

DANVILLE SCHOOL BOARD
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, April 5th, 2022, 6:00pm
Danville School Library & Zoom Teleconference
[Video Recording Available](#)

School Directors Present: Clayton Cargill, David Towle, Tim Sanborn, Melissa Conly, and Molly Gleason

School Administrators Present: Mark Tucker (Superintendent), Sarah Welch (Elementary Principal), David Schilling (Secondary Principal)

Guest Speakers Present: Sabrina Brown (CCSU, Director of Student Services), Cam Featherstonhaugh and Richard Deane (TruexCullins)

Community Members Present: Kaity White, Lance Horne, Lindsey Mitchell-Wheeler, Rob Balivet, Alison Despathy

1. **Call to Order:** Clayton called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Introductions were made around the room and on Zoom.
2. **Additions/Changes to Agenda**
Dave S. asked to add a discussion on gym equipment to the agenda; Clayton moved it to “Board Business.”
3. **Approve Minutes**
 - March 3rd, 2022: The following revision was made to the March 3rd, 2022 minutes: Replaced Dave S. with David Towle in Rob Balivet’s comment in the Public Comment section. Motion: Tim moved to approve the March 3rd, 2022 minutes with the revision. Melissa seconded. Motion carried with all five in favor.
 - March 10th, 2022: Motion: Tim moved to approve the March 10th, 2022 minutes. Dave T. seconded. Motion carried with all five in favor.
4. **Administrative Reports** (see video at 3:00):

[Superintendent’s Report](#), presented by Mark Tucker

- CCSU is moving further from COVID mitigation at the schools and the mask requirement was dropped on March 7th, and they’ve shifted to a clinical model where

they are no longer sending home self-testing kits. The nurse has the ability to assess symptoms and make decisions for testing. They are stocked up on self-tests for now. There are cases, but nowhere near where they were earlier this year.

- Act 173 (pupil weighting bill): Legislature is going to allow it to go into effect on July 1st. The House wants to delay the implementation of two special education rule changes.
- S.162: The bill included language which would allow a teacher to sign a contract and continue to seek other employment and break the original contract. This language was removed from the bill and is now in the House. There's a possibility the language could be added back in.
- Other Legislative Action: There is a surplus in the education fund and the governor talked about a property tax rebate. The House decided it would be easier to adjust the yield rate. If this passes, all communities in CCSU would see a 5 to 7 cent reduction in the projected tax rate. Mark will let people know when the yield bill is finalized.

[Principals' Report](#), presented by Dave Schilling and Sarah Welch

- No discussion on the report.

[Student Services Report](#) by Sabrina Brown, CCSU Director of Student Services

- Sabrina added an update on the submitted student transition plans, which was the only area under audit. They received 100% on the audit and should be done with audits for a number of years.
- The number of students on IEPs fluctuates, some families move out, and some move in. It's about 275-290 students/year on average.

[Student Representative](#)

- Liza and Thomas were not present and submitted a report for the Board to review.

5. Board Business:

Architects Update: Presentation/Discussion (see video at 11:00)

[Presentation by TruexCullins](#)

Richard Deane (Principal) and Cam Featherstonhaugh (Associate) from TruexCullins shared a presentation titled, “Danville Capital Project”:

Richard provided an introduction and overview of the project: Their expertise is in constructing and working with schools that have been used for many years to address 21st-century objectives. Supply chain issues and construction costs present additional challenges, and they have been successful in working with other schools to find solutions that address the financial needs of the community and the needs of the school.

Cam shared that the purpose of the presentation is to look at 1) where we’ve been, 2) where are we now, and 3) where are we going.

History:

- 2019 - The facility evaluation was conducted by TruexCullins to address the existing needs and status of the building and systems. Three priorities were identified: 1) health, safety, welfare, and code issues, 2) systems at end of life/energy efficiency gains, 3) anything not in the first two categories such as furniture in the library, not mission-critical but increases the value of the school.
- Winter/Spring 2021 - They went through a visioning exercise with a break to address serious needs with the air and ventilation at the school. The findings included a need for a significant addition and reorganization of spaces. The elementary rooms are half the size of typical classrooms. Staff members are working in small spaces tucked away, and they need more space for confidentiality, working space, and storage. Elementary, administration, and auxiliary (special services, etc) spaces are significant needs.
- Spring/Summer 2021 - The initial design and site concepts focused on expanding the building with an elementary building, cafeteria expansion, and reorganization. Cost estimating was done in the fall, and they are now ready to present the estimate. Richard added that a major change to the existing building they proposed was to take down the 1957 building because of the level of construction and to provide for a full auditorium space.

