

Minutes of the Town of Farmington  
Special Town Council Meeting  
Joint Town Council and Board of Education Meeting  
January 22, 2019

Present:

Nancy W. Nickerson, Chair  
Patricia Boye-Williams  
Bruce Charette  
Paul Cianci  
Edward Giannaros  
Beth Kintner

Kathy Eagen, Town Manager  
Paula B. Ray, Clerk

A. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

The Council, Board of Education and members of the public recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Public Comment

Inez St. James 11 Brightwood Lane told the Council she had a son who was a sophomore at FHS and would never see any changes to the school before he graduates. She voiced her opinion in favor of investing in the Town's educational infrastructure. As a realtor she believed our education system was one of the most important factors in attracting people to Farmington. She told the Council not to kick the can down the road and to make the hard and responsible choice to invest in the children's education and the Town even it meant taxes would go up. She asked all the caring people to pass the word.

Ryan Trimble of 20 Hendrickson Lane told the Council he was a local business man in Unionville. He had chosen to move to Farmington because of the schools and low taxes. He agreed that something needed to be done with FHS and didn't want the band aid approach used again even if his taxes went up.

David Melman of 9 Blenheim Terrace thanked everyone for the hard work done by the Town Council, Board of Education and the Committees studying the FHS problems. He came to voice the sentiment of thousands of Farmington residents that sought a comprehensive renovation of the cherished high school. He believed Farmington residents took tremendous pride in their schools. He talked about the long history of support for education in Connecticut. He believed it was the primary duty of the Town to supply an excellent education for its student and today higher levels of education

were necessary due to the more complex careers, which required an up to date facility to match these demands.

Jessica Lecours 3 Walnut Farms Drive told the Council she was a teacher and believed it was imperative that FHS was updated because of issues such as ADA compliance, school sprawl and security. She believed the youth and their education should be the driving force of the Town of Farmington.

Mike Lecours of 3 Walnut Farms Drive spoke on behalf of Peter Mastrobattista who couldn't be present. His sentiments were in favor of the previous build out option, which he believed was a long term responsible choice. He would not be in favor of any band aid solutions. He asked the Town officials to work with the State and the Town's State legislators to insure the Town of Farmington get some State funding for the project.

Meredith Trimble of 20 Hendrickson Lane told the Council she had been in favor of a long term solution for the problems at FHS and continued to be. She learned through her time as an elected official that the Town continuously faced problems that were preventable negative outcomes created by short term fixes to keep taxes low. She cautioned about making the same mistake again. She told the Council the previous building committee had a wealth of knowledge, and to not use their knowledge and lessons learned would be leaving on the table significant and relevant information.

Marcus Fairbrother of 12 Candlewood Lane thanked the Council and Board of Education for their work. He had moved to Farmington for the schools and so far was very pleased. He didn't believe that the FHS facility was up to the specifications of today's needs. He wanted a completely new facility was needed. He cautioned the Council there were unquantifiable needs that were very important when considering options for FHS such as student happiness, student success, teacher and administrative retention and teacher moral. He asked the Council to make sure the community had good communication with accurate information about the project.

Matt Hutvagner 4 Deepwood Rd spoke in support of a new high school. He told the Council he had supported the previous proposal. He looked forward to hearing the reports that night and how the Council would combat misinformation this time. He knew no one liked their taxes to go up, but he believed it was the duty of the parents, taxpayers and residents of Farmington to provide students with the necessary facilities to achieve the mission outlined in the Board of Education Mission Statement.

Stacey Petruzella of 32 High Street encouraged the Town Council and Board of Education to properly fund means to inform the public about the project. She didn't believe it was the responsibility of private groups to get information about the project out to the residents.

Scott Mulvihill 11 Mountain Road moved to Farmington for the schools. He wanted a complete re-do of the FHS facility. He believed the ADA deficiencies were embarrassing. He suggested the new building committee should think out of the box

as Natick, MA had done. They took blueprints from other projects that fit there footprint to avoid architectural fees. He hoped we could have a facility like that.

Johnny Carrier of 17 Riverwood Road told the Council he was a 17 year resident and was a member of the previous building committee. As a residential builder he believed the two top issues people looked at when buying a home were the quality of the education and local tax rate. He believed the new building committee would face the same issues he had faced, and the only solution to consider should be a long term comprehensive plan with an overall goal of a realistic price tag.

Jen Paoletto of 2 Saunders Hill told the Council she was a consultant and a teacher at another high school. She believed the sprawl issue at FHS was a serious educational and security matter. She explained how students arriving late to class kept the focus of the lesson delayed and the ability of security staff to respond to issues were examples of the problems.

Mariah and Sam Reisner of 41 Main Street had moved to Farmington for the schools. She talked about how parents didn't need a lot of convincing about the need to update FHS, but the 75% of households without children did. She wanted the Council to communicate the need to those households and remind them that FHS was used as a Town shelter, for continuing education and for community meetings as well as a high school.

Rafeena Lee of 3 Hamilton Way told the Council she had heard many complaints about FHS. She had come from NYC and loved it. She asked that all the problems at FHS be tackled at once. She believed it would be a huge cost to fix FHS but would only be more expensive in the future. She knew people that had voted no the previous time because of the misinformation being circulated.

Kristin Mullins 6 Pearl Street told the Council she valued low taxes and excellent schools. She wanted her sons to have pride in their high school. She has noticed new updated high schools in Middletown and Meriden and felt Farmington could do it too. She wanted a new high school with appropriate space for the curriculum, without sprawl, better security and a cafeteria that didn't have students eating lunch at 10:00 am.

Robert Ave'Lallemant of 5 Sparrow Lane told the Council he had little to add to what had been said already. He was disappointed that no one had spoken against the project. He was very concerned about the bottle necks and security issues at FHS. He wanted a new location for the school. He wanted the project better communicated to public this time.

Lisa Nollman of 11 Hidden Oak Drive told the Council she liked low taxes but believed the schools needed to stay strong to support property values. She talked about the deficiencies in the facility for the music and stem programs.

Maddy Trimble told the Council she went to Union School and was surprised how much nicer it was than FHS. She wanted the high school improved.

Erin Ross Moses of 33 High Street said she echoed the previous speakers. She was surprised at the wonderful outcomes accomplished by the students at FHS considering the deficiencies of the facility. She had concerns about FHS functioning as a shelter, its security, its HVAC efficiency, its sprawl and ADA standards. She wanted the building committee to consider comprehensive long term solutions for FHS. She was concerned that the Town takes on the responsibility to communicate the facts of the project to the residents and not rely on a private citizen group to do it.

