

**Monadnock Regional School District
Community Relations Committee Meeting Minutes
Troy Renovation Project Community Input Session
October 27, 2021 (Not Yet Approved)
Troy Elementary, Troy, NH**

Members Present: Betty Tatro, Cheryl McDaniel-Thomas and Dan LeCLair **Absent:** Winston Wright, Karen Wheeler and Colleen Toomey

Other Board Members Present: Scott Peters and Lisa Steadman

Administration Present: Kevin Stone, Troy Principal

Also Present: K.Barker of Barker Associates, Adam Hopkins, Chair Budget Committee and L. Aivaliotis, Recording Secretary

S. Peters called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

CRC Presentation for Troy: S. Peters thanked everyone for coming out tonight.

S.Peters presented his slideshow. He explained the committee will discuss the backlog for the schools, how the district got to this point, the safety issues, the work the School Board has been doing regarding the issues, funding and timeline. Each year the district will fund an article on the ballot for about 1 million dollars for renovations and projects to the schools. For the past 5 years the district has been focused on MTC but unfortunately that means the other schools were not focused on. The schools have life safety issues as well as homeland security issues. We have over 130 items on the backlog. How do we prioritize? Over the past 2 years we have paid for studies to be done to see all of the projects that need to be completed. We now feel that we have a district wide look. How do we choose? Which projects do we do first? We have significant issues we need to focus on. If the work is not completed with a bond, we will have to factor in the 4% inflation rate and every year things will get more expensive. We have to solve the problems and save taxes. The 10-year look is 35 million dollars in projects for the district, 13 million for MRHMS and SAU and 22 million for the elementary schools. S. Peters shared the pictures of the classrooms in the new addition at MTC. He commented we can do this for the rest of the district. We can raise the standard for education.

K. Barker explained he has been working with the district for 2 years studying the buildings. There are a number of life safety code issues throughout the district. He said that people believe that the life safety code issues are grandfathered in but they are not. ADA issues are enforced by a threat or lawsuit. The ADA was enacted in 1992. There was a grace period but it has long passed. It is a Civil Rights Law. You cannot create an area for ADA compliance. The entire building has to be ADA accessible. There are also Homeland Security issues. A lot of bad things have been happening since Columbine. There are other issues besides an active shooter. There are issues with non-custodial parents. There have been one or two active shooter incidents every year over the past 20 years. If a parent was to get into the school and go directly to the classroom, take their child and they do not have custody there would have to be an Amber Alert. You need to have a securely locked vestibule which is connected to the main office. The property is challenging. It is fairly tight, not very large but buildable. The good news is you can drive around it for the fire dept. It has good access. The car and bus pick up is a little awkward. It is separate but tight. The entrance to the building is not easy to find. It was asked who owns the playing fields and K. Stone thought the school did. He added the fields are maintained by the school. K. Barker explained the building consists of 4 parts. The entrance is not ADA and not properly secured. It is the main point of egress but awkward. The connection between the original wing and the gym wing has multiple deficiencies. There is no elevator and there is a hole in the fire door as well as more major problems. The kitchen is small for the size of the school. There is also a lack of toilet facilities. K. Barker showed the picture of the door with the hole in it that opens up over the stairs. It is not legal. When we first started it was asked why additions to Troy, what about a whole new school. He said he did a project in Wilton which is almost a carbon copy of Troy. There were ADA issues and a number of problems and it took 4 times before it passed and the repairs exceeded the cost of the bond and it finally passed with no State Aid. It is proof that it can work.

Troy Project Backlog: S. Peters explained the projects are broken down into categories. There are compliance issues, grant funded issues, standalone issues and the issues that would be covered with the bond. At MTC we renovated a wing not just pieces so that we would not have to redo the work. There is grant funding for the ventilation and the lighting but we need to do all of the work because of the unknown.

The total of the projects if done with the bond now would be 4.5 million but if you wait 10 years it will be 5.5 million.

Option 10: S. Peters explained there were eleven options and the Board decided on Option 10 after input from the towns. Option 10 will renovate Emerson, Troy, Gilsum and close Cutler. MTC will be renovated and will have additions for the Cutler students. Cutler has unsolvable issues and the site is small and too close to the neighbors. The Cutler students and the MTC students will be bussed to one school that will save money and also there will be a savings in energy costs with closing Cutler.

