

**Lamoille North Supervisory Union and
Lamoille North Modified Unified School District
Finance and Capital Committee
May 7, 2019**

Those in attendance: Mark Stebbins, Mark Nielsen, Angela Lamell, Lisa Barry, Laura Miller, Bart Bezio, Deb Clark, Dylan Laflam

Minute Taker: Sue Trainor

Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Public Comment: Stebbins called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Barry made a motion, seconded by Nielsen, to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously. There was no public comment.

Facilities:

Review LUHS Tractor Bid: Laflam informed the Board they had received a number of bids. After test-driving the tractors, the LS tractor model was the one that employees preferred. Laflam recommended the purchase of an LS model tractor from Northeast Farm Services for an after trade-in cost of \$29,362. Laflam explained the reason the drivers preferred the LS was because there was more visibility on the lower part of the tractor. Miller asked if it was worth selling the tractor rather than trading it in. Laflam stated it was a hard market and the tractor being traded had worked primarily in the salt shed. The equipment was covered in salt all winter long. Nielsen made a motion, seconded by Lamell, to recommend to the Board the purchase of a tractor from Northeast Farm Services for \$29,362. The motion passed unanimously, with an abstention from Miller.

Review LUHS Paving Bid: Laflam stated they had received only three bids, despite seven companies doing walkthroughs of the area. This work would involve repairing the potholes at the entryway to campus. Green Mountain Engineering and the State recommended that the only way to fix the potholes was to redo the sub-base. There would be work done at the Central Office location as well. There was a sinkhole at the current parking lot and that would be repaired and paved over. There would also be work done at the salt shed. Currently there was blacktop inside the salt shed that was now cracked and broken. The sanders were picking up chunks of the blacktop. A topcoat would alleviate that issue. There would also be paving patches done in other areas as needed. This was a fix to get through the next year. Gray's Paving was the low bid. Laflam had worked with Gray's Paving previously and, of all the bidders, they were his favorite company to work with and did great work. Lamell noted Gray's per ton cost for patching potholes was quite a bit more than the other companies and Laflam agreed.

Miller asked about putting blacktop at the Central Office location. She wondered if it was worth spending between \$12,000-\$15,000 if the building might be moved. Laflam explained the structural engineer had inspected the building and it appeared the structural component of the building could be repaired. Laflam stated even if a new building were built, the parking lot could be used as a special education bus parking area. Laflam asked the Committee to accept Gray's Paving bid of \$30,991 for the total project with \$185 per ton patch price. Barry made a motion, seconded by Nielsen, to approve Laflam's recommendation. The motion passed unanimously.

Discuss and Approve Bond Proposal: Laflam stated that he had been informed that the \$350,000 figure being quoted for the performing arts center was too low. It was an estimate from ten years ago and did not include some items. Laflam was told it could probably be built for \$700,000 but was told it could be up to \$1 million. One of the issues was that the band room, on one side of the proposed site, was sprinkled and the auditorium, on the other side of the proposed site, was not sprinkled. The Fire Marshal would have to determine if the new construction would fall under the exempted space like the

auditorium or instead like the band room. It would take three months to develop an estimate for the arts center. Therefore, Laflam was pulling that item out of the bond.

Clark asked about the cost of repairs to the Central Office building. Laflam stated that hadn't been vetted entirely. Clark Elliott, the structural engineer, stated there was nothing that made him think the building couldn't be used. Clark asked the Committee if they wanted to go to the Board on May 13th to warn a vote for the long-discussed project involving the gymnasium, auditorium, roof, and HVAC replacement or postpone the vote and look further at the arts center and Central Office building. Laflam added that he had reviewed the project costs again. The numbers they had now were quotes, not actual bids, and could end up being less.

Clark talked about the two possible dates for a vote. It was determined that a vote should not occur during the summer when school was not in session. If the Board approved the project on May 13th, the vote could occur on June 18th. A special Board meeting could be held on July 29th to approve a warning for a September 3rd vote. Bids would go out at the end of January and the goal would be to have bids returned before the end of February. Laflam and Stebbins agreed they would wait a year if the September vote resulted in a no vote.

Barry stated more communication about the project should be done before trying to rush into a June vote. A September vote would provide few months to communicate the information. Miller stated everyone would want to know how much the project would cost them personally. Barry stated she thought the arts space was out of the question. She did not think the Board could keep adding to this project. Miller stated she thought it was important to get the important things done that had already been discussed. She agreed it would be nice to have a performing arts space, but there were many questions outstanding, such as whether that would need to go through Act 250. Nielsen asked how large the performing arts program was and how well it was doing. Nielsen stated the issue of the gym floor was brought up at Town Meeting and he explained the safety issues. He had not heard one objection to spending the money on the gym. Nielsen then asked if they could work on building a contingency in order to eventually build a performing arts space. Clark stated a sinking fund could not be created and a reserve could not be intentionally created.

Laflam stated over the years there would continue to be a need to bond. He suggested waiting on the performing arts space and pay for the design work over the next few years. Then ten years down the road the work could be done. Miller stated the space analysis data would be available to use when asking for funds in the future. Stebbins stated he understood not spending money on a new addition. However, historically the District had just barely done what it needed to do to get by. This could ultimately result in limiting opportunities for students. He explained there were three different levels of dance offered. Some of those classes were split into more than one block because they had so many students. The middle and high school band was large enough that the band was split in two. They never rehearsed together. The dance classes practiced in the cafeteria. A new chorale teacher would be starting and he thought that would reinvigorate that program. Miller stated voters needed to know that type of information and data would be helpful.

Clark noted there were two big bonds retiring, one in 2026 and 2029. The Board could focus on 2026 for new construction. Nielsen stated they should do something before 2026. Nielsen stated the auditorium was always full during band performances. He thought this was an expense that would pay dividends. Nielsen asked Laflam if information on the performing arts space would be available for a September vote. Laflam stated an engineering estimate could be ready before September. It would cost between \$10,000 and \$12,000 to get conceptual information. Clark stated they could bond in 2023 and defer payments for three years.

Stebbins confirmed that the Committee was interested in pursuing Parts 1 through 3 on the project list. Clark stated that the total cost, including the additional costs of resurfacing all of the parking lots, the upper A wing roof and a kitchen line remodel, and an additional 3% in short term borrowing would be \$2,697,000. Stebbins asked about the resurfacing of the parking lots and Laflam stated that would entail a shim and a topcoat. If a complete removal and repaving of the parking lot were done it would cost close to \$1,000,000. Laflam was asked how long resurfacing would last and he stated it could last ten years with maintenance. Miller asked how long the bond would be for and stated that any project paid through a bond should last twenty years. Laflam stated the parking lot had been resurfaced in 2001.

Barry stated she would feel more comfortable with the bond being closer to \$2 million than \$3 million. Clark asked Laflam if over the next five years he could build funds into the budget for paving. Laflam stated he could. He was concerned that in a few years new Board members could question a large balance in a line item or if Laflam were to leave and additional funds were not budgeted.

Laflam stated if the Committee wanted to go back to the drawing board, the HVAC system was designed to be a long term HVAC. The grade of the equipment could be cut to lower the numbers but he thought that was shortsighted. Nielsen stated the compromise would be to take the paving out of the bond project. That would reduce the bond to \$2.2 million. Then over the next several years money could be set aside for paving. Clark stated she would research whether the Board today could commit for five years from now. Bezio asked if there were any considerations around doing the project one time versus piecemeal. He explained that the worse sections would be done first and the middle school, being hardest hit, would be the first to be paved. He agreed that breaking the paving into sections was a good way to go about it. If the cycle of paving sections kept going, it could become an ongoing line item. Clark agreed that Facilities and IT repairs and maintenance should be on a cyclical schedule.

There was a discussion about Cambridge voting in the past on an article to fund school transportation costs. Miller wondered if this could be done for paving costs. Laflam noted that because this was a union, each town would have to vote on it. Miller suggested that the Board be informed that this item had been up for discussion and the recommendation would be that each year a certain dollar amount be placed in the budget to cover paving costs. Laflam stated that bonds were good because none of the money went toward the per pupil spending.

Nielsen suggested pulling the paving out of the proposed bond and leaving the kitchen remodel in. Stebbins noted the facility had been designed 50 years ago and needed to change. The kitchen design no longer worked. Stebbins stated the Committee had to set this attitude forth to the Board and the Board needed to set this forth to the community. In order to improve the school, work needed to be done over time. Bezio asked if design work would be done on the arts space. Laflam stated he would ask for pricing on that.

Miller asked if they could enlist local companies to donate funds for the scoreboards. Laflam stated it was a great idea but he wasn't sure how to go about it. Barry asked if there was a Booster Club. Nielsen stated the \$34,000 for scoreboards should remain in the proposed bond and if donations were received they could be applied to something else.

Stebbins confirmed that the Committee would remove the paving item from the bond request and hold the vote in September. There was discussion about holding a June vote, but Committee members felt that voters needed information about the vote. Nielsen suggested holding tours in the summer and showing voters what was being proposed. He believed it would be a positive vote. Clark suggested the

first tour could take place at the end of the school year. Clark reminded the Committee that the Board would need to meet at the end of July in order to warn the vote.

Laflam suggested sending a memo home to parents about the bond and Clark stated that a press release could be sent out next week. Miller suggested having the News and Citizen write an article about the bond. Miller stated that going on the tour of the building had been very informative for her and a voter on a tour would be able to see exactly where their money was going. Lamell suggested having the coaches speak about the renovation and pictures of the current condition of the stage and gym floor could be distributed. Barry stated that if alumni from the past fifty years contributed \$5 there would be more than enough money for the scoreboards. She suggested being creative in fundraising.

Stebbins stated it was important to keep additional projects in mind. Families wouldn't move to the area for this high school if it were clear that the community wasn't willing to invest in the school.

Clark reported that taking the paving out, leaving the kitchen remodel in, and adding the 3% for short term borrowing costs, the total bond request would be \$2,233,000. Stebbins asked if Laflam could provide detail at some point on creating parcels for the resurfacing work. Bezio stated there needed to be a long-range plan. Clark explained there was a five-year capital spending plan and some of these bigger items needed to be added to the plan. Laflam noted that the money spent now on maintenance and repair within the Facilities budget was a fraction of what was spent in 2010.

Other Business: Clark reported that there had been a question about the fact that Eden buses had Eden School District written on the side of the bus. There was the concern that the town could be held liable if there were an accident. Clark reported that towns were not liable for school activity other than to the extent that the town was a member of the District.

Adjourn: Nielsen made a motion, seconded by Bezio, to adjourn the meeting at 7:19 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.