

Sent: 12/2/2024 10:31:48 PM
From: Paula Calla <pcallia@ewrsd.k12.nj.us>
To: "Mark Daniels"
Cc: "Paul Todd" "Jagruhi Patel" "Colleen Murphy" "Nicole LaRusso"
Bcc:
Importance: Highest
Subject: Re: Finance Committee - new property - 268 South Academy Street

Hi Mark,

Thank you for your response. However, I am still unclear on where the funds for this new facility are allocated in the 2024–2025 budget. Could you please direct me to the specific budget line or capital expense item that reflects this allocation? As I review the budget, I do not see over half a million dollars that would account for this purchase and it was not on the list of capital expenses.

I remain concerned about the financial prudence of this decision. Allocating such a significant amount for a facility serving only eight employees seems disproportionate, particularly in light of our district’s future funding needs—specifically, the need to implement a preschool program within the next five years. I believe our responsibility to taxpayers requires a more strategic approach to long-term space planning.

Thank you for addressing my concerns.

Regards,
Paula

On Mon, Nov 18, 2024 at 4:25 PM Mark Daniels <mdaniels@ewrsd.k12.nj.us> wrote:
Hi Paula,

Yes, the funds for a new facility for the Central Registration and Buildings and Grounds staff are included in the 2024-25 budget.

Mark



On Mon, Nov 18, 2024 at 11:19 AM Paula Calla <pcallia@ewrsd.k12.nj.us> wrote:
Hi Mark,

Was the funds specifically included in this year's budget or are we earmarking the funds from something else?

Thanks,

Paula

On Fri, Nov 15, 2024 at 4:57 PM Mark Daniels <mdaniels@ewrsd.k12.nj.us> wrote:
Good afternoon Paula,

Just so we are all on the same page, the need to identify a new workspace for the employees who are currently housed at the White House preceded the recent earthquake and strategic planning process. Due to the significant age of the White House (late 17th century structure), a few years ago, we asked SSP, the district's architect's, to complete an assessment of the property to determine what upgrades needed to occur in order for the property to have sustainability.

Their report identified several structural and ADA related needs that were not immediate safety concerns, but would require a sizable financial commitment from the district to remedy. Therefore, it was determined that it was not financially feasible to pursue a plan for renovations, but instead, explore options for an alternative workspace for the team currently assigned to the White House. The need to identify another facility was elevated after experiencing last year's earthquake, which reminded us of the building's fragility.

When attempting to find a new location, we were hoping to identify a property that was not overly priced, able to adequately accommodate the staff assigned to the White House, and situated in an easily accessible and central part of the community. Fortunately, we were able to locate the property on Academy St. that checked several of these boxes. The square footage of the building is comparable to the White House, which enables our staff to maintain office space, a reception area for families, and a conference room for meetings. Fortunately, the majority of the work related to the anticipated upgrades and room reconfigurations will be completed by our talented maintenance department.

The purpose for Paul's recent outreach to the Finance Committee, was intended to serve as a reminder that we had previously identified the space, earmarked funds in the budget, and after completing an inspection and appraisal, were preparing to make an offer. I recommend that we move forward as planned.

Feel free to reach out with any questions.

Enjoy your weekend.

Mark



On Thu, Nov 14, 2024 at 9:24 PM Paula Calla <pcallia@ewrsd.k12.nj.us> wrote:
Hi Al,

Following up on this email as I did not receive a response.

Will we be discussing it at Monday's board meeting?

Regards,
Paula

On Wed, Oct 30, 2024 at 10:28 PM Paula Calla <pcallia@ewrsd.k12.nj.us> wrote:
Hi Paul,

Maybe the discussion on the Whitehouse being in the budget was before my time on the board as I do not remember it being a line item in the budget. I did not have it on my capital project lists, and I cannot find it in any of my notes. I only recall discussing the Whitehouse after the earthquake and the need to replace it because of the damages and the amount of work needed to the building. I was also not able to attend the 9/9 Finance meeting so did not realize until now that this building is only for 8 employees.

So, I'm playing catch up here. The purchase price, plus renovations required, and ongoing maintenance/taxes seems excessive for 8 people. I would expect needing 1300- 1500 square feet not 2500 square feet.

Should we take a step back to look at how this fits into the 5 year strategic plan? Are we possibly going to need to purchase property for preschool? If so, should we be considering that future purchase?

Is there any other interest on the property that we need to rush to make a bid or can this be a topic for the next board meeting? It would have been a good topic for this past Monday.

