

SPECIAL MEETING – MANSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL  
January 7, 2013

Mayor Elizabeth Paterson called the special meeting of the Mansfield Town Council to order at 6:30 p.m. in the cafeteria of the Mansfield Middle School.

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Freudmann, Keane, Kochenburger, Moran, Paterson, Paulhus, Ryan, Shapiro, Schaefer

II. SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT

Town Manager Matt Hart introduced John Mena, CREC's Director of Construction Services, Robert Saunders and Ray LaFleur, both of whom are Senior Project Managers for CREC. Mr. Mena stated the goal of the report was to provide the best information possible for the Town. The report offered a square footage analysis, a space standard analysis, a grant impact analysis and construction cost estimates. (Report attached)

Council members discussed the discrepancies in the square footage results and the anticipated reimbursement rates between the CREC report and those from Lawrence Associates. Director of Finance Cherie Trahan pointed out the Lawrence Associates reimbursement rate was based on the proposed larger new schools, not just the existing footprints. Members also asked if CREC representatives believe the State would be amenable to considering new population variables in determining future student populations and requested information on exactly what components of a renovate-as-needed project would be reimbursable. CREC representatives commented that only programmatic, safety and code alterations would be reimbursed and that ADA and fire code deficiencies would not be grandfathered. Their experience has been that it is difficult to prove a change in student population numbers. Staff will review all the information submitted to date and provide an analysis.

CREC representatives outlined a proposed Owner Program Management Services Plan for Council consideration. Town Manager Matt Hart will forward any Town Council questions to CREC.

III. MEETING WITH STATE LEGISLATORS RE 2013 LEGISLATIVE SESSION AND RELATED ISSUES

Mayor Paterson welcomed State Senator Don Williams and State Representatives Gregory Haddad and Linda Orange who discussed the upcoming legislative session. All agreed the response to the Newtown tragedy, the budget, and job creation measures will be the main issues undertaken this year. The Legislators offered to assist the Town by coordinating discussions with the State Board of Education's Department of Construction. Mr. Haddad cautioned a limited number of requirement waivers have been granted and only after approvals, including voter approval, have been authorized. No waivers are available if specific criteria are written into the statute.

The Legislators will look at CCM's proposal regarding employee contributions to MERS, the current pension programs provisions, and the minimum education budget requirement.

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Mayor Paterson thanked the Legislators for their comments.

IV. OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

Jeanette Picard, Timber Drive, feels the school building process has been going on for too long and is affecting the Town in a negative way. Ms. Picard asked what do we need and how do we get there.

Arthur Smith, Mulberry Road, expressed concern with the change in the agenda putting the opportunity for public comment at the end of the meeting. Mr. Smith asked if all ADA improvements are covered in a renovate-as-needed proposal and has filed an FOI request with the State regarding information on all approved waivers. He questioned whether the data regarding the square footage of the schools is available.

Ric Hossack, Middle Turnpike, reiterated there is another option, repair and maintain.

Robin Weiner, Birchwood Heights, submitted 2 letters for the record and noted she could have brought in more if she had been aware of the meeting earlier. Ms. Weiner questioned whether an influx of students because of the new and proposed construction in Town would affect the student enrollment demographics. (Letters attached)

Mark Sommer, Warrenville Road, believes schools make Mansfield special and the single constituency, we need to be concerned about, are the students.

Tulay Luciano, Warrenville Road, requested the school building meetings be recorded and played on Channel 13 and the website. Ms. Luciano would like to have had the opportunity to question the legislators.

Mr. Paulhus left at 8:30 p.m.

Betty Wassmundt, Old Turnpike Road, urged an independent consultant be hired to assist with the decision and urged the Council to keep the three schools.

John Fratiello, Daleville Road, worked for 40 years in education and would hate to see new schools at the expense of teachers and staff.

April Holinko, Middle Turnpike, is a member of the Board of Education but speaking as an individual. Ms. Holinko believes the Town continues to provide a wonderful education. She was not in favor of the project seven years ago and it still doesn't make sense.

John St. Onge, South Bedlam Road, has been impressed by both the Council and speakers this evening. Mr. St. Onge urged the Council to focus on the teachers and keep the 3 schools.

Roger Roberge, Woodland Road, asked the Council to use Yankee common sense and provide good teachers and a good environment.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Shapiro moved and Mr. Ryan seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m.  
Motion passed unanimously.

Elizabeth Paterson, Mayor

Mary Stanton, Town Clerk

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