

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Building Committee met in regular session on Wednesday, March 4, 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. Dwire (virtual), Mr. Simmons, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Cowan, and Mrs. Petrella

Committee Members Absent: Mr. Overton, Mr. Giammatteo, 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 and Ms. Purcell

QA+M Associates present: Mr. Collier

STV present: Ms. Liska and Ms. Cahill

Mr. Weissberg called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Approval of Agenda

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

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

Approval of Minutes – February 18, 2026

Mr. Cross made a motion, seconded by Mr. Croston, to approve the February 18, 2026 meeting minutes as presented.

All in favor of approving the February 18, 2026 meeting minutes as presented: Mr. Weissberg, Mr. Cross, Mr. Croston, Mr. Putnam, Mr. Dwire, Mr. Simmons, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Cowan, and Mrs. Petrella. Motion passed.

Memorial Renovation/Expansion

Ms. Liska presented an update on the Memorial School project. Ms. Liska reported that five firms submitted proposals for the hazardous materials consulting contract. While TRC had the lowest estimated bid, the design team recommended Pennoni because of its prior work with the district and familiarity with the building and project. Committee members discussed factors including cost differences, unit pricing, project schedule, and the value of continuity and prior experience.

Mrs. Cowan mentioned that because IAQ testing would not be needed at this time, Eagle Environmental would be \$13,000.00 less than Pennoni's bid. Mr. Cross discussed that bid amounts are estimates based on unit pricing and projected quantities, not fixed totals, so final costs could vary. Additionally, Mr. Proia and Mr. Weissberg stressed the importance of Pennoni's history and experience with the project, as well as the company's ability to mobilize quickly and keep the project on schedule. The committee noted that procurement rules allow consideration of factors beyond price when selecting a qualified consultant.

Dr. Leggett agreed keeping the project on schedule so students can return on time is the top priority. Dr. Leggett stated that if selecting a familiar consultant helps move the project forward more quickly, the \$13,000.00 difference between bids should not be a deciding factor. Mr. Weissberg identified that several qualified bidders are available, making the key decision whether Pennoni's familiarity with the project justified the higher cost.

A. Vote to award bid 2025-007 HazMat Consultant

Mr. Cross made a motion, seconded by Mr. Croston, to approve award of RFP 2025-007 Regional School District 13 Memorial School Hazardous Material Construction Testing and Monitoring State Project Number 213-0051RNV-EA to Pennoni for the base bid amount not to exceed \$80,168.50.

Mr. Weissberg discussed the motion, stating Pennoni has strong familiarity with the project and a long history of working with the district, providing reliable service and quick turnaround. Although Pennoni's proposal was about \$13,000 higher than the lowest bidder. Mr. Cross clarified that the bid amounts are based on unit pricing and estimated quantities, not fixed totals. Mrs. Cowan noted that the budget for this line item is \$85,000.00, so even though the selected contractor is not the lowest bidder, there are still several options that would come in under budget, making the higher bid manageable within the project's financial plan. Mr. Moore and Mr. Cross emphasized that consultant selection is not solely about the lowest price but about trust, expertise, and the ability to oversee abatement work effectively.

The project schedule, including a March 16 mobilization date and an estimated 60-day abatement period, was reviewed and considered reasonable. Mr. Cross noted that another consultant unfamiliar with the project might require an additional week or more to get up to speed, which could risk delaying the schedule.

All in favor of awarding RFP 2025-007 Regional School District 13 Memorial School Hazardous Material Construction Testing and Monitoring State Project Number 213-0051RNV-EA to Pennoni for the base bid amount not to exceed \$80,168.50 as presented: Mr. Weissberg, Mr. Cross, Mr. Croston, Mr. Putnam, Mr. Dwire, Mr. Simmons, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Cowan, and Mrs. Petrella. Motion passed.

B. Phase 4 Furniture and Fixtures

Mr. Collier presented an updated, anticipated timeline that aligns with ongoing construction activities for Phase Four, which focuses on furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E) for the project. The key goal is to ensure timely procurement and installation so the project schedule is maintained. Mr. Collier presented two options: MHEC/Connecticut State Contract Pricing and Traditional Bidding.

MHEC / Connecticut State Contract Pricing: The MHEC state contract method is a pre-negotiated approach with hundreds of vendors. There are several benefits to using the MHEC method, including fixed pricing for each piece that is not subject to inflation, fuel, or delivery surcharges. Additionally, MHEC acts as an advocate for districts if there are delivery or service issues. There are no substitutions, so the district gets exactly what is specified. This is a streamlined process, requiring fewer reviews and less documentation for state approval. There is a greater ability to work within the district budget and adjust orders without renegotiation.

A single, primary vendor serves as a conduit for multiple product lines (chairs, tables, cabinetry, etc.). Lastly, there is a reduced risk in the current volatile market (petroleum-based products, shipping delays). While there are many benefits to this approach, the committee also identified disadvantages, which include a slightly less flexibility in switching vendors, though multiple vendors can be used for specialized items.

Option 2: Traditional Bidding Process: Traditional bidding is a standard bid solicitation to multiple vendors. The benefits to this approach include the potential for slightly lower prices if vendors compete aggressively and the district can select vendors individually for specific items. However, Committee members noted disadvantages, which include market fluctuations, as the pricing is not fixed. There is an increased risk of substitutions, which may not match desired specifications. This approach required more complex documentation and review by the state, in addition to a potential for delayed deliveries.

The district is planning to select a furniture vendor in March, using the MHEC state contract platform, which allows them to work with a single, pre-qualified vendor rather than managing multiple vendors for different product types. This vendor will act as a central point of contact, handling inventory, installation, and warranty issues, and providing guidance to administration, faculty, and the community on product selection. Vendor presentations will be held during the month of March and a vendor will be recommended to the building committee at a future meeting. This approach streamlines the procurement process, leverages the vendor's expertise in school furniture, ensures reliability in delivery and installation, and reduces the administrative burden of coordinating multiple sources.

Mr. Simmons questioned if either option determined the furniture design. Mr. Collier explained that option one (MHEC state contract) versus option two (public bidding) does not inherently determine the design of the furniture, but it affects how unique or specialized items are sourced. Option two requires more careful bidding to ensure substitutes are close to the intended design, while option one generally allows most items to be procured through a single state-contracted vendor, with some flexibility if a product isn't available or requires a small separate bid.

Mr. Moore inquired if the vendors were given a timeline. Mr. Collier stated the vendors were provided with a projected timeline for furniture delivery, targeting July 2027 to align with construction, with flexibility to fine-tune as needed. The plan includes setting up mock classrooms for staff and possibly selected students to test and provide feedback on furniture, helping inform final decisions. Mr. Simmons asked if the mock classrooms would be visible to the public, and Dr. Leggett stated it could coincide with back-to-school professional learning days and possibly remain open at night. Mrs. Cowan also approved

the notion for select students to test furniture, as their unique perspectives could inform decisions and make improvements.

Ms. Purcell presented an update on Phase Two and Three. Phase two abatement and demolition is set to begin on March 16th, with salvage IT equipment removed by March 12th. Phase three bidding has been released, with a pre-bid site meeting scheduled next week, and bids due by the 31st. The construction schedule currently targets completion by August 12, 2027. Outstanding items include final OSTA approval for the building permit, stormwater general permits, and a network fiber splice that must be completed before demolition. Vendor notifications and bidding outreach are underway, including email blasts, phone calls, and minority publication requirements.

Dr. Leggett stated the design team met with building leaders to discuss engaging students from pre-K through 12 in the building project, exploring a wide variety of hands-on activities and mentoring opportunities, including connections to high school capstone projects and skills trades.

Mrs. Cowan also provided an update on the school naming subcommittee, explaining that the naming and mascot committee plans to hold votes the week of March 16th. Students in fifth grade and above will vote via Google Form, while elementary students will vote in class. Community members can vote at town halls. Only the three pre-selected names will be on the ballot, and communications are being finalized to clearly explain each option. Student excitement and input are being actively encouraged throughout the process.

C. Approval of Invoices

Mrs. Neubig presented the following invoices for approval:

Vendor	Invoice #	Amount
Cubalmart	149017	\$272.00
Dattco	29801	\$16,339.20
STV	1277	\$14,840.00

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

All in favor of approving the invoices as presented: Mr. Weissberg, Mr. Cross, Mr. Croston, Mr. Putnam, Mr. Dwire, Mr. Simmons, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Cowan, and Mrs. Petrella. Motion passed.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The committee members discussed the next building committee is scheduled for the beginning of April. The committee prefaced that a special meeting could be scheduled, giving the district 48 hours advanced notice.

Adjournment

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

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

Respectfully submitted by Meghan Shortell-Fratantonio