

District: Berlin-Boylston Regional School District
School Name: Tahanto Regional Middle/High School
Recommended Category: Project Scope and Budget
Date: March 31, 2010

Recommendation:

That the Executive Director be authorized to enter into a Project Scope and Budget Agreement and a Project Funding Agreement with the Berlin-Boylston Regional School District to build a new Tahanto Regional Middle/High School.

Background:

Berlin and Boylston, with a combined population of approximately 6,700 residents, comprise a regional school district that consists of the Boylston Elementary School, the Berlin Memorial Elementary School, and the Tahanto Regional Middle/High School. The Berlin and Boylston Elementary Schools each provide a pre-K to 6th grade curriculum, with 2008-2009 enrollments of 380 and 239, respectively. The majority of Berlin and Boylston students move on to Tahanto Regional Middle/High School for the 7th to 12th grade curriculum. The Tahanto Regional Middle/High School has a current enrollment of 466 students.

The existing Tahanto Regional Middle/High School was constructed in 1961 on a 20-acre site adjacent to the Wachusett Reservoir. Site constraints provide limited space and siting options for the school, its athletic facilities and parking due to the proximity of protected watershed and wetlands. The existing facility is a two-story building, approximately 94,766 square feet.

The facility was constructed with a reinforced frame in-filled with concrete block and brick typical of the time period during which it was erected. Despite replacement of the original roof in the mid 1980's and numerous repairs, the flat roof is leaky and failing. The HVAC system has reached the end of its useful life, making heating and ventilation ineffective and costly. The windows are original, single pane. There are numerous safety issues that have been identified as well, including but not limited to non-compliant electrical systems, lighting, stairway access, inadequacies of the science labs, and health related issues regarding burner emissions and the presence of asbestos. In addition, the facility has inadequate science and technology lab space, inadequate library and media center space, and undersized classrooms.

On November 28, 2007, the MSBA Board of Directors voted to issue an invitation to the District to conduct a feasibility study for the Tahanto Regional Middle/High School to identify and study possible solutions and, through a collaborative process with the MSBA, reach a mutually-agreed upon solution.

Discussion

The Regional School District Committee voted in July 2009 to move the 6th grade from each of the two elementary schools into the Tahanto Regional Middle/High School and to

create a “school within a school” approach for the future Tahanto program. In accordance with the Regional School District agreement, the proposed grade restructuring required that both member communities approve the proposed grade restructuring with an affirmative town vote. On November 16, 2009, the Regional School District received approval from both communities to move 6th grade students into the proposed Tahanto Middle/High School, resulting in an agreed upon design enrollment of 560 students.

The MSBA, the Regional School District, and the District’s consultant team met several times to discuss the educational program and specific building and site requirements. Based upon this review, the MSBA Board of Directors voted on July 29, 2009 to allow the Regional School District of Berlin-Boylston to proceed into schematic design for a new Tahanto Regional Middle/High School on the existing site.

MSBA staff have received and reviewed the Designer’s schematic design submission and have met with the District and its consultants to discuss scope and budget. The Regional School District has provided a total project budget of \$43,954,901, which includes an estimated construction cost of \$34,180,397. The basis of the Total Facilities Grant would be \$40,697,419, which excludes any site costs over 8% of the building construction costs, costs associated with a second project representative during construction, and designer costs in excess of 10% of the construction cost. All costs associated with the proposed alternate for playing fields that are presented with the proposed cost information are categorically ineligible for reimbursement by the MSBA and would be 100% borne by the District. (Total Alternate Cost Estimate = \$700,000). Also, the proposed maximum Total Facilities Grant amount would be subject to adjustment based on the bid results and audit of the costs incurred.

Tahanto Regional Middle/High School 560 Students 126,100 gross square feet	District’s Proposed Total Project Budget	Basis of Maximum Total Facilities Grant
Total Project Budget:	\$43,954,901	\$40,697,419
Project Cost per square foot:	\$349/ SF	\$323/ SF
Total Construction Budget:	\$34,180,397	\$32,119,565
Construction Cost per square foot:*	\$271 / SF	\$255 / SF
Reimbursement Rate:		51.21%
Maximum Total Facilities Grant:		\$20,831,931

*Does not include Construction Contingency

MSBA staff recommends that **\$40,697,419** be the basis of the maximum Total Facilities Grant for the Project Scope and Budget Agreement and Project Funding Agreement for the replacement of the existing Tahanto Regional Middle/High School.