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Board of Education **Regional School District 13 Building Committee** **October 1, 2025**

The Regional District 13 Board of Education Building Committee met in special session on Wednesday, October 1, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. in the library at Coginchaug Regional High School.

Committee members present: Mr. Weissberg, Mr. Overton, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mr. Giammatteo (left at 6:30), Mr. Cross, Mr. Proia and Mr. Putnam
Committee member absent: Mr. Faiella
Administration present: Mrs. Neubig, Director of Finance; Dr. Leggett, Superintendent and Mr. Proia, Supervisor of Facilities and Grounds
O&G Associates present: Mr. Cravanzola (attended virtually) and Mr. Sedensky
QA+M Associates present: Mr. Collier, Mr. Malik and Mr. Scrittorale

Mr. Weissberg called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Giammatteo, to approve the agenda.

In favor of approving the agenda: Mr. Weissberg, Mr. Overton, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone; Mr. Moore, Mr. Giammatteo, Mr. Cross and Mr. Putnam. Motion passed.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Memorial Renovation/Expansion

Mr. Weissberg introduced O&G Associate Mr. Sedensky to discuss swing space.

Mr. Sedensky identified that at Strong School, the punch list has been reduced to a single outstanding item: the gym divider curtain.

At Lyman School, the formal punch list has been narrowed down to just three (formal) items: missing signage, one light fixture that is not functioning, and a patch that still requires finishing and touch-up paint. In addition, Mr. Sedensky is tracking five supplemental items, including the addition of an exterior light, modifying supply diffusers to two-way, removal of E&S labels, and ordering phenolic labels for the electrical panels with customized language.

Mr. Sedensky also discussed the progress of E-Trade work, noting their last primary task involved a product submission that was initially rejected. A revised product has since been submitted and appears acceptable. There is an estimated three-week lead time for replacement, after which the electrician and plumber will return to complete their portions of the work.

Mr. Sedensky provided a financial update, stating he has received the pencil application for payment covering progress through September and will be forwarding that to the board. Additionally, Mr. Sedensky will be preparing two additive change orders and two DEF change orders.

Mr. Collier addressed the gym space at Strong School and provided further discussion about the gym divider curtain that would provide space separation. The item was already purchased under the contract, with a line-item value of approximately $15,000. However, once construction progressed and the design team engaged with contractors and manufacturers about the installation, several concerns emerged.

Mr. Collier noted that the primary issue is the gym's relatively low ceiling height. Industry guidelines for basketball spaces call for an unobstructed clearance of 20–25 feet, but the Strong School gym has only 18 feet 9 inches to the underside of sprinkler piping and 19 feet to the underside of ductwork. Installing a roll-up divider curtain would lower the clear height to around 15 feet 8 inches. This not only falls below recommended standards but would also require reworking sprinkler coverage, adding additional piping, and complicating the existing mechanical systems.

Mr. Collier presented using portable furniture-style partitions. Mr. Collier identified these can be purchased in 25-foot lengths, are on casters, and fold away for storage. While more cost-effective and less invasive, they raise significant safety concerns in a gym environment, as they are not fixed and could be toppled by students.

Mr. Giammatteo discussed using netting or mesh-based systems that are similar to batting cage or volleyball court dividers, which would reduce visual and ball interference without fully obstructing the space. Mr. Collier identified that such systems still require a top track and supports, which would again be limited by ceiling height and geometry.

Mr. Weissberg inquired about using a portable gymnasium furniture system; however, Mr. Collier established that there are still safety concerns in using something like this, in addition to putting holes into the new gym floor.

Mr. Mennone discussed the possibility of a freestanding or weighted-based solution at a lower height (6–8 feet) to act as a visual and functional divider. However, safety and durability considerations remain.

Committee members also questioned the frequency of the divider use. Mrs. Neubig presented that the divider would be needed about five hours per week, when two gym classes overlap.

The consensus of the discussion was that the roll-up curtain solution is not practical. Instead, the board will continue evaluating lower-cost, flexible alternatives such as netting or portable systems. Importantly, if the curtain is not pursued, the $15,000 allocated in the contract can be credited back, returning funds to the project contingency for potential reallocation.

The item remains open for further review, with the next step being for committee members to share potential product options for a weighted-base or net-style system that could provide a safe, temporary barrier without creating long-term program or safety issues.

Mr. Weissberg reviewed that parents, teachers, and staff seemed pleased with the swing spaces and that traffic at both schools has improved.

Dr. Leggett discussed one concern that was raised by a parent regarding a fourth-grade modular unit, which feels smaller than the others. After review, it was confirmed that the classroom still meets state square footage guidelines. The tighter space is primarily due to the inclusion of an ADA-compliant bathroom within the unit. While the classroom remains compliant, the reduced storage capacity is being addressed. Mr. Ford is reviewing hallway and in-school storage solutions to support the teacher, and correspondence with the parent has confirmed the concern was acknowledged and addressed.

