



Port Chester-Rye Union Free School District
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Port Chester Public Schools

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 15, 2017

Update on Port Chester Middle School Repairs Options to Require Voter Approval

In public meetings on Thursday November 9 and Tuesday November 14, the Port Chester School District Board of Education considered options for repairs to the Port Chester Middle School (PCMS) building on Bowman Avenue. The mountings for one of the building's decorative 4500 pound cast concrete panels failed on October 26 and the panel fell to the ground. While no injuries occurred, school was closed for 6 days while emergency measures were implemented.

The November 9 special public meeting included the district's architects and construction manager in order to discuss not only the emergency work but a plan to permanently resolve any structural issues. A conference call also took place between the Board and its Bond Counsel and Financial Advisor to ensure that Agenda Action items a, b, and c comply with NYS statutes and fit the needs of the district. At this meeting the Board also examined four viable permanent reconstruction options presented by the architects including:

- Option 1, remove the concrete panels, replace the windows, and keep the original unit ventilators for \$6.9M;
- Option 2, remove the panels, replace the windows, and replace the unit ventilators for \$9.6M;
- Option 3, remove the panels, replace the windows and replace the unit ventilators with those with air conditioning capability for \$11.2M.
- Option 4, remove the panels, replace the windows, replace unit ventilators, and install air conditioning in the large common areas of the library and cafeteria only for \$10.8M.

An Option 5 was examined during the Nov. 14 Board meeting:

- Option 5: Option 3 plus rebuild PCMS pedestrian bridges, replace PCMS doors, replace Edison railings, and upgrade PCHS auditorium sound and lighting (costs to be reviewed on 11/28)

The Board also reallocated 2017-18 operating budget items to pay for the emergency health and safety work that has taken place at the middle school. Funds previously designated for maintenance projects including rebuilding of the middle school pedestrian bridges, upgrading the sound system in the Port Chester High School auditorium, and the replacement of doors at PCMS and handrails at Edison school, will be repurposed to fund the PCMS emergency work. This will permit the Board to pay vendors for emergency work already completed and to ensure maintenance of a \$985K fund balance. Note that any fund balance is rolled over annually and

returned to the tax payers during each successive school budget cycle. A fund balance must be maintained to address any type of emergency that may arise.

The Board also adopted resolutions enabling the issuance of tax free bonds that will ultimately be required for completion of the permanent reconstruction and to enable reimbursement of the operating budget for expenses incurred for the emergency work. That way funds will be available for emergencies.

The Board discussed two funding options for the PCMS reconstruction and emergency measures:

- Option 1: to present a new bond to the voters;
- Option 2: is to repurpose the existing approved \$79M bond.

Both options require voter approval through a referendum that could occur as early as February 2018. This is timely because the district is incurring a \$30K monthly rental for the equipment that was installed.

The cost of the emergency health and safety repairs of PCMS is estimated to be \$1.6M through June 30, 2018.

Note also that replacement of the 50 year old windows and unit ventilators will yield energy cost savings for years to come. The district would be able to replace the pneumatic manual temperature control system with a computerized electronic system for maximum management.

The final option selected plus the cost of the emergency measures would determine the amount proposed to the voters.

It is the current strategy of the Board to bond both the emergency measures and the permanent reconstruction project in order to generate building aid reimbursement for both.

For example, if the Board selected Option 4 to remove the panels, replace windows, replace unit ventilators, and install air conditioning only in the library and cafeteria, the total cost to be bonded would be \$12.4M, which includes the cost for the emergency measures. The good news is that the district expects that at least 75% of the emergency work and permanent reconstruction will qualify for NYS building aid of about 69.5%. It would receive said aid after the work has been completed.

When will the project be completed? Note that the permanent reconstruction project is processed by the NYS Education Department just as is any other project. The timeline for approval as such is between 26-32 weeks. Ground breaking is projected for June 2019.

In the coming weeks the Board will finalize its choice of options for the PCMS permanent reconstruction and whether to present a new bond or to modify the approved building plan.

Discussion of these matters will continue at the next special public meeting on Tuesday, November 28, 6 p.m., in the PCMS auditorium.

Timeline

October 26

On October 26, the mountings for a decorative 4500 lb. cast concrete panel failed at Port Chester Middle School, causing the panel to fall to the ground and damage a classroom's windows. Most fortunately, there were no injuries and school was not in session at the time.

October 27

The Board of Education met for a special meeting to declare an emergency, thereby allowing the district to move forward with emergency measures that would permit the building to open safely for children and staff and continue classroom instruction as soon as possible.

Because this project involves the safety of our children, we demand the highest quality engineering and construction work. We also work with the State Education Department to ensure strict compliance with its engineering and safety specifications.

October 28

On Saturday October 28, crews began working extended and double shifts to both install equipment and replace the windows damaged in the incident.

Crews installed vertical supports to shore up the nearly 90 concrete panels, anchored them to the building, and since panels are also installed over exterior entry doors, they constructed safety coverings at those locations. Also installed were fences to keep individuals at a safe distance from the construction areas. The district's insurance company inspected and approved the safety measures.

November 5, 6, 7

Crews completed work on Sunday November 5 whereby we received clearance from our structural engineer. That clearance was also submitted to the State Education Department, and PCMS reopened on Monday, Nov. 6, with a makeup day on Tuesday Nov. 7. There will be three additional make up days scheduled during the middle of the February break and another on March 20.

November 9

The Board of Education held a special public meeting to discuss not only the emergency work but a plan to permanently resolve any structural issues. Several options were presented.

November 14

At the Board of Education meeting, the district discussed 5 possible options for repair of the Middle School building, addressed funding of both the temporary and permanent repair needs at the building.

November 28

Discussion of options and funding will be discussed at a 6pm special public meeting in the Middle School auditorium