

**MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF DIRECTORS, BOARD OF EDUCATION &
BUILDING COMMITTEE
AUGUST 10, 1999
LINCOLN CENTER HEARING ROOM
7:30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Chairman Cassano, Vice-Chairman Howroyd, Secretary Negri, Directors Morancey, Hachadourian, McMahon, Crockett, Thompson, Board of Education Directors Mercier, Hackett, Barlow, Falcetta, Lok, Holmes, Building Committee Chairman Maffe, Members Brindamour, Epstein, Murphy, Lawrence and Bourque.

ALSO: General Manager Sartor, Deputy Manager Werbner, Superintendent of Schools Beitman and Public Works Director Lozis.

ABSENT: Director Becker, Board of Education Chairman Lappen and Director Spadaccini and Perlstein, Building Committee Members Cole, Walsh and Copeland.

The meeting was called to order at 7:44 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Chairman Cassano.

Chairman Cassano stated that tonight would be the discussion of a potential bond issue. Superintendent of Schools Alan Beitman will make a presentation of each of the schools. The Building Committee will also be making a presentation. Following that will be a question and answer period of Board members. Because of legal requirements, a recommendation will be made this evening for a public hearing on Tuesday, August 24, 1999. At that time the public will have an opportunity to speak on this item. On Tuesday, August 31, 1999, the Board of Directors will meet to vote as to an amount for the bond referendum.

Superintendent of Schools Beitman gave a presentation of what is believed to be the next 25 years of the Manchester Public Schools which began officially in 1997 with the Lawrence Report. These renovations would be for 10 "new" modern elementary school. Interiors would be gutted and reconstructed to like-new condition. This plan calls for equity and parity among the 10 schools with dedicated computer lab spaces, art rooms, music rooms along with instructional space. The plan would also include ADA accessibility and a separate area for car and school drop-offs.

A key element to these renovations would be the maintenance of these schools on an annual basis. Building and Sites Subcommittee, chaired by Jon Mercier, is developing for adoption a stringent policy on accountability and a commitment with regard to the maintenance, repair and capital improvement of the buildings. This policy will be adopted in October 1999.

Construction for Phase I for four schools would begin on or about December 2000 completion January 2002, Phase II for three schools would begin July 2001 completion September 2002, Phase III for the last three schools would begin January 2002 completion January 2003 and would include swing space during each construction phase.

On August 3, 1999 the Board of Education passed along 5 recommendations to the Board of Directors as follows:

1. The base plan for 10 elementary schools at a cost of \$102 million.
2. Emergency repairs to the eyebrows of the roofs at both Illing and Manchester High school and the resurfacing of Manchester High track depending on plans for the high school for a total of \$550,000.
3. Complete installation of air conditioning in existing classrooms for \$2,126,000.
4. Acquisition of computer work stations and medial retrieval equipment for \$2,320,000.
5. Consideration of joint-use space and renovation for gymnasiums, classrooms and ball fields for a cost of \$2,493,000.

The total project brought forth by the Board of Education is \$109,493,000.

Frank Maffe, Chairman of the Building Committee, asked for the Board of Directors to look at this as a good investment in which the state would participate in at least 45% of the total cost. At a meeting of August 5th the Building Committee voted to recommend to the Board of Directors that a bond issue be placed on the November 1999 ballot for the additions and renovations to the 10 elementary schools which include the recommendations adopted by the Board of Education on August 3rd as stated above. In addition the Building Committee added an extra \$100,000 for the outdoor track at the high school in lieu of resurfacing depending on plans for the high school. They also recommended to provide a contingency to ensure adequate addition space is incorporated in the 10 elementary school to maintain equity and parity among the schools, to meet joint use considerations at Washington Elementary School and meet custodial storage needs at all schools in the amount of \$500,000. They would also include to provide improved parent drop off at Buckley for \$88,000, Highland Park for \$24,000, Keeney for \$68,000, Robertson for \$24,000 in the total amount of \$204,000. Repair parking lots at Buckley

and Martin for a total of \$125,000. This would be for an additional \$929,000 recommendation for the total bond of \$110,422,000. There were two items that were considered that were defeated as not being necessary at this time. Those were air conditioning to the gymnasiums for \$320,000 and the windows at Washington School for \$730,000.

Questions were entertained at this time.

Director Hachadourian wanted to clarify the equity and parity of all schools. Mr. Beitman explained to him the process in achieving this. Director Hachadourian asked if there will be a need for a Bentley School building in the future. Mr. Beitman stated that they envision a new high school site with some joint space shared between the alternative school and the high school on the same site. At the present time they would need a small portion of Bentley School for use for the next 5 years. They have received estimates on some work to be done which would come out of their operating budget for this year. Director Hachadourian asked if children would be redistricted. Mr. Beitman stated that the plan is to maintain the neighborhood schools as they are.

Director Morancey asked about the Manchester Regional Academy. Mr. Beitman stated that it is one of the buildings that is in very good condition. An expansion of their food services program is planned for the future with Board of Education capital funds. Director Morancey asked why it was decided not to air condition the gymnasiums. Chairman of the Building Committee Maffe stated that it was a choice of the principals and Superintendent Beitman between the cafeterias or the gymnasiums. This could be changed upon necessity.