Brian Lindroth of Chelsea Place told the speakers that evening they were preaching to the converted with all their comments. He said the problem was facing a community that had voted 2-1 against the prior project. He told the Council they needed to create a platform to convince them to vote yes by giving them reasons to vote yes. He felt communication and financial planning were the keys to the project's success.

Paul Schoening of 12 West District Road had worked as a custodian at FHS when it had been used as a shelter and believed it had many issues that needed to be addressed.

Tim LeBouthiller of 77 Sylvan Avenue spoke on behalf of his family. He told the Council his family was very supportive of a project and wanted something better for the students. He thanked them for their work on FHS. He told the Council FHS was dear to his family and hoped some of it could be saved. He believed the community would support the project because Farmington supported education. A beautiful and strong FHS was essential for the students and the community for education and as a town shelter.

Alex Medvedovsky of 28 South Ridge Road told the Council it was a shame to have such a terrible facility for the high school. He felt the prior project failed because the Town failed to deliver the message for the need for the project. He stated the process was too long and if he ran his business with a process that took that long he would be out of business. He challenged the Council to engage the residents especially through social media with the facts of the project. He wanted a needs and benefits plan and an action plan with deliverables done moving forward. He believed the schools were successful not only because of the teachers but because of the parents cared about their children's education.

Amy Rosenfield of 2 Candlewood Lane hoped her 4<sup>th</sup> Grader would have a better facility when she went to high school. She believed the community would support a better high school plan.

Emily Kaliney of 30 High Street thanked the Committees for their work. She thought their reports were valuable and hoped the audience would stay to hear the presentations. She asked the Council to use the findings to shape the process going forward. She wanted the community to grow from the experiences of the last referendum. She wanted to stay focused on the goal and to communicate the cost of doing nothing.

D. Consideration of Special Topics.

1. Discussion of the FHS Community Survey Ad Hoc Committee's findings and recommendations.

- 1) Community Survey Presentation- Beth Kintner, Chair of the Committee, and Jerry Lindsley, Center for Research and Public Policy

Ms. Kintner, Chair of the FHS Community Survey Committee thanked the Committee members, the Town staff members, the Town resident members for their service on the Committee. She reviewed the summary document recorded with these minutes as Agenda Item D-1 and introduced Jerry Lindsley, Center for Research & Public Policy. Mr. Lindsley reviewed the findings of the survey using the presentation recorded with these minutes as Agenda Item D-1a. Ms. Kintner and Mr. Lindsley answered Council and Board of Education questions

2. Discussion of the FHS Facility and Financial Ad Hoc Committee's findings and recommendations.

- 1) Findings and Recommendations Presentation by Edward Giannaros, Chair of the Committee, and Kathy Eagen, Town Manager

Mr. Giannaros, Chair of the FHS Facility and Financial Ad Hoc Committee thanked the members of the Committee and the non-voting staff members from the Town and Board of Education. He reviewed the charge of the Committee and the process they had used. He introduced Kathy Eagen, Town Manager who reviewed the findings and recommendations of the Committee using the presentation recorded with these minutes as Agenda Item D-2.

3. To accept the reports from the FHS Community Survey Ad Hoc Committee and the FHS Facility and Financial Ad Hoc Committee.

Motion was made and seconded (Charette/Giannaros) to accept the reports from the FHS Community Survey Ad Hoc Committee and the FHS Facility and Financial Ad Hoc Committee.

Adopted unanimously

4. To discuss the next steps for the Farmington High School Facility

After discussion, the Chair told the Council she would meet with the Acting Chair and the Town Manager to develop bullet points for a possible charge for the FHS building committee and present them to the Council after the budget process.

E. Adjournment

Motion was made and seconded (Charette/Giannaros) to adjourn the meeting at 10:25 p.m.

Adopted unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paula B. Ray".

Paula B. Ray, Clerk

Farmington High School Community Survey  
Ad Hoc Committee

*Intro to Survey Results*

*Findings & Recommendations of the Committee*

(Reference: Summary Document dated November 27, 2018)

# Introduction Summary

- The FHS Community Survey Ad Hoc Committee was established May 2018
  - charged with hiring a consultant to facilitate a citizen survey focused on the high school facility, report the results of the survey to the Town Council and Board of Education
- The ad hoc committee developed an RFP, reviewed responses, and in August, CRPP was selected from five firms that responded to the RFP
- The ad hoc committee provided input for survey questions, CRPP staff edited out bias. The survey was designed by CRPP using a process to ensure a fair, objective and balanced survey.
- The survey was completed among Farmington residents from October 17-25, 2018.



# Introduction of Survey Consultant

## **Jerry Lindsley, Center for Research & Public Policy**

- President & founder of CRPP, which was established in 1979.
- Masters from Fairfield University
- Lives in and works out of New Hampshire
- Teaches college courses in business management, research, marketing, polling, and public policy
- Certified ski instructor, junior ski race team coach and a volunteer EMT

# Committee Findings :

## *Highlights of Survey Results*

### *High Quality of Life:*

- Nearly all residents said their quality of life was very good or good.

### *Satisfaction with Town services and Farmington Public Schools:*

- Over 85% rated the quality of town services as positive
- Over 80% rated the quality of the public schools as positive

### *The main ways people get information about the school system and Town:*

- Friends/Family/Neighbors/Co-workers
- Local print newspapers
- Farmington Town newsletter
- Of those who use social media, Facebook - most popular

## **Interest:**

*Residents express significant interest in a renewed planning process for the high school facility.*

*Over 4/5 perceive the need for changes at FHS as important.*

## **Awareness:**

*Residents are aware of the needs of the FHS facility as outlined in the Statement of Needs:*

- About two-thirds were aware of most of the needs
- Respondents were most aware of the needs for:
  - school safety and security upgrades
  - required roof repairs, and
  - increased space to accommodate students and educational needs

## **Support:**

### ***There is support for a project:***

- 83% of respondents agree that an updated and upgraded high school facility is important to maintaining home property values
- 51% support at least a \$135M project (\$511 annual tax increase)
- 55% support at least a \$125M project (\$435 annual tax increase)
- 62% support at least a \$100M project (\$348 annual tax increase)
- 74% support at least a \$75M project (\$261 annual tax increase)

### ***Nearly three quarters of respondents support a project that accomplishes more than the minimum requirements:***

There was less interest in a renovation where the minimum required updates are accomplished (15.5%)

# Committee Recommendations

*Focused, clear, and concise communication is necessary to build support of a project.*

- Understand how people get their information
- Encourage more public participation
- Show the public how the committee arrived at the proposed project
- Communicate the required vs. desired upgrades
- Communicate the facility project cost

*A new building committee should use the survey results throughout their process.*

# Questions & Answers / Discussion



Photo courtesy of Fpsct.org

OCTOBER 2018

Prepared for:  
Farmington, Connecticut Ad Hoc Committee  
Prepared by:  
The Center for Research & Public Policy, Inc.

FARMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL  
COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

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The Center for  
Research & Public  
Policy, Inc.



The Center for Research & Public Policy (CRPP) is a national research and public policy think tank working within six distinct disciplines: Market, Social, and Public Policy Research as well as Public Opinion, Political and Direct Democracy Research.

- A Connecticut corporation working from offices in AZ, NH, VT
- Incorporated in 1979
- Market Research with emphasis on Social and Policy Research
- Sample Clients: Bunge, CDC, Larimer, Southbury, Wilton, JHACH, state agencies, utilities, Saint Leo University (FL)

CRPP research informs the strategic plans, satisfaction indexes, needs assessments, feasibility studies and or other studies we conduct.

## Introduction

## Sample Municipality / County Client List

Alexandria, VA	East Lyme, CT	Ludlow, VT	Rocky Hill, CT
Austin, TX	Ellington, CT	Marlborough, CT	Salem County, NJ
Battle Creek, MI	Enfield, CT	Marshallfield, CT	Shrewsbury, MA
Burlington, VT	Fairfield, CT	Mesquite, TX	Southbury, CT
Bergen County, NJ	Farmington, CT	Meriden, CT	Stamford, CT
Big Spring, TX	Foster, RI	Miami Beach, FL	Sunapee, NH
Bridgeport, CT	Groton, CT	Middleborough, MA	Taunton, MA
Brookfield, CT	Guilford, CT	Middlesex County, NJ	Tioga County, NY
Cheshire, CT	Hartford, CT	Monroe, CT	Tolland, CT
Chittenden County, VT	Holden, MA	Narragansett, RI	Torrington, CT
Chicopee, MA	Holyoke, MA	New Haven, CT	Waterford, CT
Coconino, AZ	Houston, TX	New Milford, CT	Wellington, FL
Coral Springs, FL	Ipswich, MA	New York City, NY	West Haven, CT
Crested Butte, CO	Jackson, MS	Newport, RI	West Orange, NJ
Cromwell, CT	Lake Seminole	Norwalk, CT	Westport, CT
Dallas, TX	Larimer County, CO	Passaic County, NJ	Wilton, CT
Danbury, CT	Lauderdale Lakes, FL	Pickens County, SC	Willimantic, CT
Danvers, MA	Leesburg, FL	Pinehurst, NC	Woodbury, CT
Durham, CT	Littleton, MA		

## Introduction



“Thank you for what you have done for us. It is incredible the influence reliable data can have on a policy movement. I hope I am not being too optimistic, but I am sensing some energy, finally, to get something done to fix our schools.”

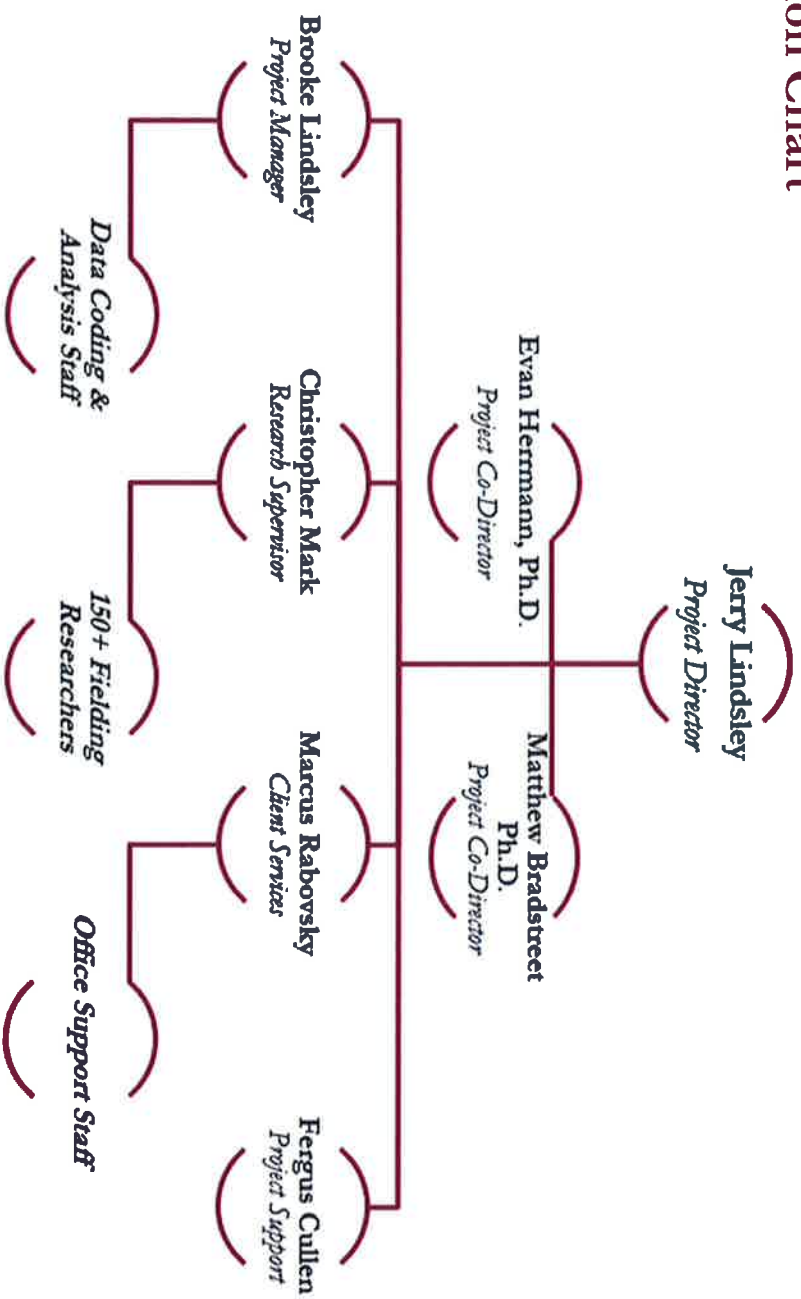
**Frank Perotti**  
**Superintendent of Schools**  
**Rutland Windsor Supervisory Union**  
**Ludlow, Vermont**

### **On CRPP's Accuracy:**

“The referendum passed. It’s always nice to hear good news. It took a while, but we got there with a successful referendum. We are all amazed at how well the actual results correlated with the poll CRPP completed for us. The referendum results were within 1.0% of the polling data you collected over the summer. When CRPP polled, you showed support at 51.8% for the plan. We received 52.57% of the vote. A testament to sound polling.”