Mr. Malik reported that work is advancing into the construction documents phase. Beginning tomorrow, a series of meetings will be held with teachers and administrators to review classroom layouts, space images, and program needs. Following those discussions, updated materials will be presented at the upcoming joint Board of Education and Building Committee meeting scheduled for October 8.

Mr. Malik discussed that the design team met with local officials to clarify the approval process. While local sign-offs are not equivalent to a building permit, officials will review third-party comments from building, fire, health, and other departments. The town and building committee will select the third-party reviewer, and Mr. Malik emphasized the importance of choosing a group familiar with state requirements to keep the process moving on schedule.

Mr. Moore inquired about the installation of sinks on the second floor. Mr. Malik clarified that while sinks are planned for lower grades, the inclusion of sinks in all upper-grade classrooms may require further discussion and could become a value engineering item.

The Committee members discussed the pragmatic need for sinks to be in science, art, and media classrooms, in addition to classrooms of students in the lower grades, but sinks may not be necessary for all 4th and 5th grade classrooms. Committee members discussed looking into alternatives like common sink areas that would be equally accessible to classrooms or installing lavatory sinks in the hallways.

Mr. Overton asked if there were any changes to the land use schedule, Mr. Malik stated the Planning & Zoning Commission will hear the application at its October meeting. Submission materials have already been provided, and coordination with the required third-party reviewer is ongoing.

The design and engineering team presented an overview of septic and utility planning.

Due to the age and location of the existing system, a new septic field was proposed in the northern athletic field area, where soil testing showed favorable conditions. The plan currently calls for two pump stations: one to manage flows from the existing and new building laterals, and a smaller one for grease waste from the kitchen. The design team is working with the local health department and exploring options to minimize pump reliance, including alternate tank placement or potential secondary tie-ins. The existing

leaching field, which currently occupies the lower field corner of the site, will be decommissioned in accordance with code requirements.

The committee discussed alternatives, which include adjusting septic tank placement closer to lower building exits to preserve gravity flow, as well as exploring the feasibility of reducing the number of pump stations overall. Mr. Weissberg made a suggestion to create a separate secondary leaching system for the kitchen and gray water; the design team will consult with the health department to confirm whether such an approach is permissible.

Mr. Overton also questioned the accuracy of the student capacity reflected in the documents. While some documents reflected lower student counts, the system is being designed for 750 students, consistent with enrollment projections. This puts daily flow estimates at approximately 8,250 gallons per day, above the 7,500-gallon threshold. However, because the system is metered, actual usage data may be submitted to the Department of Public Health to support lower flow-per-student values, helping keep the project within compliance. Preliminary septic plans will be submitted to the local health department this week, with a 10-day review period expected. The team will also correct drafting errors in the septic detail sheets before resubmission.

The design and engineering team provided an update on the well system and domestic water supply planning. Recent yield tests on Wells 3 and 5 confirmed strong production capacity, with results already submitted to the Planning Center. Copies will also be provided to the committee. Based on these results, Wells 3 and 5 will continue to serve the school, with piping re-routed to a new pump house. One irrigation well currently located under the footprint of the proposed addition will be decommissioned and replaced further north and east near the irrigation shed.

The new pump house will be located near the service area on the west side of the school. It will consolidate all pumping and treatment equipment required by the Department of Public Health (DPH), including treatment systems and tanks, two 20,000-gallon fire suppression holding tanks, and one 4,000-gallon domestic water holding tank.

The design and engineering committee identified this arrangement eliminates the need to retain outdated underground piping beneath the existing building slab, which would have been significantly disrupted by the new addition. The pump house is being designed as a brick-clad structure consistent with the main building’s appearance. Landscaping and screening will help integrate it with the nearby service and dumpster areas.

The team discussed classifying this project as a reactivation of an existing water system rather than a new installation, streamlining the DPH review process. PCR documentation will be submitted to DPH this week, with formal design documents expected in 2–3 weeks.

Committee members reviewed the location of the pump house and concerns were raised regarding pedestrian access at the preschool drop-off area. While accessible parking spaces are planned nearby, there is currently no pedestrian pathway connecting the main parking lot to the front preschool entrance. This creates a potential issue if parents or visitors attempt to walk across the service area or through utilities to reach the drop-off entry. The design team clarified that the drop-off loop is intended only for

bus and parent drop-off, with all late arrivals or visitors directed to the main office entrance for security purposes. Still, it was noted that without a designated connection, individuals may create informal and unsafe paths. The design team agreed to evaluate options for incorporating a safe pedestrian route, potentially tying it into adjacent utility or service areas to minimize conflict with traffic flow.

Mr. Overton inquired if ADA-compliant walkways will be provided not only to the sport courts and playground areas but also to the soccer fields and lower play fields, as required under the state grant standards. It was established that these accessible routes will be included in the final plan package.

Mr. Overton also inquired about the basis of design for the water system. The design team established that while the existing on-site well system currently supplies the building without treatment, preliminary testing by the well specialist indicated that some level of treatment is necessary for the expanded school. Specifically, minimal chlorination is expected to be required, and the preliminary design includes two treatment tanks to address this. The system will also need to accommodate increased demand due to building expansion and the addition of fire protection/sprinkler requirements. Locating treatment equipment outside the building was considered the most practical option, balancing space, cost, and permitting considerations. Further documentation of the treatment needs and equipment sizing will be developed and submitted for review.

