

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17
BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
MARCH 28, 2006**

A special meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held March 28, 2006, at Burr Elementary. Board Chair Robert Baranoff called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Members present: Nancy Gorski, Robert Baranoff, Mark Almeida, Daniel Cronin, and Michael Trahan. Jo Ferjak arrived at 7:11 p.m. Diane Stock arrived at 7:18 p.m. Amy Jacques-Purdy arrived at 7:21 p.m.

Members absent: Mary Withington, Douglas Stevenson, and Richard Cabral.

Also present: Superintendent of Schools Gary S. Mala, Director of Buildings and Grounds Michael Distefano, Middle School Principal Mim Wagner, Middle School Assistant Principal Michael Susi, Building Committee Member Kjell Tollefsen, and Tom Dowling and Julie Norris from Jeter, Cook and Jepson. Mr. Tollefsen left at 8:50 p.m.

Review of Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment Process

Architect Tom Dowling described the bid process regarding the furniture, fixtures, and equipment for the new intermediate school. He noted the project is proceeding extremely well, notwithstanding the issues that have occurred with the local town agencies during the project.

(Jo Ferjak arrived)

Mr. Dowling explained that the design process began about a year ago. He noted the budget for the furniture, fixtures, and equipment is \$1.6 million, or about \$10 per square foot. The estimate the Board has seen is not final but is a tool for the architects. How the bids come in determines the bottom line. He stated the specifications were determined through many working sessions.

Mr. Tollefsen noted the Board will vote on the package and then it will go to the State Department of Education's School Facilities Unit for review and approval.

(Diane Stock and Amy Jacques-Purdy arrived)

Mr. Cronin asked if there is flexibility in how the dollars are spent. Mr. Tollefsen stated there is until the specifications are drawn up.

Mr. Baranoff asked Ms. Norris for a status report on where the process goes from here. She noted that program data sheets had been distributed to the Building Committee two years ago, which were developed through discussions at the beginning of the project. The room layout was also done. Meetings were held by area and teachers were asked for their specific needs. After the meetings were held a generic list was created and categories of types of furniture were created. A price, or cost estimate, is put on each item based on the budget for the particular

town. The cost estimate is a “place holder”. Samples of furniture are reviewed for quality. When an item is chosen, it becomes the specification. The State says that substitutes are acceptable. Every type of desk and chair was brought to the school in the fall for Ms. Wagner and the staff to look at. Teachers were willing to give up items so students could be comfortable.

Ms. Norris also noted that the State requires that the district accept the lowest qualified bidder. She noted that planning on what to purchase cannot wait until the end of the project. After the bidding process the vendors are identified, but the district makes the decision on what bid to accept.

Ms. Wagner explained that the decisions have been made with the support of the teachers. She looked at eight schools prior to the start of the project. Decisions have not been made quickly and were based on functionality and durability. The classroom furniture is designed for adolescents and guaranteed to last 15 years.

Ms. Norris reviewed the bidding process for the furniture, fixtures, and equipment and technology. A project manual is produced and a summary sheet is included, which becomes the bid form. The room lists are included along with the specifications of everything in each room. A notice to bid goes into the newspaper and several vendors are sent the information. Mr. Tollefsen noted that the bid document must be approved by the Building Committee, the Board of Education, and the State Department of Education School Facilities Unit prior to it going out to bid. The documents are picked up by the vendors, who pay a fee, and they will price out the items they can supply. Bids are opened and read by category and anyone who is interested can look at the bid documents. Every bid is compared by item. Substitutes would be discussed with the Building Committee if they are included on the bid. Ms. Norris also noted that the State contracts can be looked at for pricing. The Board can continue to review the items and changes can be made during that period.

Mr. Dowling noted that the bid cycle is off by a semester from everyone else who is opening a school in September, so he feels companies will be very interested in bidding on the furniture, fixtures, and equipment.

The \$25 price listed for an American Flag was questioned because they usually cost \$5-\$10. Ms. Norris again explained that the price was a “place holder” and the price would change once the document got to the Building Committee. She noted the document the Board is reviewing is a preliminary document and was not meant to be distributed. Mr. Mala then questioned why it was presented as a finished document at a meeting he recently attended. Mr. Tollefsen explained that there is much more work to be done on the document, which will be refined up to the time it is finalized for bid. Mr. Dowling stated that ultimately Jeter, Cook and Jepson are responsible to determine the specifications after seeking input from the district. Mr. Mala noted that the Board wants to see the document before voting on it. Ms. Norris noted that the Building Committee has the responsibility of choosing the furniture, fixtures, and equipment.

Board members continued to be uncertain about what they were being asked to approve and felt they did not have enough information. Ms. Norris stated they would be approving the actual specifications for all of the furniture, fixtures, and equipment in the school. She noted the specific list would be available next Wednesday. Mr. Cronin questioned how the Board would know if they have received the best price through the bidding process. Mr. Mala noted that there would be a presentation to the Building Committee of the larger items to be bid on April 5. He invited Board members to attend. Ms. Norris noted it will only be 90-95 percent complete and there will be contingencies on it. She stated the Board will be approving an estimate of what will be going out to bid. Mr. Baranoff questioned how the Board could be expected to vote on something that is incomplete.

Mr. Baranoff asked if it made sense to get a price for different numbers of items purchased to see if there is a larger discount for more items ordered. Mr. Dowling noted that the State refers to the student census, and the project is only approved for 900 students. Ms. Norris also noted that once an item is bid, the price is only good for 90 days. Mr. Tollefsen suggested speaking to the School Facilities Unit regarding the issue of discounts for volume purchases. The Building Committee will look into this.

Mr. Cronin asked if the district could go out to State contract if a bid is rejected. He noted that while no one is questioning the amount of work being done by the Building Committee, the Board must look at every dollar because they are trying to find money for education and need to save money wherever they can.

Mr. Dowling noted the project is funded at 49.7 percent by the State and the total dollar amount was approved at a referendum.

Ms. Gorski stated the Board would like to see the written set of assumptions as a part of the approval process. Mr. Tollefsen noted the Building Committee will work on it and present it to the Board, noting it will be global in nature.

Mr. Mala noted that the project has gone especially well given the hurdles that have occurred. However, he needed to know how the decisions are being made because he must answer for the project in the end and must work with the Board to make sure they have the answers in order to act accordingly.

Adjournment

Mr. Almeida ***MOVED*** and Ms. Jacques-Purdy ***SECONDED*** the meeting adjourn. Motion passed unanimously at 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Lang, Board Clerk

Approval:

Amy Jacques-Purdy, Secretary

Date

Approved as presented at the May 9, 2006 Board of Education meeting.

S:minutes:spec mtg 3.28.06