**Craig Koehler, Chairman**  
**Town of Groton School Planning Committee**  
**Groton, Connecticut**

# Team Organization Chart



## Introduction

Farmingington H.S.



# Introduction



**The Center for Research & Public Policy (CRPP) is pleased to present the results to a 2018 Farmington, Connecticut High School Community Survey for the Farmington Ad Hoc Committee.**

**The survey was conducted to collect input regarding citizen attitudes towards and willingness to finance high school renovation in Farmington, CT.**

## **Introduction**

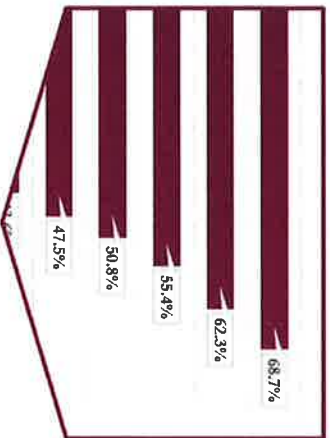
## The survey included the following areas for investigation:

- Quality of life living in Farmington;
- Current standard of living;
- Rating Farmington town services;
- Rating Farmington public schools;
- Interest in and perceived importance of Farmington High School upgrades/updates;
- Awareness levels for Statement of Need required high school repairs;
- Overall support or opposition to modifying Farmington High School;
- Support and opposition to new construction / renovation at varied cost levels / tax impact levels;
- Sources for information about the Farmington school system and town;
- Views on the 2017 high school referendum – support or opposition;
- Reasons for 2017 support or opposition in the referendum;
- Understanding of the 2017 associated high school new construction / renovation costs;
- Demographics.

## Introduction

Farmington H.S.





# Methodology



**Using a quantitative research design, CRPP completed 400 phone surveys among Farmington, CT residents.**

**Survey input was provided by the Farmington Connecticut Ad Hoc Committee.**

## **Methodology**

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**Farmington H.S.**





Survey design at CRPP is a careful, deliberative process to ensure fair, objective and balanced surveys. Staff members, with years of survey design experience, edit out any bias.

All facets of the study were completed by CRPP's senior staff and researchers. These aspects include: survey design, sample plan design, pretest, computer programming, fielding, coding, editing, verification, validation and logic checks, computer analysis, analysis, and report writing.

## Methodology

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All telephone interviews were conducted during October 17 – 25, 2018. Residents were contacted between 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. weekdays and 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on the weekend.

Respondents qualified for the survey if they were a resident of Farmington and were 18 years of age or older.

## Methodology



All population-based surveys conducted by CRPP are approximately proportional to population contributions within states, towns, and known census tract, group blocks and blocks. This distribution ensures truly representative results without significant under-or-over representation of various geographic or demographic groups within a sampling frame.

CRPP utilized a “super random digit” sampling procedure, which derives a working telephone sample of both listed and unlisted telephone numbers. This method of sample selection eliminates any bias toward only listed telephone numbers. Additionally, this process allows randomization of numbers, which equalizes the probability of qualified respondents being included in the sampling frame. A “mixed access” sample of both cell and landline phone numbers was utilized.

## Methodology

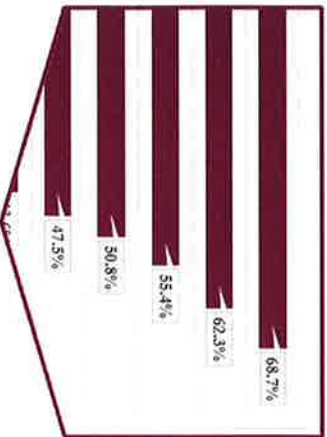


Statistically, a sample of **400** Farmington residents represents a margin for error of **+/-4.85%** at 95% confidence levels.

Each qualified resident who lives in Farmington had an equal chance for participating in the study. Statistical random error, however, can never be eliminated but may be significantly reduced by increasing sample size.

## Methodology

Farmington H.S.



