

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Unatego Facilities Study Advisory Committee  
FROM: Alan Pole and Bill Silky  
RE: Meeting Notes-Meeting of December 3, 2015  
DATE: December 7, 2015

**Attendance:**

Committee Members: Jeanne Butler, Heather Coleman, Ron Decker, Ed Frazier, Scott Garno, Kim Gascon, Patti Hoyt, Katie James, Lew Keyser, Ernie Kroll, Elaine Lowe, Katherine Mazourek, Kelly Poje, Tyler Post (for Terry Brown), Melanie Ruff, Fran Secor, and Kim Trask

Consultants: Alan Pole and Bill Silky

Observers: Ed Horan, Allison Collins, Sandra Banczkowski, Brenda McEntee, Angela Flavell, Ruth Modinger, Kathy Knox, J McDermott, Stuart Anderson, Shaun Barnes, Roger Butler, Mike Carson, and Bert Beames

Superintendent: David Richards

Location: Otego Elementary School

1. Superintendent Dave Richards, who was not able to attend the last meeting, welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanked them for their participation on this committee and introduced the study consultants.
2. Bill Silky reviewed the future meetings of the advisory committee as follows:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>December 17</b>	<b>Continued exploration of possible options</b>	<b>Unadilla Elementary</b>
<b>January 21</b>	<b>Continued exploration of possible options and tentative conclusions/recommendations from consultants</b>	<b>Junior-Senior High School</b>
<b>March 1*</b>	<b>Review of draft final report</b>	<b>TBD</b>

While the meetings of the advisory committee will begin at 6:30 pm, optional tours of Unadilla Elementary and the Junior-Senior High School will be held before each of the

next two meetings beginning at 5:45 pm. These optional tours are for committee members and for anyone that will be observing the meeting that will follow.

3. Alan Pole provided an analysis of the middle school and high school room utilization. There are 49 classrooms that are used an average of 5.8 periods out of a 9 period day. There are 7 empty classrooms including the faculty room and the board room and 6 full size classrooms are currently being used for special education resource rooms. Currently, there are 3 sections of 5<sup>th</sup> grade, 3 sections of 4<sup>th</sup> grade, and 3 sections of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade so it appears that 5<sup>th</sup> grade could be moved into the high school.

4. Staffing reductions that have been made by the district were reviewed. In the past 5 years, approximately 20-25 positions have been reduced.

5. Utility costs were reviewed for the three school campuses. If the Otego Elementary School were to be closed, approximately \$35,000 in utility costs could be saved.

6. In the event that one elementary school was closed, it appears that the following positions might be able to be eliminated: 1 principal, 1 secretary, 1 RN, 1 computer lab teaching assistant, 1 music teacher, 0.5 PE teacher, 1.5 custodial positions, and 1 cafeteria worker. This could amount to approximately \$392,000.

7. The architects are in the process of completing the building conditions survey and calculating the estimated costs of building a K-5 elementary school on the junior-senior high school campus. Neither of these things had been completed so they will be carried over to the next meeting.

8. Alan Pole reviewed “feasible” and “desirable” options as follows. Feasible options are grade/building arrangements that can be implemented based on available space and facility conditions. Desirable options are grade/building arrangements that are feasible *and* are desirable based on available space, facility conditions, educational soundness and fiscal responsibility.

9. Bill Silky reviewed three options for the facilities. He then asked the advisory committee members to break up into groups in order to define advantages and disadvantages for each option AND to determine if there should be additional options considered. The following is the input from the advisory committee.

### Option 1: Remaining as is (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12)

<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>
<p>*will not create turmoil (no disruption): keeps everyone happy</p> <p>* <i>fifth grade can remain where they have recess</i></p> <p>*<i>fifth grade would not be mixed in with high school students; keeps age groups separate</i></p> <p>*<i>PreK can be housed at Unadilla</i></p> <p>*<i>don't have to deal with maintaining an empty building</i></p> <p>*<i>room for growth</i></p> <p>*<i>maintains property values in village "desirability"</i></p> <p>*<i>keeps enrollment up?????</i></p> <p>*<i>needs of age groups are being met</i></p>	<p>*inefficient use of space in the schools</p> <p>*does not offer any financial savings</p> <p>*<i>if nothing changes now, nothing will change</i></p> <p>*<i>instructional time is lost at the end of each day for busing</i></p> <p>*<i>annual repair costs</i></p> <p>*<i>future costs are unpredictable</i></p>

