

**Special Online Meeting Minutes
Farmington High School Building Committee Meeting
Wednesday, October 14, 2020
6:30 P.M.**

Attendees:

Meg Guerrera, Chair
Michael Smith
Sharon Mazzochi
Johnny Carrier
Ellen Siuta
Wendy Ku
Chris Fagan
Beth Kintner
Kathy Greider, Superintendent
Scott Hurwitz, FHS Principal
Lisa Kapcinski, FHS Assistant Principal
Kat Krajewski, Assistant Town Manager
Devon Aldave, Clerk of the Committee
Ryszard Szczypek, TSKP Studio
Chris Cykley, Construction Solutions Group
Mark Garilli, Construction Solutions Group

A. Call to Order.

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 P.M.

B. Pledge of Allegiance.

The committee members recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Public Comment.

None.

D. Minutes.

1) To approve the attached September 9, 2020 minutes.

Upon a motion made and seconded (Carrier/Mazzochi) it was unanimously VOTED: to approve the September 9, 2020 minutes.

E. Correspondence.

1) Correspondence Received 9/7/2020 – 10/9/2020

None.

F. Reports.

1) Chair Report.

Upon a motion made and seconded (Guerrera/Mazzochi) it was unanimously VOTED: to push the Chair Report as the last topic of discussion for Agenda Item F.

2) Communications Subcommittee Report.

Kathy Greider stated that the subcommittee continues to work on videos. There is also a meeting scheduled with Tall Timbers Marketing to discuss communications support. Meg Guerrero stated that there are updates to the committee website. Meg reported that Wendy Ku has joined the Communications Subcommittee and that the subcommittee meeting schedule is being changed. Kat Krajewski stated that a Town-wide newsletter was sent out this week and that the newsletter includes a blurb about the FHS Building Committee. Scott Hurwitz stated that he will share a draft of the FHS Video Tour at tomorrow's subcommittee meeting.

3) Board of Education Liaison Report.

Beth Kintner stated that there is nothing to report.

4) Town Council Liaison Report.

Chris Fagan stated that the Town Council met last night. At that meeting, Joe Swetcky, Finance Director, shared that the tax deferment program did not have a significant impact on taxes. There were around 155 deferments for around \$650,000. Most of the deferments have been paid, except for around 40 delinquencies for a shortfall of about \$70,000. Chris stated that Joe's report was encouraging. Chris stated that Joe did not give details about expenditures, however there should be an expenditure forecast next month.

Chris reiterated that the Town Council unequivocally supports the FHS Building Project.

Michael Smith asked if the committee would be able to review a financial forecast created by Joe Swetcky which could help the committee in making future decisions. Kat Krajewski stated that Joe is constantly forecasting, and that this information would be helpful in the future.

5) Financial Report.

Kat Krajewski reiterated that the number of tax deferments was lower than anticipated. Kat stated that the committee has had no expenditures since the last meeting.

Ellen Siuta asked if the tax deferment numbers included commercial taxpayers. Kat stated that both commercial and residential taxpayers could have applied for the deferment and she will look to get a breakdown of the numbers regarding what percentage of deferments were for commercial vs residential.

Wendy Ku asked if the tax deferment program was a one-time thing or if another program could arise when January taxes are due. Kat Krajewski stated that the Town Council approved this program after Governor Lamont issued an order allowing municipalities to do so, and

Kat stated that it is possible the Governor could come forward with another order that allows municipalities to create another deferment program. Chris Fagan agreed with Kat and added that this is very possible if we see another spike in coronavirus cases.

6) State/Legislative Update.

Mark Garilli stated that the State did approve 12 grants for around \$500 million in total project costs. Mark stated that the June grant submission deadline remains the same in 2021.

Ryszard Szczypek asked if he has heard about any additional grants regarding COVID measures for new projects. Mark said he has not.

Michael Smith asked if any grants were rejected due to the current economic situation. Mark stated that he nor Chris Cykley has seen any rejections or reduced reimbursement rates due to the pandemic.

7) Industry Update.

Ryszard Szczypek had additional conversations with cost estimators, construction managers, and general contractors who suggested that the project should stay the course regarding escalation costs.

Ryszard stated that other industry professionals had similar bid experiences where contractors were bidding in some instances at 25% lower than anticipated in order to have a backlog of work. Ryszard and other professionals agree that this situation is only a temporary blip and that rates will return to normal. Ryszard shared data from the Turner Building Cost Index which reported that costs had increased steadily in each quarter until last quarter, which supports that this is a temporary phenomenon and he expects the industry to bounce back and rates to return to normal.

Mark Garilli agreed with Ryszard that this is a temporary blip and that escalation should remain as it was originally assessed. Johnny Carrier also agreed that this is a blip and that he anticipates industry issues to calm down a bit in January/February for residential construction.

8) Chair Report.

Meg Guerrera shared that Tim Harris, Director of School Facilities has retired. Meg and the committee thanked Tim for his hard work and dedication to this project.

Meg Guerrera asked for thoughts regarding bringing on a Construction Manager to the project for pre-referendum services. Ryszard Szczypek stated that there are not many phasing complications for our project. As a result TSKP Studio is comfortable continuing to use their cost estimator up to the referendum. He stated that after the referendum, there may be more value in bringing on a construction

manager. Mark Garilli agreed with Ryszard and stated that new buildings present less complications than a renovation from a constructability standpoint.

Michael Smith asked if Ryszard or Mark knew if there are major differences in cost estimation between professional cost estimators and construction managers for educational construction projects. In his experience with healthcare construction, he has seen some difference in cost estimation between the two. Ryszard and Mark did not have precise figures to share but stated that both are effective at their jobs and reiterated that a new building is less complicated to estimate. Ryszard stated that bringing on a construction manager after a successful referendum would be more valuable because at that point the committee would know if the project is real or not. Mark Garilli agreed with Ryszard and stated that in other municipal projects CSG has worked on, the committees had RFP's and contracts ready to go, so if the project did pass referendum the committee could act quickly in bringing on a construction manager. Michael asked if Mark or Ryszard could estimate the cost of bringing on a pre-construction CM, Ryszard estimated between \$100,000 to \$200,000 for pre-construction CM services.

Meg Guerrera presented slides regarding what the committee is currently doing, potential Spring or Fall referendum timelines, and steps necessary to meet the June 2021 grant submission deadline. These slides are recorded with these minutes as Attachment A.

Meg asked the committee for their thoughts regarding the future project timelines. Johnny Carrier stated that he is hesitant to move forward with a Spring referendum at this time due to the uncertainty of whether the pandemic and economic situation will worsen during the winter. Johnny added that his opinion could change if things drastically turn for the better, just as things changed so quickly earlier. Sharon Mazzochi agreed with Johnny that it is too soon to make a decision and added that it could be a risk to hold a referendum before June as we do not know what will happen with COVID during the winter. Sharon suggested reevaluating in a few months and see how the general public feels. Michael Smith suggested looking at consumer confidence as a metric to aid the committee moving forward. Michael also stated that a survey through the communications subcommittee some time in the future would be helpful in getting feedback for the public. Kat Krajewski stated that the committee has already completed a down payment to the Center for Research and Public Policy for a community survey, and that the CRPP is ready to move forward with conducting that survey when we direct them to. Kat also stated that we have partnered with Tall Timbers Marketing who has also included surveys in their newsletters to residents. Johnny Carrier added that the committee continuing to meet and preparing things like

an RFP for a CM is important so that the committee does not miss a window of opportunity.

Michael Smith asked if holding the referendum on the same ballot as a municipal election would affect the outcome. The committee was not sure but stated that this is something to consider. Meg Guerrera asked if holding the referendum on the same ballot as a municipal election would effect the timing of the blackout period. Kat Krajewski stated that Town Clerk informed her that she would not know until the election calendar is released on January 1, 2021.

Wendy Ku stated that bringing a referendum to the table prior to schools resuming to full in-person learning could be a factor. Kathy Greider shared some information regarding Farmington Public Schools. She stated that K-8 have returned to full in-person learning. Farmington High School has postponed returning to full in-person learning due to a few positive COVID cases due to a social gathering outside of school and is waiting for approval from the Farmington Valley Health District before setting a new date. Kathy stated that the new building design would be far easier to accommodate the COVID-19 regulations than the current FHS facility. Scott Hurwitz agreed that the current FHS facility presents challenges for dealing with COVID-19 and the school program has been affected negatively. Scott stated that the students continue to need more from the facility regardless of the pandemic or not.

