

**EAST HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING  
EAST HAVEN HIGH SCHOOL BOARDROOM  
35 WHEELBARROW LANE  
EAST HAVEN, CONNECTICUT 06513**

**TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 2008  
7:00 P.M.**

**PRESENT:** Mrs. Vitale, Mr. DeNuzzo, Mr. Finkle, Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio,  
Mr. Hennessey, Mr. Inglese and Mrs. Padua

**ABSENT:** Mr. Hammell and Mrs. Vineyard

**ALSO PRESENT:** Mr. Serio, Superintendent of Schools  
Mr. Martorella, Assistant Superintendent of Schools  
Mr. Meoli, Administrative Director to the Superintendent  
Mrs. Acquarulo, Director of Pupil Services  
Mr. Rizza, Director of Finance  
Mr. Ralph Mauro, Asst. Director of Admin. & Management  
Mr. Gene Ruocco, Democratic Town Chairman  
Mr. Lewis Langella, School Building Committee  
Mr. Joseph D'Albero, School Building Committee

**1. OPEN MEETING**

Mrs. Vitale called to order the Special Board meeting at 7:07 p.m. Mrs. Vitale requested a roll call.

Mr. DeNuzzo – Present  
Mr. Finkle – Present  
Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio – Present  
Mr. Hammell – Absent  
Mr. Hennessey – Present  
Mr. Inglese – Present  
Mrs. Padua – Present  
Mrs. Vineyard – Absent  
Mrs. Vitale - Present

**2. Discussion of Conditions of East Haven Public School Facilities Including Condition of Roofs, Need for Renovations, and Energy Conservation Measures**

Mr. Serio stated he had spoken with Mr. Mauro regarding the submission of the ED049 to the State for reimbursement on some of these projects. Mr. Mauro had done some legwork on roofs at four of the schools. He wanted to include some energy conservation items in the project with the roofs. These four roofs were picked because they were over 20 years old.

Mr. Mauro stated he had spoken with the State and if the roofs were 20 years or older, there was a 100% reimbursement with no questions asked. You could apply for the roofs at any time. He wanted to discuss the roofs with the energy part that went along with it. The State would give them 67.86% as reimbursement. Mr. Mauro spoke about the figures on Page 3 and stated it was roughly estimated at \$3 million. They would get \$2,021,000 from the State and it would cost the Town only \$957,000. The energy portion worked in conjunction with the roofs. He spoke about putting solar panels on the new roofs. The two should go hand-in-hand. The Clean Energy Fund basically gives you about 53% of the cost of the project. It was reimbursable through an educational grant. Mr. Mauro stated the project would cost \$6,225,000. He felt they would be foolish not to take advantage of doing these projects.

There was discussion on the long-term plans for the use of the schools and whether or not they would continue to use all the buildings. Mr. Mauro felt they needed to look at this school, the high school, for energy purposes. It was also reimbursable from the State to the tune of 53% from the Connecticut Energy Fund. He thought that one of the schools that needed to be looked at was the Middle School. If they were to keep the school, it would need new windows and also the solar panels. Mr. Mauro stated they needed some direction as to where they would go with all of this.

There was discussion on whether the State needed to see documentation. Mr. Mauro had called the State to find out. These four schools were over 20 years old and the State would not even question. The portion besides the roofs, for example the difference on the solar panels, they would have to go to the State because that was done through the General Assembly. It had to be in by June 30<sup>th</sup>. The process for the roofs would be started sooner. They would work in conjunction with the State and Clean Energy Fund to put together the Solar Panel System. The roof part they could do, but the rest they would have to wait a whole year.

Mrs. Vitale asked if they were talking about doing the roofs this summer. Mr. Mauro stated no, they were putting together this program so they could do it next summer. There was discussion on the timeframe with school opening and closing. Mr. Mauro stated if they had multiple companies doing the work, it would probably be a month or month and a half. This would be done over the summer.

There was discussion on other things that might need to be done besides windows and roofs. They would have to look at each school and see what was needed. They could apply for all of it. There was discussion on the payment of the projects. Mr. Rizza explained the process of borrowing notes while the project was taking place. He explained you have to borrow the actual money and when it is bonded, they pay you back the 68% as we are paying off our debt. There was further discussion on interest payments, bonding and the application process.

