

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Cortland Facilities Study Advisory Committee

FROM: Alan Pole and Bill Silky

RE: Meeting Notes-Meeting of November 8, 2017

DATE: November 9, 2017

### **Attendance:**

Committee Members: Breck Aspinwall, Anna Bennett, Susan Byrnes, Kevin Cafararo, Rick Gamel, Sister Harriett Hamilton, Lisa Kaup, Roberto Maniaci, Stephanie Mitchell-Madden, Amy Sundheim, Karen Williams, and Mark Yacavone

Consultants: Alan Pole and Bill Silky

Observers: Robert Creenan, Jeff Craig, Joshua Bacigalupi, Judi Riley, Alane VanDonsel, Eileen Fitzgerald-Spiehs, Doug Pasquerella, Christine Pasquerella, Kelly Comtois, Eric Comtois, Ilona Ryan, David Phetteplace, Sharon Phetteplace, Diane Timmons-Shaffer, Craig Miller, Janice Miller, Jennifer Geibel, Bethann Wieder, Christine Gregory, Kelsey Barron, Clay Benediat, Zacharie Boutoille, Sara Boutoille, Stephen Pearsall, Angela Wanish, Garrett Ciotoli, Julie Ciotoli, Kim Hay, John Howard, Scott Sharpsteen, Carol Clarke, Bill Stark, Crista Stark, Sarah Woodard, Tess LeBlanc, Nicole Krivicich, Ryan Kolas, Kati Coon, Shannon Stout, Cindy Peck, Pat Wood, Christopher Wood, Arnold Talentino, Mary Kuddie, Ricardo Nelson, Esther Dadio, Amber Thayer, Janet Griffin, Tom Dovi, Jodie Bush, Diane Chu, Donald Chu, Beau A.C. Harbin, Abigail Cleary, Andrea Kuretich, Christopher Kuretich, Sr., Jennifer Drake, Karen Diescher, Chassidy Coon, Eamon O'Shea, Carrie L.Q. Finn, Joshua Finn, Bob Martin, Erin E. Moore, Nichole Zarcone, John Zarcone, Charles Bennett, Eileen Allen, Jen Fischer, Anne Doyle, Jenny Robinson, Johnathan Robinson, Catalina Charles, Abbey Albright, Amy Riotto, Michael Hoose, Kim Vile, and Scott Steug

Location: Smith Elementary School

1. Bill Silky welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Smith principal Andrea Wanish for the tour of the school prior to the meeting. He reviewed the meeting protocol as well as the schedule of meetings that had taken place and will take place over the next three months. He asked if there were any changes to the notes from the last meeting and there were none.
2. Bill also reviewed the purpose of the study which reads as follows:

***"What options exist to arrange the grades and school buildings to maintain, and perhaps enhance, the education of Cortland City School District students while ensuring fiscal responsibility to the taxpayer? How could the grades and schools be organized?"***

The major study conclusions that had been identified during the first four meetings of the committee were also reviewed.

3. Bill then provided updates from the last meeting including updated enrollment projections, recent history of fund balance data, and the impact of school closings on property values.

4. Alan Pole then presented a summary of the fiscal implications of the options currently under consideration. In addition to the possibility of closing the Virgil school, closing Parker school is also an option under consideration. He explained that Parker is being studied because it is the oldest school in the district (1928-same year as Randall), it is the smallest of the elementary schools, and it has the fewest students of the four “city” elementary schools. In addition, there are parking challenges at Parker and, considering safety issues, it is the only school without a bus loop for picking up and dropping off students.

Alan also reviewed the staffing patterns associated with each of the school buildings as well as a summary of the Building Condition Survey that was recently completed for the district. He also estimated that the district would see an annual staff savings of \$600,000 by closing Virgil and \$800,000 by closing Parker. Annual utility savings were estimated at \$100,000 by closing Parker and \$110,000 by closing Virgil. Finally, Alan noted that the architects have estimated a cost of \$10,000,000 for moving the sixth grade to the current junior-senior high school.

Alan also reviewed the estimated financial implications for each of the following options:

Option #	Description
1	Current arrangement
8 (1)	Close Virgil; 2 grade centers-K-2 Randall & Smith; 3-5 Barry & Parker; 6-8 middle school
8 (2)	Close Parker; 2 grade centers-K-2 Barry & Virgil; 3-5 Randall and Smith; 6-8 middle school
8a	Close Virgil; Keep 4 K-5 elementary schools; 6-8 middle school
8b	Close Parker; Keep 4 K-5 elementary schools; 6-8 middle school
8c-1	Close <b>Virgil</b> OR Parker; Keep 4 K-6 elementary schools
8c-2	Close <b>Virgil</b> OR <b>Parker</b> ; Keep 4 K-6 elementary schools
A	Close Parker; 2 grade centers-K-2 Smith & Virgil; 3-6 Barry & Randall
B	Close Virgil; 2 grade centers-K-2 Randall & Smith; 3-6 Barry & Parker

5. Following the presentations, the committee members were asked to meet in groups and develop pro's and con's for each of the options and to add any new options that they thought would be appropriate. The following are the responses from the committee members:

- ✓ It is important to have the least amount of disruption from transportation.
- ✓ The district can't do nothing; we have to do something.
- ✓ Is there really enough savings from closing an elementary school to justify the cost of creating a middle school?
- ✓ How about looking at savings at the District Office?
- ✓ The Building Condition Survey is a huge wild card; what do we really need?
- ✓ What is the feasibility of merging school districts?
- ✓ Why are we only looking at Virgil and Parker?
- ✓ It is important to isolate the 6<sup>th</sup> graders in the middle school.
- ✓ Keep the 6<sup>th</sup> graders in the elementary schools.
- ✓ Will the bus rides for some kids be too long if we close an elementary school?
- ✓ Need to account for Pre-K programs.
- ✓ The current arrangement is not a good option; the two best options are 8 (2) and 8-b.

6. Following the feedback from the committee members, the audience was given the opportunity to make comments or ask questions. The following are the comments from the audience:

- ✓ Get the market values of each of the school buildings.
- ✓ Transportation is a huge concern.
- ✓ Will a financial analysis be conducted on the feasibility of closing each of the elementary schools?
- ✓ Can a 6-8 middle school be located in one of the elementary schools?
- ✓ We need to include 80 Pre-K students.
- ✓ Is the 5<sup>th</sup> grade enrollment for Parker correct?
- ✓ How long would it be before the savings is realized from closing an elementary school?
- ✓ If we close a school, what would stop a charter school from moving in?
- ✓ What research has been done on the effect of school closings and the impact on property values?
- ✓ Barry could be more saleable because it is right next to SUNY-Cortland.

7. The next advisory committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 3, 2018 at Virgil Elementary School. An optional tour of the school will begin at 5:45 for anyone who is interested. The business meeting of the advisory committee will begin at 6:30 p.m.

We believe this covers the essence of the discussions at our meeting on November 8. If you have questions with these notes, please feel free to contact me. We will also review these notes as an agenda item at our next meeting.

Looking forward to seeing you again on 1.3.18 at Virgil. The tour will begin at 5:45 and the meeting will start at 6:30!!

Enjoy the holidays!

C: Michael Hoose