

Bruno M. Ponterio Ridge Street School
Building Construction Planning Advisory Committee

Date of Meeting: 3 September 2008

Meeting Attendees:	Robin Willig	BMPRSS Staff
	Martha Rosen	BMPRSS Staff
	Trudi Davis	Federation President
	Bradley Hamburger	Parent
	Volkert Braren	Parent
	Frank Doria	Parent
	Brian Rothschild	Parent
	Joseph Denn	Parent
	Andrew Rosson	Parent
	Mitchell Levy	Parent
	Deborah Faust	Community Representative
	Jacqueline Freedman	Community Representative
	Alan Willig	Community Representative
	Larry Rand	Community Representative
	Alan Salzman	Community Representative
	Tracy Taylor	Assistant Principal BMPRSS
	William J. Stark	Superintendent of Schools, Blind Brook-Rye UFSD
	Jonathan Ross	Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Facilities
	Carmine Crisci	BMPRSS Maintenance Foreman
	Douglas Chu	KSQ Architects
	Armand Quadrini	KSQ Architects
	Kevin Sawyer	Triton Construction
	Steven Kaplan	President Blind Brook Board of Education
	Glen Schuster	Member of Blind Brook Board of Education
	Herbert Stelzner	Community Member
	Marilyn Stelzner	Community Member
	Rosa Piccolo	Community Member
	Sheri Zarkower	Vice-President, Blind Brook Board of Education

Agenda

7:30 pm - BM Ponterio Ridge Street School Band Room

- I. Sub-Committees will report to the Planning Advisory Committee as a whole
- II. Begin next steps

This meeting was open to the public so please note additional names above who are not part of Planning Advisory Committee.

The committee will switch off on chairs. Tracy chaired the last meeting. Larry R. will chair this meeting. Carmine and Brad will decide which one of them will chair the next meeting.

Steve Kaplan made it clear that any discussions or minutes should not be shared with the public until the Board has voted on the construction plan. Decisions have not been made and should not be shared until the board has made a consensus.

Larry R. announced that the sub- committees will share the highlights of their meetings.

Report from Finance Sub-Committee

Andrew Rosson went through minutes for Finance Sub-Committee. They went over bond specifics, typical process, funding cap, and the assumptions out there in the environment. The ones expressed were that:

- Must do roofs no matter what
- Economic climate is challenging
- Empty nester resistance
- Additional reluctance of support from current high school only families
- Even existing elementary parents will not see benefits
- Justification of additional classrooms based on declining demographics

Recommendation:

- Seek current approval for bond of \$12.5-\$15
- Fix infrastructure needs based on that cap
- No additional classrooms
- No replacement of butler building
- Minus enrichment center improvements
- Reduction in library improvements
- Addition for complete kitchen/server room redesign/rebuilding

Can we delay this whole entire thing by a year? Jon Ross said that he practically lives in his building and he can see all the problems in the building. Due to Wicks Law it prevents certain parts of the project to be done cheaper. We are subject to the requirements of Wicks Law. It was recently reformed. We have to bid out 5 primes – roof, electrical, etc. We cannot bid this out and ask for one contractor to bid this out. Jon has a handout if needed for clarification. He also has payout option. If the decision to be made to the board is to delay it, we run the risk of things going up in price. We can cut out things – such as Enrichment Center – but there is a need for North Field and a new cafeteria. Jon also reserves the right to defer to people who were in on the discussion of why and we need so much money to rebuild library.

Did you discuss how much it would be per household? Jon Ross passes out document showing how much it would cost. He also discussed that the roofing work be done through us and not contract out.

If we are talking about 6%-8% increases then we might be talking increases in double digits.

Alan S. says since 2004 the school taxes have increased over 50%

Brad says that he thinks we can all agree that we need Plan B, but should we really delay the vote for Plan C? He believes that if we move to the Plan C the value of the homes will increase due to new construction. The demographic study does not speak to the changes in empty nesters. He spent the last two weeks talking to realtors who are going to have small children or have them now. It is very possible that the demographic study is not speaking to the correct information. It does not speak to impact of King Street property. If we compare RSS to BBMS/BBHS and the role of the committee is to assess the needs of the school, he thinks everyone needs to come here during the school day and see it first hand. We need to take a look at the schools in Armonk of the renovations and construction done there by KSQ. Could we get a slide show from KSQ? This place is a “dump” compared to other schools and doesn’t hold a candle to BBMS/BBHS. We gave our kids \$33 million to the middle school and high school.

A parent from the community, representing the public, said that her kids went through the schools before there was a middle school and had a wonderful experience. No one is arguing improvements are needed, but there is a realistic expectation. The people in the community in the past voted for it, but now you are going to drive people away because there will be an increase in taxes.

Report from Education Sub-Committee

Martha and Robyn sent out email to the faculty to gather info about what they saw were needs. One of the biggest needs was to get people who do not have a classroom to be in a classroom as well as those people who are in storage rooms. The needs have nothing to do with the number of students and have to do with education.

From surveying the teachers what came up was:

- The Band Room can only accommodate 60 children but there are 120 children in the band.
- Library space cannot accommodate programs of future.
- Update science lab.
- The infrastructure needs repair – leaky ceilings!
- If you were here today you can see the need for air-conditioning – it was way too hot!
- Cafeteria does not service the number of students.
- Parents fought hard for Spanish as a FLES program, but now there is no space for it and the Spanish teachers walk around from class to class on a cart.
- No storage space – stage is used for storage and we have no productions of any kind because of this.
- Service providers (Resource Room teachers, School Psychologists, etc.) are in storage closets or hallways – Hallways were narrowed so that there is room to make offices, but this makes it difficult for our large population of students to walk through hallways.
- If the demographics do not go down, we are in real trouble!
- The 4 classrooms needed that were discussed on the education committee are needed to get space back.