Director Crockett asked that the swing site concept be explained. Mr. Beitman stated that the first concern was the safety of the staff and the students. He stated that there are several options that have not yet been finalized. Swing space would be areas where entire schools would be relocated while the interior of the buildings are gutted and major construction is done. This would allow in relatively short order the renovations and new construction with the least disruption to the students, staff and parents. Built into the plan is portable classrooms to be located at a site that would be safe, off the main routes with all the comforts of a school setting. Commercial sites are also being looked at along with the lower campus at Manchester Community Technical College. All these costs are included in the project. Director Crockett asked for an example for some of the costs included in the \$2.5 million for joint use of buildings. Mr. Halpern from Fletcher Thompson stated that this would include irrigation and grading of all the ball fields, some additional spectator seating, and replacing back stops, bleacher repairs and replacing the tile floors in many of the gymnasium areas to wood. Chairman Cassano asked why this

couldn't be considered educational relative to reimbursement. Mr. Jim Bodin from Fletcher Thompson stated that the seating and ball field maintenance would not be eligible items, although every effort would be made to have these reimbursable. He thought that the floors possibly could be reimbursable.

Secretary Negri asked that Mr. Beitman elaborate on the concept of a new high school. Mr. Beitman stated that part of the reason for removing the high school from the original proposal was that it is clear that the size of the high school is too large and also the ability of a large high school to address the individual needs of the students. What is being proposed is that when school begins this fall, to utilize the PTA's, parents, community leaders and professional staff and closely examine 6-12 grade education. One of the best opportunities that is available to us at the present is to have a close working relationship with Manchester Community Technical College. It is a desire to build a program that takes advantage of this. It is felt that we have the opportunity to build a high tech vocationally oriented high school either on the community college property or very close.

In addition, the Bentley site was removed from the proposal because of the cost. That gives us another opportunity to have joint space that could be shared with Manchester High School, academically and an alternative program for 250 students. One of the issues that is being looked at is to make the schools more personal and friendly, as well as, offering the kinds of instructional programs that the children will take advantage of. He then offered further ideas for the middle schools.

Chairman Cassano stated that part of the Board's goal is to increase the recreational program for children in the summer and would hope that air conditioning the gymnasiums would be considered in the final proposal, particularly from the community use aspect. He thought that if we do air condition the gymnasiums, we will generate more community use of those buildings. He asked that the Manchester Community Technical College swing sites be revisited for possible use with the thought that they are state owned. He asked if there was reimbursement for swing sites from the state. Mr. Bodin from Fletcher Thompson stated that there would be reimbursement for purchase and renovation of swing site space and there may be reimbursement for leasing portable classrooms. He believed that there would be partial reimbursement or possibly full reimbursement depending on the details. He will be meeting with the state on August 16th regarding this. Chairman Cassano stated that it has been said, because of pressing needs at the high school, that we should delay the elementary schools and focus on the high school. Mr. Beitman stated that certainly the critics of the elementary plan coming first have a very valid observation, although we are really dealing with two issues. The elementary schools need to be refurbished, rebuilt and made appropriate for instruction. The other goes back to what we want to do for grades 6-12. He didn't feel that it was in the best interests for the students to postpone the elementary decision which is clearly defined

while deciding for another year on grades 6-12. The ultimate result would be less for more. Chairman Cassano stated that we know the total figure but will need the bottom line figure less the reimbursable amount to go to the voters. He asked when they would have that figure. Mr. Beitman stated that they have an appointment with the Facilities Department of the State Board of Education on Monday, August 16th to get some clear guidelines as to what the reimbursement would be for like-new construction. This is a new area for the state and clearly undefined in regard to the reimbursement. Chairman Cassano stated that this would be too late to legally advertise for a public hearing on the 17th and asked if they could provide an estimate on the conservative side to advertise and then it would be reduced if necessary at the public hearing. This figure could not be increased.

Director Hachadourian thanked all who were involved in this proposal and was delighted with the presentation and the proposal on the table.

Director Morancey asked that along with those numbers for the bonding issue, a determination on the mill rate impact by the 24th be identified.

General Manager Sartor stated that the appropriate number is \$110,742,000, however, based upon an approved estimate from the consultants, the bond authorization portion of that will be then reduced in an amount less than the \$110,742,000 based upon a conservative estimate of the reimbursement rate which is expected to be received in the next few days.

Vice-Chairman Howroyd stated that he had some concerns about the sequencing of this project but felt that the Superintendent addressed those. He felt that what was before us is work that needs to be done regardless of what we would feel is the optimal sequence. If we wait one year, we would lose \$2 million based on professional estimates which would be one very good reason to go forward on this project. He planned to support this recommendation.

Board of Education Director Holmes made a suggestion to split referendum items on the ballot in order.

Vice-Chairman Howroyd moved and Secretary Negri seconded a motion to RESOLVE that the Board of Directors hereby set the date of August 24, 1999 at 7:30 p.m. for public hearing at which electors and taxpayers shall have the opportunity to speak for or against the adoption of the \$110,742,000 appropriation and bond authorization for the school improvement project. Notice of the public hearing shall be made in accordance with Chapter 3 of the Town Charter. The

General Manager is hereby directed to add the above item to the agenda of the public hearing and the Board of Directors' meeting on August 24, 1999 to be voted on at such meeting. Eight voted in favor.

Chairman Cassano reminded people that the public will have a chance to speak at a Public Hearing to be held on August 24th at 7:30 p.m. in the Lincoln Center Hearing Room. At that time we will identify questions that need to be answered and following the public hearing we will answer them. The Board of Directors recessed the meeting until 7:30 p.m. August 31, 1999 and at that time will take action on the Resolutions. On November 2nd, the public will have an opportunity to vote. He stressed how necessary this project is and how important it is to the Town of Manchester.

Adjournment: 9:18 p.m.

/jld

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

SECRETARY, BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MANCHESTER, CONNECTICUT