There was discussion on whether this was a risk to the Board or not. Mr. Rizza explained how it could be a risk. If they decided to do these four schools and five years down the road the Board says they don't need Overbrook School anymore and

they want to turn it back to the Town for offices or whatever, the State comes in at that point and says to us, it costs \$350,000 of which we paid you for five years worth of interest and principal. We want that back and you will not get the balance of the monies. It would not be an educational facility any longer. This would happen for any time during that 20-year period. Enrollment for the district had gone down by about 400 kids in the last four years. Mrs. Vitale stated she had been saying for a couple of years that they should do a redistricting plan to condense their facilities.

Financial discussion ensued and it was determined that the earliest time for borrowing money for this would be in August 2009 when the project would be completed.

Mr. D'Albero spoke about the roof at Momauguin School not being 20 years old; they had remodeled that building. Mr. Mauro stated he had gotten these numbers from the State and these were the records they had. Mr. Finkle stated this had taken place when he was on the Board about 14 or 15 years ago. Mr. Langella stated it was almost as old as this building. Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio said the whole building wasn't remodeled. Dahill had done the roof. Mr. DeNuzzo stated they needed to check with them. Mr. Rizza stated they would check their own records. There was discussion on when this school had been done and what was done to it. There was further conversation about what the Board of Education had to do in order to find out what they needed to do at each of the schools so they could move forward with these projects. If they didn't move forward then nothing would happen especially with the energy grants.

Mr. Finkle stated that no matter what they did with any of the schools, the energy piece was a benefit even if you sell the buildings later on in the program. Mr. Inglese wanted to know what the timeframe was to put a roof and the grids on four schools at once if you figure the kids get out the 20<sup>th</sup> of June and they come back in session after Labor Day. Would they get a guarantee that it would be complete? What would they do if they needed another three weeks? Mr. Mauro responded that was a hard thing to say. You don't know how many bidders you are going to have. Those bidding on our schools would not bid on all four schools. They would make sure they were able to perform. The solar panels were installed on top of the roof, so those could be done while the kids were in school.

Mrs. Vitale stated they needed to complete the forms and get them into the State to get approved. Then it goes to the School Building Committee and they put it out to bid and take over the project. All they needed to do was to put new roofs on. There was discussion on how an architect was needed and engineers and how they would work in conjunction with the firms that handled the solar grids. It was asked whether the cost of that was absorbed with the architect. Mr. Mauro stated yes, absolutely.

Mr. Hennessey stated he did not believe anything is what you think it is. They had a hard time getting their cafeterias to have hot water and now they were going to generate their own electricity? They needed a different kind of staff – engineering type of people for a grid that big that made that much power. You don't just plug it in. Mr. Mauro stated there was no maintenance. Mr. Hennessey responded there had to be something. Power grids were complicated. What if a bolt of lightning hits it? Who were they going to call? Mr. Mauro stated obviously they would have a firm

that handled this type of thing because they could not handle it themselves. Mr. Hennessey felt that it started to get to be something that they never envisioned at this point. There was some discussion on the problems in the new high school. Mr. Hennessey stated it did not cost zero cents to run and maintain something like this.

Mr. Langella stated that things were cut on this building; the staffing was cut on this building. Major staffing that brought on a lot of those problems you talked about. The generator should have been exercised once a week here. Mr. Hennessey stated that probably no one here knew how to run it. Mr. Mauro stated that no one even checked these things in five years. Mr. D'Albero stated the biggest problem they had was there was no preventive maintenance program on the books. They had a maintenance staff that did nothing. Mr. Langella stated it costs money and saves you money in the long run. You had to expend that money.

Mr. Hennessey stated a month ago they were cutting costs -- it was unbelievable. They said cut this, get rid of curriculum leaders. Now they were coming up with new stuff, they didn't even know how to run. It was the same money -- it came out of the taxpayers' pocket. Mr. Ruocco said the whole purpose was to say they had more money in the school budget next year -- energy-saving things. He was afraid they would have to go in with their eyes open. Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio asked weren't they supposed to have so much green within a certain timeframe. Mr. Mauro stated yes.

There was discussion on some energy saving things that had been done in the district. Mr. Ruocco stated just because something was difficult, it didn't mean they couldn't do it. There would be training for people who were going to take over. They could walk through Bernard School or the Branford schools to see what they had done.