Alan S. said that he was on the committee and he did not agree for 2 FLES rooms, only one. He asked if students move from one class to another there has to be an open space. Why can’t the

spaces be used? Carmine replied, "It can't. Classrooms in an elementary school do not work the same way as a high school and middle school."

A question came up – do we need to build classrooms for BOCES? No. They can contract out to other schools, but we would lose the money that they give us to rent out space.

Another question – Do the educational needs lead us to think that we need more time for this project? But, we do need roofs fixed immediately.

Brad asked for Steve to speak to us on the impact of waiting a year. Will waiting a year lessen the impact of the needs and the cost to the community?

Larry said that the Finance Committee said that they did not wish to wait a year, because there is too much risk if you do delay.

State Aid is 28% right now and if you lose 10% on that rate you are going to lose money on the project.

Steve states that it was not his place to speak on behalf of the board.

A parent said could we do a fundraiser? There was one that was done for the schoolyard – could we do one to raise funds for construction?

Report from Facilities Sub-Committee

Consensus that:

- 4 new classrooms are needed and a new kitchen/cafeteria.
- Infrastructure needed, new offices needed to get storage back.
- Keep Butler building to use for other purposes. Maybe make the Cafeteria/Multi-Purpose Room a new Band Room, and use the current Primary Wing a building for offices.
- 2 story structure for 13 classrooms (includes the 4 new classrooms)
- Use enrichment center for a workshop for Carmine and custodial/maintenance staff (no children or teachers would be in the Enrichment Center), which could include a service road
- Find ways to build at lower costs
- Use the existing footprint for other needs

If the demographics went down even 50 children, it will not alleviate the space needs. Office space STILL needed. Get teachers/administrators out of the closets.

Armand agrees that Plan B seems to be the minimum planning need. He thinks we should explore what other schools look like throughout the area to compare to our school.

Reviewed the good points of the plans that would have minimal impact on students during construction.

Armand wants to speak to the band teacher about needs to make a 120 member band room. Carmine says he spoke to band teacher and he said that he needed more room for the students. Current band room is not enough room.

Question for architects: What would be the most cost effective plan?

Armand tries to reduce the about of levels in elementary schools. There may not be a multi-level plan that would work due to various factors, such as the different topographic levels at RSS. Digging out foundations at different levels, stairs, elevators.

However, minimizing the footprint can minimize costs too. Architects need to study this further.

Armand recommends putting a concrete structure on roof to allow future stories to be built. Neighbors will need to be pulled into the discussion. Will neighbors be greatly affected by a two story structure?

The idea was to keep the Butler building and return it to its original purpose of offices, storage, etc.

Aid is dependent on proving that children will occupy the new space. State aid may be jeopardized if it were only offices. ESL, special ed., and other resource smaller classrooms would qualify for aid.

Do we need a band classroom to accommodate 120 students once every 6 days? However, the band room is used for many uses for large group meetings. Band Room is used for indoor recess to accommodate whole grades also, used for faculty meetings.

Using the Butler building for small classroom had benefits for the students, but infrastructure will still need to be repaired.

Armand: Changes in the program need to come from the administrators and then be addressed to the board. The program needs to drive the space needs.

State aid is a 28.3% ratio in Rye Brook, based on population in the classroom and instruction space need. Aid comes back to school by retiring the tax debt. Jonathan Ross explained some of this formula to committee. Expect 23-24% back from the state. We don't get everything we want because we are a high wealth district. We do get over \$832,000 back from state now from our original bonds. Jon talked about the budget and how the state does reimburse on earlier bonds.

Steve Kaplan asked that committee members be at the Sept. 15th BOE meeting to publicly share committee viewpoints, even if the viewpoints are different. The BOE will need to know if the architects can accommodate our recommended building needs at the recommended budget from the committee. Is that recommended budget feasible?

Jon Ross emphasized his concern with addressing the critical building needs as well as creating the school budget.

Parents didn't come out tonight, because it was the first night of school. However, would there be a large group of bond supporters in this community? Would this bond vote pass? If not, could it hurt our community reputation? Too little budgeted for the project, which results in too many compromises in the educational program, could hurt the community's reputation too? Could different levels of bond be voted on by the community? (Architects will need to research this question, is it legal? Will this fracture the community?)

If we renovate the Butler building for kindergarten, the bathrooms would need to be added, but not necessarily the floor space.

Carmine and Brad will chair the next meeting when we will prepare the recommendation(s) to be given to the BOE by the Sept. 15th meeting.

We need infrastructure and 4 new classrooms. Is the Butler building fixable? Armand's opinion, he would want to personally spend more money to replace the Butler building. Kevin's (construction manager) opinion – the Butler building is reaching the end of its useful life. This building, even renovated, may cost a lot to maintain over the years. It might cost less to replace the building, which would require less maintenance costs.

Original draft from October 2007 did give more specific line items for how much each part of the project is estimated to cost. Triton will reconstitute these numbers to give their own estimated costs for each part of the project. Triton does not think the architects were far off from the current market costs for these sorts of projects.

Next Meeting
Monday, September 8th
7:30 pm
BM Ponterio Ridge Street Band Room.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00pm.

Minutes submitted by Tracy Taylor and Robin Willig.