

Town of New Fairfield
Board of Selectmen
4 Brush Hill Road
New Fairfield, CT 06812

MINUTES
PUBLIC HEARING
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2009
7:00 P.M.
HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY

Members present:

John Hodge, First Selectman
Tom Corbett, Selectman
Ron Oliveri, Selectman

Other Town Officials Present:

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph Castagnola
Assistant Superintendent of Schools Alicia Roy
Board of Education Chairman Kim Hanson
Board of Education member Ed Siebert
Permanent Building Committee Chairman Pete Viola
Town Treasurer Phil Cammarano
Finance Director Jay Waterman
Accounting Manager Ed Sbordone
Director of Management Services Craig McClain
Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross
Meeting House Hill School Principal Sarah McLain
Scott Pellman, B&L Companies
Ken Biega, O&G Industries
Rob Ricard, Legnos & Cramer
Matt Spoerndle, Phoenix Advisors
Board of Finance Alternate Tony Sanches

Call To Order First Selectman John Hodge called the Public Hearing to order at 7:00pm and noted that the purpose of this public hearing was to inform the taxpayers about a potential school project for Meeting House Hill School and the High School.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph Castagnola spoke of the project and noted that the power point presentation will be on the New Fairfield Public Schools website by Thursday, March 5th. Dr. Castagnola encouraged all taxpayers to become informed regarding the project and noted that he was available to answer any questions or to speak to any group regarding the project. Copies of the power point presentation will be available in the offices of all four schools as well as the Board of Education office.

Board of Education Chairman Kim Hanson thanked the Board of Selectmen, Permanent Building Committee, the Board of Education and all the administrators for all their hard work in getting to this point. Mr. Hanson encouraged taxpayers to stay informed.

Assistant Superintendent of Schools Alicia Roy spoke of the "Education Specs" for the projects. There are a set of ed specs for Meeting House Hill School and for the High School. These ed specs must be approved by the state.

Scott Pellman from BL Companies went over the specifics for the school projects and explained the educational specifications. Mr. Pellman spoke of the “renovate as new” process and reimbursement from the state regarding the “renovate as new” process. Mr. Pellman showed a layout of the proposed project for Meeting House Hill School and explained the potential for a “future” addition if necessary. Mr. Pellman spoke of the proposed project for the High School and explained that it would be primarily in the science rooms.

Ken Biega, Construction Manager for O&G Industries spoke of the schedule and costs. Mr. Biega spoke of a possible referendum date of May 2nd and noted that filing to the state must be done by June 30, 2009. Mr. Biega went over the total cost for both Meeting House Hill School and the High School and explained the net cost to taxpayers after the state reimbursement.

Matt Spoerndle from Phoenix Advisors spoke of the bonding and gave examples of the increase in taxes for the average house in New Fairfield.

Permanent Building Committee Chairman Pete Viola spoke of the project and noted that construction costs and interest rates are at historic lows and it would be a good time to do the project. Mr. Viola noted that the Permanent Building Committee will oversee both projects.

Members of the Board of Selectmen asked questions regarding the project. Specific questions included upgrades to the schools and safety concerns. There was a discussion about “geothermal” heating and the cost savings for more efficient equipment in the schools. There was a discussion about future enrollment estimates and making sure the project was neither too small or too large.

Many members of the public spoke of the school projects and asked questions regarding the potential size. Members of the public in attendance encouraged taxpayers to get involved in the process and to stay informed.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph Castagnola reiterated his offer to answer any questions. Dr. Castagnola also thanked the BOE, BOS, PBC and the administrators for all their hard work.

First Selectman John Hodge noted that there will be two more meetings in the near future to discuss the school building projects. Tentative dates for these meetings will be Wednesday, March 18th and Wednesday, April 1st. It is hopeful that these meetings can be in conjunction with the regularly scheduled Board of Finance meetings. First Selectman Hodge noted that he was available for any questions by the taxpayers.

Adjournment

Ron Oliveri made a motion to adjourn the public hearing at 8:47pm. Tom Corbett seconded the motion.

Vote: 3-0-0 (Motion approved)

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Kloos