

**BRISTOL BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2020**

The Operations Committee met on Wednesday, December 1, 2020 via ZOOM online meeting platform

Present: Committee Chair Eric Carlson, John Sklenka, Karen Vibert and Chris Wilson

Also Present: Jill Browne, Timothy Callahan, Dr. Catherine Carbone, Mike Dietter, and Kristen Giantonio

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm by Chair Carlson

Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting norms were reviewed.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 26, 2020 REGULAR MEETING

On a motion by Commissioner Wilson and seconded by Commissioner Sklenka, it was unanimously voted to approve the October 28, 2020 meeting minutes.

3. DISCUSSION REGARDING CELL TOWER AT NORTHEAST MIDDLE SCHOOL

Timothy Callahan Presented:

The Board of Education received a letter of intent from Smartlink to put a cell tower on the Northeast Middle School site. According to Mr. Callahan, it is a good location for their needs and they approached us to begin to work out the logistics. They were asked to put together a letter of intent so the committee and board can understand the nature of their request. No decisions have been made yet and this is in the very early stages of this discussion. The letter indicates there will be a monthly recurring rent of \$2,100.00 and that all construction costs, permit fees will be absorbed by Smartlink. This will be an AT&T tower and will be approximately 100 feet tall. Mr. Callahan met on the site with Scott Pike and April Grasso. The process has been started in terms of discussion and a letter of intent.

A couple of options were reviewed. The first option was to put the tower on the gym. That option was not picked because there is a generator that is associated with the cell tower. In addition to the generator, putting the tower on the gym is not feasible because of the potential new projects, school expansion, and roof replacement. It made more sense to erect a freestanding tower. There are three potential sites that will be narrowed down to one. The sites are highlighted by the yellow pins in the picture. It will first be narrowed down to two options and they will review constructability and the distance from the building because of the small generator that is associated with the tower. The two towers that are located at the bottom of the photo are the two favorable spots at this time. They are most favorable because of screening and the ability to connect to the current utilities without getting into a lot of underground work.

Smartlink has been asked to provide the Board of Education with all of the information in regards to safety of installing the cell tower for the students.



Jill Browne asked for clarification on what happens once Smartlink gets the approval for the Connecticut Siting Permit. Does Smartlink come back to the Board of Education for another vote to move forward?

-Tim Callahan: The next step will not need approval. The permit will be issued and Corporation Counsel will have to review the statute chapter 824 lease referral. Corporation Counsel will have to ensure the Board of Education can engage in this before it is brought back for any approval. Corporation Counsel will make a referral to the Board of Education and City Council saying it has been approved. After the lease referral is approved, the next step will be discussion of the lease agreement with Corporation Counsel and Roger Rousseau.

Chair Carlson: Approximately 6-8 years ago, there was another company that wanted a tower installed on the Northeast property – There are cell sites on the water tower; is this the one of the companies that is on the water tower?

-Tim Callahan: No, those are Sprint, this is AT&T

This is a lease with AT&T. There is an option to add other components and other companies to this in the future. They will be looking at expandability as it gets further into the project.

Chair Carlson: Is this a part of the 5G network? 5G are supposed to be smaller and closer to the ground.

-Tim Callahan will find out. He proposes that as the project moves forward, Smartlink is invited to a meeting to speak on the details of the project.

Commissioner Sklenka: What is the exposure of the Board of Education? (insurances, liability)

-Tim Callahan: That would be included in the detail of the contract when it is set up.

Tim Callahan is looking for a motion to explore installing the cell tower on the Northeast Middle School property and to allow Smartlink to apply for the Connecticut Siting Permit. This is only the exploratory phase and the Board of Education can withdraw at any time.

Commissioner Vibert: Recalls several years ago, a company came in and wanted to put a cell tower up in the same area. She vaguely remembers when it was originally brought to the Board of Education, they Board of Education said "no." Commissioner Vibert also recalls this wasn't enough information on how safe they are.

-Timothy Callahan was informed that there was talk about expanding the array on the top of the water tower and the water department would not let them. They came to a standstill and negotiations stopped.

Chair Carlson agreed, he was on the water board and the company did want to expand the array on the water tower. They came forward with a plan to put a tower in that was met with resistance from the public and he suspects this one will too. If anything is done with it, the tower should be off into the woods and away from the school.

Commissioner Giantonio is requesting clarification on whether or not this will be a 5g tower. What is the noise level that will be produced from the accompanying generator? Will there be any electronic interference with the school networks? Last June, there was a very controversial story on a 5G tower going up near a school in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL. Commissioner Giantonio feels any environmental and safety concerns and hazard information about the tower being near the school needs to be presented to the Board. The story addressed concerns of exposure from the emissions of waves and radiation to/from the tower. She did not look into any significant amount of detail. The link of the story will be shared with the guests at the meeting.

Commissioner Wilson: A point of clarity – Tim has used "we" and this is not "we" but a third party that will be putting up the tower on the Northeast Middle School property that they would be leasing from the Board of Education. "We" in the Board of Education would not be putting up the structure.

On a motion by Commissioner Sklenka and seconded by Commissioner Wilson, it was unanimously voted to approve to move to the full Board of Education the recommendation to begin the due diligence survey and conceptual design by Smartlink to add a cell tower at the Northeast Middle School property, located at 530 Stevens Street, Bristol, CT and to allow Smartlink to apply for a Connecticut Siting Permit.

4. OLD BUSINESS

None at this time

5. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Sklenka and seconded by Chair Carlson, the meeting was adjourned at 6:21 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tara Landon

APPROVED