# Summary of Findings

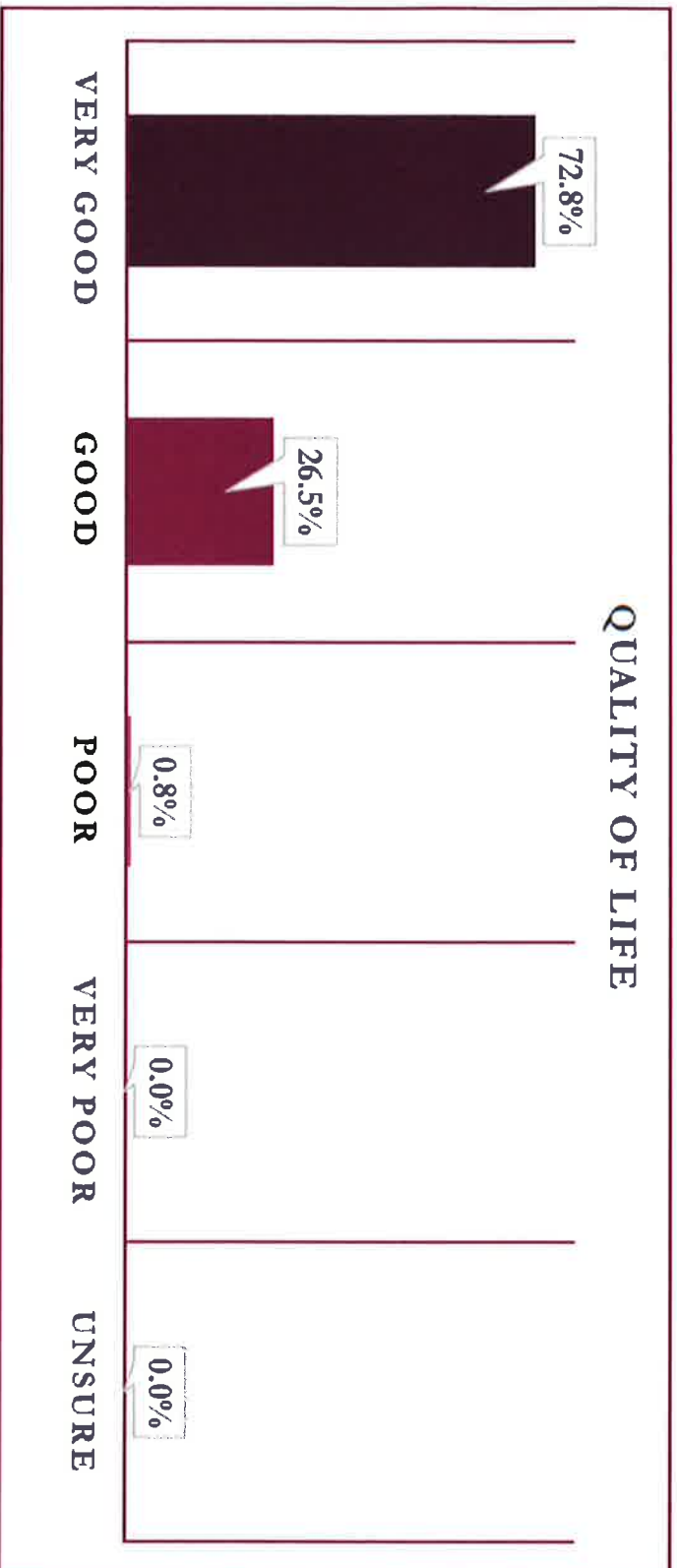




# On Quality of Life



Impressively, 99.3% of all residents surveyed reported their quality of life living in Farmington as very good (72.8%) or good (26.5%). Just 0.8% reported their quality of life as poor. No resident reported very poor.

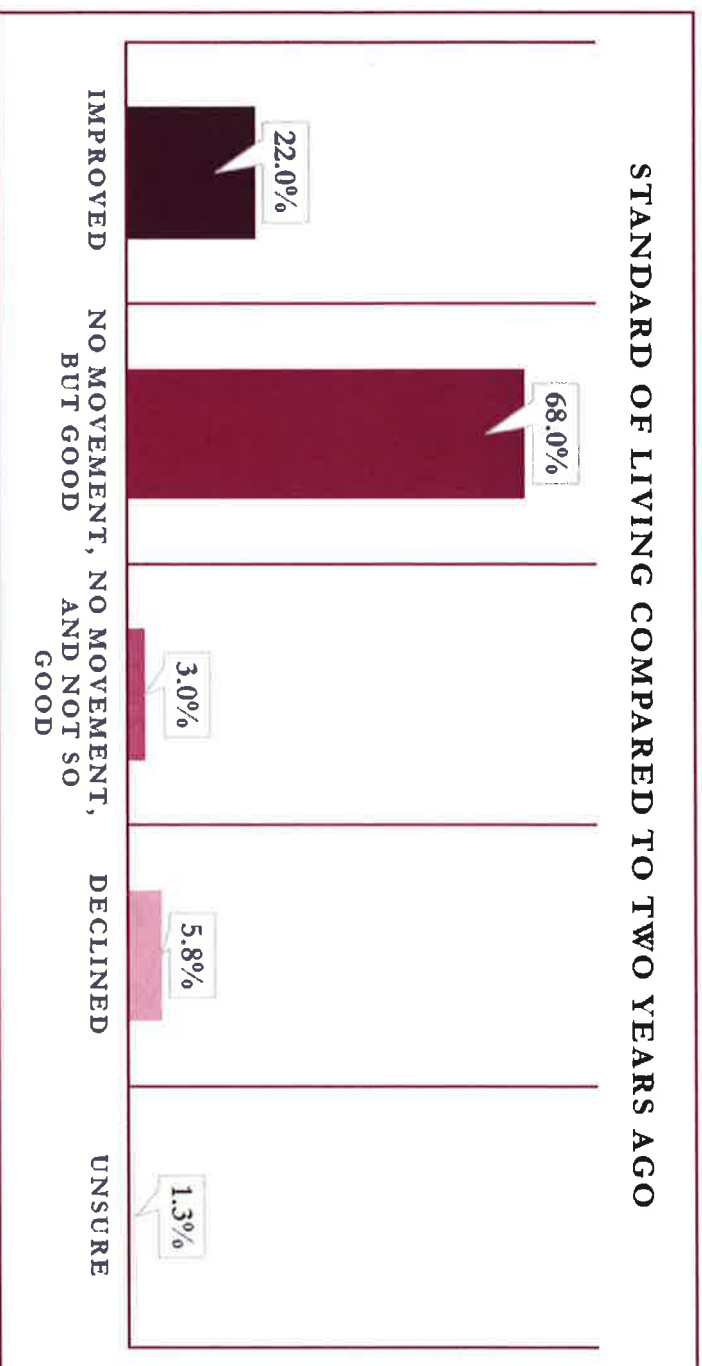


Quality of Life

Farmington H.S.



A large majority, 90.0%, suggested their standard of living, compared to two years ago, was “improved” (22.0%) or there was “no movement but good” (68.0%). Some suggested their standard of living was “no movement and not so good” (3.0%) or “declined” (5.8%).



Quality of Life

Farmington H.S.



Resident ratings of both Farmington town services and public schools was strong and positive. The positive rating for town services was 87.9% with poor ratings at 1.8%. On public schools, 82.1% provided positive ratings while 2.8% offered poor ratings.

RATING	PERCENT	PERCENT	PERCENT
	GOOD (7-10 RATING)	NEUTRAL (5-6 RATING)	POOR (1-4 RATING)
Quality of town services	87.9	8.8	1.8
Quality of Farmington public schools	82.1	7.8	2.8

Quality of Life

Farmington H.S.





# On a Fresh Start



There exists strong interest in a renewed planning process for a new or renovated Farmington High School. A large majority, 81.6%, suggested they were either very interested (53.8%) or somewhat interested (27.8%).

