

Special Town Council Meeting

August 18, 1987

5:30 p.m.

A special meeting of the Wallingford Town Council was held in Council Chambers, called to order at 5:36 p.m. by Chairman David A. Gessert. Answering present to the roll called by Rosemary A. Rascati, Town Clerk, were Council Members Adams, Bergamini, Killen, Polanski, Rys and Gessert. Councilman Holmes arrived after the roll was called. Also present was Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr.

The meeting was held to consider the following three items:

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ITEM 1. Consider and approve the return of Parker Farms School to the Board of Education, moved by Mr. Rys and seconded by Mr. Polanski.

Mr. Gessert commented that Mr. Robert Devine and the rest of the Building Committee did a wonderful job on the school and the finished project is excellent.

Mr. Devine invited the Council Members to walk through the school that evening for a tour.

Mr. Rys commented that he was at Parker Farms School today and he noticed that they were paving the driveway and asked if the sidewalks were switched and Mr. Devine explained that the sidewalks were going to be on the other side for safety reasons. Mr. Rys added that the school looks beautiful.

Mr. Killen pointed out that he noticed in the paper last week, that they were going to have an open house on August 29th and Mr. Devine said that that was a possibility and the Committee will be addressing that at their meeting tonight. Mr. Killen added that he noticed that this request was coming from Mr. Devine and not from the Board of Education and asked if this was the proper way to do things. Mr. James Annis explained that he believes that it is turned over from the Committee to the Council and then the Council turns it over to the Board. Mr. Robert Nicoletti told Mr. Killen that he would be happy to send the Council a formal letter regarding this matter.

Mr. Rys commented that when the town took Parker Farms School last year, there was a large pile of furniture, etc. that had accumulated and asked if this was going to happen when they took over Yalesville School. Mr. Nicoletti said that he did not think so because right now, Benhaven is in the process of negotiating with the town. We would hope that the school would be left in operable order because there is a design to occupy it immediately, where there was no design to occupy Parker Farms. That does not excuse the condition that it was in. We are going to leave it intact.

Mr. Gessert commented that at a previous meeting, the Council had requested research to be done with the state to see what has to be done so that they don't end up with another Parker Farms and Mr. Nicoletti explained that he spoke to the state

about it and the only way that you could keep your foot in the door (so to speak), should it ever be needed as a school facility in the future, would be if the Board of Education does not relinquish ownership. I would never recommend that Yalesville School be used as a school again because the location is hazardous, and I would not want to put millions of dollars into an 11 room facility because 11 rooms is too small. However, it could be used as central office space. As a function of that, that means that we could possibly vacate 6 to 8 rooms at Stevens. There in lies the possibility for expansion. In talking to the state, they do provide building grants for education administrative offices. However, they are not a number one priority. Educational facilities are a number one priority and you do not get the full 62% or 64% reimbursement, it is something less. That would be my recommendation to the Board. The only problem that I see from the Board's perspective is, the financial liability of maintaining that facility although it is in operable condition and will continue to be so for perhaps the next 4 to 5 years before major capitol improvements must be made, who pays? The roof is intact however, you will get another 5 years out of the heating system, it is manual controlled, there are no automatic controls for the furnace. The sewer line is only about 6 inches from the surface and it has frozen more than once. We have pumped a lot of hot water in there to keep it from backing up. There are situations there that have to be remedied if it is ever going to be used as any kind of a facility for any long period of time. I would recommend, as Superintendent, that it never be used as a school again, because it is too small and is in a bad location.

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Mr. Polanski pointed out that originally, when Parkers Farms came up, the deal was that when Parker Farms was turned over to the Board of Education, Yalesville would be turned over to the town, and added that there was talk about the Board of Education continuing to use it. Mr. Nicoletti explained that that type of conversation started from the Council and the Mayor as it relates to Benhaven and also some apprehension on the part of some Council Members, as to if it should ever be used as an educational facility, we wouldn't want to go through another Parker Farms expense. That did not start from us. The Board is prepared to totally turn it over to you people. That is our game plan at this point in time. Mr. Polanski then asked when Yalesville will be turned over to the town in the event that Parker Farms is turned over to the Board tonight and Mr. Annis stated that he believes that the Board has to accept it first, and as soon as it is accepted, he would imagine, in a motion, they would turn it over to the town. Mr. Nicoletti added that he believes that the Board is prepared to turn it over to the town immediately. Mr. Annis added that Benhaven's plan is to use it for about 3 years and then build their own facility.