Cost Estimations: The cost estimations include all items from the facility evaluation and the additions and renovations needed for educational alignment. It is the complete cost to design and build everything designed to date. Break down is as follows:

- Facility Evaluation Work: To complete over the next 5-10 years, including repairs and replacements needed for the existing building as it sits = \$32.3M
- Additions: To build additions they’ve designed = \$23.8M
- Cost Escalation: The cost of construction compounded from today year over year (2024 is the earliest construction could be started)= \$4.8M

- Soft Costs = Costs associated with permitting, legal, moving, engineering, money not paid to contractors = \$5.9M
- Owner Contingency: Covers unforeseen conditions, errors in bid documents, and changes the owner elects to make = \$4.3M.
- Hazardous Material: Removing hazardous materials they suspect is on-site = \$516,000
- Total Estimated Cost = \$71.6M

Cam clarified that the \$32.3M in the Facility Evaluation Work section includes everything in the health, safety, welfare, code issues category, and everything that is at the end of its life, such as the air handling units and original electrical service. The original electrical is over 60 years old and parts are unavailable. They don't even test the units anymore because they might not turn back on. The \$32M Facility Evaluation Work is work that will need to be done at some point and planning either happens proactively to make changes or it fails and fixes are made in an emergency situation.

Cam acknowledged that this is a significant amount, and it is hard to conceive how the town will pay for it. They have several other school projects in this same situation; one other school is 1.6 times the size of Danville, same age, the same level of work, same issues. That project is down from \$65M to \$49M. The schools needing this work were all built during the same time period, during post-war expansion, added onto in the 80s and 90s. They are confident in the numbers because they are similar to other schools throughout the state.

Discussion on:

- The value of the school as it sits (available in the Town Report): Dave T. looked up the value online and the school building is worth \$6.9M and the property is \$100,000 based on an assessment.
- Constructing in phases as a possible strategy
- Cam shared that when Dave S and Sarah were first presented with the estimated cost, they discussed possible alternative options due to the high cost. The following are two alternative options to meet the needs of the school in the most cost-effective way.

Alternative Option 2 - Reduced Plan




Cam showed an [alternate design](#) that removes the large addition to the west and is built inside the footprint of the existing school for the most part. There would be an addition for the elementary school, and the separate cafeteria would be eliminated, combining the cafeteria and gym (this would have a sports floor and fold-up tables). This design would not take down the 1957 wing because the auditorium is more modest. It would be a significant expansion for the elementary school and reduce new construction and areas of renovation, keeping more of the old structure. There would be an estimated \$10M in savings with this approach.

Alternative Option 3 - Build a New School

Cam discussed the costs of building a new school, and the benefits such as no hazardous material costs and less risk of contamination, much less disruption to the students as they can build in the soccer field and then move structures over the summer, less noise pollution. It is a better investment as 100% of the money is going into a new project and not temporary measures that are only spent to enable the work to happen. Total cost for a new school = \$70-80M

The Board discussed demolition costs, and Cam stated it is included in the final number; demolition of the original 1937 building should be discussed at the community level. He added that a new building should be seriously considered as a potential option; renovation jobs are complex and there are more unforeseen conditions. He presented the three project options in a visual below:

PROJECT OPTIONS – SUMMARY

OPTION 1 (original design)	OPTION 2 (reduced design)	OPTION 3 (new school)												
<table border="0"><tr><td>Pros:</td><td>Cons:</td></tr><tr><td><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design is farthest ahead of options• Separate cafeteria and gym• Separate elementary school</td><td><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cost• Site disruption• Occupied construction• \$\$ spent on enabling work</td></tr></table>	Pros:	Cons:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design is farthest ahead of options• Separate cafeteria and gym• Separate elementary school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cost• Site disruption• Occupied construction• \$\$ spent on enabling work	<table border="0"><tr><td>Pros:</td><td>Cons:</td></tr><tr><td><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced costs• Less site disruption</td><td><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Combined cafeteria and gym• Occupied construction• \$\$ spent on enabling work</td></tr></table>	Pros:	Cons:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced costs• Less site disruption	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Combined cafeteria and gym• Occupied construction• \$\$ spent on enabling work	<table border="0"><tr><td>Pros:</td><td>Cons:</td></tr><tr><td><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purpose built• Minimum student disruption• Best investment</td><td><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highest cost</td></tr></table>	Pros:	Cons:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purpose built• Minimum student disruption• Best investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highest cost
Pros:	Cons:													
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design is farthest ahead of options• Separate cafeteria and gym• Separate elementary school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cost• Site disruption• Occupied construction• \$\$ spent on enabling work													
Pros:	Cons:													
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced costs• Less site disruption	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Combined cafeteria and gym• Occupied construction• \$\$ spent on enabling work													
Pros:	Cons:													
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purpose built• Minimum student disruption• Best investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highest cost													
														

Next Steps

- 1) Project Update: Provide an update to the community
- 2) Community Feedback: Need to involve the community through flyers, mailers, and an assembly. Something needs to be done at some point and the project won't be successful without community involvement.
- 3) Discuss Options: With community feedback, discuss options.
- 4) Confirm Approach
- 5) Project Proposal Board Recommendation

- 6) Bond Vote
- 7) Design & Construction

Cam talked to a few contractors to gauge a construction timeframe for Options 1 and 2, and the estimate is 2.5 years of construction on-site. Construction would start after the school year, say 2024, and finish in January 2027. The quickest timeline is five years from now if the bond vote is successful in November. A new school is easier and can be accomplished in two years. It would be three summers, and if construction started in 2024, kids would come back to a new school in the fall of 2026. These are unofficial ballpark estimates.

Questions and Discussion:

Cam added that these numbers are similar to other schools including Middlebury, Milton and Winooski. The number shouldn't be interpreted as a lack of effort to maintain schools as they reflect historic reluctance and tax avoidance as a primary goal of most politicians. They've seen deferred maintenance at schools over the last 30 years and a mentality of "if it ain't broke, don't fix it."

Discussion on \$32M to fix the existing structure:

- Cam clarified that it is fixing what is there and includes replacing end-of-life systems such as piping. The bulk of plumbing is 50 years old and on borrowed time as an example. There's not enough good material left to fix it, and piping systems need to be replaced so the lead doesn't leach as they reach the end of life. Winooski had a single main failure, and it was a \$150,000 emergency fix. It will catch up with the community if it's not managed proactively.

Discussion on federal, state, and grant funds available and the impact on taxpayers:

- Mark shared that currently there is no federal nor state money available, but there is talk about investing money into schools nationwide. It is recognized by the Vermont Legislature that Vermont has dated infrastructure. The Board needs to know what the community wants to do before discussing financing.
- The cost is not 100% paid for by the taxpayers in Danville. There is a split with education funding: this year, 36% came from Danville residents, 39% came from non-residents (second homes, Joe's Pond camps, etc), and 25% is from the education fund (wealthier communities that pay into the education fund in Vermont). Options for financing include going to the bond bank and the USDA.
- Danville is a receiving town and gets more out of the education fund than it puts in. Because Danville doesn't have a tax base large enough to cover education costs, the remaining 25% comes from the education fund which is made up of sales tax revenue, lottery, and taxes from liquor sales. Danville gets back an additional 25% because we are

a receiving town. As an example of the real tax impact on the community, Winooski taxpayers are only paying 41% of the total project cost. Cam added that the bond is entered as a line item in the budget, that way the costs are shared. Bond payments are part of the budget to operate the school.

- Cam will provide the Board with talking points and different examples of the tax impact on homesteads of different sizes, income-sensitized or not.

