

The Regional District 13 Board of Education Building Committee met in regular session on Wednesday, April 22, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. in the library at Cuginchaug Regional High School.

Committee Members Present: Mr. Weissberg, Mr. Cross, Mr. Croston, Mr. Putnam, Mr. Overton, Mr. Moore, Mr. Giammatteo, Mr. Simmons, Mr. Dwire (attended virtually), and Mrs. Petrella.

Committee Members Absent: Mrs. Cowan and Charles Dalles.

Board of Education Members Present: Mr. Roraback

Administration Present: Dr. Leggett, Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Proia, Supervisor of Facilities and Grounds, and Mrs. Neubig, Director of Finance

O&G Associates present: Mr. Cravanzola, Mr. Luccarelli, and Ms. Purcell

QA+M Associates present: Mr. Collier and Mr. Malik

STV present: Ms. Liska

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Cross made a motion, seconded by Mr. Giammatteo, to approve the agenda as presented.

All in favor of approving the agenda as presented: Mr. Weissberg, Mr. Cross, Mr. Croston, Mr. Putnam, Mr. Overton, Mr. Moore, Mr. Giammatteo, Mr. Simmons, Mr. Dwire, and Mrs. Petrella.

Motion passed.

Memorial Renovation/Expansion

Ms. Liska provided an update on the project and indicated that progress is going well, with another meeting scheduled for Tuesday and overall work moving forward at a strong pace. Ms. Liska noted that they are still in the bidding process for stormwater monitoring consultant services and are preparing an additional RFP for materials testing services, which will be needed as construction begins.

Ms. Liska also shared that project documentation is being organized and shared through a centralized Google Drive system. A dedicated "Field Reports" folder has been created, with subfolders for both Mr. Collier and Ms. Liska's reports, where updates and photo documentation are regularly uploaded for the broader team to review and stay informed.

Mr. Collier reported that demolition and abatement work is continuing smoothly, with ongoing coordination through weekly meetings and the issuance of field reports. Mr. Collier noted that these reports, including those prepared by Ms. Liska, are being regularly shared to keep stakeholders informed as construction-related activities progress.

Additionally, Mr. Collier stated that staff are meeting with faculty returning from spring break to review FF&E needs in order to gather preliminary input before the summer break period. The roofing addendum has also been finalized and issued, with a bid opening now targeted for May 20.

Mr. Overton inquired if there were any surprises so far. It was reported that during demolition, a few minor structural issues were identified during site walks with structural engineering, primarily suspect or inadequately constructed walls typical of older buildings, such as those from the 1950s. These issues were described as manageable and not unexpected, with Mr. Collier expressing confidence that they can be resolved through coordination with the contractor.

Ms. Purcell discussed construction sequencing and procurement timing, including whether certain trade contract awards, such as masonry work, may need to be advanced sooner than originally planned rather than waiting for the full GMP process to conclude in June, in order to address emerging site conditions more efficiently.

Ms. Purcell introduced the next step in the project approval process, explaining that they are ready to move forward with awarding base bid contracts for the selected trade contractors. Ms. Purcell distributed additional documentation, including letters for each trade package outlining proposed contract awards. These letters specify base bid amounts along with any potential accepted alternates, which would need to be formally approved and included in the contracts. Ms. Purcell emphasized that if the committee wishes to accept any alternates, this would be the appropriate time to decide so they can be incorporated into final agreements.

Ms. Purcell reviewed detailed bid results, which include a consolidated overview of all trade bidders, along with detailed pricing and alternates. Ms. Purcell noted a precautionary approach in the presentation: certain low-bid items, specifically Masonry and Casework, were included in the totals for comparison purposes but remain under active review and have not yet been fully vetted for qualification. This was done to provide a conservative financial scenario in case those bids are ultimately deemed unacceptable.

Ms. Purcell walked the committee through the overall financial status of the project, emphasizing that the materials being presented were a comprehensive snapshot of current bid results, contract award summaries, and potential cost adjustments. Ms. Purcell explained that one of the key summary documents shows both a full base-bid scenario and a comparison of how the project tracks financially under different assumptions, including whether or not alternates are accepted.

