

The Regional District 13 Board of Education Building Committee met in regular session on Wednesday, January 21, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. in the library at Coginchaug Regional High School.

Committee Members Present: Mr. Weissberg, Mr. Overton, Mr. Cross, Mr. Giamatteo, and Mr. Dwire (attending virtually)

Committee Members Absent: Mr. Putnam, Mr. Dalles, and Mr. Simmons

Board of Education Members Present: Mr. Moore, Mrs. Cowan (left at 6:15), Mr. Roraback, and Mrs. Petrella

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

O&G Associates present: Kevin Boyle, Dave Cravanzola and Ms. Purcell

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

STV present: Ms. Liska and Ms. Cahill (attending virtually)

Mr. Weissberg called the meeting to order at 5:02 P.M.

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. Giamatteo, to approve the agenda as presented.

All in favor of approving the agenda as presented: Mr. Weissberg, Mr. Overton, Mr. Cross, Mr. Giamatteo, Mr. Dwire, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Cowan, Mr. Roraback, and Mrs. Petrella. Motion passed.

Approval of Minutes – December 17, 2025

Mr. Cross made a motion, seconded by Mr. Giamatteo to approve the December 17, 2025 meeting minutes as presented.

All in favor of approving the December 17, 2025 meeting minutes as presented: Mr. Weissberg, Mr. Overton, Mr. Cross, Mr. Giamatteo, and Mr. Dwire, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Cowan and Mrs. Petrella. Motion passed.

Memorial Renovation/Expansion

Ms. Purcell presented a reconciled construction cost estimate developed by comparing independent estimates from QA+M and O&G, resulting in a unified figure covering Phase 1 (completed swing space), Phase 2 (currently out to bid), and Phases 3 and 4 (newly estimated), including contingencies and escalation. The team identified value management options, some as drawing revisions and others as bid alternates, and recommended proceeding to bid with about \$1.55 million in accepted adjustments, noting that the project would still be slightly over budget but within a manageable range. Given favorable market conditions and early timing in the construction year, the team recommended moving forward to bid.

Board members asked about the reliability of estimates and the process if bids come in high. Ms. Purcell explained that estimates are intentionally conservative and that market conditions suggest bids may come in under estimates. If certain bid packages are high, the district has flexibility to pause or rebid non-critical trades, adjust scopes, or defer later-phase items without delaying critical work such as site and concrete packages. The bid process will involve multiple trade awards leading up to a final Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP), allowing individual packages to be adjusted as needed.

Additional strategies discussed included deferring award of non-essential or later-installed items (such as window shades or gym wall padding) until later in the project, potentially using returned contingency funds to cover those costs.

The design team explained that contingency funds are being treated conservatively early in the project due to higher risk, with the expectation that more may be released as work progresses and risks diminish. The bidding strategy will issue all bid packages at once but open and review them in a staggered sequence over a few weeks, allowing the full project cost to be known while still providing flexibility to delay, reject, or rebid specific packages if prices are unusually high. If bids come in significantly off target, the team can revise scopes and rebid, though this requires meaningful changes and limited timeframes under public bidding rules.

The design team clarified how bid packages are structured by specification sections and trade responsibilities, and how detailed scope-review meetings help identify errors, omissions, or cost drivers before final awards. Mr. Cross also brought attention to reimbursable versus non-reimbursable costs under Connecticut's school construction grant program. The design team reviewed that most renovation construction costs are reimbursable, while certain soft costs (legal, bonding, some equipment and technology) are not. The district's reimbursement rate has increased, largely due to the pre-K component, reducing the net cost to the towns. Mr. Weissberg emphasized that an unexpected increase in the state reimbursement rate has significantly reduced the towns' financial burden on the project. What was originally estimated as roughly a \$35 million town share has now dropped to about \$30 million, meaning the towns will ultimately be reimbursed at a higher rate than anticipated.

The project team then provided a status update. Construction documents and estimates are complete, structural reviews have been fully signed off, and third-party review comments have been addressed, with final sign-off pending before local building approvals. The overall project remains on schedule.

Dr. Leggett informed the Building Committee that the Board approved the formation of a subcommittee for the Naming of the School and mascot selection, chaired by Mrs. Cowan and Mr. Roraback.

Mr. Weissberg then asked the design team to review the logistics and site impacts plan. The design team discussed the adjustments to keep pickleball courts open as long as possible (at least until mid-May), clear communication with soccer groups, and realistic expectations for the new soccer field. The field will require a full growing season and winter establishment, meaning it should not be used before 2028, and steps will be needed to keep the public off the turf.