Discussion on the timing, cost of materials, and supply chain issues:

- Cam shared that experts say cost drivers are long-term. There's been volatility; wood and metal were up, then went back down, and they will probably never come down to where they were before. Estimators predict 4-6% costs per year for costs escalator predictions. Construction, more or less, only goes up and it went up steeply over the past few years.
- He added that VT has had a moratorium on school construction aid since 2007 and it has not been restarted (they used to reimburse 30% of costs). Act 72 passed, which is the state's overall facility assessment and the total state burden. There's not enough political will for discussions on school construction aid. As part of Act 72, they are redrafting standards. Cam has walked through about 15% of building stock in the state and renovation costs are about \$350/sq ft. It's a widespread issue.
- Cam clarified, again, if Danville didn't make any changes and fixed what's there, it would cost about \$32M over 5-10 years to replace plumbing, heating, etc...when those are replaced, there are data systems, sprinklers, and cables that are impacted, too. The \$32M cost is the cost of replacing infrastructure in the building wholesale.
- He also mentioned that they check the cost estimators' numbers and look at the most expensive items and try to drive estimates down to quality assumptions of what needs to happen. The project he mentioned earlier has a deferred maintenance cost of \$50M for 140,000 sq ft. Danville has 85,000 sq. ft today and a deferred maintenance cost of around \$30M tracks well.

Discussion on the bond:

- Cam stated that 30 years for a bond is common. Winooski did a 30-year loan from the USDA.

Discussion on community feedback and engagement:

- This needs to happen first, explain the need and deficiencies; there's potentially a difference of \$10M to get an ideal school
- Explain what the existing school needs first before debating about finances.
- Cam shared that TruexCullins can help with recommendations for community engagement consultants, and it's been helpful to show pictures, videos, presentations (dinner and daycare), identify strong proponents and opposers, and offer building tours, and presentations. Board needs to be ready three months before the vote. Bring the

community back to the why and the needs. The summer would be spent on community education.

Discussion on replacing the entire building as is, without additions:

- Cam said he listed the replacement costs of the building as it sits today at \$45M/50M. The cost of \$32M from that would be to repair and renovate (as mentioned earlier). The community would need to determine which buildings are going to be worked on next and which ones aren't worth it. Cam will send more information to the Board. The tipping point is around 70% (he gave a car example: are you going to spend \$7,000 to repair a car that's worth \$10k?).
- If the building is replaced at \$46M to fix the safety issues, there would still be the issue of space which was the reason for the project and evaluation. There are concerns about space, safety concerns, and missed opportunities kids could have because there isn't space; focus the conversation on what's happening with children and the opportunities for them and why the space is no longer adequate.
- A suggestion was made to look at the \$46M to fix/replace what's there and then how to get to \$70M.
- The \$46M includes being in small spaces and windowless classrooms; the principals suggested holding board meetings in different spaces throughout the school to get a sense of the need.

Discussion on opportunities for the school and students:

- This presents an opportunity to bring in more high school students with a better facility and have more kids to teach which brings in revenue and lowers taxes. Seats in the high school would be empty without sending students and this money can help with costs.

Discussion on student capacity and parking and handicapped parking:

- Cam stated that the capacity of Options 1 and 2, and by default 3, would be around 450/460 students and there's some flexibility.
- Board members expressed concerns about parking and safety issues.
- Cam stated that Act 64 created stormwater changes and regulatory requirements which are included in Option 1; can't engage in construction without addressing that need, and it is included in site costs. Richard shared that Option 2 has a preliminary site design with parking and turnaround
- There will be 100 parking spots total and the school has about 50 now

Changes to Special Education Regulations (video at 1:32:26)

Sabrina shared a presentation on the special education rule changes which can be found [here](#).
Summary of changes:

- Currently use a reimbursement model and will be moving to a block grant model and receive one lump sum each year; all providers will be funded through this. The block grant is significantly lower than what has been spent.
- Parents have 10 days to complete and return the parent input section of IEP
- Vermont is moving away from the discrepancy model to determine a specific learning disability (SLD) to a Patterns for Strengths and Weaknesses Model or a Response to Intervention Model
- For the disability categories of Deaf-Blindness and Specific Learning Disability, the new rule does not state how many areas of measurement nor the percentile or score of the measurement
- There are currently eight basic skill areas; Functional Skills has been added
- Rules about specific positions qualifying for reimbursement or not are deleted from the new rules
- Changes for IEP goal writing include using pertinent data to inform the development of goals and objectives

Discussion on staffing and special education services:

- Sabrina shared that they have to be careful about how they use interventionists and that Tier 2 interventionists don't go into Tier 3. All schools are looking at reading and writing interventionists, and the social-emotional piece, as there is more trauma from Covid.
- There is a robust Tier 2, and if a student needs more (ie five/days a week), that's where special education comes in. She expects there to be an increase in special education across the country and students are six months to a year and a half behind or below. Having a solid Tier 2 and Tier 1 will help decrease the number of increasing students in special education.
- Dave S. added that Danville only has a few Tier 2 interventionists and they are looking at how to structure Tier 1 to accommodate kids.