Ms. Purcell stressed that these figures are not yet for formal approval, but rather a “big picture” financial view to help the committee understand where the project stands. Ms. Purcell shared that trade contractors were asked during scope review meetings to identify potential cost-saving opportunities, and those suggestions have been compiled into a preliminary list. These ideas are still in early stages and have not yet been fully vetted by the design team.

Ms. Purcell also noted that some potential cost adjustments involve previously discussed items, including options related to local ordinances and deferred bid packages, while others remain under active consideration.

Ms. Purcell noted that the numbers are not meant to be read as a simple continuous sum. Instead, certain items (specifically later line items) represent “in lieu of” alternatives that replace other listed costs rather than adding to them directly. Ms. Purcell explained that, for example, some line items are structured to substitute for earlier scope elements, meaning they are not cumulative and therefore cannot be totaled in a straightforward way. This is why some entries appear separated or offset in the documentation; they function as replacements rather than additions within the overall budget structure.

Ms. Purcell further emphasized that, even with these substitutions and adjustments, the project still has sufficient flexibility to reach budget alignment, though the exact path forward depends on how the committee chooses to proceed with approvals and potential refinements. Ms. Purcell also reiterated that trade contracts need to move forward immediately, and that any remaining cost adjustments can be finalized afterward through defined credit values built into the contracts.

Mr. Weissberg then redirected the conversation toward a broader concern, noting that while most bid packages appear aligned with estimates, a couple of areas may warrant deeper discussion to ensure clarity and confidence in the overall financial plan.

Ms. Purcell explained that one of the main cost drivers is the mechanical scope, particularly complex piping and controls work required due to working within an existing building and limited space constraints. Ms. Purcell noted that a similar project using the same design team and contractor had come in at a lower cost, but this project’s conditions and design complexity appear to have increased pricing. Some of the higher costs were attributed to controls integration and assumptions around proprietary systems, which may have unintentionally driven up equipment pricing. Electrical costs were also mentioned as an area that exceeded estimates, though no clear single driver had yet been identified, aside from some feeder adjustments already noted in value management items.

The committee then discussed potential opportunities for savings, particularly around the mechanical controls system. Mr. Cross expressed interest in revisiting whether the current controls approach, such as the proposed Honeywell system versus the Ferguson-combined bid, could be further evaluated for cost efficiency without compromising long-term system performance. However, Mr. Proia expressed caution about deviating from the current design basis (including maintaining consistency with systems like Trane equipment already used across the district), due to concerns about long-term maintenance, compatibility, and system integration. Mr. Cross and Mr. Weissberg agreed that the most realistic near-term savings opportunities likely lie within the controls scope, and that further targeted review would be needed to determine whether meaningful reductions could be achieved without impacting system cohesion or lifecycle performance.

Mr. Cross discussed how to strategically manage alternates and cost-saving items while awaiting key pricing information, particularly the roofing bid, before making final decisions that could affect the overall budget picture. Mr. Cross suggested that certain alternates should be held in a “pending” status for now, rather than being eliminated prematurely, since anticipated roofing savings could influence whether

they are ultimately affordable. The emphasis was on avoiding unnecessary cuts until the full financial picture is clearer, especially since HVAC and mechanical areas remain primary focus points for potential savings.

Ms. Purcell then reviewed specific value engineering items, starting with locker system options. One proposed savings involved using knockdown lockers instead of fully welded lockers, offering an estimated \$15,000.00 reduction. Mr. Cross raised concerns about durability and long-term performance, particularly in a school environment, noting that knockdown systems can perform adequately when properly protected within recessed or enclosed installations. Given the building context (elementary-level use and protective architectural conditions), the item was ultimately left as “pending” for further consideration.

A second locker-related value item involved substituting metal Z-bases in place of concrete bases. While this offered potential cost savings, Mr. Cross expressed concern about long-term durability and maintenance. Concrete was generally viewed as more robust, particularly for cleaning resilience and moisture resistance, though Mr. Proia acknowledged that metal bases have performed acceptably in some past applications. This item was also left pending, with a general consensus that it would only be accepted if budget conditions required it, given a preference for the more durable concrete option when feasible.