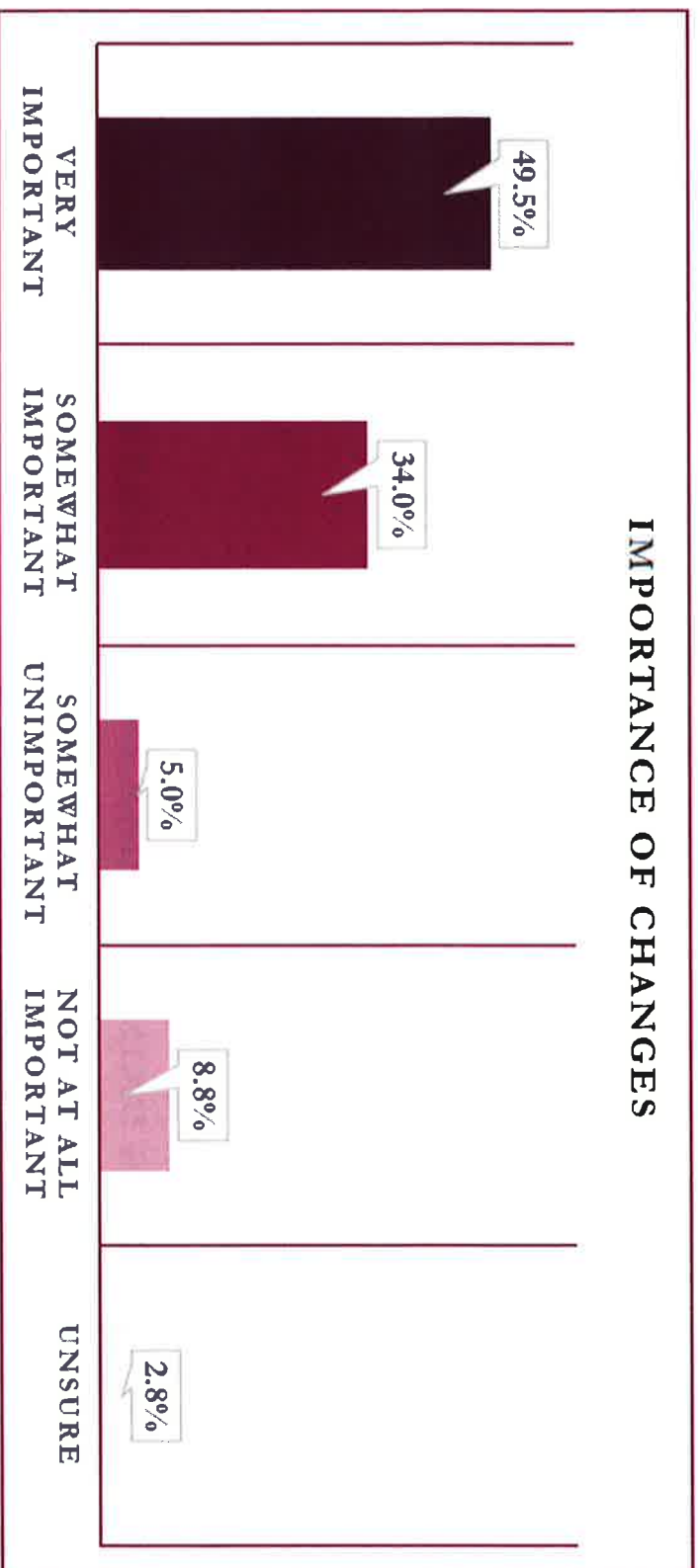


Interest

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The need for changes at the Farmington High School was perceived as important. Over four-fifths (83.5%) suggested changes were either very important (49.5%) or somewhat important (34.0%).



Interest

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In an open-end format question, survey respondents were asked to report the changes they would like considered in a new or renovated high school.

The most frequently named desired changes, in declining order, included:

<b>FACILITY CHANGES</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>New roof</b>	22.3
A facility that is safe and secure for students, faculty and staff	19.3
<b>Temperature control</b>	16.5
<b>Unsure/no suggestions</b>	16.5
<b>Code compliance</b>	15.8
A facility that is better designed to educate	14.5
<b>Ensuring ADA: Handicap accessibility</b>	14.2
<b>Update the 1928 building</b>	14.2
<b>Maintaining accreditation</b>	14.0
Ensure 21 <sup>st</sup> century learning is available to our students	14.0
<b>Larger auditorium</b>	13.3
<b>Larger cafeteria</b>	12.3
<b>Improving energy efficiency</b>	12.0

Desired Changes

Farmington H.S.



Others mentioned with less frequency include:

FACILITY CHANGES	PERCENT
A warm, more comfortable building for visitors, students, faculty and staff	10.8
Gymnasium – upgraded and/or ADA compliant	9.0
High school facility can be used as a Community Shelter	8.5
Improved and ADA accessible athletic fields	8.5
Demolish the 1928 building	7.8
A facility that is better designed to attract new families to town	7.5
Better parking	7.5
Reducing the sprawl	7.5
Adding a second floor	6.8
Maintaining the historic appearance / look	6.3
None – no need for a new or renovated high school	6.3
Preserve the existing high school for other uses	4.5
Tennis courts	3.8
Keep / mothball the 1928 building	3.8
Other...	22.8

Desired Changes

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Respondents were asked how aware they were of several issues cited in a Statement of Need which need addressing in the existing high school facility. Approximately two-thirds of all residents surveyed were aware of most needs listed.

	<b>REQUIRED REPAIRS OR UPGRADES</b>	<b>VERY OR SOMEWHAT AWARE: PERCENT</b>
School safety and security upgrades		68.0
Roof repairs required		67.5
Increased space for the auditorium, library, cafeteria and classrooms to accommodate students and educational needs		67.3
Meet and maintain high school accreditation requirements		66.8
Improvements - to address environmental issues such as temperature, water, air, noise and light		66.0
Increased space and classroom need for educational programming		64.5
Code compliance including energy efficiency improvements		63.7
Sprawl of the building, after additions, has caused increased internal travel time, hallway congestion, wasted usable space, and the need to cross outside the building during class changes which reduces security		63.7
Meet ADA Handicap Accessibility requirements		62.7
Parking lot improvements such as traffic flow and number of spaces		59.5

Awareness

Farmingington H.S.





# On Going Forward

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Farmington H.S.





Going forward, in any renewed effort to upgrade the Farmington High School...

**STATEMENTS**

**STRONGLY OR  
SOMEWHAT AGREE:  
PERCENT**

Public communication of a new design should distinguish between required and desired upgrades	88.0
I could be convinced to support new construction or renovation if I clearly understood the need	84.3
An updated and upgraded high school facility is important to maintaining home property values	82.8
If space could be identified for purchase, I would support a new high school in a different location	48.3





# On Support / Opposition



In an early survey support or opposition question, researchers asked respondents which of three options they were currently most interested in seeing pursued by planners. Costs or tax impacts were not included in this initial question.

The highest level of support was recorded for a renovated high school where all required and some desired upgrades are accomplished.

STATEMENTS	PERCENT
A newly constructed high school where about 85% is new and where all required and most of desired upgrades are considered	32.8
A renovated high school where all required and some of the desired upgrades are accomplished	41.3
A renovated high school where the minimum required upgrades are accomplished	15.5
None of these options ( <i>Response not provided, but accepted</i> )	4.3
Unsure / Don't know ( <i>Response not provided, but accepted</i> )	6.3

Support / Opposition

Farmington H.S.



**Researchers read the following to all survey respondents:**

**“The committee, tasked with looking at future upgrades and updates of the Farmington High School facility, will be exploring new construction or renovation that will range in overall cost from \$75 million dollars to \$135 million dollars”.**

**Following the introduction, respondents were asked to report their support or opposition to high school construction / renovation at four different cost and personal tax impact levels.**

Support / Opposition

Farmington H.S.

At \$135 million...