There was discussion on how the "ball was dropped" on the high school building. They now had a system that was not working properly. If it was working properly, the bills would be less. Mr. Hennessey stated he had been an engineer and had done this stuff many more times than anyone at this table. Nothing turned out exactly the way you envisioned it.

Mr. Langella stated as a building committee member, they welcomed this. To do a project like this was great, but it needed to be supported for ten or twenty years down the road. When this came to be a certain thing, it needed to be maintained. There was further discussion on the importance of preventive maintenance. Mr. Finkle stated that they did not have this plugged into the budget now or on a regular basis. Could they add to it? Mrs. Vitale stated that Mr. Serio would have to find a way to plug it in. Mr. Mauro stated somebody put a deal together and took that part of maintenance out of the contract. That was why some of them were not working. Some of them were sabotaged. You need the right people to watch the system to make sure they know what they are doing. Mr. D'Albero stated that the maintenance person needed to go through a list. They needed to ask the principal why the lights were going out. Then they have to go outside the system and get an electrical contractor to determine what was wrong.

Mr. Serio asked who watched this building. This building didn't last five years before the floors were bubbling up, the water pipes were never even connected; this place was a nightmare. Mr. D'Albero stated that the building committee was never informed about what happened. Mr. Serio stated he agreed with Mr. Hennessey that you could not sit on your hands and do nothing. You also could not work on a hand-to-mouth budget every year either. Both he and Mr. Rizza had cut a ton of money out of buildings and grounds for next year. Mr. Finkle stated that was the account they always went to when making cuts. Mr. Langella stated as a taxpayer and parent he felt they should not say no to this. They needed to understand that they had to make a commitment to keep this up. They should buy a program and assist people to make that happen.

There was discussion on how moving quickly on this before other districts caught on and the monies dried up. Mr. Serio stated he wanted to check on two things. The first was if the monies were eligible to schools like Overbrook. He wanted to make sure all the programs running at Overbrook would qualify because programs like the Little Jackets Program occupied classrooms. He didn't want any surprises down the road. He wanted to make sure they were in compliance.

Mr. Inglese wanted to know if there was a reason the other 160 towns did not jump on this. Was it because they did not know about it or they did not believe in it? Mr. Ruocco stated that it was relatively new. Mr. Serio talked about the high school campus and how it still held the number one spot. They must have done something right. Do we have problems? Yes, it is a huge building. Mr. Hennessey compared the cost of electricity at Deer Run School vs. this high school. It cost \$1,000 a month at Deer Run and at the high school it cost \$40,000.

Mr. Mauro felt they needed to meet for a second round of discussions to look at energy for the high school.

**3. Possible Approval of Educational Specifications Regarding Any Proposed School Building Projects**

After some discussion, Mrs. Vitale stated they needed to table Item No. 3 Possible approval of educational specifications regarding any proposed building projects. No action was taken on this item.

**4. Possible Approval to Request Town Council Authorization to Apply for State Grant Reimbursement for Approved School Building Projects (Submission of ED049)**

Mr. Serio recommended the Board approve the request for Town Council authorization to apply for State grant reimbursement for approved school building projects.

Motion was made by Mr. Inglese and seconded by Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio.

Any discussion on the motion?

Mr. DeNuzzo asked if the ED049 would encompass the four schools as they had in the paperwork. Mr. Mauro stated yes, they would fill it out in conjunction with the Board of Education. Mr. DeNuzzo wanted to make sure that Momauguin School qualified for the 20 years.

Mr. Mauro stated he would like to ask that this be approved in two sections: the energy part and the roof part. He would like to file an ED049 for the roofs and get that going and then do one for the energy part of it.

Any further questions? There were none.

Mr. Serio stated he would like to recommend that they amend the motion. He recommended the Board approve the request and submission for Town Council authorization to apply for the ED049 in two separate proposals for State grant reimbursement.

Motion was made by Mr. Inglese and seconded by Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio.

Any discussion on the motion? There was none.

Any opposition to the motion? There were three (3) opposed which were Mr. Finkle, Mr. Hennessey and Mr. DeNuzzo.

Any abstentions to the motion? There were none.

Vote was four (4) in favor with three (3) opposed. Motion carries.

## **5. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. DeNuzzo made a motion to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio. The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,**

**MARILYN VITALE, CHAIRPERSON  
EAST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION**