

Report of the Minnechaug Facility Study Committee

18 January 2005

**Hampden Wilbraham
Regional School District
School Committee
626 Main Street
Wilbraham, MA 01095**

www.hwrsd.org

REPORT OF THE MINNECHAUG FACILITY STUDY COMMITTEE

Executive Summary

At the urging of Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Paul Gagliarducci, and with the solid support of the Hampden Wilbraham Regional School District School Committee (HWRSDSC), an ad hoc committee, the Minnechaug Facility Study Committee (MFSC), working with the Superintendent and his staff, carefully analyzed the adequacy of the High School Facility. Safety and security issues popped up immediately: no fire sprinklers, little or no security for some 91 antiquated outside doors, an inadequate fire alarm system, American Disability Act (ADA) standards not met, and etc. A number of technical deficiencies were of concern because they directly affected the educational program: the sprawling floor plan which denies the school core spaces for departmental focus, and there is no centrally located modern media center but only marginally adequate pieces of it scattered throughout the building. At the request of the Committee Dr. Gagliarducci prepared a report which encapsulates a host of these contemporary and well accepted advanced educational programming ideas (see Appendix A.) There are structural aspects of the building which have outlived their natural life and need to be replaced: the classroom heating and ventilating system barely works, does not meet current fresh air codes and should be replaced; and the roof, in many places, has given up to a myriad of leaks and etc., etc..

No one is really to blame for this rather stark collection of shortcomings. Minnechaug, like many other high schools of this vintage, just seemed to work, year after year. In the regularity of its perceived adequacy the school went forward year upon year on a wave of tight, and then tighter budgets. New students appeared at the 9th grade door and, four years later, gracefully and with all the hope and purpose of young men and women, proudly walked out the 12th grade door. However, the world, in the 1980's and at an ever more rapid pace in the 1990's and into the new millenium was continuously *changing*, evolving, and pressing on us new, indispensable technologies. Despite this uncontroverted situation, our high school facility, in its current condition, is unable to keep up with the evolving technologies, the demands of the workplace and the world of education in the 21st century.

By early June the MFSC advised the Superintendent that there were obvious structural difficulties with the high school. The ad hoc committee advised the Superintendent that they would need technical assistance to conduct a thorough feasibility study of the facility. At that point the ad hoc committee was appointed by the Regional School Committee. The Regional School Committee acquired the services of Dore and Whittier, Inc., Architects, with whom the MFSC has closely worked. The MFSC was given the task of reporting to HWRSDSC, and through them to the Towns of Hampden and Wilbraham, what they believed the problems to be with the Minnechaug facility. They do this now with a wide-ranging report in hand by Dore and Whittier, Architects, Inc. This report is backed up by a group of architects who specialize in school design, a team of engineers with various specialties, and an educational planning consultant who has the national credentials to assure all parties that their input is studied, comprehensive and relevant.

The method of analysis used by the MFSC is detailed in this final report. After a thorough study and due deliberation the Committee recommends that the HWRSDSC build a *new* facility. The principal reasons are:

1. The security and safety systems in the facility are inadequate for today's needs.
2. The sprawling floor plan impacts teaching, circulation, the relationships between spaces, the adequacy of classrooms and science labs, the placement of a Media Center, technical education, athletic programs, student guidance functions, and the use of the cafeteria and kitchen.
3. Most of the building systems are considerably past their useful life, seriously jeopardizing the performance of the building's thermal envelope; the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems; the plumbing system; the electrical system; building acoustics; and broadly viewed, the entire technology package at the school.
4. In several important areas the building structure does not meet current State and Federal codes and standards, principally for the roof, which leaks in numerous locations, but also the brick-work pulling away from the building, as well as general thermal concerns.

5. Handicap accessibility compliance is problematic at best.
6. The broad use of a number of materials in the original construction of the building are now considered hazardous materials and must be removed in a timely fashion.
7. The replacement of the current building with a new structure is the most cost effective, long term solution to correct the obsolescence of the existing facility.
8. Of the various options studied, this recommendation offers the least disruption to students, faculty and administration over a three to four year period of constant construction when teaching and learning should be the fundamental mission of the institution as a whole.
9. This option will allow students to engage in interdisciplinary projects, to provide for and encourage collaborative learning projects and, it will allow teachers to work in teams to evaluate student performance and to deliver an interconnected curriculum in a coordinated manner.

During the course of the Committee's work it came to their attention that inquiries had been raised at a Wilbraham Capital Budget Committee meeting about the possibility of combining in a new school facility as part of the School Library the Hampden Town Library and the Wilbraham Town Library. A full hearing on the topic was held on Nov. 30, 2004. Both the Towns and the Regional School presented considerable written and oral testimony regarding the operation of their individual libraries. They also provided reasoned arguments both for and against the combining of all three libraries under one roof at Minnechaug. After reviewing all the information presented to the MFSC it became clear to the Committee that such a combination would not be in the best interest of the parties. Thus we have notified both the Hampden and Wilbraham Library Boards of Trustees that the MFSC would not be recommending a combined school and Town Library facility to HWRSDSC.

