

Jamaica School Board & Townshend School Board Joint Collaboration Meeting
September 9th, 2014
7:00p.m. at Jamaica Village School

Jamaica School Board: Stephanie Amyot, Tom Tolbert, Heather Hallenbeck, Anne Reynolds, Amber Burrow.

Townshend School Board: Al Claussen, April Chase, Cliff Passino, and Tricia Shine.

Administration: Dr. Steven John, Victor DeBonis, Deborah Leggott, Laura Hazard.

Members of the Public: Nancy Dyke, Jerry Dyke, Kristina Wright, Susan Stomski, Janet Hamilton, Judy Hawkins.

Stephanie Amyot & Al Claussen called the meeting to order at 7:05p.m.

Victor DeBonis presented preliminary figures to the school boards.

Max student capacity 95 students – Jamaica

110 students – Townshend

205 students – Total Students at Max Capacity *Based on the VT

AOE's guideline of 140 square footage per each student.

For preliminary purposes, the total square footage needed to build a new school building for both Townshend and Jamaica students, would be 28, 700 sq ft of school space. The estimated cost per square foot is \$230. The estimated Cost of Construction, based on square footage, would be \$6,601,000.00. The estimated cost of land acquisition would be \$270,000.00. Victor anticipates the total estimated cost to bond being \$6,871,000.00. Currently, there is no state construction aid available in the state of Vermont. Estimated annual payments over a 20 year period would be \$475,000.00. At this time, it's estimated that 125 students would be enrolled, bringing the total amount to bond to \$5,003,400 and the estimated annual payments (20 years) to \$350,000.00.

There is a lot of room in between the numbers and a lot of discussions to get to a bottom line but if you build towards current numbers, these are the cost projections, according to Mr. DeBonis.

Although there is currently no state funding, the Gov. in a letter to Rebecca Holcombe, listed a number of initiatives during the next legislative session including school construction for districts looking at collaborations.

Dr. John suggests inviting Wardsboro and Windham to join the conversation. Currently, Wardsboro's enrollment is at 58. Windham is currently at 19.

Projected preliminary cost-savings:

Administration:

Principal's Salary - \$81,024.00

Admin. Asst. Salary - \$29,074.00

Benefits - \$37,640.00

Supplies, Travel, Postage, etc. \$4,500.00

Building Maintenance:

Custodian Salary - \$26,445.00

Benefits - \$5,523.00

Contracted Services Repairs - \$9,000.00

Water Testing - \$3,700.00

Insurance - \$3,900.00

Electricity - \$9,000.00

Fuel Oil - \$15,000.00

Supplies, Misc. Expense - \$8,000.00

Staff Reductions:

Salaries - \$158,000.00

*Net Reduction of 3.0 FTE includes foreign language instruction added (+0.5FTE).

Benefits - \$52,000.00

TOTAL ESTIMATE OF SCHOOL OPERATING SAVINGS: \$442,806.00.

A new building is apt to be much more efficient. There are opportunities for energy savings. There may be additional savings in other areas. Class sizes would be increased in this preliminary model.

Dr. John left the meeting at 7:28p.m.

Discussion ensued re: Staffing Needs and Cost-Savings.

Many decisions will need to be made that will drive the costs one way or the other. It's projected that more savings will come from larger classes and reductions in staff. There is a possibility for efficiencies with reducing travel for itinerant teachers.

The boards agree this is a good time to approach other schools (Wardsboro & Windham) for their interest in joining in the project keeping in mind that it could increase economy of scale regarding staffing.

Next Steps:

- ***Creating a solid building plan, curriculum plan, brainstorming the “dream school” e.g. Full-time art teacher – require an art room, etc.***
- ***Jamaica and Townshend school boards will contact the Board Chairs of Wardsboro and Windham to invite them into the discussion of collaboration. (Stephanie Amyot will contact Windham Board & Cliff Passino will contact Wardsboro Board.) The Wardsboro & Windham board chairs can disseminate the information to their own board members as they see fit.***
- ***The administration will include the student populations of Wardsboro and Windham to these preliminary projections after the boards ask Wardsboro and Windham whether or not they are interested in participating in the collaboration efforts.***
- ***The boards will then break into committees to form their “dream school.”***
- ***Receive fine-tuned information from Victor DeBonis on cost-savings (Wardsboro and Windham included).***

Next Collaboration Meeting:

Date to be determined once Wardsboro & Windham accept or deny the invitation to join the discussion. If they accept, a meeting with all interested boards will be scheduled.

Tom combined the survey questions with the answers as recorded in Alison’s meeting minutes from the last collaboration meeting held on June 26th, 2014. He provided the results in a handout.

Public Comments:

One member of the public emphasized concern for both buildings, not being as sustainable as they are today, in the near future.

Another member of the public stated that she commends the boards for slogging through all of the details. She said, "There's a concern beyond most of the things presented tonight but it turns up in the questionnaire: 'Where are we as a State and not being able to sustain where we are at today in the future?' During the last legislative session, we were in Montpelier for a few of the hearings, and there are a lot of schools in the State who are in real big trouble for the way things are being done currently and sustainability in the future is hard to see. The very first question: high test scores in correlation with small class sizes – there isn't very much correlation between those two things. There has been anxiety about making class sizes larger but the statistics show that wouldn't be a problem. The correlation is really with the teacher who is teaching the class. There isn't a heavy populated metropolitan area in Vermont. Increased class sizes can still produce good results."

Jamaica Board thanked Townshend board for coming to Jamaica tonight.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. Stephanie Amyot adjourned the joint meeting at 8:05p.m.

Respectively Submitted,

Alison Hescok