Hillcrest Middle School
Building Committee

TOWN OF TRUMBULL
CONNECTICUT

Town Hall
5866 Main Street
Trumbull, Connecticut 06611

Hillcrest Middle School Building Committee
March 3, 2026
7:00 pm
Virtual Meeting

Present: Joseph Costa, Andrew Lubin, Jeff Alterman, Bill Mecca, John Morello, J.C. Cinelli, Ann Sather and Fran Basbagil

Absent: Bob Gerbert

Also Present: Robert Tencza, Arcadis; Gregory Raucci, Bismark Construction; Michael Scott, TSKP; Randall Luther, TSKP; John Butkus, Arcadis; Town Attorney James Nugent; Chris Fryxell, President of CT Chapter, Associated Builders and Contractors

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm followed by Roll Call and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Past Minutes
Motion was made by Mr. Lubin to approve the minutes of February 10, 2026 as written; seconded by Ms. Sather. Motion was approved unanimously.

Public Comment
No public comment.

Review and Approval of Invoices
No invoices for approval at this meeting.

Presentation from CT Associated Builders and Contractors
Mr. Costa introduced Chris Fryxell, President of the CT Chapter. Mr. Fryxell noted this is a state-wide trade association representing approximately 260 businesses. He spoke on PLAs noting his organization is against them and cited the following information:

1. It is a unique, pre-bidding hiring contract that sets forth specific requirements that are not found in most construction contracts. Twenty-five states prohibit their use.

2. All contractors must sign the PLA that requires them to adhere to union work rules, recognize the union as their representative on the job, pay into the union benefit funds and hire from the union hall.
3. Contains terms that harm open shop contractors and their employees which is why they will not bid. 85% of the construction industry workforce in CT is open shop and PLAs discriminate against the majority of CT's construction industry.
4. Labor unions benefit directly by having the job operate under the rules that favor union contractors; is a no-bid contract that guarantees labor costs go to the union. Used as a marketing tool.
5. Limits the workforce to only members of the union hall; to forgo the PLA, it allows workers (union and open shop) an opportunity to compete for and work on projects allowing fair opportunities for all.
6. No existing OSHA data that proves PLAs deliver accident-free projects. Employees on prevailing wage jobs require an OSHA 10 card whether they are union or not.
7. PLAs prohibit strikes and walkouts but this has not happened since CT began collecting data.
8. Misconception that PLAs provide better protection to workers – laws in CT protect the workers in the areas of prevailing wages (mandated), worker classification and workers comp insurance and are well enforced.
9. Open shop companies take advantage of apprenticeship and craft training programs to ensure they have a highly skilled and competitive workforce. Most apprentices in CT are registered by open shop contractors. CT ABC founded the Construction Education Center that offers training required by the trades; also has many other avenues for training including the Technical High School System.
10. Employing local workers is a reasonable goal but does not require a PLA. A PLA may prevent local contractors and workers a fair opportunity to work on the job.
11. There is a work force shortage. It would not be beneficial to limit the majority of the work force and prevent them from having an opportunity to work on the project.
12. On Time/On Budget – no guarantees and can be a reason for cost over runs.
13. Study from the Beacon Hill Institute comparing 95 school construction projects indicated a 19.84% higher cost with a PLA. Similar studies with non-school construction projects presented the same outcome.
14. Increased costs result from labor usage/availability, compliance costs and competitive costs.
15. Hiring requirement is from the union hall and union apprenticeship programs; labor may not be local. Open shops will not bid as they would want to use their own workers.
16. PLA requires contractors to recognize the union as its rep on site and everyone must abide by union rules including work separation. Open shop workers excel in multi-skilling and can produce work more efficiently. Workers are required to pay into the union funds in various areas.
17. Impact on projects include cost overruns, value engineering/scope reductions, delays.

Recommendations/Comments –

1. The PLA will ensure that 100% of the work force is union labor. Will not provide a more cost-effective/safer job; a better product or value whatsoever to the taxpayers of Trumbull. The only beneficiary is the union.

2. Similar projects are routinely completed in CT with union and open shop workers working side by side.
3. The most effective way to bid the job is under a strong contract that focuses on safety, strict enforcement of State laws and a competitive bidding process that provides the best value for the community and the children who will attend the school for years to come. (There is often a correlation to the reimbursement rate for the State of CT on PLA projects.)

Mr. Costa requested a copy of the presentation for the record.

New Business

Architect's Project Update – Mr. Scott discussed the following:

1. Met with acoustic engineers and have their recommendations that will be forwarded to the OPM and Committee chair for review and input.
2. Met with civil landscape team – recognizing the early release package for the Phase I documents.
3. Received input from the Fire Marshall and Parks and Recreation.
4. Scheduling a school security and infrastructure meeting with all the stakeholders in Town next week.
5. Returned to the educators for review and further delineation of the educational spaces and hone in on specific equipment.
6. Meeting with the technology group regarding security specifications.

(Costa) – update on kitchen equipment. (Scott) – spoke with consultant who provided a spec that was forwarded to the OPM and Committee Chair. Described the ware washing in the current kitchen noting they rely on disposable trays. There could be an increase in washing needs in the future; space can be adapted to include a return window. (Sather) – what is the impact of the snow days on the timeline. (Scott) – still starting in July. (Basbagill) – last day at Hillcrest is now June 22.

(Costa) – receiving comments from AHJs. What do you need from us. (Scott) – need to return to the AHJ regarding interpretation of how to respond and the potential cost impact of the requests to better put the requests in context. They are health and safety requests for the school and its occupants and are value judgements. Could be part of the project or added as alternates. After reviewing the site logistics plan and design development documents, additional safety requests were received from the building officials and Parks and Rec. They are value added but do have a cost. (Lubin) – reimbursable. (Scott) – depends on the choices made but should be. The meeting with the stakeholders next week will bring discussion of the items so there is a better of understanding of priorities. (Butkus) – clarification - if a field is disturbed because of the work, it would be eligible; improvements to spaces not disturbed because of the work, eligibility would be in question. The new field in the old school location would be eligible.

OPM's Project Update – Mr. Tencza discussed the following:

1. Met with the building officials and the Fire Marshall to review the design development documents. As a result, they will not be doing any reviews in-house; an RFP for the Third Party Code Reviewer was developed and advertised. Due back March 25.
2. Multivista project update was received.

3. OGA - scheduling an OGA PCR meeting with the State. Following approval, project will be out for bid for Phase I.
4. Project Updates – discussed requests from Fire Marshall and Athletic Director. All are being addressed.
    a. Requirement for drivable Emergency Vehicle Access on East Side of the Building.
    b. New front field and lack of vehicle barrier.
    c. Request for irrigation and possible sod for new and existing stump field.
    d. Concern with capacity of cafeteria.
5. RFP for Third Party Code Review was discussed. Standard RFP. Deadline for questions is March 18.
6. Multivista proposal was reviewed. Questions from the last meeting were addressed – photo documents would be eligible for reimbursement; web cam not eligible. Proposed documentation schedule was discussed; can be adjusted as needed.

(Lubin) – proposed to discuss at the next meeting in Executive Session. How long until a decision needs to be made. (Tencza) – they would start in the fall. There is time to review. (Nugent) – photo documentation and web cam – reimbursement and costs. (Tencza) – Photo documentation is $145,000 reimbursable; web cam is $17,000 non-reimbursable. Funds would be allocated from contingency prior to construction. (Butkus) – could be funded through Other Consultant line item. Discussion was held regarding how to lower costs by using district resources. (Nugent) – of the six contracts currently being held by the Town, how are they funded. Discussion was held regarding the status of the contracts noting 2-3 would be out of the Other Consultant line item. It was felt they should have pricing on all contracts before making a decision.

7. RAM – Mr. Butkus explained when a project goes out to bid, it is the structural engineer's drawings of the building. Once the bids are awarded, the steel contractor does the detailing of the steel or how they process the material for assembly. Proposing to have that detailing work done prior to going to bid. Everything is outlined for the bidders so they know what the final project will look like. Two benefits – (1) bidders are more certain on what they are working on and can better calculate costs and allows the procurement/fabrication of materials weeks to months earlier so they are on site and ready to go (2) cheaper to bid up front than to have the iron worker pay for the service. It is more cost competitive. They recommend it strongly.
8. 90-Day outlook – March – select third party reviewers, Phase I construction documents completed, HMSBC and BOE approval of Phase I construction documents – looking for a special meeting on March 31 for the Committee to approve prior to the BOE meeting on April 7. Cost estimate will be included in the documentation. April – Phase I Office of School Grants Pre-Bid Conformance Review, OSTA approval. May – Phase I bidding process, Phase 2 Construction documents complete, Phase 2 cost estimating, third party reviewers engage.
9. Schedules and project budget summaries were reviewed. Requisition #1 was submitted to OGA and payment is expected in April 2026.
10. Change Order #1 from Bismark for RAM drafting in the amount of $172,700 was discussed. This includes the scope of work and a 10% mark-up on the cost of the professional service. It is a CO on their pre-construction contract.

(Butkus) – this is not an additional cost but an amount that would be spent at some point. (Lubin) – was the 10% anticipated as part of the pre-construction contract. (Butkus) – amount is not out of the ordinary. (Sather) – was this part of the original project. ((Raucci) – this is typical in the budget for the structure. We are paying sooner for a lower cost. It allows for accurate quantities and eliminates change orders.

Construction Manager Update – Mr. Raucci discussed the following:

1. Met with Fire Marshall and reviewed on site logistics; discussing front field changes.
2. Met with Police Chief and reviewed site safety signage on Daniels Farm Road and area. Signage approved by the Chief and the Traffic Commission.
3. Working on the rough draft of the bid package. There was a site package review last week and will meet with TSKP next.
4. Updated pre-construction schedule.
5. Met with CHRO regarding the bid package. Discussing potential changes.
6. Preliminary construction schedule starts on July 6.

(Costa) – Phase I bids. (Raucci) – would like to have only a site package. CHRO is discussing other potential bids to include more small businesses. Would like utilities package done early. Any changes to Phase I bids would lower initial costs when moved to Phase 2. Would also like to start the thermal drilling.

Next Meeting
Next regular meeting is March 10, 2026 at 7:00 pm in Council Chambers.

Actions/Approvals of Building Committee
Motion made by Ms. Sather to approve the Bismark Change Order #000-1 for $172,700. Seconded by Mr. Lubin. Roll call vote taken by the Chair. All Committee members approved the motion (Lubin, Cinelli, Mecca, Basbagil, Sather, Morello, Alterman, Costa). Motion approved unanimously.

Adjournment
There being no further business, motion was made by Mr. Cinelli to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 pm; seconded by Mr. Mecca Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Crandall
Clerk