

**MIDDLE SCHOOL CONVERSION COMMITTEE  
OCTOBER 29, 2007  
TOWN OFFICE ANNEX  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Dan D'Amelio, Richard Everett, Maryjane Malavasi, Craig Mansfield, Chuck Smith, Patty Stricker, Sharon Wheeler, Jim Ventres (arr. 7:45), Melissa Ziobron.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Brad Parker, First Selectman and Bob Mather, liaison from the Board of Education.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Parker called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM.

2. **INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS:**

Mr. Parker reported that 18 people had volunteered to be on this committee. He feels that those chosen form a strong committee and he thanked everyone for their service. He offered the services of the Selectmen's Office to the committee. He then asked each member to introduce themselves and give a brief explanation of their background and experience they bring to the committee. He noted that the committee is made up of 7 regular and 2 alternate members and that Bob Mather will be their liaison from the Board of Education.

3. **EXPLANATION OF PROCESS:**

a. **Brad Parker:**

Mr. Parker reviewed the charge of the committee. He asked the committee to determine their meeting schedule, and to be sure that agendas and minutes are filed appropriately. He suggested that future meetings be held in the Middle School. He suggested asking Bob Carroll, Business Manager, be invited to give a tour of the building. He suggested site visits to other towns who have converted schools to office buildings, such as Westbrook, Waterford and Portland. He suggested that sub-committees be formed to evaluate space and facility needs. He noted that the committee will need to put a budget together for the 2009 fiscal year. He said that the committee will need to hire an architect, which would require an RFP.

4. **GENERAL DISCUSSION:**

a. **Review of Handout Materials**

Mr. Parker handed out and briefly described 4 reports for the committees' reference: the 1997 Preliminary Report of the East Haddam Municipal Space Needs Study Committee, the 2000 Facility Study for Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School, the NHRMS Site Plan, and the 2003 School Site Investigation report.

Ms. Ziobron suggested asking the BoE office for a copy of the diagram that was done by Dr. Durham for BoE offices in the Middle School.

Mr. Parker suggested that the facility sub-committee, or the entire committee, walk through the building with the fire marshal and building inspector.

Mr. Parker then listed a few suggestions that have come into his office from other areas. It was suggested that the Nathan Hale wing become the BoE wing, since the BoE could occupy the entire wing and include other offices other than just the current ones.

Another suggestion was to remove the portables and restore the garage door entrances for ambulance and/or other vehicles.

One concern is where the vault would be located. It was suggested that it could be added onto the building in the area of the current music room. It seems that adding it on instead of renovating another area might be economically feasible.

Patti Stricker asked if the building was handicapped accessible, and it is.

It was suggested that the gymnasium and nearby areas be utilized by the recreation department.

The committee needs to decide what to do about the cafeteria. Suggestions are to keep it and rent the area out to groups, and to use it for the employees.

Patti Stricker said that we would have to think about the needs of the food bank.

Mr. Parker expressed a need for small conference rooms for daily use by individual departments.

Dan D'Amelio asked if the town has decided that converting the middle school to town offices is what is wanted. Mr. Parker explained that this committee was voted upon at town meeting, and when the new school was approved, it was the general feeling that the old school would indeed become town offices. This committee will need to have the project approved by the legislative body, however, before the actual conversion begins.

Jim Ventres joined the meeting at this time.

Dan D'Amelio asked if the town employees have been asked what their needs are. Jim Ventres replied that they did in 1997, but were asked at that time for minimal needs. Patti Stricker said that we would need to ask them again.

Mr. Parker turned the meeting over to Maryjane Malavasi, who was asked to facilitate this first meeting, and to begin by determining a meeting schedule.

**b. Meeting Schedule:**

After discussion, it was decided that the committee would initially meet monthly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday at 7:00 PM in the Middle School. Craig Mansfield offered to contact the school to secure a specific meeting location. Sub-committees will be named and will meet as needed. Special meetings also will be called as needed.

**5. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Appointment of Chairman**

**Motion made by Melissa Ziobron, seconded by Craig Mansfield, to nominate Maryjane Malavasi as Chairman. Seeing no other nominations, the motion was passed unanimously.**

**b. Appointment of Secretary**

**Motion made by Dan D'Amelio, seconded by Melissa Ziobron, to name Craig Mansfield as Secretary. Seeing no other nominations, the motion was passed unanimously.**

**c. Appointment of Treasurer**

**Motion made by Dan D'Amelio, seconded by Chuck Smith, to nominate Melissa Ziobron as Treasurer. Seeing no other nominations, the motion was passed unanimously.**

**6. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS – None.**

**7. OTHER**

- a. Maryjane Malavasi asked each member to be sure that their contact information is correct and to add their email addresses. Patti Stricker will update the list and make it available to everyone.
- b. Melissa Ziobron asked what the committee's timeline is. Mr. Parker suggested it would take a year for the committee to come up with its recommendation, which would seem that by next Fall the plan would be ready for town meeting. Public hearings could be scheduled as often as necessary.
- c. Patti Stricker stated that there may be State and Local grants available for the project. She suggested a sub-committee be named to look into any possible grants.
- d. The question of any restrictions pertaining to the Ray Funds was posed. Mr. Parker stated that the Ray Fund would need to turn over that portion of the building to the town, which would take away any current restrictions on use.
- e. Dick Everett asked if there were any restrictions relating to the mural in the Middle School. None were noted, but the issue would be looked into.
- f. The following sub-committees were formed:
  - i. Facility – Chuck, Dick, Dan  

This sub-committee will meet on Nov. 13<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm. The Fire Marshal and Building Inspector will be asked to walk through the Middle School with the sub-committee. All members are invited.
  - ii. Space Needs – Patty, Sharon, Maryjane, Craig, Melissa
  - iii. Grants/Legal – Jim, Sharon
  - iv. Public Relations – Melissa, Maryjane
- g. The next meeting will begin at 6:30 with a walk through of the middle school with Bob Carroll. Bob Mather will make the appointment.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion made by Dan D'Amelio, seconded by Craig Mansfield, to adjourn at 8:25 pm. Unanimous aye.**

Respectfully submitted,

Maryjane Malavasi, Chairman