Discussion on Gym Equipment ([video of this section is here](#))

Dave S. shared that conversations about the gym needs began pre-Covid. There are issues with the basketball hoops and the curtain, the batting cage is in rough shape, the winches are broken, the stationary backboards need safety straps, and the bleachers were inspected and have to be removed for safety reasons. These issues are affecting youth sports, and it's not safe.

Clayton mentioned the request wasn't warned, and the Board can't take action tonight.

Dave shared [three proposals](#) for the Board to consider:

- Winches & Basketball Backstops = \$30,504 (price went up after covid)
- Batting Cage = \$18,832
- Curtain = \$18,169

- Total = \$67,505 total

Discussion on costs:

- Dave S stated there is enough money in unencumbered funds to cover these costs, according to his conversations with CCSU finance manager Michael Concessi.
- Question about waiting to purchase for the new or renovated building: Mark shared that everything needs to be moved to the new building. Sarah shared the timeline for construction is 4-5 years, and basketball is significantly impacted; the batting cage isn't usable.
- Dave S added that this would be summer work as it is not an emergency.
- Clayton stated the Board could meet quickly and get it done or wait and involve the community. Dave S. will get back to the Board if action is needed immediately and the Board will meet if necessary.

Truancy Officer - Discussion/Appointment

Mark shared that each school needs a truancy officer and typically the principal is designated. It is more of a figurehead position and doesn't have a lot of authority. Cases of truancy require an affidavit from the superintendent.

Tim moved to make Sarah Welch the truancy officer. Dave T. asked to modify the motion to have both principals serve until a certain date. Clayton mentioned the statute says a sheriff can be named and asked what happens to a tuition student from a different town. Mark stated that Danville would take care of it, and truancy isn't something that comes up every day.

Motion: Tim moved to nominate Sarah Welch as Truancy Officer. Dave T. seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

A31 - Board Education Policy (Discussion/Possible Adoption)

Clayton shared that the A31 policy is about board education. The VSBA can be helpful and he encouraged directors to use the resources they provide; it's incumbent on members to come to meetings prepared and there are many trainings offered online.

Discussion on reimbursement for training costs and travel:

- Mark stated that most trainings are online and Clayton said the SU is billed for workshop costs if directors are signed up under the SU.
- Superintendents and board chairs are required to go to the spring conference.

Clayton closed the discussion and stated the Board isn't required to act and encouraged directors to come to meetings prepared.

Board Education - VSBA Webinar on Effective and Appropriate Management of Public Comment

Clayton described the webinar and the information offered on how to handle public comments. He discussed the highly charged meetings about masks and expressed he wants people to come to meetings. The meeting this past January wasn't civil, especially from people outside of the school district. The webinar is about the open meeting law - who can speak and how long they can speak and the purpose of public comment. How the Board entertains public comment, when and who. The Board needs to be clear about the procedure.

Mark added: 1) open meeting law says the board has to allow for members of the public before it takes action on an agenda item, 2) there are general misunderstandings about the intention of public comment - it's not a dialogue, 3) CCSD has a statement about public comment on the agenda. He'll send to Clayton and Molly.

Discussion continued around the procedure, where to share the procedure with the public (website, agenda or both), developing meeting norms/ground rules, the importance of staying consistent at every meeting as to who can talk and for how long even if there are only a few people in attendance.

Mark shared that the public can ask questions or comments before board votes, and on other boards, the chair will ask if anyone has comments or questions before a motion.

6. Other Business - None

7. Public Comment

Public comment was given by Alison Despathy and Lance Horne on mutual respect and valuing different opinions. Please refer to the video at 2:31:43 for a recording.

8. Future Agenda Items

Building Plan

Public Comment Procedure

Gym Equipment - Discussion / Possible Action

9. Meeting Adjournment: Motion moved by Tim to adjourn. Seconded by Melissa. Motion carried with five in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:37pm.

Respectfully submitted by Molly Gleason, Clerk, April 7, 2022