

**EAST HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
JOINT BUILDINGS & GROUNDS/FINANCE
SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
EAST HAVEN HIGH SCHOOL BOARDROOM
35 WHEELBARROW LANE
EAST HAVEN, CONNECTICUT 06513**

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 6, 2011
6:30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Mr. Pompano, Mrs. Maisano, Mr. DeNuzzo,
Mrs. DePalma, Mr. Hennessey, Mr. Palladino,
Mr. Scalesse and Mrs. Vineyard

ABSENT: Mrs. Kluth

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Serio, Superintendent
Mrs. Forti, Assist. Supt. of Curriculum & Instruction
Mrs. Acquarulo, Director of Pupil Services
Mr. Travaglino, Director of Bldgs. & Grounds
Mr. Lathrop, Business Administrator
Mrs. Lewis, Finance Manager

1. OPEN MEETING

Mr. Pompano called the joint Buildings & Grounds/Finance Subcommittee meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. in the Boardroom at East Haven High School.

2. Discussion of Heating & Maintenance Issues at JMMS

Mr. Pompano stated a report from George Ellis had been handed out. He asked Mr. Travaglino to take them through the report and start explaining it to everyone there. There was an open PO and there were two rates for different techs in the amounts of \$65 and \$72. They were still waiting for the invoice for this particular issue. The amount that had been spent minus this invoice was around \$16,000. This covered all schools except the high school and Hays. Dornfeld handled most of the work for air-conditioning etc. at the high school and they did some work at the other schools. Their bill was around \$60,000 for the year. Between the two they were just shy of \$80,000.

Mr. Pompano asked Mr. Travaglino to take them through how they got Ellis to come into the building. Mr. Travaglino spoke about the 639 maintenance requests they had since the start of school and how one was for the heat problem at JMMS which was dated 11-29-10. The complaint was this teacher's room was very hot because of direct sunlight and the heat being on. He assigned a tech to see what was going on and the thermostat was set too high. The following morning they heard from the same teacher that it was too cold. Mr. Travaglino explained how the thermostats worked and how they were different from those at home because they were pneumatic thermostats.

Mr. Travaglino stated the issue with windows being open at the Middle School, though it was important, they needed to recognize they work off of work orders that were given to them by the principals or orders they receive. Mr. Pompano stated that from what he understood, there were a number of health issues associated with this such as asthma issues. Mr. Travaglino explained that there was usually a freeze on the budget that usually happens in October or early November. There were no expenditures unless it was an emergency, so don't even ask. Mrs. Maisano stated she thought the Board as a whole would recognize a freezing spend, but she did not think this Board had ever said no when it had to do with the heating system and health. Mr. Travaglino stated he did not mean to imply that and he would never try to embarrass them. Mr. Pompano stated if it were a safety issue, they would find the money. Mr. Travaglino stated they did not know there was an issue so drastic that they needed to devote \$10,000 - \$15,000 to it. If they had known, they would have gone to the Superintendent and he would have told them in a blink of an eye, do what you need to do to fix it.

There was discussion on how certain people need the temperature cooler or hotter than others. The system at the middle school was from 1957. Mr. Travaglino explained how these wall units functioned. There was discussion on why the EPA recommended fresh air flow and Mr. Pompano stated it didn't recommend it because the buildings were too warm, it was because of carbon monoxide.

Mr. Travaglino explained what he did on a daily basis and stated if he knows of a particular person having an issue at any school, he takes care of it immediately. He stated they could not hold his feet to the fire if he was not aware there was an issue. Mrs. DePalma spoke about touring the buildings and the number of electricity issues such as all of the coffee pots and microwaves they had in the corners of the rooms at the middle school.

Mr. Serio explained how the heating issues at the Middle School were better regulated today than they had been for a long, long time. He remembered going to Biddy Basketball games in the gym and it was so hot in there, it was unbearable. It was not that way anymore and a lot of the situations had been taken care of. The regulation of the heat was much better than it was. They had issues in all of their schools and their schools were old. He did not get calls or complaints from the principals saying they were waiting on Joe to take care of an order for days or weeks.

