

High School Building Committee sends plans to council, Board of Ed

By Alicia B. Smith
Associate Editor

FARMINGTON — The Town Council and Board of Education will now have the opportunity to vote on plans for the renovations of Farmington High School following final approval by the high school building committee May 3.

The committee has spent well over a year considering numerous options and selected a final plan after adjustments were made to scale back the size and cost of its chosen option, which calls for upgrades for the building to be ADA compliant, reduces sprawl, and updates the auditorium and gymnasium while also adding parking. The plan also maintains the original high school building, built in 1928, a portion of which will become offices for the Board of Education.

The new construction will consist of a main entrance opening to the administrative offices in a portion of the building that will

be three stories and house classrooms. Extending east of this portion of the building will be a main hallway leading to the cafeteria, auditorium, music area, gymnasium and lockers, and the tech and automotive education area.

The second floor will consist of the guidance department, classrooms and art rooms, with a balcony area looking down into the cafeteria. The third floor will consist of more classrooms.

The site plan calls for additional parking spaces from about 500 to about 540, a new drop-off/pick-up area, and the tennis courts will be moved to the eastern part of the property. Access to the playing fields will be renovated.

Construction will take place in five phases for an overall period of 36 months with completion scheduled for 2022.

Original projected costs for the project ranged from \$125 million to \$139 million for a building measuring 239,000 square feet.

As the building committee re-evaluated the plans, additional space was considered, increasing the size of the building by 10,000 square feet and the cost to \$142 million. Eventually, the committee decided to eliminate some of the design options, resulting in a reduction of cost by \$6.2 million. The final cost of the project is \$135.4 million.

The committee found savings by deleting a locker room, relocating the Board of Education offices to the high school, eliminating some collaboration space and parking lot modifications.

The Board of Education offices will relocate to the first floor and a portion of the second floor of the 1928 building, the rest of which will remain unused except for storage and could have a future community use.

"One of the reasons I supported this is the phasing," committee member Jean Baron said. "I'm very satisfied with how things will go."

Committee Chair Bill Wadsworth thanked those hired to draw up plans, O and G Industries and Kaestle Boos Associates, Inc., for their willingness to adjust options at the committee's request.

The Board of Education will meet May 22 and the Town Council May 23. The town meeting to move the project to referendum will take place June 5, with voting set for June 15.

For more information visit fhsbuildingproject.org.



Courtesy photo

From left to right: First Selectman Ted Shafer; Janet Schwartz Chair of the Burlington Community Fund; Jarre Betts of the Main Street Community Foundation; Michael Haaser, EMT; Chief Andrew Mercieri and EMT in training Enzo Mercieri

BVFD accepts community fund donation to cover cost of AEDs

By Sloan Brewster
Senior Staff Writer

BURLINGTON — There can't be too many automated external defibrillators.

Andrew Mercieri, chief of the Burlington Volunteer Fire Department, has a goal of getting one AED for each member of the department to keep in his or her personal vehicle, he said.

That way, if a call for a cardiac arrest comes in from the outskirts of town, anyone nearby can go and quickly come to the person's aid.

For example, if the call comes from the Lake Garda area, it would take the ambulance seven minutes to get there from the main fire station on George Washington Turnpike where the ambulances are parked.

"But, if you're next door, you can go," Mercieri said.

Mercieri encourages anyone in the department with an AED to go out and help someone during a cardiac emergency, he said, especially if they are nearby.

On Monday, May 1, the Burlington Community Fund presented the department a check for \$2,300 for two AEDs for two members' cars.

"This would cut much time and result in a more positive outcome for the person in crisis," said Janet Schwartz, chair of the Burlington Community Fund.

On Sunday, May 7, Mercieri said the department was grateful for the donation.

"It will go a long way," he said. "The new units actually came in Friday and will go in service as we speak."

With the two new units, the department now has 11. There is one in each fire truck and in the ambulance, the chief has one for his de-

partment vehicle, and now there are two for personal vehicles.

Mercieri is hoping to get eight more.

Burlington is a Heart Safe Community, meaning there are AEDs in public locations, such as parks and Town Hall.

"Anywhere where people go," he said. "this just helps to augment it even more."

Recently, the AED in Town Hall was used to help an employee who suffered a heart attack.

"Through the use of the AED, they were able to help and they're OK now," Mercieri said.

Anyone wishing to make a donation for more AEDs should send checks or bring cash to the Burlington Volunteer Fire Department at 719 George Washington Turnpike, Burlington, 06013.



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