

BUY
PHOTO
REPRINTS
ONLINE

SUBSCRIBE TO
THE GAZETTE
ONLINE
OR IN PRINT

GAZETTENET.com

Daily Hampshire Gazette - Established 1786

Amherst Bulletin

The Recorder

Valley Advocate

Pioneer Valley

Many Hands

Hampshire Life

Sign out

Account

Trouble finding something?

Contact us

Classifieds

news search

Local News State/Region U.S./World Obituaries Sports Business Schools Colleges Politics Opinion Entertainment Health Living Sci/Tech

Easthampton school price tag rises \$10M

By CATHERINE BAUM
Staff Writer

Email this page Printer-friendly version

Tuesday, October 6, 2009

EASTHAMPTON - Recent studies indicate a brand-new high school building will now cost \$48 million, roughly \$10 million more than the figure project planners discussed in August, but it is still cheaper than the renovation and addition projects formerly on the table.

"Two or three months ago we thought renovating was the only way to go," said project manager Mel Overmoyer, of Chicopee-based Strategic Building Solutions. "These three months have revealed there's more issues with the old building ... It isn't a construction issue, it's a project issue."

Set to be twice as large as the existing high school, the new building was found to be cheaper than renovation and addition projects largely due to the absence of contingency costs for relocating students and programs during the construction. The other two projects would cost approximately \$1.5 million and more than \$3 million in relocation expenses.

"In our minds not only do (options) #A' and #B' cost more, but you're also spending money that doesn't give you any value," Overmoyer said, referring to temporary facilities that won't help the school community once the project is completed. Students will continue to learn in the existing school while the new one is being built.

A new building is "the option that makes the most sense from the point of view of the kids," said Mayor Michael A. Tautznik. "Yeah, it's a two-year disruption, but we don't change where they go to school."

Also included in the estimated \$50 million and \$52.7 million renovation and addition options were expenses in bringing the building up to code and preloading the land with 7-foot piles of dirt to set the foundation for additions. The existing school, south of where the new school is set to be located, was built on "old marshy" land with poor compaction, Overmoyer said.

"The building is on a marsh," Tautznik said. "It's on clay; it was not designed to hold up the way that it should have been. The building's sitting on a pad that moves and there are cracks because of that."

The new building's gym, auditorium, cafeteria and lobby area will be isolated from the academic classrooms as recommended by the Massachusetts School Building Authority, set to fund at least 59.9 percent of the project. The state's reimbursement will likely increase if the project includes rainwater reuse, photovoltaics and other green options down the road.

City voters will weigh in on funding the remaining portion in a May or June debt exclusion vote. The \$48 million is a "conservative" estimate, Overmoyer said. The figure includes an auditorium that seats 510, which is not reimbursable by the state board because the board reimbursement seat limit is 350.

Superintendent Deborah Carter and Tautznik suggested the auditorium be subject to a second vote on the May ballot.

Meanwhile, the state board is expected to approve the new construction option Nov. 17, with the project scope, schematic design and final price tag to be considered by the board in late January. The new building project submission will be sent Friday.

Go Green & Save up to 60%!



INK & TONER SOLUTIONS
www.inksolutionsma.com

Green Business

Popular stories

- Three are treated after head-on Whately collision
- One car hits couple in 2 vehicles
- Dog to be euthanized
- Laurie Loisel: A crash that kept on taking
- Gazette switch ends era of youth carriers

"After this submission goes in, they told us we can get into the design," Overmoyer said. "We can't afford to wait for them to make a decision before we proceed with the work."

Catherine Baum can be reached at cbaum@gazettenet.com.

Filed Under: [easthampton](#) [local](#) [news](#) [schools](#)

Comments

Post new comment

Your name:

[Catherine Baum](#)

Subject:

Comment: *

Input format

Filtered HTML

- Web page addresses and e-mail addresses turn into links automatically.
- Allowed HTML tags: `<a>` `` `<i>` `` `` `<code>` `<cite>` `` `` `` `` `<div>`
- Lines and paragraphs break automatically.

Full HTML

- Web page addresses and e-mail addresses turn into links automatically.
- Lines and paragraphs break automatically.

unfiltered HTML

[More information about formatting options](#)

