

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM. Present: School Board Members John Harmon, Stephen Scarfo, Joseph Saulnier, Cindy Bennett, and Tony Clements; Superintendent Terry Leatherman; Business Administrator Marjorie Whitmore; Director of Safety and Facilities Todd Ledoux.

Proof of Posting: It was noted that the meeting was properly posted.

Pledge of Allegiance: All those in attendance stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Input: Public input was opened at 6:01 PM. Mr. Harmon noted that public input would be open for 30 minutes. If anyone arrives within that timeframe and would like to speak, they will be allowed to do so. There was no public input forthcoming.

Energy Efficient Investments: Mike Davey, from Energy Efficient Investments and Mr. Ledoux reviewed with the School Board an updated estimate for energy projects at the high school and the middle school.

Mr. Davey stated that the updated estimate includes a finalized price for solar design, which went up a little but the savings also went up substantially, so the net savings improved. He discussed a potential requirement to buy American-made products which shouldn't have too much of an impact but he may not know the final requirements by March. Regarding the solar array, he suggests leaving the location vague, as "intended" so if there is an objection they could potentially go back to the roof-mounted system, but in this plan they chose a ground-mounted array to provide about 70% of the district's energy needs. Additionally, LED lights will decrease energy needs by 22%.

Mr. Davey reviewed another change to the updated estimate, which is that he added options both with and without wood heat. During discussion, Mr. Ledoux stated that there are some downsides to wood, such as the silo taking up space, but overall he believes it's a good way to go. Mr. Davey recommended that the project should also be brought to the Planning Board, not because they can stop a project but because they can provide opportunity for public comment and feedback. Ms. Bennett asked about safety risks. Mr. Davey stated that every boiler system has some safety risk. If there was a fire it would be contained to the silo.

Mr. Davey suggested discussing the location of the solar array, currently positioned at the high school on the field before the rock wall, as "subject to planning board review and final design" There was some discussion about the possibility of putting the solar panels in front of the high school. Mr. Davey stated that if only the high school solar panels could fit there, they could consider the option of splitting the system between the high school and middle school, which would result in a cost difference of maybe 5%.

Mr. Davey reviewed the different cost options. He confirmed that at any point the lease could be paid off early. Also, if interest rates go down, the lease could be refinanced.

Mr. Harmon stated that we have returned money to the taxpayers each year, and if we wanted to reduce the lease by putting extra money on it we would need that wording in the lease and if we do that, 20 years would be the better route. Mr. Davey stated yes, that would have to be in the agreement with the bank.

Mr. Harmon stated that the conversation is if the Board wants the wood boiler and do we want option three of 15 years or option three of 20 years. He stated he would choose 20 and make arrangements to pay more toward it, and that we would need to know what that first year payment would be.

Mr. Saulnier stated he would like to put it in the budget and he would choose option three for 20 years. Mr. Davey stated that if they choose option three there's a chance for up to an \$800,000 grant, so if they write a warrant they may not want to do it restrictively in case they need to change things around and reapply for the grant if they don't get it the first time around.

Mr. Leatherman stated his recommendation is wood. Mr. Harmon asked if we could find out from John Stark how much fluctuation they've had in price over the years.

Mr. Clements asked about emissions. Mr. Davey stated that it does have emissions but it's much cleaner because they would be burning a pure product.

Mr. Scarfo asked if there have been any supply issues. Mr. Davey stated yes, but similar to the propane delivery running late. There are only two vendors in the state that provide these chips. He stated that if need be, the entire system could be converted to pellets. They've never had to do this, but the option is there.

Mr. Saulnier stated he thinks it should be put in the budget. Mr. Clements and Mr. Scarfo agreed. Mr. Harmon stated they run the risk of losing this opportunity if added to the budget. Mr. Saulnier stated that even adding this, the operating budget will be lower than the default. There was further discussion about the option for budget versus warrant articles. Mr. Leatherman recommended waiting until the next board meeting when they will know the default budget amount.

It was agreed to add an agenda item for the next board meeting to take action on this after the default budget is discussed.

Other: Mr. Saulnier stated that he is hearing a lot of people talking about the water tower and suggested that it could be put in front of the high school. Mr. Clements stated that he will look into if that has been considered. Mr. Harmon asked Mr. Leatherman to check with the Town Manager.

Adjournment: MOTION: Joseph Saulnier moved, seconded by Tony Clements, to adjourn the meeting. Voted unanimously in the affirmative. Meeting adjourned at 7:11 PM.

Raymond School Board Meeting
November 29, 2023
Raymond High School Media Center
Minutes Page 3
DRAFT

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Heywood,
Raymond School Board Clerk