

**Monadnock Regional School District
Finance/Facilities Committee Meeting Minutes
Cutler School Walk-Through
Sept. 23, 2021 (Not Yet Approved)
Cutler School, Swanzey, NH**

Members Present: Betty Tatro and Colleen Toomey. **Absent:** Winston Wright and Dan LeClair.

Other Board Members Present: Scott Peters and Michelle Connor.

Administration Present: Janel Morin, Business Administrator and Tony Breen, Director of Building and Grounds.

Budget Committee Members Present: No members present.

Also Present: Kyle Barker of Barker Associates and Laura Aivaliotis, MRSD Recording secretary.

1. **Meeting Called to order at 6:30 PM.**

2. **Public Comments:** There were no public comments.

3. **Cutler School Tour begins:** K. Barker began by saying there are no safety codes that are grandfathered. There are ADA issues, Life Safety issues and Homeland Security issues. He said the worst is the site. Traffic entering the wrong way. The fire lane is too small for a fire truck. The fire lane cannot be corrected because the neighbor's property line is so close. We would be building the same size as the land. The site is limited and everything is not fixable. M.Connor explained they may have fixed the bus and car pickup issue. K. Barker continued by saying it is a nice old building. The front entrance is not obvious and it is awkward. The bulkhead is right near the entrance, awkward.

The gym was sort of built separate from the school. It is odd to have it so separate from the building.

Homeland Security requires a locked vestibule. We have entered directly into the corridor. Not only is there a possible issue of an active shooter but a custodial issue and parents picking up their children intoxicated, driving home and getting in a car crash. The locked vestibule cuts down on the time parents want to bring items to their children and disrupt the class.

The courtyard is an odd design and this is the area older kids come to drink at night and hang around. He would suggest filling in the area with soil and plants.

The original school house had an additional story and then a 3rd story. The metal fire escape for the 3rd floor is not safe and is not up to code. It needs to be covered and does not meet life safety requirements at all. Across from the fire escape there is mold on the building which

shows lack of integrity in the design. There is no exit discharge off the escape. The discharge is back into the building.

The entrance to the building does not meet code. There is only one legitimate egress and it does not meet fire code.

K. Barker pointed out the staircase off the entrance of the school he said this is the only staircase to the upstairs top floor. There are 2 classrooms up there and the only fire exit is rusted, old and scary to walk down. The doors do not meet fire code and allow smoke to come in if there was a fire. Also they do not open and close correctly. The doors and fire escape do not meet life safety and security requirements.

The principal's office is not on the same level as the entrance. You can come up to this level on the platform. This does not meet ADA requirements.

The second floor was built for 2 classrooms. The second room has to go through the adjacent room in order to use the exit. Not knowing what is going on in the adjacent classroom students could be pushed and stepped on if there were to be an emergency. Unless the students are doing the same program throughout the day.

The upper floor is a serious safety issue. Technically, this floor should not be occupied.

There are fire code violations in the basement. If there were a fire in the basement the smoke would go to the other floors.

The group discussed the sale of this building and what it could be used for. K. Barker commented the original building has historical value.

K. Barker pointed out in parts of the school the floors are not level which does not meet code. One of the classrooms, K. Barker mentioned how cute it was. The ceiling tiles have been replaced. It looks great and helps morale for the teachers. Kudos to the maintenance staff. There are classroom counters but no cabinets. It is not like MTC. There is a door with no stairs. At one time it must have made sense. Staff probably get used to it. It is covered with materials. It is the best they can do with what they have.

K. Barker brought the group down in the basement which has a reading room and the mechanical and electrical area as well. There should be a minimum of 7' feet from the floor to the ceiling and it is not. There is another area where the ceiling is even lower. This area does not meet code. To get out of this area the staff and students have to climb stairs and get out. It does not meet code and it is not the best way out. To access the boiler, you need to go through the reading room. The heating system is not high quality for this school.

The group continued to the library which has a slope on the floor and also to get out of the library you need to step up which is not code. K. Barker commented there are 6 additions to this school. There is also a classroom on this floor that has a step up which possibly might be a Special Ed. Classroom which is not up to code. There is a chairlift to get to this floor.

K. Barker commented that the building looks clean and good for what you have. He did caution that for State Building Aid the Fire Chief and the Fire Marshall will be touring this building. With the number of code deficiencies if the Fire Marshall was to inspect today he would say do not use the top floor but it could be to our advantage. If the Fire Marshall was to issue a strongly worded letter for the Troy School as well. That would give the District higher points and a tremendous spot in the ranking to receive the funds. It is almost a given to receive the funds. Shutting down the top floor in a strongly worded letter is a guarantee of State Building Aid. He explained 20 districts have applied for Building Aid this last time and 3 got it. There are 20 schools remaining on the list for the next round. There has to be significant life safety issues. It is necessary to have the Fire Chief invite the Fire Marshall. We know the problems and we have the solution but we need to get through the application process and the bond passed. The Fire Marshall may want something in return like shutting down the third floor. You need to think of the liability. Trying to hide something could be more trouble. The District is attempting to correct this. Ask the Fire Marshall to work with us because of what we are doing to correct the situation.

K. Barker walked to the other section of the school, the portable ramps which were temporary in 1980. The gymnasium is off this hallway. There is not much of a separation of the gym and the hallway. It was commented that this section of the school in the future could be a community center if purchased by the town. The town may be interested. There are bathrooms, a gym, a kitchen and this section is near the ballfields.

K. Barker summarized and said the biggest problems are the Homeland Security issues, the portables and lack of room on the site. There should not be a question on why to close the school.

4. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis

MRSD Recording Secretary