Mr. Cross discussed value management options to bring the project closer to budget. Items were categorized as “accepted” (permanent cost reductions), “alternates” (items that could be added back on bid day if funds allow), and “pending.” Mr. Cross advised that the front canopies at the main entrance should be included in the base bid with deduct alternates, rather than removed entirely. Mr. Overton also discussed preserving the stamped concrete as an accepted item for its aesthetic design value. The Building Committee agreed to keep stamped concrete as a deduct alternate so its true market value is visible on bid day without eliminating it entirely.

Discussion continued to pending value management items. The team reported progress with the fire marshal, confirming that temporary fire alarms will only be required during demolition, not throughout construction. This reduces estimated costs by roughly \$100,000. As a result, this item will move with a lower cost impact.

The Building Committee discussed using reclaimed asphalt (grinding existing pavement and reusing it as base material). Some concern was raised about potential environmental risks, particularly because the existing asphalt may have been exposed to underground fuel storage or other contaminants over the years. Mr. Weissberg clarified that the process only involves grinding the top 3–4 inches of asphalt to create a new base, which is standard practice on many school projects. Any unknown contamination can be managed through standard testing once the asphalt is ground up, and the new asphalt layer will be placed on top. Mr. Overton recommended a performance spec that the contractor can run small test pits to understand how to set the reclaiming depth. The consensus was to accept reclaimed asphalt use, with coordination and communication with local officials to avoid unnecessary testing delays.

The Building Committee also reviewed a site grading adjustment involving spreading excess soil near an existing leaching field. This change was accepted, with assurances that drainage patterns would not negatively affect neighboring properties. The only follow-up action is proactive communication with adjacent property owners to explain the work and avoid confusion.

The Building Committee then discussed playground surfacing options. While full rubber surfaces are ideal for safety and accessibility, they are costly and difficult to maintain. The preferred approach is engineered wood mulch for most areas, supplemented with rubber mats only where required for ADA accessibility or pre-K areas. Mixing wood mulch and rubber throughout was considered messy and unsafe, so it’s not recommended. The rubber surface will be treated as an alternate, implemented if the budget allows.

For the courtyard, the proposal to eliminate courtyard improvements in favor of grass was discussed. Grass provides a flexible, low-maintenance surface, but would require occasional mowing and may trigger a modification due to potential usage concerns. The consensus was that grass is acceptable, with the understanding it would need maintenance and may require a future modification.

The Committee then reviewed pending item B02: Replace all specified insulated metal panels with alternate material at a certain dollar value per square foot. The design team is in the process of finding a system that will meet the performance requirements, still maintaining the insulated metal panel product. The Building Committee moved this item into the accepted item list.

The next two items reviewed were rooftop equipment screens. The base bid includes the horizontal roof support structure, while the vertical supports and the metal screens themselves are treated as add alternates. This allows the district to install them if the budget permits or leave equipment exposed if cost or potential future solar installation conflicts arise.

The Committee reviewed BEO6, a brick shelf installed along the foundation wall. To support the brick, there's another way of doing this with a metal angle, which was recommended by the design team. BE07 was also recommended as an alternate.

The Building Committee then reviewed interior finishes and classroom items:

Media Center Ceiling (BIO1): The plan is to reduce the perforated metal ceiling panels to save cost while maintaining wood aesthetics and acoustic performance. Acoustic baffles and lighting help mitigate sound, despite reduced panel coverage.

Countertops (BIO2): Solid surfaces in classrooms will be replaced with plastic laminate as an alternate to reduce costs without compromising functionality.

Lockers, Whiteboards, Window Shades, Gym Bleachers (BIO3): These items are bundled into a separate bid package as alternates. The goal is to secure competitive pricing now, while retaining flexibility to delay award up to six months if budget constraints require it.

BIO4 is a recessed mat on the inside of the building, recommended as an alternate.

Theatrical Lighting: Reduced by one-third to match elementary school needs while still meeting performance requirements.

Portable Classroom Audio: Added as an alternate in lieu of a hardwired system.

Emergency Radio (VDA) System: Included as an alternate since the exact need depends on post-construction testing and compatibility with first responder frequencies; pathways are pre-installed for potential future implementation.

The Building Committee also reviewed the reinforced parking lot alternate. The alternate covers the addition of a 40-space parking lot at the back of the site, behind the academic additions. This alternate includes all grading, site clearing, and related work required to construct the lot. It's priced separately so the district can choose to fund it if the budget allows; it was not part of the original project scope.

The Building Committee reviewed the cell phone booster system. This system is not currently included in the bid because it requires additional design services and on-site measurements to determine coverage. Costs are highly variable, ranging as low as \$10,000 or over \$100,000 depending on the site and system requirements. The scope is not defined, so it cannot currently be a formal alternate or part of the GMP. The Committee suggested leaving it as a placeholder or priority item in the contingency/CM allowance, to be addressed later once the building is complete and proper measurements can be taken. Ultimately, the Committee removed this item from the current bid and it will be evaluated in a future phase or as a change order if needed.