Thanks,

Paula

On Wed, Oct 30, 2024 at 11:59 AM Paul Todd <ptodd@ewrsd.k12.nj.us> wrote:
Good morning Paula. My answers in blue.

On Tue, Oct 29, 2024 at 10:45 PM Paula Calla <pcalla@ewrsd.k12.nj.us> wrote:
Hi All,

I have a few questions but will start with just two:

- Are we being asked to approve purchasing this property? **The Board has already approved the purchase of a new property to replace the Whitehouse. It is a line in our 24-25 budget. We are asking for feedback if this property is acceptable to replace the whitehouse.**

- Did I read correctly below that this building is only for 8 people? **Correct. We covered the building and the needs at our Sept 9th Finance Committee meeting. We have 5 staff members in the Buildings and Grounds Dept and 3 other staff members who handle Central Registration, Kidcare and District Communications. B&G holds staff meetings and meetings with vendors/contractors. We currently do not have the space elsewhere in the district to house these 8 staff members.**

Thanks,

Paula

On Tue, Oct 29, 2024 at 10:15 PM Jagruti Patel <jdpatel@ewrsd.k12.nj.us> wrote:
Hi Paul,

I reviewed the contract. Can we offer \$550k and do counter offer? I understand that it's on Market for some time.

Otherwise all is good.

Thank you,
Jagruti

On Tue, Oct 29, 2024 at 9:02 PM Colleen Murphy <cmurphy@ewrsd.k12.nj.us> wrote:
Hi Paul,

Thanks for the document. This, including the explanation of parking in the email chain, all sounds good to me.

Good luck,

Colleen

On Tue, Oct 29, 2024 at 12:37 PM Paul Todd <ptodd@ewrsd.k12.nj.us> wrote:

Paula, Good afternoon. I started a Finance Committee chat this morning about that new property in the Borough. I accidentally included Tina in the conversation. Please see the chain below. We would like to make an offer on the property. Let us know your thoughts.

pmt

On Tue, Oct 29, 2024 at 12:21 PM Tina Lands <tlands@ewrsd.k12.nj.us> wrote:

So long as there is street parking. I didn't realize you could park on the street there. I know there are spots in front of the park around the corner, but if we end up using them up more often than not, I'm sure there would be complaints.

Do we need a special meeting to vote on this expenditure, or were funds earmarked in our budget? I don't recall for sure.

Kind regards,
Tina Lands

On Tue, Oct 29, 2024 at 12:07 PM Mark Daniels <mdaniels@ewrsd.k12.nj.us> wrote:
There is also a considerable amount of street parking in close proximity to the building.

Mark Daniels
Superintendent of Schools
East Windsor Regional School District
25A Leshin Lane
Hightstown, NJ 08520
609-443-7717 ext.2020
609-847-1451 (Cell)
mdaniels@ewrsd.k12.nj.us

On Tue, Oct 29, 2024 at 11:12 AM Paul Todd <ptodd@ewrsd.k12.nj.us> wrote:

Sorry left Mark off original email. Parking is probably one of the biggest cons But not insurmountable. We have a total of eight people who work in the building. I don't think we're gonna find anywhere centrally located that has that kind of parking, unless you go up on 130 and then the price tag goes into the millions. Most registration is electronic these days, but we do have some walk-in traffic.

Paul Todd
Business Administrator
ptodd@ewrsd.k12.nj.us
www.ewrsd.net

On Tue, Oct 29, 2024 at 10:41 AM Tina Lands <tlands@ewrsd.k12.nj.us> wrote:

My biggest concern would be parking. The lot seems much smaller than the 21 +handicap spot lot at the Stockton location. How many employees are expected to work in the building? Do we still use that building for registrations? Or would there be little visitor traffic?

Otherwise, it appears to be a sound building nestled in town.

Kind regards,
Tina Lands

On Tue, Oct 29, 2024 at 7:58 AM Paul Todd <ptodd@ewrsd.k12.nj.us> wrote:

Good morning. Several months ago we talked about purchasing a new piece of property at 268 South Academy Street. Since that last meeting we authorized a commercial property appraisal. **I have attached it to this email.** The listing price of the property is \$635,000. The property appraisal estimates a price of \$590,000. Based on our real estate agent, due to the time the property has been on the market and lack of offers, he is recommending an initial offer of \$520k - \$530k with a settlement goal of \$550k. The administrative recommendation is to proceed with the purchase of the property. Does everybody concur? Thanks!

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