***(Italics indicate thoughts of the committee members.)***

**NOTES:**

*1-One group noted that there should be a five year plan for this option*

### Option 2: Close Otego Elementary School, make Unadilla K-4, move 5<sup>th</sup> grade to the Middle School

<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>
<p>*makes much better use of space</p> <p>*offers considerable financial savings</p> <p>*<i>no shuttle buses like we have now so instructional impact won't be great like it is now; improves transportation overall</i></p> <p>*<i>more opportunities for teachers to collaborate</i></p> <p>*<i>more accommodating for parents not to have multiple elementary buildings</i></p> <p>*<i>more opportunity for student interactions among grade levels (buddy reading, writing, etc.)</i></p>	<p>*backlash due to emotional attachment to the Otego Elementary School.</p> <p>*K-2 students from the Otego Elementary School would have to ride the bus longer</p> <p>*there would likely be some staff members that would lose jobs</p> <p>*<i>fifth grade is too young for our current building set-up at MS/HS; maturity level of students; how did moving 6<sup>th</sup> grade to the middle school work?</i></p> <p>*<i>after school program—those families that live in Otego will have to travel to Unadilla to</i></p>

<p><i>*easy for service provider schedules (i.e., counselors)</i></p>	<p><i>pickup students</i>  <i>*loss of room for growth</i>  <i>*question of impact on home values of taxpayers and therefore loss of tax revenue to school district; desirability for home buyers and maybe lose families to other districts</i>  <i>*Unadilla floods</i>  <i>*cost of perhaps relocating the bus garage</i>  <i>*lack of extra gym and field space</i>  <i>*more difficulty scheduling specials, lunches, etc.</i>  <i>*lessens possibility of PK</i>  <i>*less space for tier groups and accommodating test mods</i></p>
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***(Italics indicate thoughts of the committee members. )***

*NOTE: One comment as a con was there recently has been a re-assessment in one town that shifted the burden of taxes between towns. While we recognize this may be a concern to residents of the school district, we don't believe it is either a pro or con for this study as it is out of the control of the school district. Another group noted that there should be a five year plan for this option.*

**Option 3: Close both elementary schools and build a new K-5 elementary school on the Junior-Senior High School campus.**

<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>
<p><i>*would most likely make better use of district space</i>  <i>*would ensure an up-to-date elementary school for 20st century learning</i>  <i>*transportation would be shorter for some elementary students; bus transferring issue disappear</i>  <i>*gaining 20 minutes of instructional time</i>  <i>*more accommodating for parents not to have multiple elementary buildings</i>  <i>*more opportunity for student interactions among grade levels (buddy reading, writing, etc.)</i>  <i>*easy for service provider schedules (i.e., counselors)</i>  <i>*No Otego vs. Unadilla—nobody wins; no</i></p>	<p><i>*backlash due to emotional attachment to both the Otego and Unadilla elementary schools</i>  <i>*there is a local cost to building a new school</i>  <i>*transportation would be longer for some elementary students</i>  <i>*empty buildings and what to do with them in both towns</i>  <i>*length of time before a new school is built (5 years) and difficulty having to get a proposition passed</i>  <i>*bus garage is still at Otego</i>  <i>*the parking lot is already an issue at the MS/HS so it would need to be redesigned</i></p>

<i>more Otego vs. Unadilla mentality</i> <i>*there would no longer be flooding concerns</i> <i>*makes it easier to share services between the elementary and MS/HS</i>	
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*(Italics indicate thought of the committee members.)*

**NOTES:**

*1-One group suggested using Greenies existing building as base for new elementary*

*2-A group suggested possibly closing Otego while building a new campus as an option*

*3-Whether there is enough site space was one question a group listed*

*4-One group simply listed that this option is not feasible at present and did not list any pros or cons.*

**Option 4: Close Unadilla Elementary School, make Otego K-?, move remaining elementary grades to the Middle School and some number of Middle School grades to the High School.**

<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>

*NOTE: This was an option brought up by the committee that will be explored from a space perspective and further discussed at a future meeting.*

10. The meeting was opened up to the committee members and to observers for questions and comments. There were a number of comments and questions including the following:

What is the appraised value of the district’s buildings?

How much is owed on the buildings?

What is the impact on property values when schools close in a community?

Is there a capital reserve for helping to finance future capital projects?

Can Unadilla be closed? This is option #4 above.

Responses to all of the questions will be provided at the next meeting.

11. The next advisory committee meeting will be held on Thursday, December 17, 2015 at Unadilla Elementary School. An optional tour of the school will begin at 5:45 for anyone who is interested. The meeting of the Advisory Committee will begin at 6:30 p.m.

We believe this covers the essence of the discussions at our meeting on December 3. If you have questions with these notes, please feel free to contact me. We will also review these notes as the first agenda item at our next meet at Unadilla Elementary.....tour will begin at 5:45 and meeting will start at 6:30!!

C: David Richards