The Minnechaug Facility Study Committee fully recognizes that their recommendations will require the expenditure of local tax dollars (see Appendix M). They also fully recognize that many residents of both Towns believe the Minnechaug facility is in fine shape. However,

the MFSC has taken a close look and is here reporting on a broad range of deficiencies which they believe it would be in the best interest of both communities to rectify.

This is a tough message to deliver. The Committee is of the belief, however, that it is a realistic message. And, after the HWRSDSC and the two communities review this report, along with the detailed Dore & Whittier Feasibility Study, the Committee believes that a reasonable solution can be achieved. The inevitability of going forward and correcting this situation is principally dictated by the realization that if we do nothing we will quite likely risk shortchanging our children's education. We strongly recommend against this approach. Our children *are* our hope for the future. The Committee believes that 'to do nothing' is not a realistic option. Furthermore, to do nothing may well call into question the value of our homes now as the Feasibility Study by the Architects clearly details, key mechanical equipment which is obviously obsolete; that there are numerous structural deficiencies which no longer meet codes and many of them are plainly in need of replacement; and the educational programming is impeded by an outdated floor plan.

On the plus side of this evolving Regional School problem is that there *are* solutions. The Committee is confident that after the HWRSDSC and both communities look into these solutions and study them they will come together to solve these problems. A plan for those solutions is within reach, certainly nothing to panic over. The first step is to understand the process the State requires communities to follow in such a situation (see Appendices I and K). The second step is the HWRSDSC, by consensus, needs to draft a time line, of which there are several to choose from (see Appendix I and J for two possible examples). The third step is to understand that a decision must be made soon and that it's effect will not be realized for possibly five to eight years down the road. That is to say that the problem before the Regional School Committee today requires decisions today which will not produce a high school facility until 2011 to 2013. Acting today for such a worthy long term goal should not cloud the idea that today's problems need today's decisions in order that a solution will actually occur those several years down the road. And lastly, it is important to realize that the financial impact of the Regional School's decision is realistic, in particular when measured against outcome: a better, more relevant education for our children and grandchildren, as they try to make their way in a quickly evolving, increasingly complicated world. And further, it is realistic when one considers that it is necessary to assure that the educational quality of Minnechaug matches the often used

phrase “I moved to Hampden or to Wilbraham because of the quality of the schools” - (see Appendix O).

The Minnechaug Facility Study Committee stands ready to continue to work with the Regional School Committee to assure that the critical substance of this report is acted upon in a timely fashion.

This report is respectfully submitted to the Hampden Wilbraham Regional School Committee.

Doug Boyd, Co-Chair, Hampden

Pat Brady, Wilbraham

Sue Bunnell, Wilbraham

Bob Burger, Hampden

Claire Clini, Wilbraham

Stephanie Fitzgerald, Wilbraham

John Flynn, Hampden

Mike Flynn, Wilbraham

Brian Garbecki, Hampden

Paul Huijing, Wilbraham

John M. Lovejoy, Co-Chair, Wilbraham

Tom Mitchell, Wilbraham

William Bickley, ex officio

Regional School Committee

Marianne Desmond, ex officio

Regional School Committee

Dr. Paul Gagliarducci, ex officio

Superintendent of Schools

Steve Nembirkow, ex officio

Director of Business Services

Ed Cenedella, ex officio

Facilities & Maintenance

Director

Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Methodology and Approach
3. History of Minnechaug Regional High School
4. First Inspection
5. Design Categories
6. Option Overview
 - (X) Do Nothing
 - (A) A Complete Renovation
 - (B - E) Addition and Renovation [Add-Reno]
 - (F) A New Minnechaug Facility
7. Evaluation Basis
8. Minnechaug Facility Study Committee Biographies
9. References
- Appendix A Superintendent Paul C. Gagliarducci Report, October 8, 2004
- Appendix B MRHS Facility Committee RFP for Architectural Services
- Appendix C Architects List
- Appendix D Color Coded Floor Plan, Minnechaug's Three Parts, D.a, D. b and D.c
- Appendix E School Population Statistics, E.a and E. b
- Appendix F Option A, Before and After, Color Coded, F. a and F. b
- Appendix G Preliminary Cost estimates Graph, G.a, G. b and G. c
- Appendix H Summary of Options, Estimated Costs
- Appendix I Requirements for State Approval of School Projects
- Appendix J General Information on Architect's Fee Structure & Notes on Going Forward
- Appendix K Estimated Cost Distribution, Option F "New School"
- Appendix L Definition of Option Evaluation Criteria
- Appendix M Summary of Options, Estimated Tax Impact
- Appendix N Educational Plan Graph
- Appendix O Five Year Tax Chart
- Appendix P Frequently Asked Questions
- Appendix Q Scortino Capital Budget Projects FY '05

1. Introduction

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Paul G. Gagliarducci, after consultation with the Hampden Wilbraham Regional School District Committee (HWRSDC), invited a small group of citizens from Hampden and Wilbraham to join an ad hoc Committee to do a careful assessment of the Minnechaug High School facility. The first meeting was held on February 12, 2004. The charge to the Committee by Dr. Gagliarducci was to assist him in evaluating the sufficiency of the Minnechaug High School building and grounds to deliver a 21st century educational program.

The Committee studied the historical record including, but not limited to: student population; capital expenditures; maintenance records for a wide variety of school equipment; life safety issues; state and federal code requirements; and the status of our on-site hardware and software technology systems. The assessment was performed with the assistance of the Regional School staff, outside experts, and the expertise of several Committee members. It quickly became clear that the aging facility, both building and grounds, were exhibiting not only the effect of age, but also the consequences of chronic, long term deferred maintenance. The Committee agreed that it needed a host of technical specialists to make a proper evaluation of Minnechaug, known in the architectural field as a ‘feasibility study’. The Committee determined that a comprehensive study would cost approximately \$30,000. As the cost of the ‘feasibility study’ would be funded by money from the HWRSD, the ad hoc status of the Committee was changed in June when each member was formally appointed by the Regional School Committee and the Minnechaug Facility Study Committee (MFSC) was created.

2. Methodology and Approach

In June 2004 the HWRSDC asked the MFSC to develop a ‘request for proposal’ (RFP), to seek architectural services to conduct a thorough Facility Study of Minnechaug Regional High School. They also informed the new MFSC that by early September they would allocate a sum, not to exceed \$30,000 to pay for the feasibility study. The MFSC drew up an RFP (see Appendix B), approved by the HWRSDC, publicly advertised the RFP and appointed an Architect Selection Sub Committee. There were 31 inquiries for the RFP, twenty-two firms

attended a pre-bid walk-through of the building, and ultimately 17 actually bid on the project. Five firms were chosen as finalists (see Appendix C). In late August the School Committee accepted the recommendation of the Minnechaug Facility Study Committee, and voted to approve a contract for architectural services with Dore and Whittier, Architects of South Burlington, VT and Newburyport, MA. The terms of the RFP required the architectural firm to complete its' study and submit a final report by mid-December.

3. History of Minnechaug Regional High School

On October 20, 1956 the Towns of Hampden and Wilbraham voted to form a Regional School District for purposes of administering a Regional High School. That high school was ultimately named *Minnechaug*, as a result of a winning essay, the top one of 651 submitted by students, written by Jean L. Soderberg of Wilbraham. Alderman and MacNeish of West Springfield were the architects chosen to draft plans for the school. Perforce they used education design concepts current in the late 1940's and early 1950's. The original school contained 154,300 square feet. The new Minnechaug opened in September, 1959. The same architects, following the same education design, added an addition which opened in September, 1965 and included 24,800 square feet. Once again, the same architects built the last addition, which opened in September, 1972, adding 104,000 square feet to the school. This final addition basically included no new education design concepts varying from those of the original high school of 1959. The entire school then contained 283,100 square feet: 54% built 1959, 9% built 1965, and 37%, built 1972 (see Appendix D). Though the same architects designed all three portions of the building, a different General Contractor constructed each of the three different sections of the building. Essentially, this resulted in each building containing equipment, hardware, lighting, etc., all by different manufacturers, considerably complicating future ongoing maintenance. It is of particular importance to note that virtually all the original equipment in each of the three segments of the building have long since ceased to be manufactured and replacement parts are either nonexistent or extremely limited

The MFSC's analysis revealed that precious little money had been spent on the 46 year old Minnechaug facility or on either of the two additions. In 1989 the entire roof was replaced using a material specifically designed for flat roof applications. Unfortunately, the roofing material proved to be defective and the roof began to leak almost immediately. Despite the fact

that both the manufacturer of the roofing material and the roofing contractor both went bankrupt, certain repairs were accomplished through a claim against the bonding company of the contractor. Half of the roof area was redone in 1999 along with several other items (gym floor, boiler, girls' lockers, a maintenance department building, new doors at the front entrance, etc.) and the costs were covered in a \$1.8 million, 10 year capital bond in 2002. Virtually nothing else of a capital nature has been done at Minnechaug since 1959.

Two years after the original Minnechaug was built actual and projected pupil population growth demonstrated to school officials that an addition would be needed. Roughly four years after the 1965 addition went up, it again became clear that yet another addition would be needed. The Minnechaug addition for 1972 provided a high school space for 2000 pupils. However, the Hampden and Wilbraham high school population never reached 2000 students. In fact, in 1995 there were only 884 students in a school fit for 2000. (See Appendix E) This year there are 1334 students.

4. First Inspection

The Minnechaug Facility Study Committee met at Minnechaug on Saturday, March 27, 2004 and made a long, detailed, first hand examination of the building itself: corridor by corridor, room by room, lab by lab, athletic space by athletic space, shower by shower, locker by locker, courtyard by courtyard. It was revealing. A flood of questions arose. Sound, technical answers were requested and supplied. Original costs, maintenance costs, replacement costs were examined and weighed, one against the other.

Three of many areas of concern exemplify what the Committee found throughout the building. The first was the *Doors*. Almost all the doors are original equipment. That is to say they are as old as the building they came with, 46, 40 and 33 years old. Thousands upon thousands of students and hundreds upon hundreds of faculty have used these doors daily, over and over and over, and they are either well worn or worn out. There are 143 interior doors and 91 exterior doors. The 91 exterior doors have no method of controlling or monitoring access to the building (not electronically controlled, no surveillance cameras) and do not meet many current codes — though they *do* meet the codes extant in 1956, 1962 and 1969 (dates of the planning stages of the three parts of Minnechaug). Most need expensive retrofitted hardware because the original hardware is no longer manufactured, in fact, most of the 91 doors themselves need to be

replaced. Replacement is expensive. For example, new doorframes would need to be cut in and sealed. The 142 interior doors are in much the same state of obsolescence and quite a bit past their useful lives. The hinges, long since discontinued by the manufacturer, require retrofitted hinges costing \$320 a pair; the panic bars and associated hardware, as well as magnetic equipment to hold the doors open, keyed to an electronic system, triggered during fires or fire drills to automatically close, all of which now run about \$2500 per door set (2 doors) and full installation would easily double the figure. The question arises: do you renovate a building which itself needs all new doors [and new floors (asbestos), ceilings, windows (asbestos caulking), wiring, plumbing (some asbestos), etc., etc.], or do you build new, installing state of the art, fireproof, magnetic equipped openers, electronically controlled doors? The Committee sought answers to these and other questions through the RFP, and the answers in the Feasibility Study are detailed and unequivocal.

A second area of concern was the *Unit Ventilators*. The core of the heating and fresh air intake system at Minnechaug is the Unit Ventilators. They are in all the classrooms and offices. Replacement parts for them are no longer available and have not been now for some considerable time. The newer, currently available unit ventilators are decidedly different, technologically advanced, digitally controlled and energy efficient. During the 1970's energy crunch most of the 'outside air intake' portions of the units were blocked off to *save energy*. The unit ventilators, all of an outdated design, do not draw sufficient outside air to meet today's ventilation codes. Minnechaug's senior maintenance staff readily admit that all the units have clearly out-served their useful lives and in fact are failing. Rooms are either too hot or too cold and most of the roof exhaust fans are obsolete and no longer manufactured. Virtually all the duct work is dirty and has not been thoroughly cleaned. The bottom line is that the Committee learned that the heating and ventilation (outside fresh air intake) system is in a state of substantial disrepair and needs replacement *in toto*. The entire system should be replaced by a direct digital automatic temperature control system, similar to those already installed in most of the primary schools in both Hampden and Wilbraham. Such replacement would considerably improve building air quality as well as save substantially on energy costs.

The third area of concern was the *Cafeteria*. From the Superintendent's office, next to the Music Room and across the hall from the Family and Consumer Sciences Kitchen area, to the School Cafeteria is just over a fifth of a mile, a good two fifths of a mile round trip. There are

other equally long, and longer hikes students and teachers must traverse in the five minutes allotted to change classes. The students' lockers are rarely central to a student's classes and so small that today's winter coat can only be squeezed in the locker with room for nothing else, resulting in the fact that many students must carry large, heavily stuffed backpacks to get them through the day's assignments with their classroom 'stuff'. The cafeteria serves two meals, half an hour each: half the school eats lunch from **10:30 to 11:00 a.m.**, then back to class at 11:00 a.m., and the second half of the school eats lunch from 12 noon to 12:30 p.m. These two lunch sittings are driven, in part, by scheduling, in part because of the capacity of the cafeteria (about 648) to feed the student body (1334), and in part is a function of the cafeteria's unusual, non-central placement at the outer edge of the school's floor plan. Beginning September 2005 there will need to be a third lunch period which is already causing problems in the planning of the school schedule. A number of students who eat at 10:30 must supplement that early meal with power bars to sustain themselves through an active sports program which begins about 2:30 pm and often goes to 5 p.m. or beyond. Clearly the cafeteria is too small and poorly positioned in the school's sprawling floor plan.

It became obvious to the Committee that the layout of the building and the travel distances between classes and other rooms created educational and operational inefficiencies. Added to this is the distribution of classrooms for any given department throughout the building which demonstrates a crazy-quilt pattern of school "space use". Changes have occurred in education since the school was originally designed in 1959 and the adaptation of an older building to these current programs and services is putting an appreciable strain on students, faculty and the administration.

5. Design Categories.

The MFSC began working with Dore and Whittier in September, 2004. As part of the RFP the Committee requested a complete professional report on the following:

1. Site Assessment
2. Architectural Assessment, Interior and Exterior
3. Space use
4. Handicap Accessibility
5. Health and Life Safety

6. Security
7. Structural Assessment
8. Hazardous Material Assessment
9. Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning Assessment
10. Plumbing Assessment
11. Fire Protection Assessment
12. Electrical Assessment
13. Technology Assessment
14. Educational Programming and Enrollment Projections

The Committee met regularly with Lee Dore and Don Walters to review the preliminary reports of various technical consultants and to develop various options intended to address obvious deficiencies in the high school facility. There were basically four categories of options: (X) to do nothing; (A) renovation of the entire building; (B - E) construction of a new addition connected to a completely renovated portion of the old building and, when the project was complete, demolition of a portion of the old building (often referred to as the ‘ad-reno’ option); and (F) construction of a new high school facility.

Four controlling factors were in play as the Committee considered each option. First and foremost was to understand that Dore and Whittier’s obligations under the RFP were “to develop diagrammatic or conceptual building plans sufficient to define the approximate size, scope, site impact and cost impact of the project in order to satisfy the defined needs”. That is to say, the plans they developed for each option were conceptual in nature, not to be construed as actual finished drawings. Second is the size of the building. Minnechaug, when finally built (1972), was for a school population of 2000 students and contained 283,000 square feet. The communities of Hampden and Wilbraham have never produced a total of 2000 high school students. The current State regulations governing reimbursement of a portion of construction costs lead to the assumption that the Hampden Wilbraham Region would receive reimbursement for approximately 269,000 square feet of space. Thus, options (X) and (A) were based upon 283,000 square feet while the other options were based on 269,000 square feet. The third controlling factor was the percentage of State reimbursement. Notice has already been given to all cities and towns by the State’s new Massachusetts School Building Authority that they should

expect to receive 10% less than the previous program would have provided. This would lead to the conclusion that the Hampden Wilbraham Region will receive 10% less than 67%, or 57% reimbursement. However, to be conservative with this reimbursement estimate, the working number the Committee adopted was 54%. Lastly, a new factor has come upon the project since 1959, or 1965 or 1972. Federal and State environmental protection laws have been enacted over the past three decades which limit, *more than before*, the actual available acreage in the 46.27 acres which define the Minnechaug tract. Notwithstanding these new restrictions, Dore and Whittier assures the Committee that the property available for each option will be sufficient and not in conflict with either the Wetlands or Endangered Species Laws.

6. Option Overview

(X) *The do nothing option.* Actually this is not to *do nothing*, but an option to do merely a Maintenance and Code upgrade. This option is a proposal to address immediate needs and remedy existing deficiencies. It is an option that responds to, and emerges from, what is often referred to as the Scortino Report.

The Scortino Report goes back at least five years. It was a schedule of capital items at Minnechaug which needed, or shortly would need, attention. It was never intended to be a comprehensive assessment of the facility or to be a substitute for a full renovation of Minnechaug. Its principle use was to outline the requirements of a ten year capital program for the high school for use in financial planning by both the HWRSB as well as the Finance and Advisory Boards of the Towns. It was an excellent effort, for that limited purpose. However, to suggest it was the outline for a renovation program which added up to \$14,462,675 (FY 2005) would be erroneous (see Appendix Q).

The greatest impediment to such a use was that much of the work would not qualify for State reimbursement. Additionally, many of the items slated to be addressed would have triggered other additional items which would have to be included. The best and potentially most expensive example of this is the Hazardous Materials Assessment which, when completed throughout the building, would inevitably have led to costly abatement measures, the magnitude of which it is difficult to calculate. It is known that under the old School Building Assistance Program, and there is every indication that the new authority will have similar regulations, that to

qualify for partial reimbursement the applicant would need to demonstrate the following: the District's Long Range Educational Program; State Codes for Accessibility (ADA & AAB); Code required Ventilation Standards; Adequate Technology; Structural (Seismic) Code; Energy Conservation (2001 Energy Code); Hazardous Materials (asbestos); Have a Sound Roof. The architects were of the opinion that the various federal and state code requirements triggered by this option would bring the preliminary costs for this option to a tentatively projected figure of \$31,834,702 (a conceptual estimate only, see Appendix G. a - G. c), carrying with it numerous hidden caveats. This option was not considered viable as it would most likely not be sufficiently comprehensive to qualify for SBA reimbursement..

(A) *A complete renovation.* (see Appendix F).

This option would take approximately 48 months to complete, would be accomplished in four segments [called phases], taking an estimated one year apiece. While a section of the school was being renovated (thoroughly gutted: windows, doors, plumbing, heating, electric, ceilings, floors, a new roof, etc.) 16 portable classrooms would be utilized to compensate for the loss of classrooms.. As one section of the school was finished and another section started a shift of other affected classrooms would take place, sequentially going on for four years. As one Committee member wisely observed, it would be perfectly possible for a student, or many students, to enter as a freshman and have to spend a great portion of their freshman through senior years of *learning*, being educated, in portable trailers and building construction. There would, of necessity, be disruptions. Some of these disruptions would have a major impact, such as the temporary loss of the auditorium, the pool, some of the athletic facilities (both interior and exterior), science labs, library, etc., etc. There is no question that the end product would be school with new mechanical systems and appearance but all still part of the original floor plan, and in the old structure.

This option would include an attempt to group similar educational functions together and to distribute the spaces in a more logical and efficient manner. However, this regrouping would be limited by the footprint of the existing building and the web of hallways and resulting distances.

This option caused the Committee to have long, meaningful discussions on what became known as the 'disruption factor'. The Committee tried to explore what degrees of disruption through four school years would be acceptable to the students, parents, faculty, and/or

to the Hampden and Wilbraham communities. Would it be possible to obtain several temporary athletic fields, and an alternate pool, and a suitable auditorium space for several months at a time? Would the savings of this option, weighed against the costs of other options, be justified, and if so, using what standards? Could the long-term educational value of this option somehow be weighed against the four continuous years of disruption? Where would the balance be found? And finally, to what extent would the disruptions interfere with the “learning experience” of the students, and the “teaching effectiveness” of the teachers?

The most important factor which removed this option from final consideration was the uncertainty of current and future State reimbursement of renovation only projects. The former State rules allowed renovation to qualify for reimbursement, however, the funding was, and will probably continue to be, subject to legislative appropriation, and over the last years the renovation portion of the School Building Assistance program in the Dept. of Education budget has not been funded. Needless to say, this has discouraged ‘school renovation’ projects from being submitted by most communities across the State. The new regulations for “renovation only” have yet to be written.

The cost of this option was estimated at \$56,927,324. (see Appendix G, a).

(B — E) *Addition and Renovation* [Add-Reno]. Each of these four options were discussed individually at length by the MFSC. The Committee was interested in how each concept, each approach, went about rectifying the diverse problems with the present high school facility. However illuminating and interesting each option was seen to be, in the end the Committee decided to treat them as one generic option, as an approach to solving problems. This was done for two reasons. First, and most determinatively, they were each roughly in the same price range (see Appendix H). Secondly, the differences between the options were so nuanced, and the numerous evaluation criteria were addressed only to varying degrees by the different options. When several top priority criteria, such as overall cost, length of time to complete and the relative degree of disruption, were all figured in and weighed, the differences were not that great. Thus the Committee treated all four Add-Reno options as a single conceptual approach.

Two important aspects of each of the Add-Reno solutions were that they each would lead to the ultimate removal of the 1959 portion of Minnechaug, the most problematic

portion of the entire structure, and that each would allow for a more logical organization of classrooms and adjunct resources. The placement of the new addition, the functions to be located in it, and the positioning of it next to the 1972 three story segment of the high school, raised another set of formidable challenges. At one point in the discussion an experienced member reminded the Committee that the three story structure itself had a number of serious shortcomings and would, in a complete renovation, be stripped down to a shell and have to be reinforced to meet the new Federal Seismic codes. Furthermore, the renovation would have to be done in only half the three story building at a time to preserve the existing compliment of classrooms necessary to limit the total number of temporary classroom units rented or purchased. This example is given to point out the interrelation of a number of factors: total costs, numbers of existing and portable classrooms, rented or purchased, completion schedules and always, the looming disruption factor. This is not to imply that the problems with any of the Add-Reno options are unsolvable. It is to say that these are difficult and complicated choices. The more complicated and difficult the issues, the more likely the costs associated with addressing them would increase. And certainly the ultimate choices must take into consideration the quality of deliverable educational programming during the construction period.

One of the results of this in-depth examination by the Committee was that a principle surfaced which was recognized and acknowledged by all. It became clear that in either the complete renovation of the existing building (A) or in each of the Add-Reno options, a comparatively large amount of money would have to be expended to which no direct educational value could be attached. Thus, the portable classroom units, which would cost about \$2 million over three to four years, would in the end be a loss of dollars, as would all costs attributed to the shifting during the sequential, segmented building stages. The Committee is of the opinion that, to the extent possible, each dollar spent should be spent upon improving the education program and facility and not spent on necessary though incidental construction costs with no long-term, tangible education value.

Each of the Add-Reno options would qualify for State reimbursement. For a comparison of their costs and a rough estimate of their tax impact in each Town see (Appendix G. a and H).

(F) *A New Minnechaug Facility.*

Option (F) was the last option to be studied by the Minnechaug Facility Study Committee. The Committee was aware about halfway through our work that the estimated costs of (F) were close to some of the Add-Reno options, roughly \$63 million-vs-\$59 million. The Committee was aware at all times of *price*, and as an extension of price, *value*. Because of the history of the earlier three designs of Minnechaug, the Committee was interested in an option which would be as inherently flexible and adaptable as possible to allow for future changes and/or modifications to the educational programs. Though past Committees (1956, 1962 and 1969) all undoubtedly shared this view, the pace of societal change, including technological advancements and the demands of a quickly evolving global workplace required that the present Committee be even more mindful of the inevitability and pace of these advancements and changes (see Appendices A. and N.). The Committee was also aware that the field of educational programming is changing and requires educational facilities which are a good deal more dynamic and adaptive than the static sprawl of the present floor plan.

A good part of the analysis of the differences in costs involved an understanding of their effect on the taxpayer. Assuming the ultimate difference between New -vs - Add-Reno was about \$4 million, the question was what does \$4 million mean to the citizens of each Town ? First, the Committee used the reasonably conservative reimbursement rate by the State of 54%, which meant that the \$4 million would really be \$1.84 million. And that figure was divided into 75% for Wilbraham (Minnechaug population split) or \$1.38 million, and 25% for Hampden, amounting to \$ 455,000. Using Hampden's and Wilbraham's current Assessors' tax figures and applying those costs to a 30 year bond, the impact on the *average home* in Hampden would be \$.06/1,000 or \$13.38 per year, and in Wilbraham would be \$14.34. In a very real sense, when you take the nine reasons (or advantages) stated in the Executive Summary and weigh them in total or individually against an additional \$13.38 for the average home on the annual tax bill in Hampden and \$14.34 in Wilbraham, the Committee generally believed that the advantage to the student's education far outweighed the nominal extra cost. This is but one example of the deliberative process which the Committee used in reaching the conclusions they did.