State Funding: K. Barker explained that it is believed that the project can be funded with 50% of State Building Aid. We do not have the specific numbers but the district will only have an 11-million-dollar bond for 20 years at 1.67%. The bond can only pass with a $\frac{3}{5}$ vote. Renovate the buildings and get half of it paid by the State. K. Barker explained for 10 years the State had not funded any projects. The State now will fund the projects upfront. They will pay 80% upfront and the districts will receive the remaining 20% after the completion of the project. The process is competitive. The last round there were 23 projects and 3 were approved. The State application is awarded on a points program. The life safety issues will rank very high and closing Cutler to get rid of the life safety issues will help. Financial needs also gain points, free and reduced lunch numbers and low to medium income. Monadnock should be getting 50% awarded by the State. Renovating this historical building will also give you points.

It was asked if life safety issues are covered by grants. K. Barker explained years ago districts receive funds for life safety issues. He is not sure that they are covered.

S. Peters explained the district had supported a warrant article every year in the amount of 1 or 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ million dollars. If the district were to pass a bond the payment would be 1.2 million and decline each year for 20 years. The payment each year would be built into the budget. This bond would fix a major chunk of the backlog. This bond is for the elementary schools and we also need to fix the SAU and MRMHS.

Timeline: S. Peters explained the blueprinting efforts will be completed after the

Input Sessions and the staff surveys. K. Barker will use the information to come up with the floor plan blueprints which the Board will approve before Christmas. The construction manager will take the plans and cost out everything. The district will receive a firm GMP. The district will submit the State Building Aid application and the district will wait 5 months for a response. The bond will be on the March 2023 warrant and if it passes construction will begin in April. It will take about 1 ½ years to complete. L. Steadman asked if there is any kind of warrant in 2022 for the renovations. S. Peters explained that there is no warrant regarding the Elementary Schools Renovation Project. There may be proposed articles from the Finance and Facilities Committee regarding the Gilsum Fire Alarm Panel and renovations to MRMHS. The NH Municipal Bond Bank will award the bond. K. Barker explained that 80% of the bond will be paid in July and the remaining 20% when the project is complete. It was asked if any construction work would be done between April and July. K. Barker explained the construction company would work without pay. They expect 30 day payments. It was asked about a plan regarding the work and moving the children. K. Barker explained build new first and move the students into that and renovate the area the students have moved from. There will be a lot of shuffling. S. Peters commented we have not had that conversation yet. It was asked what if the bond does not pass and the construction manager did the work. K. Barker explained the construction manager we hire does not do the actual work and subcontracts out. There is not a large cost to have the construction manager on board but the benefit is to work with K. Barker and in the end it is more efficient because of the extra input by the construction manager. The best companies that do schools will ask for cost pre bond work and it is covered in the \$300,000.00 which the voters approved.

Getting the Word Out: S. Peters explained the Board has hired a PR Firm. They are creating a dedicated website for the promotion of the Elementary Schools Renovation Project. They are helping with a paper and social media campaign. S. Peters explained the MRSD.org website and how to access the videos which K. Barker has created for YouTube. The minutes from the School Walk-throughs and the Input Sessions are on the website.

S. Peters asked what would make the property better. L. Steadman said larger, more stimulating spaces for OT and Speech. It was asked about the plan for ADA compliance

issues. K. Barker explained we want to hear the input from these sessions. Some of his ideas are for an elevator for all of the floors, a bathroom on each level, a secure access to the main entrance and move the main entrance to the front of the building. Either move the kitchen or rebuild. It was commented to have bathrooms in the MPR for people to use the facility. K. Barker explained a plan may be to have them close to the entrance of the MPR. K. Barker explained Troy has the highest number of car riders and walkers in the district. This will save on bussing by having a school in a densely populated area.

B. Tatro commented that she likes it best that we do not have to pick one school over another. Everyone gets what they need.

S. Peters thanked C. McDaniel-Thomas for organizing the Input Session.

C. McDaniel-Thomas presented a clipboard for anyone who would like to give their email. These emails will be used to send out additional information regarding the Elementary School Renovation Project.

S. Peter thanked everyone for coming and explained we are really trying to meet all of the needs and lower taxes.

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Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis

MRSD Recording Secretary