Mr. Rys asked if the Board's projections for enrollments for this coming year was that the only growth that we have in the elementary system was in the Highland area and Mr. Nicoletti explained that they are growing by about 25 youngsters a year and they are spread out. I do the enrollments on a statistical procedure and it comes out that we are growing slightly. Mr. Rys added that he heard last year, that they are looking at the elementary schools, except for Highland, to be filled pretty close to capacity. Mr. Nicoletti explained that what Mr. Rys heard was, the ideal capacity, which is something that is done in terms of an educational exercise, the ideal. They are 75% or 85% filled to the ideal capacity, which is like 20 to 24 kids. There is ample room for growth throughout all of the elementary schools. Our secondary schools are not experiencing the kind of growth that one would hope for so, there is always a possibility that we can revert back to a different structure. I do not foresee any need, in the near future, for any kind of building. I do not see any problem from now until 10 years.

Mr. Adams asked to have the control of Yalesville clarified and Mr. Nicoletti explained that the Board's game plan was to assume Parkers Farms and relinquish Yalesville on the spot. My major concern is the financial liability of that building, because we are not budgeted. I told you what you had to do to keep your foot in the door and that does not come cheap, there is a string attached. If indeed the Board, acts as your custodian (in case), then they are going to need financial support for that facility from you people, in addition to their

budget. If there are no provisions for us to continue to do what we have to do, we don't want it. We can't take it because we are not budgeted to put one penny into it.

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Mr. Killen added that he is bothered by the fact that they keep on saying that there are no dollars here, there are never any dollars as far as the Board of Education is concerned. But, when the time comes that the need is there, the town always has to come up with it, one way or the other. This is where the buck is going to stop all of the time and I would hesitate saying that Yalesville will never be used as a school again. Mr. Nicoletti explained that he learned to never say never but, if he were to make a recommendation to the Board, he would never recommend that they use that as a school.

Mr. Adams added that he is concerned because he does not want to get into another Parker Farms. Maybe there are some other options for Yalesville.

Mayor Dickinson commented that the purpose here is Parker Farms School and if things work out with Benhaven, we will get a few years to see what is going on and make better judgments then. I do not see why a judgment has to be made now, on Yalesville.

I am aware that the Board does not want Yalesville and they don't have the money to run it. So, at the point that it comes over, and I suspect that it is going to, simply because they don't have the money to put into it for heating and everything else, we are going to have to make decisions on Yalesville.

Mrs. Bergamini commented that she understood that, we give them Parker Farms and we get Yalesville. Mayor Dickinson told Mrs. Bergamini that she was right, and added that there is no other scenario and there isn't any money to do anything else with it anyway.

Mrs. Bergamini moved an amendment to the original motion, that we are voting to turn over Parker Farms contingent upon the fact that the Board of Education, at their next meeting, will turn Yalesville over to the Town of Wallingford, seconded by Mr. Killen.

VOTE: (Amendment) All ayes; motion duly carried.

VOTE: (Original motion) All ayes; motion duly carried.

ITEM 2. Consider and approve the transfer of \$5,000 from Contingency to Interior Work - Parker Farms School, moved by Mr. Holmes and seconded by Mr. Rys.

Mr. Gessert commented that this is within their current budget

Mr. Polanski asked how much money has not been expended out of the original budget and Mr. Devine explained that there is \$368,500 which is bonding money, which is in their budget. Mr. Devine added that netting out the \$5,000, they are talking about tonight, they have \$62,305. We made an agreement with the Board of Education regarding the alarm system, that if we had the money, we would pay for it. Assuming that we will have the money, it will net us out to \$50,000. We have a problem that we are going to discuss tonight, where there was water found in some of the electrical cables that have to be replaced and that cost is going to be around \$8,000 and that will take us down to \$42,000. At this point, I do not know of anything else that would be coming up. We also have 5 phones that are going into the building.

Mr. Gessert asked Mr. Devine to explain the water problem in the electrical cables and Mr. Devine explained that apparently when they were hooking up the box, they found moisture and water in there and we had two choices. One was to try and dry them out or to replace them and Mr. Williams will have the cost options for us tonight at our meeting.

Mr. Gessert asked if there was a liability on someone's part and Mr. Devine told Mr. Gessert that these were the existing ones and added that what happened was, this is the secondary backup

system and they are concerned that if it is ever used, there could be an electrical fire. That is where we stand at this point. There was some talk of some more crushed stone being needed but I believe that that has been resolved and there was another issue regarding some extra pipe that had to be laid down for drainage, and we do not have the cost on that, but I think this can be handled in the appropriation that you gave us for the site work (about \$10,000). 638

Mr. Polanski commented that the Building Committee works for the Town of Wallingford through the Town Council, and was concerned because once that building is turned over to the Board of Education, he can't see how their money can go into their building. He added that the Board of Education is accepting the building as is. Mr. Devine explained that there is a significant amount of money that hasn't been paid to contractors yet, the funds are encumbered. Mr. Devine added that it is their position, that they continue to be a Building Committee as appointed by the Town Council, to finish the project. It is my understanding, by the state, there has to be an official return of the building to the local educational authorities, and that is why we are here tonight. I cannot respond to the other issues because we felt that we would continue as we were going along until the project is completed.

Mayor Dickinson added that he spoke with Mr. Devine, before the meeting, and it was his feeling that the Building Committee would have to continue for a period of time, and Mr. Devine was aware of that. We agreed that a number of bills will not be in for a number of months and until all bills are paid, and there is a sign-off by the Building Committee, that all work has been completed, which to my knowledge I have not received yet, the Building Committee is not terminated. What this comes down to is, cooperation between two governmental bodies. If we sit and wait for the bills to come in, which could take several months, unless the Board has jurisdiction over it, you couldn't use the building for a school, which is the purpose of our efforts thus far. There will be a dual jurisdiction, and until all bills are in and all work is signed-off, I would expect the Building Committee to continue. They are really the only ones that can make the final judgment that everything has been completed in accordance with the contract.

Mr. Killen commented that he can go along with Mayor Dickinson's comment as long as they are going to take care of only outstanding bills and they are not going to incur any new bills. Mayor Dickinson added that this is another factor. Anything that is not within the original contracts, because there is money left over, certainly, the Building Committee should not be the recipient of all kinds of requests for odds and ends at this point and if they should be, and it is something important enough, then it should certainly come back to the Council.

Mr. Devine explained that it has been requested that they air-condition the office at Parker Farms, because people work there throughout the summer. It has not been done yet, but it will probably be talked about tonight. This was not part of the original cost estimates that I submitted the last time and obviously, we would want your approval to go forward with that. Any other changes will be job changes, such as things that have come up on the job itself, which requires extra work but, we have been doing those all along. To my knowledge, this is the only request, outside of the original scope that we discussed, that the education officials made to us.

Mayor Dickinson stated that he hopes this would not mean structural changes and Mr. Devine explained that it possibly might mean, putting a hole in one of the panels or replacing a window. It might be a portable unit.

Mr. Edward Musso commented that he agrees with Mr. Polanski. The minute the Board of Education gets the building, they are responsible for it. You can keep Bob Devine as a Building Committee to see that things are carried out but, disband the rest of it. The bandit that did the police station is giving us the same business over here.

VOTE: All ayes; motion duly carried.

ITEM 3. Consider and approve authorization for submitting a proposal for purchase of American Legion property, requested by Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr. WITHDRAWN

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A motion to adjourn was duly made, seconded and carried and the meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

Meeting recorded and transcribed by:
Susan M. Baron

Approved David A. Gessert
David A. Gessert, Chairman

9-22-87
Date

Rosemary A. Rascati
Rosemary A. Rascati, Town Clerk

9-22-87
Date