schedule and if you would like to add this item to a future agenda for discussion purposes.

- *Parks and Recreation*
  - Kayaks and backyard games are available for rent at the Community Center. Due to a grant from *Health Eating, Active Living*, we have kayaks, volleyball and badminton sets available to rent for \$5 each. Reservations with payment must be made in writing at least 48 hours in advance. A \$50 deposit check (for kayaks) and a \$25 deposit check and a copy of driver's license are required at the time of rental. Call the community center at (860) 429-3015 ext. 0 for more information.
  - A variety of camps are available to area residents beginning next week. There are sports camps, dance, science, engineering to name a few plus our ever popular Camp Mansfield. Registration is underway and space is limited in some camps.
  - This year's free *summer concert series* will be held on Thursdays, beginning July 8 on the green at the Community center from 6:30-8 p.m. If the weather doesn't cooperate, the concerts will be held inside the community center. The first concert will be performed by the Jessica Prouty Band; this group of teenagers will truly impress with their musical talents.

### Major Projects and Initiatives

- *Assisted Living Update* - Kevin Grunwald, Director of Human Services, has spoken to the president of Masonicare, Steve McPherson, who has informed us that Masonicare is still committed to building an assisted/independent living facility in Mansfield. Masonicare has an option to purchase a piece of property on Maple Road and plans to exercise that option by the end of this calendar year.

### Special Events

- *Tour de Mansfield: Call for Volunteers* – Calling all volunteers! We need help with the 5th annual *Tour de Mansfield* bike tour! We are excited to again offer this special event on Saturday, July 17, 2010 (rain date July 24). The bike tour provides a family oriented event for area residents, encourages exercise through cycling, brings awareness to the scenic beauty of Mansfield's historic villages and promotes community bonding through social and recreation activity. Volunteers are needed for the following duties - set-up, registration, break-down, rest stop management and barbecuing. Please contact Sara-Ann at 860-429-3336 if you are interesting in volunteering.

### Upcoming Meetings\*

- Mansfield Historical Society, June 29, 2010, 8:00 PM, Conference Room B, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Mansfield Downtown Partnership Board of Directors, July 1, 2010, 4:00 PM, Mansfield Downtown Partnership Office
- Community Quality of Life Committee, July 1, 2010, 7:30 PM, Council Chambers, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Planning and Zoning Commission, July 6, 2010, 2010, 7:00 PM, Council Chambers, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Agriculture Committee, July 6, 2010, 7:30 PM, Conference Room B, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Mansfield Community Campus Partnership, July 7, 2010, 4:00 PM, Council Chambers, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Housing Code Board of Appeals, July 12, 2010, 5:00 PM, Council Chambers, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Town Meeting on the Ordinance Regarding Off Street Parking On Residential Rental Property, July 12, 2010, 6:00 PM, Mansfield Middle School Auditorium
- Town Council, July 12, 2010, 7:30 PM, Council Chambers, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building

*\*Meeting dates/times are subject to change. Please view the Town Calendar or contact the Town Clerk's Office at 429-3302 for a complete and up-to-date listing of committee meetings.*

# MEMORANDUM

Town of Mansfield  
Town Manager's Office  
4 So. Eagleville Rd., Mansfield, CT 06268  
860-429-3336  
Hartmw@mansfieldct.org



To: Town Council  
From: Matthew Hart, Town Manager *MWH*  
CC: Kevin Grunwald, Director of Human Services; Maria Capriola, Assistant to Town Manager  
Date: June 28, 2010  
Re: Senior Services Social Worker

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Kevin Grunwald and I wanted to answer some of the questions that Councilor Keane and others have raised regarding the supervision of the Senior Services Social Worker. Your concerns seem to relate to whether or not the employee is being supervised by a licensed clinical social worker and what liability the Town might have if she is not receiving that type of supervision. We think that there has been some confusion related to whether or not this is a clinical social work position and hope to alleviate this concern. According to the Dictionary of Social Work, "*Clinical social work* is the professional application of social work theory and methods to the **diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of psychosocial dysfunction, disability, or impairment, including emotional, mental, and behavioral disorders** (Barker, 2003)." In the State of Connecticut, as in many other states, a social worker is required to be licensed to practice clinical social work. The Town has taken the position that the Senior Services Social Worker is not a clinical social work position. Consequently, in the job description we identified an LCSW as preferred but not required.

Clinical social work is just one area of social work practice and many of these practice areas do not require licensure. The responsibilities for this job do include counseling, and in this context counseling is used as a generic term and does not necessarily equate to clinical social work practice. An accepted definition of counseling is "to offer advice, opinion or instruction given in directing the judgment or conduct of another, or, the act of exchanging opinions and ideas; consultation; advice or guidance, especially as solicited from a knowledgeable person." Many professionals offer counseling for such things as investments, careers, weight loss, education and smoking cessation, to name a few. The Dictionary of Social Work explains that "counseling is a *procedure* that is often used in clinical social work *and other professions* to guide individuals, families, couples, groups and communities by such activities as delineating alternatives, helping to articulate goals and providing needed information (Barker, 2003)." To clarify, the use of counseling as a procedure is not exclusive to clinical social work practice and is in fact employed by professionals in many different areas of expertise.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) describes social work practice as consisting of the professional application of social work values, principles, and techniques to one or more of the following ends: helping people obtain tangible services; counseling and psychotherapy with individuals, families and groups; helping communities or groups provide or improve social and health services; and participating in legislative processes." Furthermore, "The practice of social work requires knowledge of

human development and behavior; social and economic and cultural institutions; and of the interaction of all these factors.”

The Social Work Code of Ethics requires that “Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.” We believe that the field of practice that best describes the work of the Senior Services Social Worker would be gerontological social work.

“Gerontological social workers help older adults and their families maintain well-being, overcome problems and achieve maximum potential during later life. Social workers serve as *advocates* for older people, providing a vital link between older individuals and the services they need. Indeed, a key function of gerontological social workers is to promote independence, autonomy and dignity.” In this context it is reasonable to assume that the gerontological social worker would *counsel* clients regarding services, programs, alternatives, etc., but that this type of counseling would not be defined as clinical social work.

I believe that it is our responsibility as management to establish and maintain appropriate qualifications for staff and to provide ongoing supervision to ensure that staff members maintain the skills and knowledge that are necessary to carry out those responsibilities. Ms. Lavoie is currently supervised by Mr. Grunwald, a professional social worker with more than thirty-two years of active practice in that field. I am comfortable with his ability to effectively supervise Ms. Lavoie in her position as the Senior Services Social Worker and believe that she is in compliance with the code of ethics and standards of practice as she is currently practicing within her area of competence. Our insurance carrier is also comfortable with the fact that Ms. Lavoie is carrying out professional responsibilities that are consistent with her job description and is receiving appropriate supervision.

Kevin and I hope that this information will serve to answer any questions or concerns that you may have regarding the Senior Services Social Worker position. If Councilors would like to meet to discuss this subject further we would be happy to do so.