

Findings & Recommendations Presentation

Joint Town Council and Board of Education Meeting
January 22, 2019

Charge of the Committee

Such committee shall develop and present options to the Farmington Town Council and Board of Education on next steps for the Farmington High School facility utilizing the following information:

1. The previous FHS Building Committee information and data
2. Town of Farmington Financials (Present and Forecasted);
3. Community input/ public informational meetings;
4. Results of the citizen survey poll focused on the FHS facility; and
5. Information from experts in school construction.

Findings and Recommendations





Process

Findings & Recommendations

Process Findings

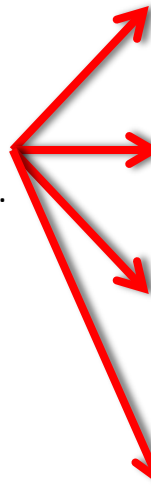
The Town Code, Chapter 53, is similar to the process in other municipalities and is an effective process for public building projects



An amendment to Chapter 53 of the Town Code is not necessary, as the ordinance clearly outlines the process

- It has been determined that Chapter 53 is consistent with the building project process in other communities
- In order to generate competition, explore engaging multiple firms in the design process and project cost to address the statement of needs (Option A and Option B)
- Include a new building option and determine the cost on the existing FHS site and other locations
 - According to the survey, 48.3% of respondents agree that they would support a new high school in a different location if space could be identified for purchase

Although 74.1% of survey respondents support a project with more than the minimum requirements, 88% of those surveyed agreed that required vs. desired needs should be distinguished in public communications



Show and clearly communicate the project's required vs. desired upgrades to the public

Clearly define "required" and "desired"

- Refer to the K-8 Facilities Assessment Report

Refer to the matrix document created by the FHS Facility and Financial Committee as a sample to prioritize the Statement of Needs

Highlight and communicate the benefits of the proposed project to the public



Process Findings

The previous committee did not include options of “the cost of doing nothing” or a renovation in the existing FHS footprint, which would be helpful in determining a baseline price and the required upgrades



Although the previous building committee’s process was effective in vetting options that ranged from a “renovate as new,” “renovation/addition,” and “new building” to meet the Statement of Needs and the Educational Specifications, they did not effectively communicate those options to the public.



Process Recommendations

Require the architect to include a cost for the “do nothing option” (physically maintaining FHS in its current form for a 30 year period) as well as the option for renovation in the existing footprint of FHS to determine a baseline price for the required upgrades

- Refer to Guilford’s “do nothing option”

The next building committee should show the public how they arrived at the proposed project

- Prioritize the options
- Refer to the Guilford matrix document



Process Findings

According to the survey, the previous building committee's process was effective in communicating the needs of the FHS facility

- Approximately two-thirds of all residents surveyed were aware of most of the needs of the FHS facility

Process Recommendations

Use the survey results and the previous building committee data as references throughout the process

Engage the community through the process through surveying and other methods to receive feedback

Engage the State legislative delegation to maximize State reimbursement





Communication

Findings & Recommendations

Communication Findings

Friends/Family/Neighbors/Co-workers, Printed Local Newspapers/Farmington Patch and the Farmington Town Letter are the 3 main ways people get information about the school system and the Town

Outside of the box thinking is necessary to encourage public participation

Communication Recommendations



Increase the number of Town Newsletters

Review the capabilities of the architect to support marketing efforts throughout the project

Communicate to the public that the Town's dedicated web page on the project can be distributed and reproduced

Run bus trips from Senior Center/Senior Housing/New Horizons to FHS for tours

Coffee with the committee (i.e. Coffee with a cop program)

Chair Report with bullet points after each meeting to distribute to public via e-newsletter/post on website

Research project engagement platform to sync to website

Engage civic groups/diverse demographics in the public participation to reach a broader audience (ex: Exchange Club, Rotary Club, Booster Clubs, Youth Sports, Tunxis Seniors, Chamber of Commerce, Religious Organizations, etc.)

Hold as many meetings a possible in the FHS facility

Communication Findings

The previous building committee's communication was complex and difficult to understand



The previous building committee did not use data/information to their full advantage to support the message



Successful large-scale building projects generally have a strong interest group attached to it

Communication Recommendations

Use clear and concise communication

- Refer to the updated Statement of Needs one page document created by the FHS Facility and Financial Committee

Present data and information to strengthen the committee's message

- Refer to Guilford's Map document illustrating funding for school projects in Connecticut
- Reference other building project costs
 - Compare on a cost per square footage basis
 - Find comparable projects with similar design
- Include timelines and impact
- Have Elections Enforcement present to the building committee early in the process

Communicate overall timeline of project to the public

- Phasing timelines and impact on students



Financial Findings & Recommendations

Financial Findings

The survey has determined that there is support for a large-scale building project

- According to the survey, 74.1% of respondents support a project that is more than the minimum requirements
- A project budget from the beginning of the process is beneficial for both marketing the project and knowing the financial impact on the residents
- The cost of the project was not determined until late in the process and the referendum occurred soon thereafter, therefore making it difficult to communicate information to the public
 - To communicate your message effectively people need to hear the message at least 7 times

Financial Recommendations

Before establishing a new building committee, a project's financial impact should be evaluated by the Town Council by reviewing the long-term forecasting that was presented to the Committee

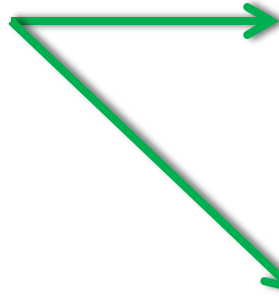
The Town Council should set the range of the net municipal cost of the project for the committee

- Refer to Debt Presentations dated 7-31-2018 and 9-18-2018

In the charge of the committee, The Town Council should require periodic reports from the building committee throughout the process (including financial projections)

Financial Findings

The cost of the previous project and the tax impact was perceived as too complicated and inconsistent



Financial Recommendations

The cost of the project should be communicated early and often

- According to the survey, 41% of respondents could not recall/did not know the price of the last project

The financial information needs to be presented and communicated in a clear and consistent manner

- Refer to marketing materials from successful projects in other municipalities
- Refer to best practices on municipal bonding

When issuing debt for the project, consideration should be given to various financing options such as principal skips.

- An example of a principal skip is a debt repayment option whereby the pay down of principal on a debt obligation is postponed until the second year of the repayment schedule. Interest on the debt obligation is paid in the first year of the repayment schedule but the first payment due on the amount borrowed (the principal) is delayed until the second year of the repayment schedule.
- Refer to the Debt Presentation dated 9-18-2018