The committee reviewed a significant potential cost reduction involving the elimination of a mobile high-density storage shelving system valued at approximately \$82,000.00. The system is intended for secure record storage in the main office and functions as a specialized, space-efficient solution for storing student records and archival materials. Ms. Purcell noted that removing this system would result in a substantial construction credit, but would likely shift costs into the FF&E (furniture, fixtures, and equipment) budget if replaced with more conventional lateral file storage. Given the size and cost of the item, approaching \$100,000.00 when fully considered, Ms. Purcell suggested that this scope area might even warrant re-bidding the division if it is to be significantly restructured, to ensure fair pricing and consistency.

From a design and operations perspective, Mr. Collier clarified that while the system is high-end, it is not strictly required and could be replaced with standard filing systems, though with trade-offs in efficiency and storage density. The committee members acknowledged the implications but ultimately agreed to leave the item as “pending” for now, keeping it under consideration as part of the broader value management process.

The next item for review was to remove the traverse wall (climbing wall) from the gym equipment scope, creating an estimated \$11,000.00 cost reduction. This requires a replacement scope item of gym padding to avoid a hard/unsafe floor condition. Dr. Leggett supported removing the item, as it could be budgeted separately later. Ms. Liska questioned if there were any savings to bundle specialty items differently with the general contractor Ms. Purcell responded that this is a possibility, but it depends on how the bid packages and alternates were structured. The committee agreed to remove the item.

The next item for review are roller shades called Roll-Ease. The design team has not used the product before, but Mr. Cross, in his experience, has used the item and expressed confidence in the item. The

design team recommended a “conditional acceptance,” subject to review of product literature and any technical vetting before final commitment.

The committee discussed the next item, a potential fire protection involving eliminating higher-end vitreous enamel components in the fire pump system, which could result in an estimated \$50,000.00 credit. However, the pricing was only verbal and not yet formally confirmed, and there was uncertainty about the exact manufacturer and system basis of design, making it an unverified estimate. The committee noted that this specification represents a higher-end option not typically required for a school project, but agreed that more clarification is needed before making any decision. As a result, the item was left unresolved and marked for follow-up once the contractor provides confirmed pricing and the design team verifies the technical implications.

The electrical contractor proposed a value engineering item to use aluminum feeders instead of copper for certain electrical components (including panel and branch feeders), which could reduce costs, although a formal price had not yet been provided. Ms. Purcell indicated this item would be treated as accepted in principle while awaiting finalized pricing and further review.

This discussion also transitioned into broader cost recovery efforts related to building permit fees, where Dr. Leggett noted the district has already paid approximately \$362,000.00 to the town of Middlefield. Dr. Leggett proposed the Building Committee to formally request a waiver of additional permit-related charges through a letter to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Cross agreed, establishing that the fees significantly impact project costs.

Mr. Giammatteo suggested that because Middlefield is responsible for staffing and funding the building inspectors, even though some costs are reimbursed, the arrangement still disproportionately benefits Durham. In his view, Middlefield does not fully recover its costs through reimbursement, meaning it effectively absorbs more of the financial burden. As a result, Mr. Giammatteo suggests the current structure may be costing Middlefield more than it benefits them, creating an imbalance in how the permit and inspection system supports each town within the regional district project. Mr. Cross responded that during earlier building renovations, certain charges were not applied in the same way, and suggests using that historical precedent in a formal letter to support the argument for reducing or waiving current fees. Mr. Giammatteo referenced the historical cost-sharing arrangement between Durham and Middlefield, noting that benefits and financial contributions were previously divided roughly on a two-thirds to one-third basis, with Durham ultimately giving up less than a million dollars in that prior arrangement. Mr. Cross reiterated that the guiding intent is to prioritize student benefit, ensuring that any savings or recovered funds are redirected into improving the school building itself. The committee discussed removing certain cost items and reallocating or clarifying permit-related expenses, with acknowledgment that the budgeting approach intentionally excluded some mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEP) permit costs based on prior practice. The committee members agreed that a formal memo or letter should be drafted to document the original budgeting assumptions, explain the permit fee structure, and clarify how costs were allocated across trades, particularly in light of regional district practices and prior accepted norms in Connecticut.