A Zoom Room/ Board Meeting Technology was proposed. This item is for enhanced, built-in, user-friendly board meeting technology with interconnected screens, cameras, and audio systems. It's modeled on the platform being installed at Memorial School.

The estimated cost is \$100,000. The Building Committee proposed it as an add alternate item, depending on budget.

Additionally, the Committee reviewed a lightning protection system. This item is currently included in the specifications but is not part of the base estimate. The Lightning Protection System protects building data infrastructure. The Building Committee recommended this item to be listed as an add alternate so the committee can see a cost if they choose to include it.

The Committee reviewed the overall budget impacts, establishing that the district is approximately \$1.3M (about 1.7%–1.8%) over budget. The overage accounts for all accepted alternates and value management items; pending items will be reviewed and finalized next week. The design team will consolidate the final, add alternate list with updated numbering and categories. Voting on final approvals is scheduled next week.

A. Vote to accept and approve proposed value management

Mr. Cross made a motion, seconded by John Giamatteo, to approve the value management modifications as discussed in today's meeting.

All in favor of approving the value management modifications as discussed in today's meeting: Mr. Weissberg, Mr. Overton, Mr. Cross, Mr. Giamatteo, Mr. Dwire, Mr. Moore and Mrs. Petrella. Motion passed.

B. Vote to approve invoices

DATTCO	December	\$360.40
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Salas O'Brien (BVH)Commissioning Agent	December services, Invoice #612504866	\$10,130.40
Eversource	Portable units 5 & 6, December	\$756.01
CubeSmart	January storage, Invoice #137040	\$272.00
Mobile Modular	January rental, Invoice #283-9325	\$3,554.00
STV	Invoice #778	\$10,645.00
STV	Invoice #872	\$8,100.00
QA+M	Invoice 17689	\$200,740. 95

Mr. Cross made a motion, seconded by Mr. Giamatteo, to approve the invoices as presented.

All in favor of approving the invoices as presented: Mr. Weissberg, Mr. Overton, Mr. Cross, Mr. Giamatteo, Mr. Dwire, Mr. Moore and Mrs. Petrella. Motion passed.

The design team plans to prepare an updated graphics package in early February and review it internally before releasing it to the public. Demolition bids are due February 3 with possible extensions; bid reviews will follow a few weeks later.

The Building Committee then discussed sharing information with the public. A “Good Neighbor” communication flyer has been drafted. It includes a graphic, high-level timeline and project team contact info to handle community concerns early.

The town already hosts a central “Memorial Project” page on its website with updates, slideshows, and reports; future graphics, flyers, photos, and schedules will be added there.

The Building Committee agreed the website should be the primary public information hub, with social media directing people to the link rather than engaging in social media comment threads.

Floor plans will not be posted online due to safety concerns; only approved graphics and summaries will be shared. The design team will provide monthly progress reports, from which selected photos, schedules, and high-level updates can be shared publicly (excluding sensitive financial details).

Major design changes (e.g., roofline updates) will be reflected in updated slides to avoid public confusion. The team discussed potentially creating a formal, updated PowerPoint with revised graphics for public communication.

OWL went out at 2 hours and 31 seconds.

O&G discussed the importance of structural steel pre-detailing that can potentially save 4-6 weeks in the scheduling at no extra cost to the project.

John Cross made a motion, seconded by John Giamatteo to authorize O&G to enter into a contract with Rand Drafting for \$91,000 for structural steel pre-detailing.

All in favor of approving a motion for O&G Industries to enter into a contract with Rand Drafting for \$91,000 as presented: Mr. Weissberg, Mr. Overton, Mr. Cross, Mr. Giamatteo, Mr. Dwire, Mr. Moore and Mrs. Petrella. Motion passed.

Dr. Leggett asked whether construction bids or contracts include delay penalties, expressing concern about the school opening on time. The design team explained that in public construction, delay penalties are difficult to enforce because if penalties are included, contractors may also seek bonuses for early completion, which has happened in past cases. As a result, such provisions are generally not included.

The Building Committee established next week will be a joint Building Committee and Board of Education meeting at 5:00. Additionally, Building Committee members were asked if they wanted to participate in upcoming scope review meetings.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjournment

Mr. Cross made a motion, seconded by Mr. Overton to adjourn the meeting at 7:12.

All in favor of adjourning the meeting: Mr. Weissberg, Mr. Overton, Mr. Cross, Mr. Giamatteo, Mr. Dwire, Mr. Moore, Mr. Roraback, and Mrs. Petrella. Motion passed and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Meghan Shortell-Fratantonio