Respondents were asked to indicate their support or opposition in a new referendum if the investment in new high school construction or renovation is \$135 million, meaning an average increase of \$511 in taxes per year over 20 years for the average Farmington residential assessment.

Just over one-half of respondents, 51.0%, indicated they definitely (29.0%) or probably would support (22.0%) a renovation plan if it cost \$511, on average, per year.

AVERAGE INCREASE OF \$511 / YEAR	RESPONDENTS (PERCENT)	Total support or opposition	LIKELY VOTERS (PERCENT)	
			n=361	Total support or opposition
Definitely support	n=400 29.0	51.0	31.0	54.8
Probably support	22.0		23.8	
Probably oppose	12.0	40.7	11.4	37.7
Definitely oppose	28.7		26.3	
Unsure	8.3	8.3	7.5	7.5

Support / Opposition

Farmington H.S.



At \$125 million...

Respondents that indicated they would probably oppose, definitely oppose or were unsure about their support of an additional \$511 in taxes to support a renovation were, in turn, asked to indicate their support or opposition if the investment in new high school construction or renovation is \$125 million, or an average increase of \$435 in taxes per year over 20 years for the average Farmington residential assessment.

An additional 3.5% of respondents indicated they would definitely or probably support the renovation at a cost of additional \$435, on average, per year, bringing the total amount of support to 54.5%.

AVERAGE INCREASE OF \$435 / YEAR	RESPONDENTS (PERCENT)		LIKELY VOTERS (PERCENT)	
		Total support		Total support
Definitely support	+1.0	54.5	+1.1	58.1
Probably support	+2.5		+2.2	

Support / Opposition

Farmington H.S.



At \$100 million...

Respondents that indicated they would probably oppose, definitely oppose or were unsure about their support of an additional \$435 in taxes to support a renovation were, in turn, asked to indicate their support or opposition if the investment in new high school construction or renovation is \$100 million, meaning an average increase of \$348 in taxes per year over 20 years for the average Farmington residential assessment.

An additional 7.8% of respondents indicated they would definitely or probably support the renovation if it cost an additional \$348, on average, per year, bringing the total amount of support to 62.3%.

AVERAGE INCREASE OF \$348 / YEAR	RESPONDENTS (PERCENT)		LIKELY VOTERS (PERCENT)	
		Total support		Total support
Definitely support	+1.3	62.3	+1.4	66.7
Probably support	+6.5		+7.2	

Support / Opposition

Farmington H.S.



**At \$75 million...**

Respondents that indicated they would probably oppose, definitely oppose or were unsure about their support of an additional \$348 in taxes to support renovation or new construction were, in turn, asked to indicate their support or opposition if the investment in high school renovation without new construction is **\$75 million**, meaning an average increase of **\$261** in taxes per year over 20 years for the average Farmington residential assessment.

An additional 12.0% of respondents indicated they would definitely or probably support the renovation if it cost an additional \$261, on average, per year, bringing the total amount of support to 74.3%.

AVERAGE INCREASE OF \$261 / YEAR	RESPONDENTS (PERCENT)		LIKELY VOTERS (PERCENT)	
		Total support		Total support
Definitely support	+2.5	74.3	+2.5	78.9
Probably support	+9.5		+9.7	

Support / Opposition

Farmington H.S.





In an open-end format question, researchers asked respondents to identify three or four things they would need to see, hear or better understand before they would feel comfortable saying they could “definitely support” either new construction or renovation of the Farmington High School. The most frequently cited responses, in declining order, included:

STATEMENT	PERCENT (N=285)
Know more about costs / budget	24.9
Know detailed plan with on-going updates on proposal and process	17.5
Required vs desired needs to be justified / proved	14.0
Still would not agree / against it	6.3
Only minimum needs to be met in plan	5.3
No opinion / don't know	4.6
Town to seek unbiased / fair bids, be transparent in process	4.6
Need more information overall	3.9
Minimal impact on student life and education	2.8
Better communication / publicized meetings and info	2.1
Safety of students ensured	2.1
Want to know student enrollment / projected	2.1

Support / Opposition

Farmington H.S.



**Others mentioned with less frequency include:**

STATEMENT	PERCENT (N=285)
No new building / construction	1.4
Know how long it would take / timeline	1.1
Need ensured fiscal responsibility	0.7
Has nothing to do with me	0.7
Focus on handicap accessibility	0.7
Know that student needs are met	0.7
Everything is too expensive	0.7
Town comparisons completed	0.7
Build on new land	0.7
More time before vote	0.4
Need tour of school	0.4
New roof	0.4
Understand effects on desire to move to Farmington	0.4
Improved technology in school	0.4
Bring in more skills	0.4
Improved space for special needs	0.4

Support / Opposition

Farmington H.S.





# On Communication

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Farmington H.S.



The most frequently cited sources for information about the Farmington school system and town included, in declining order:

<b>RECEIVE FARMINGTON INFORMATION FROM...</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
Friends/Family/Neighbors/Co-workers	31.5
Local Newspapers: Printed	29.0
Farmington Town newsletter	23.3
Internet / Websites	16.8
Farmington Town Website	14.2
Farmington Schools Website	13.5
Flyers/brochures	12.3
Local Newspapers: Online	11.3
Emails	11.3
Direct mail	10.0
Social media such as Facebook	9.5
Talk of Farmington	9.5
Directly from the schools / school system	8.5

Communication

Farmington H.S.



Others mentioned with less frequency include:

RECEIVE FARMINGTON INFORMATION FROM...	PERCENT
Farmington Public Schools App	4.8
TV	3.8
Other	3.3
State news outlets (papers, radio, TV)	2.8
Everbridge	2.0
Opponents of school facility initiatives	1.5
Employer	1.3
Proponents of school facility initiatives	1.3
Radio	1.0
Blogs	0.8
Front Porch or similar community forum	0.5
Don't know / Unsure	0.5

**Other responses included:** Board of Education meetings, Farmington Patch, meetings/meeting minutes, discussions with local politicians, parents, school letters, text alerts, Town Hall, community board, building commission and YouTube.

Communication

Farmington H.S.



Social media used by respondents centered mostly on Facebook (55.5%), Instagram (18.3%) and Twitter (12.3%).

<b>SOCIAL MEDIA USED</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
Facebook	55.5
Don't Use social media	35.0
Instagram	18.3
Twitter	12.3
YouTube	8.5
Snap Chat	7.2
LinkedIn	7.0
Google Plus+ (not "Google")	6.3
Pinterest	4.3
Yelp	2.0
Other	1.3
Front Porch Forum or similar community forum	1.0
Foursquare	0.3

Communication

Farmington H.S.





# On The 2017 Referendum

Farmington H.S.



