

Skaneateles Central School District
Board of Education

Strategic Planning Advisory Committee

Draft Minutes

13 December, 2016

6:30-8:00pm

Board of Education Building

The meeting came to order at 6:37pm with Mrs. Brogan, Mrs. Abbott-Kenan, Mrs. MacLachlan, Mrs. DeMass, Mr. Butler, Mr. Widrick, Mrs. Richards, Mrs. Lynn, Mr. Gerst, Mr. Nichols, Mr. McGraw, and Mrs. Slentz present. Ms. UsdanskyNiebuhr, Mrs. Ward, and Mrs. Cogan-Millman were absent.

Mr. Slentz reviewed key governing policies for the Committee including Policy 1530 - Meetings of Committees of the School District – to ensure that all members understood the application of Open Meetings Law to Committee meetings.

After the committee approved the agenda, the Standing Committee agreed that Mrs. Brogan would report out to the full board at the next meeting.

Board members thanked the committee for attending tonight's meeting, particularly in light of the busyness of the holiday season.

With the full committee approving the proposed agenda, Mr. Butler and Mr. Slentz reviewed the latest financial information and scope development for Project 2021 with the committee. The following points were focused on:

1. 2 principles are at the basis of the numbers:
 - a. Level debt service as a result of the project
 - b. Level or decreased tax rate as a result of the project
2. As a result, the current project maximum is slightly over \$35M. This is the maximum cost of the project, and the final cost would be based on the final scope which is currently being broken into 4 categories:
 - a. Must do (health and safety and/or failure of current systems)
 - b. Should do (to remain proactive in areas that are nearing the end of their useful life)
 - c. Nice to do (those areas that are enhancements for the teaching and learning environment)
 - d. Considered but rejected (those areas that cannot be justified in the current project)
3. Once project scope is determined, administration has been discussing how best to package the project and is considering multiple propositions including a separate proposition for the replacement of the turf at Hyatt Stadium.

Mr. Slentz discussed building use with the committee and summarized a recent meeting with the architects, construction manager, strategic planning consultants, and administration on this topic. The following points were highlighted:

1. Repurposing one of our buildings based on declining enrollment is being reviewed and the outstanding debt is being analyzed to determine when the District would be in a position to consider repurposing through sale, lease, etc of the building. BOCES, for example, is running out of program space and may be looking to lease additional space in districts or to possibly expand their own facility. Skaneateles could conceivably have space available, but only after conversations with the Board and community.
2. The current debt on each building was also being reviewed. Mr. Butler noted that State Street, for example, has just under \$6M of debt against it based on prior projects. Under existing conditions, this debt is scheduled to be paid off in 2025. Mr. Slentz noted that this might be a good “stake in the ground” point to plan towards as administration was trying to balance the declining enrollment against the cost of a project. For example, should the District consider limited renovations and repairs to State Street until a determination could be made as to whether the District would need 4 school buildings in the future? Roof repairs, repairs to an internal wall, repairs to the north facing wall and associated gym floor damage, sealing the basement against water infiltration, and replacement of the remaining original windows would be the areas addressed under this approach. If additional changes were needed based on program need, these could be considered in a future building project. Mr. Butler reminded the committee at each building had a "maximum cost allowance" that was established by the state education department that would also guide our planning of repairs for each building.

Committee members asked whether the focus of the project was on repairs to the buildings or constructing towards fulfillment of the mission, vision, and innovative programming articulated in the strategic plan. Discussion on this followed with a number of points being offered for consideration including the likelihood that the savings to the taxpayers on the sale of a building versus the value to the students on having adequate space for programming is likely to be negligible. As a result, committee members encouraged administration to not consider selling a building anytime in the near future and to utilize the Strategic Plan to drive the design of the project. Mr. Slentz reminded the committee that selling was only one of a number of possibilities and that the district's Bond Counsel, Bill Marquardt, would help to guide us on options to be considered. Board members asked the committee if they were hearing of a putsch in the

community to close a building. No one reported that they were hearing this. Administration noted that this was being represented as a concern from some members in the community. The committee discussed the need for good communication that was based on concrete examples and the needs of the students as described in the Strategic Plan. Approaching it from this perspective with pictures of existing conditions and short associated narratives would demonstrate the needed repairs.

Given the discussion on the adherence to the strategic plan, Mr. Slentz asked the committee to move to that portion of the agenda. The updated Strategic Planning Tracker was reviewed and changes since the last meeting of the committee were highlighted. Next steps would be to add communications, financial management, specific training needs, and measurement component to the plan. The committee agreed that the changes were in line with what they had envisioned for the planning document. Committee members asked for an estimate on the amount of initiatives represented by the current iteration of the plan. Mr. Slentz noted that it was approximately 70% complete which would allow Ilya to complete a draft in line with the timeline on the Blueprint.

Committee members asked if administration was seeing progress against the expectations of the plan. Mr. Slentz and Mr. Widrick pointed to a couple of examples including the establishment of the districtwide Professional Learning Team which would be charged with designing training opportunities for all staff aligned to the plan. Mr. Slentz noted that the administrative cabinet was increasingly aligned with the plan and that fewer items needed his direct guidance.

The committee returned to the Update portion of the agenda and reviewed the following topics:

- *2017-18 Capital Budget* including the Annual Building Maintenance Project, Bus Replacement Plan, and equipment and fleet replacement plans. Reminded the committee the reason for these plans was to keep costs outside of the Program budget as consistent and predictable as possible so as to drive more of our resources towards the Program budget. Committee members encouraged administration to publish examples of how these plans were/are working towards this purpose. The bus replacement plan, for example, would be good to update the community on relative to what we were seeing as benefits within the first year.
- *Capital Reserve Funds* – Mr. Butler and Mr. Slentz discussed the existing capital reserve funds that would be used for Project 2021 including the Turf Reserve. Similar to last

year, the district will ask the voters to approve the establishment of the Turf Reserve as this was not originally done when the board set aside the \$225,000 some years ago. In addition, administration anticipates recommending to the board establishment of a new capital reserve that would be funded out of monies remaining from current year budget that would serve to offset the cost of a future project that would come after Project 2021. Administration noted that the current midyear fund balance is estimated between \$1 and \$1.2 million. This money or a portion thereof would be utilized to fund this reserve. Mr. Slentz noted that administration surveyed a number of other similar districts to see how they were utilizing reserves in their financial management plan. Most were using the same reserves as Skaneateles with a few others utilizing fewer reserves.

- *Summary of Current Projects* – this document was briefly reviewed and Mr. Slentz noted that it was posted on the website for the community access. The document detailed the existing 9 projects that are either in process, being reviewed by the state education department, or in planning. Committee member at members agreed that this was helpful particularly tracking the “Phase” projects.

With all items on the agenda being complete, the meeting adjourned at 7:58pm.

Respectfully submitted, Mrs. Brogan and Mrs. Abbott-Kenan