

School Construction Priority List Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, January 28, 2010

3:30 PM in Room 1B of the LOB

The meeting was called to order at 3:40PM by Chairman, Rep. Fleischmann A. 018.

The following committee members were present:

Senators: Gaffey, Fonfara
Representatives: Fleischmann, Reynolds, Giuliano

Absent were:

Senators: Roraback, Debicella

Representatives: Floren

- I. Rep. Fleischmann called the meeting to order at 3:40 p.m., welcomed everyone, and asked Sen. Gaffey if he had any remarks.
- II. Sen. Gaffey welcomed everybody and talked about the importance of school construction. Rep. Fleischmann recognized the ranking member, Rep. Giuliano, who thanked the chairs and is looking forward to working with them this year.
- III. Rep. Fleischmann asked the State Department of Education Commissioner, Mark McQuillan, to present his testimony.

- IV. Commissioner McQuillan talked about the priorities of SDE for the year. He mentioned the Sheff case, school construction, and the state's magnet school strategy, focusing on school choice that would lower costs for the state.
- V. Rep. Fleischmann asked about the high cost of construction of West Haven High School.
- VI. David Wedge from SDE said that the cost would be \$400/sq ft, which is on the low end of building a high school.
- VII. Rep. Fleischmann asked why costs for the Reggie Magnet School for the Arts were \$470 per square foot-significantly higher than other schools. Mr. Wedge said that magnet schools tend to cost more.
- VIII. Rep. Fleischmann asked why certain schools on the priority list had not been sited. Mr. Wedge answered that Stratford and Honey Spot House have sites. The siting process for magnets is underway as is often the case for magnets on the list.
- IX. Rep. Fleischmann asked about the cost impact of the new state law involving environmental requirements. David Wedge estimated that the incremental costs are at 5% to comply with the requirement.
- X. Rep. Fleischmann asked why the Montville High School project, which was originally authorized in 2001, was on this year's list. David Wedge indicated he didn't know the details, but would follow up.
- XI. Sen. Gaffey asked about West Haven City Hall and paying for unused space. Sen. Gaffey said that this issue could be taken up with OPM Secretary Bob Genuario.
- XII. Sen. Gaffey said that there is a moratorium on magnet schools and was pleased to hear Commissioner McQuillan state that the Open Choice alternative is the most cost-effective and least expensive way to comply with the Sheff agreements. Sen. Gaffey concurred with that, and stated that CT will not be able to build our way into compliance with the Sheff order.
- XIII. Sen. Gaffey mentioned Vocational Technical schools, saying that the issue would be discussed at Monday's meeting, but was surprised that no Vo-Tech construction was on the priority list. Sen. Gaffey asked for the dates of all Vo-Tech construction project authorizations, and that SDE have that information ready for Monday's meeting.
- XIV. Sen. Gaffey asked about the definitions of reimbursable renovations when a district is faced with difficult economic times and may choose to opt for the least expensive options to make important repairs in lieu of "renovate as new" or "build as new". Mr. Wedge said that anything characterized as repair, replacement, or maintenance does not qualify for reimbursement. Mr. Wedge said that the Department believes a line has to be drawn between minor renovations and replacement of a school.
- XV. Rep. Fleischmann recognized Vice-Chairman Rep. Tom Reynolds, who asked about funding and spending efficiencies. Mr. Wedge

ndicated that the new state law limiting change orders is helping to reduce costs.

- XVI. Rep. Reynolds asked about changes anticipated in the next few years. Mr. Wedge anticipates significant renovation changes.
- XVII. Rep. Fleischmann recognized Sen. Fonfara, who talked about energy related improvements, such as HVAC, and what advantage was being taken of technology. Mr. Wedge said that there are two categories regarding this, but that with respect to energy efficiencies, the Department lacks the personnel to review the changes. Sen. Fonfara said that he'd like to work with Sen. Gaffey and Rep. Fleischmann to improve state review of HVAC upgrades.
- XVIII. A motion was duly made and seconded to approve the Priority List.
- XIX. Rep. Fleischmann asked the clerk to call the roll and announce the tally. Total voting were 5, with 5 yeas, 0 nays, 0 abstaining, and 3 absent and not voting.
- XX. Rep. Fleischmann adjourned the meeting at 4:20 p.m.

Chris Calabrese
Committee Clerk

Riju Das, Dianne Slopak
Assistant Committee Clerk