Mr. Pompano asked Mr. Prato if staff members came up to him to complaining about the climate in the building being difficult. Mr. Prato said they had some but they would tell Mr. Solli who would then tell Mr. Travaglino and it would get resolved.

There was discussion on whether there was a preventive maintenance plan to take care of filters and things like that. Mr. Travaglino explained that they had undertaken a huge move this summer and how some things such as filters could have been missed, absolutely.

Mrs. Maisano spoke about how at home they have their heat checked each year before they turn it on and would like to think that before they turn the heat on at the schools, they had a maintenance program to test all of these thermostats. Mr. Pompano stated if it was past practice that they changed their filters in July? Mr. Travaglino responded yes. Mr. Pompano stated these filters had not been done in July. What about July to December? Mr. Travaglino explained they did not have an HVAC mechanic. They had been asking for a test to fill that position. There was discussion regarding what had transpired regarding this position. Mrs. Maisano stated that Dornfeld had covered it for less money. Mr. Pompano stated he never denied when he put in a request and the Board approved it for whatever was needed. Mr. Travaglino stated they had done the best they could and he was not aware of any issue that would warrant that they would have to be here this evening to talk about it. Mr. Pompano asked if Dornfeld was the one that would change filters. Someone in the audience responded no. Mr. Travaglino stated it was hard to get their rooms ready and clean, so they probably missed a few things.

There was discussion regarding having a checklist to make sure things were done such as filters in July. If they were not done by September, they could then make sure they were done. Mr. Travaglino stated they never had enough funds to have a preventive maintenance plan in effect.

Mr. Pompano explained by not having an HVAC person, they had shown by using Dornfeld they had saved the taxpayers money in this town because they did not have a full-time person. Mr. Travaglino stated that if he had someone, that would be his job. Mr. Travaglino explained how he was supposed to have four maintenance positions. Mr. Pompano stated he was not trying to be confrontational.

Discussion continued regarding the monies allotted to the Buildings & Grounds Department and how each year there were big cuts to these accounts. Mrs. Maisano asked what they spent last year; she believed they went way over. That worried her. They were over by \$400,000; they were having major problems and she would like to know where did the money go? Mr. Hennessey stated he would like to step back a minute and look at the big picture. He thought that all they did with the buildings was fight fires. They did not budget "x" amount of dollars per foot. All of their nice facilities were not so nice. Even up here there was cracked concrete and burnt out lights. It felt their budget for maintenance dollars should be an amount per square foot not per list. **Mrs. DePalma stated you need a list. Someone needs a preventive plan. She spoke about the solar panels and how they had said they needed a maintenance plan.** They needed to know what was needed in this department, not just money, but what was it for.

Further discussion ensued regarding how the budget was cut last year, but they overspent by \$340,000 in this area and that nothing was ever denied. Mr. Pompano stated there should have been a plan in place and they should not have heard about this through an on-line media source that this was going on. Nobody should have an asthmatic attack. Mr. Palladino stated he went to a meeting with Joe Travaglino and people from Town Hall and there was a plan in place. Mr. Pompano asked why this was not done already. Mr. Travaglino stated that Mr. Pompano was talking about things he (Joe) was not aware of, such as asthmatics.

Mr. Serio explained that that was about two years ago when the windows were open and the heat was on. He had put out a memo to not open the windows for the teachers and within a week had a call that they had to call 911. They were then told to use their own reasonable judgment. Mrs. DePalma asked why this had not been taken care of two years ago then. Mr. Pompano stated he knows that Mr. Travaglino and Mr. Palladino and people from Town Hall got together with George Ellis and George Ellis did some good work. They were moving forward and they were all on the same team. They needed to take precautionary measures. Mr. Pompano stated if this had not come back to Mr. Travaglino, there was a communication failure. Mr. Travaglino stated

they pride themselves in doing the best they can with the resources they have. They were committed to the students just as the teachers and principals were. His job was to make their job easier.