G. Adjournment.

Upon a motion made and seconded (Mazzochi/Carrier) it was unanimously VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

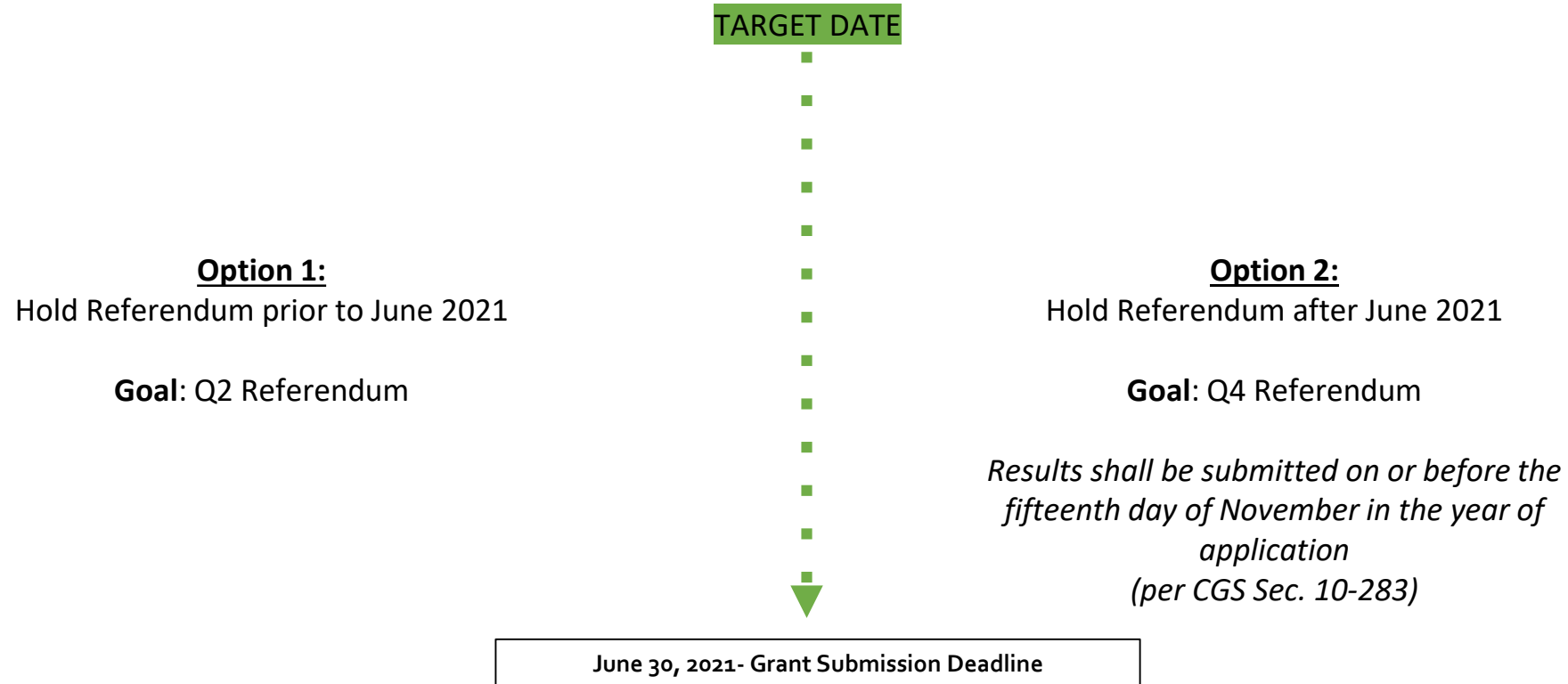
Devon Aldave
Clerk of the Committee

What are we Doing?



- Continue to meet monthly
- Collaborate and Communicate with the Town Council Chair, Board of Education Chair & FHS Building Committee Chair
- Work with Tall Timbers and the Communications Subcommittee to prepare communications
- Utilize the Town Council Liaison to keep the communication channel open

What Do We Know?



(This is a planning document that represents high-level tasks and will be updated continually.)