One criteria which was used in the process of selecting an architectural firm was their knowledge and experience in building what are known as Green Schools. These are buildings which are designed and constructed in an environmentally responsible manner. One of the

determinants that led to picking Option (F) was the clear need to tighten up the school structure, to put double glazing in all the windows for energy saving, to update the entire heating system (with the exception of two relatively new boilers), to assure a cleaner, healthier air flow throughout the building, to develop a more efficient roofing system in order to save money on energy expenditures and to stop the persistent roof leaks. For these reasons and others the Committee recommends actively pursuing an application for a “green school” grant. The new facility option would provide the best opportunity to have an environmentally friendly structure.

7. Evaluation Basis

The Committee used an Options Evaluation Matrix provided by Dore and Whittier to rate each Option. They did make two changes. First, we combined two of the twelve criteria since they appeared to overlap sufficiently to act as one (see Appendix L “note”). Second, we decided that each criteria should be rated on a scale of 1 to 9, rather than 1 to 4. By increasing the calibration of the rating system it allowed for greater overall accuracy in the final tally.

TALLY SHEET OPTION EVALUATION MATRIX December 15, 2004

The tally of the entire Committee (11 members) for Option A, Renovation Only under Building Circulation and Core Location received a total vote of only 27 out of a possible top score of 99. Option B-E received a total of 62 out of 99, and Option F received a total of 86 out of 99. A careful analysis of this Tally Sheet, taking into consideration the definitions of the criteria (Appendix L) will give a fairly accurate picture of what the Committee thought, both individually and collectively, after the extensive discussions with the Architects and analysis of the documents concerning particular aspects of each criteria.

8. Minnechaug Facility Study Committee Bios

Douglas Boyd, Co-Chair, Hampden

Married to Joanne. They have four children, 10, 14, 15 and 17. Doug was born in Rutland, VT in 1958, went to Bridgewater State and received a B.S in Psychology, then a J.D. at Western New England School of Law in 1987, and is now a Principal at a law firm in Springfield. He was on the HWRSD School Committee, Green Meadows School Council, Mile Tree and Stony Hill Building Committees and a member of the Recreation Association of Hampden. Currently Vice Chair of Green Meadows Building Committee, Chair Hampden Community Preservation Committee and member of the Hampden Advisory and Hampden Long Term Capital Planning Committee.

566-5045

boydone@charter.net

Patrick Brady, Wilbraham

Married to Peggy. They have four children, three of whom have graduated from Minnechaug and one of whom currently attends Wilbraham Middle School. Pat attended Dominican College in New York and received his MBA from Pace University in 1977. For the last three years he has owned and operated Brady Group, Inc., a freight transportation sales agency. Pat serves on both the Town Finance Committee and the Capital Budget Committee.

596-5079

pat.brady@charter.net

Sue Bunnell, Wilbraham

Partner, Kurt Piper. Sue's son, Alex McCaffrey, is a Minnechaug graduate and currently a Junior at the Savannah College of Art and Design. Sue graduated from Smith College in 1977. Sue is the Director of the Redstone Fast Start™ Sales Training Program and a Performance Coach with Redstone Consulting in East Longmeadow. She has served on the Finance Committee for over ten years; on Capital Planning for over four years; as President of Soule Road PTA; and as a School Council Member at Soule Road, Wilbraham Middle School and at Minnechaug Regional High School.

596-4644

scbamm@juno.com

Robert L. Burger, Hampden

Married to Beth. They have three sons, now 40, 31 and 30, all of whom attended Minnechaug. Bob was born in Delphos, Ohio, attended the University of Dayton, 1959-1960 and received a BA from the International College, Fort Wayne, Indiana in 1962. A long-time Mass Mutual employee, with a Chartered Life Underwriter, a Master of Corporate Real Estate specialty degrees and for 30 years oversaw about 150 corporate offices and buildings throughout the U.S. Currently the Director of the Hampden Lions Club, Bob has been a member of the Hampden Advisory Board, Board of Selectmen (1981-1987), Chair of the Cable TV Advisory Committee, the Insurance Committee and the Green Meadows Facilities Committee.

566-8988

burger@hampden.com

Claire M. Clini, Wilbraham

Claire is married to David. They have one son who this year is a freshman at Minnechaug. She has an Advanced Paralegal Studies Certificate, 1984, from Elms College and an Associate Degree in Medical technology, 1978, from Springfield Technical Community College. Claire was a Medical Lab Technician at Mercy Hospital for six years; a litigation paralegal for five years at Doherty, Wallace and Pillsbury, an Adjunct professor of Paralegal Studies for five years at Bentley College, and is currently the founder and President of Professional Paralegal Services, Inc., since 1990. There is little in the school system that Claire has not been involved in: Mile Tree and Soule Road School Councils; Chairperson SAB Wilbraham Middle School; HWRSD School Route Rezoning Committee; Co-Chair Soule Road Playground Project, and participant in the Advisory Committee Star 2000.

596-4499

cmclini@charter.net

Stephanie A. Fitzgerald, Wilbraham

Stephanie is married to Francis P. Fitzgerald II. They have two children, 2 and 5 years old. Their five year old is currently attending kindergarten at Mile Tree School. Stephanie graduated from Union College, New York, in 1990 and Cum Laude from Albany Law School in 1994. After a year of serving as Clerk to the Massachusetts Superior Court Justices of Western Massachusetts she joined the law firm of Frank P. Fitzgerald as an Associate. She is an active member of the American Cancer Society and a member of the Springfield area Planning Committee for ACS Daffodil Days.

599-0191

saf@fitzgeraldatlaw.com

John M. Flynn, Hampden

Married to Sheila. They have eight children, seven of whom went to Minnechaug. John graduated from the University of Massachusetts. For the better part of 30 years he has been President of Hampden Engineering in East Longmeadow which manufactures electronic products and which does business with educational institutions, industry and governments throughout the U.S. and many countries throughout the world. John has served on the Board of directors of several institutions and is currently on the Board of Trustees of Elms College. For forty years John was involved in the day-to-day government of Hampden, 33 years as a Selectmen and 6 years on the Planning Board.

525-3981

sales@hampden.com

Michael J. Flynn, Wilbraham

Mike is married to Janice. They have three girls, all part of the Wilbraham School System, though one this year is at Wilbraham Monson Academy. Mike and Janice both graduated from Minnechaug. Mike has a B.S. from Western New England, 1982, and an MBA Cum Laude in 1983. He works for Hampden Engineering Corporation, East Longmeadow, as a Regional Sales Manager, 1984, National Sales Manager, 1990, and in 1998 Vice President of Sales. He has been an Advisory Board member at Chicopee Comprehensive, Dean Tec in Holyoke, Putnam Vocational Tech in Springfield, at STCC, and is currently a Board member of the East Longmeadow Chamber of Commerce. Mike has served on the Finance Committee, the Regional School Committee, Vice-President and now president of the Minnechaug Booster Club. He also holds a Gubernatorial Appointment to the MMWEC Board of Directors.

596-4399

Mike.Flynn@hampden.com

Brian E. Garbecki, Hampden

Married to Ann. They have three children attending all levels of the school system: kindergarten, elementary and high school. Brian has a B.A. in Economics from A.I.C., 1981, an M.A. in Economics from U.R.I. He holds a BSME from WNEC, 1995; a P.E. License in Massachusetts and a CEM from the Assoc. of Energy Engineers. From 1996 to 2004 he worked for Bay State Health Systems working in a wide variety of Facility Planning and Construction roles, including Director, Facilities Special Projects Manager and Project Engineer. He is currently Director of Health Care Services for Gilbane Building Company.

566-8158

brianann@juno.com

Paul A. Huijing, Wilbraham

Paul is married to Donna. They have two children, one of whom is currently at Memorial School. Paul attended Cornell University, Sibley School of Mechanical Engineering, and received both a B.S. and a Masters of Engineering Degree. He has taken additional courses at U. Mass., Amherst in Structural Analysis, Concrete Design and Wood Structural Design. He holds numerous affiliations: Mass. Construction Supervisor; both Mass. And Conn. Home Improvement Contractor; Professional Engineer in Conn., Mass. and Maryland; and a Mass. License to sell real estate. Paul has recently founded Oak Mountain Construction and Engineering, concentrating on residential construction as well as offering services in the forensic analysis of building failures.

599-4884

paul@oakmountainconstruction.com

John M. Lovejoy, Co-Chair, Wilbraham

John is married to Nancy. They have one son and she has three children from her first marriage. Their son attended Pines School. John attended the Little Red School House 1942-1944 and, for a short time, the Elementary School in North Wilbraham, now the Wilbraham Police Department. He holds a B.A. from Bates College, 1958 and a Master of Arts in Philosophy from the Univ. of Mass, Amherst, 1961. He worked as a Claims Adjuster for Liberty Mutual Insurance Co. for 5 years and as an independent Publishers' representative in New England for 38 years. John was a Selectman on and off for 12 years between 1973 and 1990. He was president of the Mass. Selectmen's Association, 1983-1984, and Gubernatorial Appointee to the Local Government Advisory Committee 1976-1980 and 1981-1984.

596-3735

lovejoy@crocker.com

Thomas Mitchell, Wilbraham

Tom is married to Pam. They have two daughters, both of whom graduated from Minnechaug, one in 2000 and one in 2002. Tom received a B.S. in 1970 and an MBA in 1972 from Boston College. He is employed by and part owner of Raleigh Rug Company, which is both a commercial and residential flooring contractor. He served four years on the Finance Committee and was a member of both the Building Study and the actual Building Committee for the Mile Tree / Stony Hill Road School projects.

596-8914

ralrugtm@msn.com

9. References

1. Dore and Whittier, Architects Feasibility Study, 21 Dec. 2004
2. N. E. Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Public Secondary Schools, Minnechaug Regional High School, March 18-21, 2001
3. Superintendent's Report, October 5, 2004