Regardless of whether the respondent voted in the 2017 high school referendum or not, researchers asked each if they supported or opposed the 2017 new construction / renovation plan. A total of 44.3% reported they supported the plan either strongly (34.0%) or somewhat (10.3%) while 42.3% indicated they somewhat (7.5%) or strongly opposed (34.8%) the plan.

<b>SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION</b>		<b>RESPONDENTS (PERCENT)</b>	
Strongly supported	34.0	Total support or opposition	44.3
Somewhat supported	10.3		
Somewhat opposed	7.5	42.3	
Strongly opposed	34.8		
Had no opinion / no interest	6.5	6.5	
Unsure / Don't know	7.0	7.0	

2017 Referendum

Farmington H.S.





In an open-end format question, supporters were asked for their reasons. The most frequent reasons for support included:

STATEMENT	PERCENT (N=157)
For the kids, investment in the kids, my kids go there	16.0
Current building conditions are poor, need repairs, bad shape	12.1
Quality education is important, education is a top priority	9.0
Need to maintain home and property values	9.0
Need a NEW building (not renovation)	5.7
Needs renovation, updates, upgrades, modernization	5.7
It's currently dangerous, safety reasons	5.1
High School reputation does not keep up with Town's	4.5
It was a good plan, well thought out, would benefit town	3.8
Not at code	2.5
Needs to be attractive to new residents	2.0
Not convinced on price, need an investment but not that much	0.6
Need a pool	0.6

2017 Referendum

Farmington H.S.

The most frequently cited reasons for opposition included:

STATEMENT	PERCENT (N=162)
Price was overblown, costly, taxes will increase, excessive expense	52.0
Not enough information, not convinced, lacked communication, handled poorly	8.0
No need, not necessary, fine as is	7.0
Don't need fancy new building, most expensive school in the state/nation	7.0
Renovate yes, build new no	5.0
Disagree with the plan, changes planned	4.0
Only offered one plan, no less expensive options offered, no wish list	4.0
No trust in board, lack honesty, lied, taken by surprise	4.0
Kids would be living in construction	2.0
Want new, not renovation	2.0
Waste	1.0
Debt incurred	1.0
New library and police station recently in town, same year	1.0
State budget not trustworthy	1.0

2017 Referendum

Farmingington H.S.



Majorities agreed (somewhat or strongly) with a few statements about the 2017 referendum....

STATEMENTS	STRONGLY OR SOMEWHAT AGREE: PERCENT
I clearly understood the proposal for the high school that was presented in the referendum	74.0
I was confident I knew the cost to me of a new high school in additional property taxes	71.3
I saw the overall cost of the new high school as too high	67.0
The communication to the public was adequate – I had enough information to make an informed decision	59.8
Public input was sought in the planning process	54.3

2017 Referendum

Farmington H.S.



While 41.0% do not recall or were unsure of the cost / price tag in the 2017 referendum ballot, the largest group of respondents, 23.0%, suggested the cost was \$125 - \$150 million dollars. Some, 14.8% suggested the total price was \$175 or more.

<b>PROPOSED COST</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
Under 50 million	1.8
50 to under 75 million	1.3
75 to under 100 million	3.3
100 to under 125 million	10.0
125 to under 150 million	23.0
150 to under 175 million	5.0
175 to under 200 million	10.0
200 million or more	4.8
Don't know / Unsure / Don't recall	41.0



# Summary

- The town appeared evenly divided on the 2017 referendum despite loss
- Those opposed identified and turned out their voters
- Those opposed prevailed at messaging (most expensive HS in U.S.)
- Voters did not see, but wanted, options in the run-up
- Voters did not know the impact on them personally in new taxes
- Cost recall was limited with many unsure
- Residents felt rushed
- Going forward: Finite and clear messages to a population that seems to want quality education and facilities in town. Increase awareness of need.

Thank you for the opportunity to present!



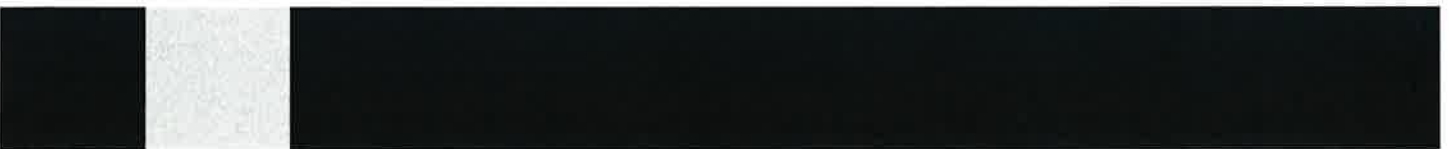
Any Questions?



# Findings & Recommendations Presentation

Joint Town Council and Board of Education Meeting

January 22, 2019



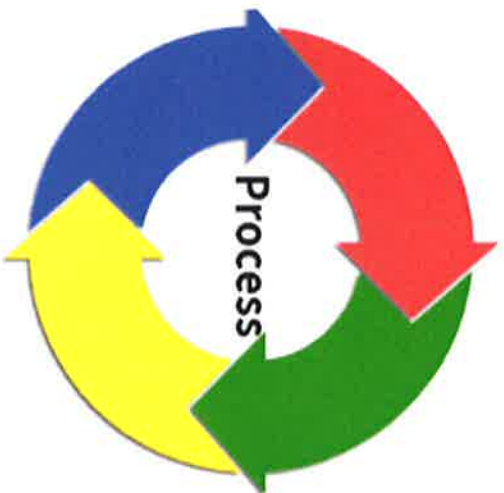
# Charge of the Committee

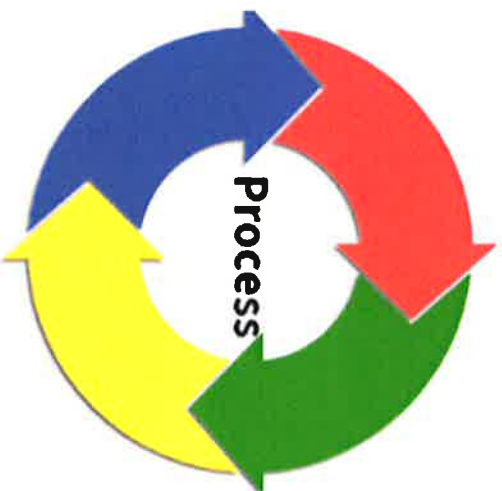
Such committee shall develop and present options to the Farmington Town Council and Board of Education on next steps for the Farmington High School facility utilizing the following information:

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

## Process Recommendations

→ 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/Farmingtown 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 as possible in the FHS facility

Communication



## 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

Communication







## **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



## 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