Mr. Palladino asked Mike, a custodian sitting in the audience, if the filters were changed every year. He responded they were not done this year with moving all of those classrooms. There was not enough manpower to do all of this. They were neglected this year, but they were changed every summer. Whatever report was sent to them, they should take it with a grain of salt. He could attest to that.

Mr. Palladino commented that all of Mr. Travaglini's guys did an excellent job this year and people did not believe that we did this in one summer. He asked if public works could help if they ran into a situation like this again. Would they send manpower? Mr. Travaglini stated this was his experience with no animosity meant by this. They get a lot of people saying we will do this and that and it is not forthcoming. Mr. Pompano asked Mr. Travaglini to give him something specific that happened in the past. Mr. Travaglini stated that most of his people are always helping public works. One example was they had asked Civil Service to test and they did not get that. Mr. Serio stated he asked the custodians to give him leniency on the contract language to fill the fourth maintenance position when they had received a zero two years ago. It was still not filled at the beginning of this year. They ended up filling the position with a temporary person from within. Both he and Mr. Travaglini felt strongly that this person should be an HVAC person.

Mr. Travaglini stated the other thing you were alluding to. When they were doing the reconfiguration and they met in this room with Town Hall administration and we talked about the move, they had asked what they could do or not do to help. What happened was, because of the size of the job to move over the summer, they were unable to help and get what they normally do in the summer done, so they thought it was wise to get the movers and do it with our own guys.

There was discussion about the paving that was supposed to be done at Overbrook School, but that had never been done. Mr. Serio explained they may have been jammed with other things. He did not have control over that section of town.

Mr. Hennessey spoke about the lawsuit regarding the floors at the high school that had lifted. They won the lawsuit and were awarded hundreds of thousands of dollars and they had never put a dollar into the floors of this

school. It went somewhere else. You can't run a place like that. Mrs. DePalma asked who decided where the money went. Mr. Hennessey stated not to the Board. Mr. Travaglino stated it was \$300,000 and it stayed at the Town Hall. Mr. Hennessey stated the budget was coming up at the next meeting, and in his opinion, they would spend two months scrambling again and cutting the maintenance budget. Mr. Pompano stated that he thought they had beaten this one up enough. He just wanted to stay ahead of these things.

There was further discussion on the HVAC position and whether it would be cheaper to outsource it because of workers' comp. Mr. Travaglino explained that part of the issue was they had a binding contract with the custodial/maintenance union for four maintenance men. Mr. Serio explained the point he was trying to make was they were paying for four maintenance men and right now they would like to have one of them be HVAC.

There was discussion on whether the public should be allowed to join in on the subcommittee meetings and talk about what they thought. Discussion continued on a list being made of those things that needed to be done and Mr. Serio stated that Mr. Travaglino gives him a list of things that need to be done in our buildings during budget time. He felt that the window issue had been fully blown out of proportion. Mr. Travaglino stated he and his department totally agreed with him. Mrs. Maisano spoke about the paving not being done at Overbrook and how they had approved it and it had not been done. That's why they are "even" on June 30th. **There was no communication with the Board. Somebody should come back to this Board and say we didn't do that.** This was why the budget was ridiculous. Mr. Lathrop stated it was never budgeted; it was part of the Capital Improvement budget.

Mr. Serio said he wanted to inform the Board that this work that was done in the Middle School was estimated to be between \$10-15,000. Town Hall said, don't worry about taking care of it. We will find the money. Two hours later, they tell Jason to pay for it. I asked Jason, do you have the money. He said no. Someone asked who is going to pay George Ellis? Mr. Serio stated he would get paid.

