

MAY 24, 2021
MINUTES OF SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
OF THE TOWN OF FARMINGTON
HELD IN PERSON AND ZOOM

A Special Town Meeting of the electors and citizens qualified to vote in town meetings of the Town of Farmington, Connecticut, was held in the Farmington High School Auditorium, 10 Monteith Drive in Farmington, Connecticut, on Monday, May 24, 2021 at 7:00 PM and on Zoom meeting.

Paula B. Ray, Town Clerk called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Upon motion made and seconded the reading of the Warning of the meeting was waived. Motion passed by voice vote. The Warning was published in the Hartford Courant on May 14, 2021 and is recorded in these records immediately preceding these minutes. The Town Clerk called for nominations for moderator. Upon motion made and seconded, Mr. Bruce Chudwick was selected Moderator. Motion passed by voice vote.

The meeting was recessed at this point for 20 minutes because of technical difficulties with the Zoom portion of the meeting.

The Moderator asked the 55 residents in attendance to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance. There were 87 residents attending by Zoom meeting. He reviewed the purpose and procedures for the Special Town Meeting.

The Moderator called for the consideration of the resolution warned under Item 1 of the Warning appropriating \$135 600,000 for costs related to the design, construction, furnishing and equipping of a new high school. Motion was made and seconded to consider Item 1 contained in the Warning. Motion passed by voice vote. Motion was made and seconded to waive the reading of the resolution contained in Item 1 of the Warning. Motion passed on voice vote. Copies of the resolution having been made available to those in attendance.

He called on C.J. Thomas, Chair of the Town Council: Ellen Siuta, Chair of the Board of Education and Meghan Guerrera, Chair of the Farmington High School Building Committee to make a presentation on the proposed project.

Mr. Thomas, Town Council Chair, told the audience that the scope, timeline, tax impact and costs for the project would be explained during the presentation. He introduced Ellen Siuta, Chair of the Board of Education.

Ms. Siuta gave a brief project summary and introduced Meghan Guerrera, Chair of the Farmington High School Building Committee.

Ms. Guerrera gave a detailed overview of the project using the presentation recorded with these minutes. She called on Mr. Thomas to review the tax impact of the project for residents.

Mr. Thomas listed the financial assumptions used to assess the tax impact of the project grand list growth, operating budget increases for both the Board of Education and the Town, Capital Improvement Plan budget increases and debt service expenses for both the project and other needs. Because of the retirement of existing debt, the project was expected to impact the tax rate for five fiscal years 2023-2027. The increase on the average assessed home was estimated to be \$466 in total over the five years.

The Moderator opened the meeting for public comments and questions for those in attendance in the auditorium.

Peter Jones of 21 Briarwood Road spoke against the project. He felt it cost too much money and should be a renovation not a new building. He asked the Town to stop wasting the residents tax dollars. He felt the proposed project would be detrimental to the homeowners on Knollwood and Briarwood roads and in violation of the Town's zoning laws. He believed the silent majority would vote the project down.

Mike Galluzzo of 3 Fox Run Road thanked everyone for their work on the project and thought it was an excellent plan. He believed the residents of Farmington had historically invested in the Town's infrastructure, and the High School was terrible condition. He was concerned about the High School losing its accreditation.

Emily Kaliney of 30 High Street spoke in favor of the project. She urged everyone to vote yes. She believed that economically it was the right time for the project.

Pierre Guertin of 12 Henley Commons had questions about the costs of the project. He had not made up his mind about the project. He believed the High School needed work but did not know if the Town could afford the proposed project. He wanted the audience to know it would cost the average taxpayer \$460 a year for 20 years.

Matt Hutvagner of 4 Deepwood Road spoke in favor of the project and appreciated all the hours people had put into the project. He believed it was a very thoughtful project and the continued maintenance expenses for a failing building were a waste of tax dollars.

Ned Statchen of 6 Bella Lane thanked the Building Committee for all the work they had done on the project. He believed the lack of support for the schools over the years had led to the current situation. He spoke in favor of the project and believed it was the correct time to move forward.

John Resony of 1 Norfolk Gardens asked what happened to taxes if you do not build the building and what were the deficiencies in the building requiring the project.

Gerald Hancock of 5 Westview Terrace spoke in favor of the project. He believed students over the years had benefited from the previous building projects that

had taken place to the building, and now was time for a new high school. He asked residents consider the future of the Town and to provide for the students what was expected in education today.

John Silver of 70 Peggy Lane spoke in favor of the project. He believed the process had been very transparent and well done. He highlighted the needs in Special Education, ADA compliance and the failing structure. He acknowledged as a parent he would get direct benefits from the project, but he had a Mother living in Town on a fixed income and still supported it.

George Reider of 9 Glenmore Drive spoke in favor of the project and believed residents came to Town because of the excellent schools. He felt the project brought benefits to the students and property values. He did not want the Town to make another mistake like the Green Briar purchase by turning down the project.

Dorothy Raviele of 25 Munson Road spoke in favor of the project. She told the audience over the years she had lived in Town she had seen too many referendums turned down, because resident's unwillingness to support the community. She believed now was the right time for the project and the can should not be kicked down the road anymore.

Rakeshkumar Kansara of 74 Alpine Drive asked what was the analysis that went into to developing the \$466 cost to residents.

Jake Brickner of 111 River Road told the audience he was recent graduate from Farmington High School. He loved his time at the school, but believed the project was needed. He was going to work to get it passed.

Nancy Nickerson of 45 Farmington Ridge Drive thanked the Board of Education, Town Council and Building Committee for their work. She commended them for bringing the project back for the benefit of the entire community. She believed the High School was at a crossroads, and it was necessary for the project to move forward to maintain quality education. She felt it was economically the correct time for the project forward. She commended the Building Committee for listening and communicating to the community especially during Covid.

Demetrios Giannaros of 56 Basswood Road thanked the public servants for their time. He told the audience he was a senior, an economist and had taught economics and finance for 35 years. He had done a cost versus benefit analysis and believed the benefits outweighed the costs for the project. He told the audience that if the project did not move forward there would be costs to the Town in maintenance to failing building and making it an undesirable place for families and businesses. He was in favor of the project.

Steve Lamoureux of 86 Knollwood Road told the audience he was an educator and had worked in several nearby towns and in Farmington. He felt the students deserved the project, and it was his civic duty support the project.

Patty Picard of 11 Tanglewood Road told the audience her children would not benefit from the project, but she supported it. She asked what would happen if the State of Connecticut anticipated funding was not received, and why the Central Offices were being moved to the 900 Wing. She believed as much as possible needed to be done to mitigate the impact on the Briarwood Road neighbors.

Alex Oshana of 21 Berkshire Drive was concerned about the building being ADA deficient and the possible loss of accreditation. He questioned if proper maintenance had taken place to address these issues over the years and whether the building would be in the poor condition it was currently if it had been maintained properly.

Lyman Louis of 53 Knollwood Road spoke in support of the project. He felt the scope of the project was appropriate. He asked the Arts not to be forgotten and given appropriate consideration in the new high school.

Elaine Carpino of 10 Sparrow Lane asked why the building was three stories instead of two stories, where the kitchen was in relation to the cafeteria and why the classrooms had glass fronts because of privacy and security concerns.

Veronica Krusz of 6 Kent Lane questioned whether the cafeteria, auditorium and the music areas had been increased in size in the proposed high school because of their deficiencies in the current high school.

Demetrios Giannaros of 56 Basswood Road told the audience the State of Connecticut was running a budget surplus and the State of Connecticut was receiving money from the Federal Government, so there was no reason to think the Town was not going to receive a school construction grant from the State of Connecticut.

Marcus Fairbrother of 12 Candlewood Lane thanked the Building Committee, the Town Council, and the Board of Education for their work. He spoke in favor of the project and urged everyone to vote yes. He believed the proposed project was a solution to the High Schools problems.

The Moderator announced that he would now take comments from attendees on Zoom.

Sarah Willett of 54 Garden Street told the audience she was shocked by the no vote contingent in Farmington. She believed the poor condition of the High School was a result of this attitude. She spoke in favor of the project.

Stephen Kay of 57 Garden Gate thanked the Town for the Zoom portion of the meeting, which allowed him to participate. He thanked the speakers, the Building Committee, the Board of Education and the Town Council for their efforts and work on the project. He said it was unusual for unanimous support among elected officials for a project, which was the case for this project. He noted it had not been unanimous support last time and wanted to know what was different this time.

Erika Nowakowski of 69 Coppermine Road spoke in favor of the project. She believed the new school would benefit the community by reducing long term costs for maintenance and operations. By doing nothing the community would be left with a building that was not up to standard and was not ADA compliant. She asked residents to ask questions and learn why the project needed to be supported.

John Baily of 14 Salisbury Way thought the project was turned down the last time because of the prospect that Moody's was considering the Town for down grade. He thought the new project was much better than the last proposal. He was concerned that enough consideration had not been given to outside economic forces from the State of Connecticut and the possibility of escalated construction costs.

John Schoenhorn of 155 Town Farm Road told the audience he had moved to Farmington for the schools. He was an empty nester now, but he was supporting the project. He believed people would not choose Farmington as a place to live if the schools deteriorated, which would affect home values. He pointed out voting no would not result in not spending money because of the maintenance needs at the High School.

Jessica Harrison of 301 South Road spoke in favor of the project. She agreed with much of what had been said. She thanked the Town Council for bringing back the project. She asked what repairs had been done to the High School over the years.

Rich Scalzo of 29 Strawfield Road spoke in favor of the project. He asked residents to take pride in their community and vote yes.

Lisa Humbarger of 6 Fox Run moved to Farmington for the schools. If she had known about the High School, she would not have moved here. If the Town chooses not to invest in schools again, people will choose Avon and Simsbury instead. She thanked everyone for their hard work on the project.

Jessica Lister of 8 Candlewood Lane was excited about the project and encouraged everyone to vote yes.

James Rackliffe of 92 Knollwood Road felt positive about the project. He believed the people not in favor of the project were showing up at the last minute and using scare tactics to defeat the project. He pointed out that even with the proposed tax increase Farmington's mill rate would still be less than the neighboring towns. He did not believe the residents in opposition to the project did not have the Town's best interest at heart. He did not want money spent on maintenance for a failing school building.

Richa Gupta of 8 Gillette Way spoke in favor of the project. She believed Farmington was a great Town to live in. She wanted Farmington to continue to have an excellent school system. She thanked everyone for their work on the project.

Janell Lovig of 5 Crosswood Road spoke in favor of the project. She believed now was the time to move forward, and the Building Committee had done an excellent job communicating with the residents.

Patty Boye-Williams of 17 Westview Terrace spoke in favor of the project and thanked the Building Committee, Board of Education, Town Council, school staff and Town staff for their work on the project. She stated the project was a complete and comprehensive solution for the needs of the students and Town, which would serve for decades to come.

Rafeena Bacchus Lee of 3 Hamilton Way spoke in favor of the project. She urged anyone undecided about the project to go the Building Committee's website to learn about the project. She believed the value of a new High School outweighed the cost to build it and would serve students and residents into the future.

Dara Macchi of 14 Firenzi Lane spoke in favor of the project. She believed the ADA deficiencies were a serious problem for residents and students. After taking a tour of the High School, she was surprised at the deficiencies in the building. She was concerned about the security needs of the building.

Sarah Burns of 3 Hidden Spring Lane spoke in favor of the project. She was very impressed with how the Town moved forward since the failed referendum. She felt the process had been very transparent. She told the audience there were other websites to learn about the project besides the Building Committee's such as Comprehensive FHS.org and United Farmington.org.

Sam Reisner of 41 Main Street spoke in favor of the project. He thanked everyone who had worked on the project and the residents who had gone to meetings and gave input. He encouraged all supporters to vote. He believed the current High School was outdated and did not serve the student's needs. Doing renovations to a failing building was not a good idea.

The Moderator moved to comments from the Chat Room function of Zoom.

Anna Saraceno of 25 Hickory Lane questioned if there would be any changes to the turf field or changes to the scoreboard regarding the old mascot.

John Carpino of 10 Sparrow Lane agreed that something needed to be done, but he did not like the design. He felt there was wasted space in the design of the proposed high school and was concerned there were not enough classrooms in the new design.

The Moderator called for a second round of public comment from residents in attendance.

Elaine Carpino of 10 Sparrow Lane asked for the square footage in the new building compared to the old building, the number of classrooms in the old and

proposed high school and the amount of space for art in the old and proposed high school.

It was moved and seconded the meeting be adjourned to referendum vote on the resolution considered pursuant to item 1 of the Town Meeting to be held on Thursday, June 3, 2021 between the hours of 6:00 AM and 8:00 PM at the polling places indicated in the Warning at 10:00 p.m.

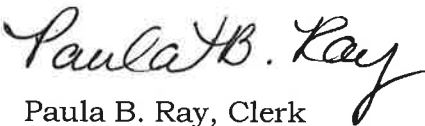
The motion passed by voice vote.

The Moderator declared that the Town Meeting was adjourned to a referendum vote and that the resolution would be placed upon the ballots under the following heading:

“SHALL THE TOWN OF FARMINGTON APPROPRIATE \$135,600,000 FOR THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW HIGH SCHOOL ON THE GROUNDS OF THE EXISTING HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS, DEMOLITION OF SUBSTANTIALLY ALL OF THE EXISTING FARMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL OTHER THAN THE 900 WING AND THE 1928 BUILDING, AND RENOVATION AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE 900 WING, AND AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS AND NOTES IN AN AMOUNT SUFFICIENT TO FINANCE THE PORTION OF THE APPROPRIATION NOT DEFRAYED FROM GRANTS (AN ANTICIPATED NET PROJECT COST TO THE TOWN OF \$109,300,000)?

Voters approving the resolution will vote “YES” and those opposing the resolution will vote “NO”. Electors shall vote at their regularly assigned polling places, as follows: Electors residing in the First Voting District and assigned to polling places 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, and 1-4 shall vote at Irving A. Robbins Middle School, 20 Wolf Pit Road, Farmington, Connecticut; and those assigned to polling place 1-5 shall vote at West Woods Upper Elementary School, 50 Judson Lane, Farmington, Connecticut. Electors residing in the Second Voting District and assigned to polling place 2-6 shall vote at the Community & Senior Center, 321 New Britain Avenue, Unionville, Connecticut; and those assigned to polling place 2-7 shall vote at the Municipal Complex, Monteith Drive, Farmington, Connecticut. Voters qualified to vote at town meeting who are not electors shall vote at their respective polling place at Irving A. Robbins Middle School, West Woods Upper Elementary School, the Community & Senior Center, or the Municipal Complex. Absentee ballots will be available from the Town Clerk.

Respectfully submitted,

Handwritten signature of Paula B. Ray in cursive script.

Paula B. Ray, Clerk



**Farmington High School
Building Committee**

**Special Town Meeting
May 24, 2021**

Project Summary



- Design, construction, furnishing and equipping of new, three story, high school building of approximately 239,000 sq. ft.
- Constructed on the grounds of the existing FHS campus
- Demolition of substantially all of the existing FHS, other than the “900 wing” and the 1928 building
- 900 Wing renovation & improvements- locker rooms and Farmington Public Schools Central Office



Project Summary



- Site work, including:
 - Improvements to traffic patterns and vehicular circulation
 - Additional parking
 - Relocation of athletic fields
 - Accessibility improvements to the upper fields, football field stands and press box
- Widening of Monteith Drive



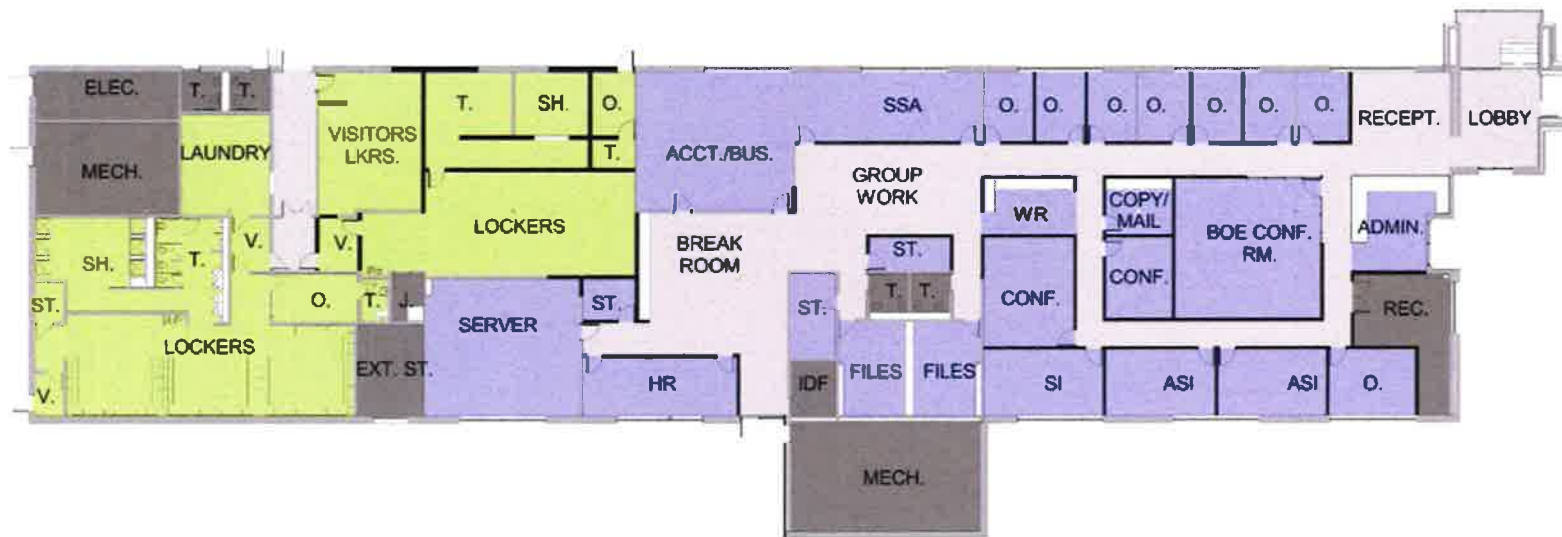
First Floor



Third Floor



Renovated 900 Wing

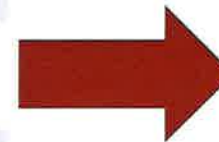


Estimated Project Timeline



Estimated Project Timeline

Town Meeting	May 24, 2021
Referendum Date	June 3, 2021
State Grant Application Submission	June 30, 2021
Design and Approvals	July 2021- July 2022
Bidding and Award	July 2022- September 2022
Phase I Construction of New Building	September 2022-August 2024
Phase II- Renovation of 900 wing & Demolition of Remaining Building	June 2024-July 2025
Phase III- Site Work	January 2025-June 2025



Students will occupy the new high school in August/September 2024

There will be no disruption to teaching and learning during construction

Estimated Project Cost



Estimated total project cost is approximately **\$135.6M**.

The Town Council set a net municipal project maximum of **\$110M** for the project, which the FHS Building Committee is committed to delivering a project below the net municipal project maximum.

This will be offset by reimbursement from the State of Connecticut, estimated at approximately **\$26.3M**.

Budget Review



Approved by FHS Building Committee- March 2021 (Budget in Millions)

	Feb 2020 original	May 2020 adjusted	March 2021 Rate adjusted	
			900 Wing	New Bldg
1. Arch./Eng. Design Fee	\$ 5.7	\$ 5.7	\$.3	\$ 5.3
2. Professional Fees	\$ 3.0	\$ 3.0	\$.1	\$ 2.8
3. Construction Costs	\$ 120.6	\$ 117.0	\$ 5.1	\$ 110.4
4. Alternates	\$ 0	\$ 0		\$ 0
5. FF&E and Technology	\$ 5.6	\$ 5.1	\$.2	\$ 4.9
6. Owner Contingency (5%)	\$ 7.1	\$ 6.5	\$.3	\$ 6.1
7. Grand Total	\$ 142.0	\$ 137.3	\$ 6.0	\$ 129.6
8. Est. State Reimbursement	- 28.0	- 27.5	-1.7	- 24.6
9. Net Town Share	\$ 114.0	\$ 109.8	\$ 4.3	\$ 105.0
			\$ 109.3	

On February 4, 2020:

10. Target Net Town Share

\$105 to \$110

Projected Tax Impact



- Because of Farmington's ongoing retirement of existing capital projects bonded debt, there will only be five years (Fiscal years 2023 to 2027), the high school project will increase the property tax.
- For example, the impact on a homeowner with an average assessed value of \$226,777 (assessment is 70% of the market value of a home worth \$324,000), **is estimated to be \$466 in total over those five years, averaging \$93 per year, or under \$8 per month.**
- In the remaining years of the bond(s), there is no incremental increases to taxes due to the high school debt issues, as the required debt service is absorbed by the retirement of old debt.

Referendum



When: June 3, 2021

 Polls Open 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM

Where: At your regular polling location

Referendum Question:

SHALL THE TOWN OF FARMINGTON APPROPRIATE \$135,600,000 FOR THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW HIGH SCHOOL ON THE GROUNDS OF THE EXISTING HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS, DEMOLITION OF SUBSTANTIALLY ALL OF THE EXISTING FARMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL OTHER THAN THE 900 WING AND THE 1928 BUILDING, AND RENOVATION AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE 900 WING, AND AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS AND NOTES IN AN AMOUNT SUFFICIENT TO FINANCE THE PORTION OF THE APPROPRIATION NOT DEFRAID FROM GRANTS (AN ANTICIPATED NET PROJECT COST TO THE TOWN OF \$109,300,000)?