Mr. Overton questioned the design team on how small-town building inspection costs and permit fees are structured and justified, and whether the current figure is appropriate. The team responded that in similar

projects, towns sometimes need to hire additional or part-time inspection capacity to keep large construction projects on schedule, and the figure is being referenced as a rough estimate for that level of service. Committee members noted that this estimate was previously included without objection, but that concerns emerged later as the project moved into more active construction phases (such as swing space work), when demand on inspection resources increased.

The design team shared that they recently met with the new building official, who is working part-time and has set inspection availability primarily in the late afternoon and early evening (roughly 3:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.), with little or no daytime inspection availability. This raises concerns about whether inspection timing could affect construction efficiency, since contractors may need to adjust work schedules or extend staffing hours to accommodate inspections. Mr. Weissberg questioned whether this limited inspection window is appropriate given the cost of the project and whether it could create inefficiencies or delays if inspections are not available during standard construction hours. Additionally, Mr. Overton asked if another person had been hired. It was noted that the town has hired an additional person, suggesting some effort to expand capacity or improve coverage, even if the exact structure of that support is still unclear. Ms. Liska established that the amount paid in fees is estimated to be \$590,000.00 and she would draft the letter that the Building Committee can add to and review.

The committee debated whether to reject, accept, or leave pending alternates 9, 10, and 11, particularly canopy-related items (including exterior canopies), with concern about their importance for site circulation and weather protection versus their cost impact. Ultimately, there was no full agreement to remove them, and the committee leaned toward keeping them pending while requesting additional clarification, including visuals and clearer pricing breakdowns.

Separately, Item 12 proposed delaying award of a trade package until October as a financial “lever,” effectively deferring commitment until more budget clarity is available after other major bids (like roofing) are finalized; this was generally seen as acceptable or even advisable. The committee agreed to accept the proposal.

A. Review and Vote to Approve Phase III Bid Awards

Ms. Purcell clarified that the current motion would cover the core trade contract awards (primarily the MEP and other base bid packages), while excluding or deferring certain specialty alternates for later resolution. To preserve flexibility, Ms. Purcell proposed structuring the contracts so that identified savings items could be included as “subject to acceptance” through future change orders at a minimum credit value. This would allow the project to move forward with awarding contracts immediately while still retaining the ability to formally accept or reject specific cost reductions once fully vetted.

Mr. Weissberg and Mr. Cross also confirmed that the motion did not need to list every individual bid package in detail, but could instead reference the set of recommended packages collectively. The committee agreed that any accepted or rejected alternates would be tracked through the change order process, ensuring accountability while keeping the award process moving. Dr. Leggett stated a full table of bid awards will be attached to the minutes for transparency.

Mr. Cross made a motion, seconded by Mr. Putnam, to accept the bid packages and authorize O&G to enter into contracts as per the following table.

Bid Package	Scope	Contractor	Contract Amount
3.03	Concrete	W.J. Mountford	\$1,733,000
3.05	Structural Steel & Miscellaneous Metals	United Steel Inc.	\$3,206,000
3.08	Aluminum Entrances, Windows & Storefronts	Accurate Door and Window	\$2,641,000
3.09d	Drywall	GDS Contracting Corporation	\$4,674,250
3.10a	General Trades	Scope Construction Company	\$1,747,700
3.21	Fire Protection	H.H.S. Mechanical Contractors, Inc.	\$946,000
3.22 / 3.23	Plumbing & HVAC	Ferguson Mechanical Company, Inc.	\$16,917,000
3.26 / 3.28	Electrical & Fire Alarm	J.E. Shea Electric Inc.	\$7,156,000
3.31	Site Work	LaRosa Earth Group	\$8,100,000

All in favor of accepting the bid packages and authorize O&G to enter into contracts as represented in the table: Mr. Weissberg, Mr. Cross, Mr. Croston, Mr. Putnam, Mr. Overton, Mr. Moore, Mr. Giammatteo, Mr. Simmons, Mr. Dwire, and Mrs. Petrella. Motion passed.

B. Review and Vote to Approve Construction Oversight Subcommittee

Dr. Leggett proposed revisions to the decision-making framework for future project changes in an effort to streamline approvals. Dr. Leggett recommended allowing the superintendent, director of finance, or director of facilities to independently approve decisions with a financial impact under \$10,000.00, with

those actions simply reported afterward. Dr. Leggett also revised the next approval tier to clearly cover costs between \$40,000.00 and \$249,999.00, ensuring it did not overlap with the highest threshold of \$250,000.00 and above, which requires greater oversight. Additionally, Dr. Leggett corrected a reference in the document by replacing an incorrect acronym with “building committee.” Dr. Leggett also clarified that the more formal review process, requiring the design team and subcommittee to convene, should apply only to major decisions over \$250,000.00, rather than smaller routine changes, helping the project move more efficiently while maintaining oversight for significant financial decisions.

Committee members agreed to the proposed changes as long as proposals had already been vetted by the design team before reaching the committee. It was requested that the guidelines would be amended to include the date.

Mr. Giammatteo made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cross, to approve the construction oversight subcommittee guidelines as amended.

All in favor of accepting the amended construction oversight subcommittee guidelines as presented: Mr. Weissberg, Mr. Cross, Mr. Croston, Mr. Putnam, Mr. Overton, Mr. Moore, Mr. Giammatteo, Mr. Simmons, Mr. Dwire, and Mrs. Petrella. Motion passed.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Dr. Leggett discussed how to handle the timing of this meeting alongside a separate board meeting scheduled the same evening to formally approve the construction contracts. Since the board meeting’s only purpose was to vote on the contracts, Dr. Leggett suggested either recessing the current meeting and reconvening afterward to finish remaining agenda items, or adjourning and addressing them at a later date. Committee members preferred to keep the momentum going since everyone was already present and prepared. After confirming the board vote would likely be brief, the committee agreed to recess temporarily, allow the board to complete its contract approval vote, and then reconvene afterward to continue discussing the remaining project items.

Mr. Weissberg called a recess at time stamp 6:07 p.m.

The Building Committee resumed after the Board of Education meeting 6:17 p.m.

The Committee discussed whether to accept the top three value engineering items but agreed to keep everything pending since the entire package still requires broader discussion. It was noted that if the project is deferred, the eventual low contractor would be the one responsible for honoring any credits, so the Committee agreed to hold off and work with that contractor before deciding whether to move forward.

Ms. Purcell also reviewed item 13, which involved changing the PVC jacket color to white and replacing attic insulation board with duct wrap. Mr. Cross noted that part of the specification appeared to be leftover language that did not belong and expressed comfort with the white PVC and duct wrap if those are standard. However, the design team raised concerns that two separate changes were being bundled

into one value, making it difficult to assess whether the proposed credit was appropriate. While the design team was not opposed to the concept, they emphasized the need to carefully review the numbers and ensure the value is accurate before making a final decision, acknowledging that the proposal was very recent and still needed further evaluation. The committee moved to accept this item.

Ms. Purcell reviewed the proposal to revise the basis of design so that major HVAC equipment, including air handling units, DOAS units, fan coil units, reheat coils, and chillers, would be based on Trane equipment while still allowing for competitive bidding through open competition. Mr. Cross clarified that not all listed components should be tied to Trane, noting that major equipment such as air handling units and chillers would appropriately remain Trane products, while items like VAV boxes, split systems, reheat coils, and some fan coil components are typically more generic and available from multiple manufacturers. The design team agreed the language in the proposal was too broad and needed refinement to clearly distinguish which systems were truly basis-of-design items. The design team also noted that Ferguson had returned to Trane for a “best and final” pricing effort in order to reduce costs and keep the project viable, and this appeared to be the strongest offer available. While committee members were generally comfortable accepting the credit tied to the revised pricing, they emphasized that all equipment would still need to meet the original project specifications and requested one final review by the mechanical engineering team before making a formal commitment. The item was moved to be accepted, pending the final review.

The Committee quickly discussed Item 15, which proposed eliminating windows on access doors for all air handling units, explaining that it was simply leftover language from the specifications and did not apply because those units do not include those windows. This item was moved to be accepted. The committee then discussed reducing the cost of temperature controls and noted that Item 16 followed the same approach as Item 14, working collaboratively with vendors and contractors to identify cost savings without compromising project quality. The item was also moved to be accepted.

Ms. Purcell emphasized that several remaining cost-saving items were still under review and were being presented only for consideration, with the understanding that any proposal raising concerns could be removed. The committee discussed Item 17, which proposed using lighter 20-gauge metal studs instead of 33-mil studs in certain areas while keeping all 8-inch and 10-inch studs at the originally specified strength. While the concept appeared acceptable and offered a \$31,000.00 credit, the team said they needed more detailed location-specific information and planned to fully review it during the shop drawing phase to ensure structural integrity. Similar caution applied to the next two items, where members noted some hesitation and stressed the importance of understanding existing conditions before committing to savings.

The committee also reviewed a proposal involving ISO curbs, in which Mr. Cross noted that the specification appeared to be a leftover requirement that is not typically used in school projects. The design team clarified that the equipment in question is located on the roof rather than in a mezzanine, shifting the concern away from ambient noise and toward vibration traveling through the roof deck structure into the building. While the potential cost reduction was presented for consideration, the design team noted that eliminating vibration-control measures could create new issues that may require

additional mitigation, such as enhanced ceiling materials or other internal building infrastructure to reduce noise transmission. Based on experience from other school projects, they emphasized that these types of changes often create unintended trade-offs, so they agreed the proposal needed further evaluation before any decision is made.

Ms. Purcell presented the value of all remaining unresolved cost-saving proposals and noted that the items still under review total approximately \$167,000.00 in potential savings.

Ms. Purcell reviewed Items 21 and 22, which presented alternative “in lieu of” cost scenarios tied to changes in the basis of design for HVAC systems, including air handling units and a revised chiller configuration. The discussion centered on switching to a different chiller approach, described as a multi-stack option rather than the originally assumed design basis using a Trane chiller. Although the proposed savings were significant, about \$313,000.00, the committee noted this figure replaced a previously identified \$242,000.00 savings, effectively representing a different comparison baseline and only an incremental additional benefit. After reviewing the scope and implications, the committee determined that both Items 21 and 22 were not acceptable as presented and decided to reject them, preferring to remain aligned with the established design basis rather than pursue the revised equipment substitutions. The committee members reaffirmed openness to other elements of value engineering where appropriate but agreed these specific chiller-related changes did not warrant further consideration at this time.

Ms. Purcell concluded with a confirmation that several concepts were accepted pending final value verification, while one item was still being held back from award pending further review. Ms. Purcell noted that with the current approved and accepted items, the committee had reached approximately \$871,000.00 in value against a required target of \$1,054,000.00. The committee also discussed roofing and canopy-related adjustments, including the possibility that canopy credit assumptions could change significantly based on bid comparisons, which may ultimately increase the value beyond what was initially estimated, so that item was kept open for now. Additional contractor considerations were briefly mentioned, along with the expectation that further vetting of bidders and trade packages could reveal additional cost-saving opportunities in the coming weeks.

The committee also reaffirmed that the project remains on schedule to begin around May 19, with procurement extending into the summer. Plans were discussed for a groundbreaking ceremony, including inviting legislators and stakeholders who supported the project, as well as coordinating logistics, possibly including a rain date. Additional upcoming activities include a leadership walkthrough, coordination with students on project signage, and continued refinement of educational programming input through a shared google document.

Adjournment

Mr. Cross made a motion, seconded by Mr. Putnam, to adjourn the meeting.

*All in favor of adjourning the meeting: Mr. Weissberg, Mr. Cross, Mr. Croston, Mr. Putnam, Mr. Overton, Mr. Moore, Mr. Giammatteo, Mr. Simmons, Mr. Dwire, and Mrs. Petrella
Motion passed and the meeting adjourned.*

Respectfully submitted by Meghan Shortell-Fratantonio