3. Discussion of the EHHS Gym Floor

Mr. Pompano asked Mr. Travaglino to tell them about the leak and the floor condensation. Mr. Travaglino did not remember the day he received the call from Mr. Lathrop and Mr. Marone regarding the leak in the high school gym. He immediately dispatched a maintenance man to look at it. They got four

men on the roof to shovel the snow that was caused by the blizzard. Because of the severity of the winds, the snow was blown into the unit. They then proceeded to put a pump inside the unit to pump off water and tarp the floor down below. He reported there might be some cupping; it was in the area of the bleachers which covers it. It could be sanded out. Mr. Pompano wanted to know if there was a correlation between this snowstorm and the cause of the leak on the floor from last year's reason. Mr. Travaglino stated last year was a totally different scenario where the flashing was torn on a particular area of the roof. There was discussion on this being the same area as the last problem. **Mr. Pompano said staying on the same theme, he found out through an online media source with no call from the Buildings & Grounds director or Chairman or Mr. Serio. He asked that he please keep him posted.**

Mrs. DePalma stated that Joe should call Tony and Tony should call Nick and Nick lets the Board know. Mr. Travaglino stated he had neglected to call them. She stated she knew for a fact that by the time Mr. Travaglino was informed, this situation was out of control. This concerned her because the person here taking care of it was about to leave and then finally brought it to his attention. She thought this was a continuing problem. Mr. Hennessey wanted to know with snow coming for the end of this week, and no one here - - this scared him. There was discussion about having someone on duty to check the building. Mr. Travaglino stated he would have the men who were working on snow removal check inside the buildings. Mr. Serio informed the Board that they had taken some preventive measures with covering it up so there would be no infiltration of snow. Mr. DeNuzzo asked if there would be any mold problems with covering this vent up. Mr. Travaglino stated there was another vent on the other end that can handle it. Mr. DeNuzzo asked Mr. Travaglino if they were permanently blocking it off, did he see a problem. Mr. Travaglino stated no, he didn't.

4. Revisit Building Needs for All-Day Kindergarten

Mr. Serio informed the Board that he and Erica Forti met with Karen Schmidt, Jackie Bacon and Bill Grimm to talk in length about what they need for all-day kindergarten. There was discussion on the portables and whether they would buy or lease and whether they had money for this. Mr. Serio stated that was why they were here this evening because they would have to budget for it in next year's budget. They were not purchasing it now; this would come out of the 2011-12 budget. There was discussion on how many classrooms and teachers would be needed to accommodate all-day kindergarten. Altogether

they would need five more kindergarten teachers. Mr. DeNuzzo stated they were talking about another quarter of a million dollars.

Mr. Lathrop had spoken with Mr. Thompson and Mr. Mauro regarding bonding of any dollars as part of their operating budget and they said they would be bonding dollars next year. It would come through Building & Grounds and then through the normal budgeting process. They would have to request a couple of hundred thousand dollars worth of Capital Improvement and submit that parallel to our budget. It did not need to be approved on the State Bonding Commission list. They would follow the State's process of 68% on the purchase of those facilities or lease them and put that operating cost into our operating budget as part of the 2011-12 budgeting process.

There was discussion on the stimulus money. Mrs. Forti informed the Board that they had to use 80% of the ARRA fund and it would be exhausted by the end of this year. The \$1,097,000 needed to be spent by 2012 and could be used for salaries only. Mr. Palladino asked if this could pay for the kindergarten teachers that they need. Mr. Lathrop stated yes. Mr. Scalesse asked if they had the \$1.1 million already and the response was yes they did. Mr. Lathrop stated they had forecast about \$200,000 of that as of the November report that was submitted to them.