Mr. Weissberg inquired about the progress of pricing. Mr. Sedensky stated the development pricing package is nearly complete. O&G's estimating team will finalize numbers by Friday, followed by an internal reconciliation meeting on Monday to review details and confirm alignment before presenting to the project team. Site estimating is also underway to ensure coverage of grading, utilities, and civil components.
Mr. Weissberg presented the traffic report with no capacity issues anticipated on surrounding roadways. Crash data was minimal due to low existing volumes. Additional operational analysis was requested at two intersections:

> **Cherry Hill and Hubbard** – a skewed T-intersection where additional stop control and operational improvements may be warranted.
>
> **Route 147 and Cherry Hill** – a significantly skewed state intersection requiring DOT approval for any modifications. Mr**.** Weissberg **requested** concept alternatives ranging from signage/pavement marking improvements to more significant design options.

The revised traffic study, including these updates, has been submitted with the Planning & Zoning application, and the OSTA submission will follow shortly. The trigger for OSTA is the building's square footage, even though the site falls below the parking count threshold.

Mr. Weissberg praised the site design for preserving existing trees along the frontage and within the site, which provides natural screening. Internal circulation and queuing were reviewed as well:

> The Pre-K drop-off loop accommodates 11 vehicles in queue, with double-stacking possible along much of the route.

The parent drop-off loop provides 26 queue spaces, with additional width allowing for double-stacking to maximize throughput. Overflow parking is available nearby to prevent queuing from spilling into emergency access routes.

Mr. Overton raised questions about equipment placement and noise considerations.
The generator and chillers are planned for the southeast corner of the building, consistent with the current generator location. The team will evaluate the need for sound attenuation enclosures or screening to minimize potential noise impacts on neighboring properties. Aesthetic integration and transformer screening were also noted as priorities.

The design team then provided their report on the drainage system. The stormwater strategy maintains the site's three existing drainage areas while reducing peak flows to Hubbard Street and ensuring no net increase to the state/town system. They include: Bioretention islands in the main drive, water quality swales along athletic fields and basketball courts, and a large underground detention/recharge system (basis of design: StormTrap) sized to capture and treat new impervious surfaces while reducing discharge rates below existing conditions.

The design emphasizes low impact development (LID) practices while balancing constructability and long-term maintenance. Concrete stormwater systems were favored for durability and constructability, though alternate chamber systems (plastic or other approved products) will also be considered during bidding. Inspection ports and a formal operations/maintenance plan will be submitted to the building committee.

The design team committed to listing three acceptable manufacturers to allow competitive pricing. Any substitution requests will be vetted by O&G, the design team, and the building committee with alternates structured into the bid if needed.

Mr. Overton recommended allowing sheet flow across the lawn/emergency access areas during rain events. This approach increases infiltration, reduces concentrated flow in the southeast corner, and saves money by eliminating some yard drains. Concerns about winter ice were addressed; however, Mr. Overton discussed that sheet flow across the fields/courts is not expected to cause issues.
Mr. Weissberg addressed adding a rain garden near the building addition to manage runoff and meet low-impact development (LID) goals. Layout constraints limit the number and size of potential rain gardens. If feasible, adding a rain garden would provide educational value and help manage stormwater.

A. Vote to recommend contract award for RFQ/RFP 2025-006 OPM

Mrs. Neubig stated the district received six bids and two potential OPMs were interviewed by the subcommittee. The subcommittee recommends STV Construction, Inc. as the OPM.

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mennone, to approve the contract award for RFQ/RFP 2025-006 OPM to STV Construction, Inc.

In favor of approving the contract award for RFQ/RFP 2025-006 OPM to STV: Mr. Weissberg, Mr. Overton, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mr. Cross and Mr. Putnam. Motion passed.

B. Vote to approve invoices

Mrs. Neubig presented invoices for the approval of the building committee:

1-800 Pack Rat	$539.56
1-800 Pack Rat	$99.00
Cube Smart	$240.50
Eversource	$56.13
K&J Tree Service	$300.00
Mobile Modular	$3,779.68

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Weissberg, to approve the invoices as presented.

In favor of approving the invoices as presented: Mr. Weissberg, Mr. Overton, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mr. Cross and Mr. Putnam. Motion passed.

C. Vote to approve change orders

There were no change orders presented, this will now be added to the October 15 meeting. The progress payment through September will be available by the 15th along with the pending change orders. Additionally, there is a plan to have MVP engineers review the system at the next meeting.

Public Comment

No public comment took place.

Adjournment

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Dahlheimer, to adjourn the meeting.

In favor of adjourning: Mr. Weissberg, Mr. Overton, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mr. Cross, Mr. Proia, and Mr. Putnam. Motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by Meghan Shortell-Fratantonio