Mr. Serio reported he went to a meeting up in Hartford with CABA, CAPSS and CASBO who did a presentation pleading to the Governor and the legislature not to cut our ECS funding. This would mean about \$2.6 million and if they didn't get this, it would put a lot of hurt on us. Conversation ensued regarding what other cuts would have to take place if this happened. **Mr. Serio stated he would probably have Mr. Lathrop break this out as a separate expense to see what it looked like. He would have a draft for them on Tuesday of what the proposal was starting to look like that they want to give to the Town.**

There was further discussion regarding the portables and Mrs. Schmidt stated they would need one at Overbrook even if they didn't go to full-day kindergarten. With one portable, the school would function so much more efficiently on behalf of the students. Mr. Pompano mentioned the benefits of full-day kindergarten and how the scores improved and how the vocabularies of students improved with the added hours.

5. Update on Rental Properties' Resolution

Mr. Serio stated he had met with the landlord for the Dodge Avenue properties to go over some of the resolutions with him. They did not nail down an actual number. He told him there was a strong interest in vacating those buildings and using our own buildings. He asked him about possible movement in reducing the amount of rent and he agreed to work on some numbers to see how low he could go. He was interested to the degree that less was better than no rent at all. Mr. Serio had also asked him if he would be interested in flip-flopping the leases to leave Adult Ed and move out Pathways. He had replied that if he had to lose one, he would like to see Adult Ed stay. We know Pathways can function at Hays because they were there before. **Mr. Serio stated he was looking for some direction from the Board as to how deep they wanted him to go into these negotiations with them.**

Mr. Serio stated they had talked about housing Adult Ed here. Mr. Pompano stated they had covered that in length. He thought that it would be a benefit to the Board if he was willing to flip-flop the leases because of the State reimbursement. It was \$21,000 for the Adult Ed lease with a 51% reimbursement. The cost of moving Pathways to Hays and housing the program there would be around \$4,300 a month plus custodial fees of approximately \$2,500 a month. They were already paying \$4,300 a month for that building. There was a possibility of real savings here and it could take care of a big portion of all-day kindergarten needs.

There was discussion on some of the changes that would need to be made to the building; how lunch would need to be done through a satellite; and how emptying the building might be a problem. With all-day kindergarten, those materials stored at Hays would be used by that program. There were 10 classrooms and around 40 students in the Pathways Program. There was some discussion on the possibility of tuition savings.

Mrs. DePalma wanted to know if the people were considering decreasing the rent and if it was even discussed. Mr. Serio responded yes it was discussed but he did not have a hard number from him. He could get that for them. She would like to keep Adult Ed there if they would come down substantially in price. Mr. Pompano spoke about portables and if they submit the ED049's on Capital Improvement Projects, they could get close to a 69% reimbursement. Mrs. DePalma stated that's under this year's terms. **Mr. Pompano stated at some point they should dedicate a night and plan to do a presentation here. Mr. Serio recommended a long-term planning**

committee be formed to get people's input. They needed to start those conversations now. He spoke about redoing the Middle School. Mr. Pompano spoke about the educational needs and building around that and how they could have a lot of success bringing the public in, Town Hall, and everyone else. It was how they delivered the message to the parents.

Mr. DeNuzzo expressed his concern with Hays as well. He asked Mr. Serio when he would be able to get a bottom line to see if this was feasible. Mr. Serio stated he could call him tomorrow. Mr. DeNuzzo stated if it did not work out, and he leases it for multiple years, we can't go back. Mr. Pompano stated that may be a good thing; then we start one of these Capital Improvement Projects.

There was further discussion on the savings for each program. **Mrs. Maisano felt they needed a spreadsheet on what it would cost them to improve Hays and run it and see if Piscatelli was willing to go down on his price. He should go down on Adult Ed too.** Mr. Pompano felt they should be able to count on Town Hall for Capital Improvement and it should not come out of the operating budget.

6. Any other business that might rightfully come before this subcommittee.

There was no other business this evening.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Vineyard and seconded by Mr. Hennessey. Motion carries. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

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**RAYMOND POMPARNO, CHAIR
BUILDING & GROUNDS
SUBCOMMITTEE**

**CHRISTINE MAISANO, CHAIR
FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE**