

1. **Introductions:** Judy Nelson stated that she is the school board representative on the building committee and she would like to thank everyone for coming, it is nice to see everyone here. She stated that she would like to thank the select board for changing their meeting night and they will be open back up tomorrow night at 6:30. She stated that she would like to thank the group who put the signs up to get people here tonight. She stated that her role here tonight is as a facilitator to make sure the proceedings go smooth. She stated that the purpose of this meeting is to hear from you and get your thoughts on what is going on. She stated that in the back there is a survey for people to fill out. She introduced the school board, SAU staff, Architects and Construction Management firm.
2. **Presentation:** Banwell Architects gave a presentation. (See attached) Nelson stated that they had a bond bank presentation and using the current bond rates for the ease of discussion they showed the level debt where the payment stays the same each year. She stated that with option one the tax rate increase would be \$2.07 and the cost per thousand on a \$200,000 home is a \$414 impact each year for twenty years. Option eight would be \$2.32 and the cost per thousand on a \$200,000 home would be \$464 each year for twenty years.
3. **Questions:** Lester Wall stated that would be per year for twenty years correct. He then asked what the interest rate is. Nelson stated yes each year and the interest rate is 3.03%. Mike Rhode stated that the guaranteed maximum price for a project never comes in at that price and asked if they are willing to put that in writing. Nelson stated that we have been told that is the guaranteed maximum price. Mark from Harvey Construction stated that we have already put that in writing and we do a lot of public work and we know that there is a bonded amount of money available for the project and any savings that we have go back to the owner. He stated that the architect can vouch for them that they don't go over on publicly bonded work, this is the guaranteed price. A resident asked how they get selected. Mark stated that there was a public bid proposal process. Nelson stated that they went through public RFP to choose architects and construction management firms. She stated that we interviewed four architects and we interviewed six construction management firms. She stated that the track record with Harvey is that they have been able to return money and this is a guaranteed price. She stated that we went through public interviews. Ingrid Nichols stated that with construction management firms all the work is still bid out they are just managing the process, it is all open book bidding. Lucy Putnam asked if the Harvey Construction reputation with the town hall renovations considered at all. Nelson stated no we looked at school buildings. Putnam stated that the board should review the town history with Harvey because there are problems there. Dennis St. Hilaire stated that he can't believe that the project won't go over budget we are talking about change orders and everything, they are lying to us. Ingrid Nichols stated that we have to balance how much to spend before it gets approved and we do as much as we can to put a budget to it. She stated that if it passes in March the real work will begin and we need to be diligent because what passes is all we have to work with. She stated that they have never gone over budget and it is all about being responsible with the design and working hard on

bidding it out. Carl from Harvey Construction stated that it is different working with a general contractor and a construction management firm. He stated that once the design is finalized we put it out to bid with three per trade and all bids are collected and summarized and we sit with the building committee and make a recommendation and once it is approved we then proceed to make the award. He stated that on the last four schools we have been successful enough to give money back. He stated that if we do it for less 100% is returned to the tax payers. He stated that there are change orders but we manage it within the money that is available and the only time we have seen the number expand is when it is an owner driven change. Brian Pelleran stated that he is having trouble picturing a million dollars in the form of a building and asked how many people have been to the library, the fair market value of that building is one million and stated that this is a big project and when they considered a 7 or 7.7 million dollar bond if they were thinking of it in terms of the retail value of all of Rollinsford. Nelson stated no, we were thinking about education. Tamia Porter stated that if we say yes in March then you bid everything out and asked if that is where the money starts changing. Nelson stated that they are giving us a guaranteed maximum price and it will not go over that, they have experience and know when to put out to bid and know what it is supposed to cost. She stated that she can't say enough that this is a guaranteed price otherwise we wouldn't be considering this. Carl from Harvey Construction stated that it is our job to manage the money and to bring in the project for no more than the price you are told and it is on us to manage that to meet the dollar amount. He stated that there is no seed money to go out. He stated that the work that has been done is on our shoulders and every portion will get bid out. Robert Cavanaugh stated that there will be recurring annual costs for maintenance and there will be a lot of added expenses down the line. He asked if we are going to end up spending millions on junk. Nelson stated that she hopes that will not be the case. She stated that we don't know the operational costs yet but the building will be more efficient. She stated that the town supported the school board hiring a facility manager had he has already made a difference. Robert Cavanaugh stated that should be figured out ahead of time and you should have the operational budget forecasted. Nelson stated that they will see what they can do. Ed Jansen stated that one side of the equation is the cost to the tax payer and the tax rate but in 2012 the rate increased by \$4.00 because we reevaluated the town and we lost assessed value of \$38 million. He stated that nobody can guarantee the tax base will be there years from now so you need to take that into consideration. Nelson stated that the journal of economics states that there is a 6% increase in home values predicted after school facility investments. An increase on a \$200,000 home equals a \$12,000 gain on investment. Michelle Small stated that the cap is the amount of money available and that is the maximum amount connected to the project but in Unity they bid out a job and everything went bad and the town had to scrounge up \$3 million, what is the difference there? Ingrid Nichols stated that we were called in to fix that issue. She stated that the architect was also the contractor and also the owner's rep so there were no checks and balances and they had never designed a school before and he got in over his head. She stated that they along with the new construction management firm passed the additional money in March and they opened in September. She stated that you have two very experienced firms here and this is a guaranteed price and our job is to work together. June Gallop stated that \$7 million is a lot of money, she

loves RGS but what is your contingency plan if this doesn't pass. Nelson stated that they have started to look at that because the school will need some work to get through next year. She stated that they haven't priced it out yet but they are looking at what is necessary. June Gallop stated that there is a space issue here and asked if there are other options as a community such as removing the sixth grade to open up more space. Nelson stated that the other option is to do the work in the IBEA study and that is over \$6 million to do all of those things just to replace mechanicals. She stated that she did a back of the envelope calculation on sending the sixth grade and it would cost more than to keep them here. June Gallop asked what about sending all the kids. Nelson stated that the board is looking at keeping education in Rollinsford. Sheila Riley asked what the total effective cost bonded out for 20 years with the interest rate included at 3.03%. Nelson stated that for option one the total cost is \$9,369,708 and for option eight the total would be \$10,346,869. She stated that these are estimated ball park figures. Jan Janetos asked if we don't do this and the school doesn't meet state criteria will the state come in and close the school down. Nelson stated that we do have a number of waivers because we are out of ADA compliance and are unable to accommodate a student in a wheelchair and security is a big issue for the board. Jan Janetos asked if we send all the kids to Marshwood if there will be a cost savings. Nelson stated that she has done a back of the envelope calculation based on this year's figures and the first year we would save approximately \$800,000. Beth Murhead stated that was scoped out to do and maybe you can't do it like you thought. Mark from Harvey Construction stated no, we provide a performance and payment bond and it binds us to finish the project at the cost. Joe Caoette stated that we have an SB2 mandate and I am hearing you allude to a March meeting and the warrants are settled in January in the first session. Nelson stated yes the warrants are in January and in March they will be voted on by the town. A resident asked if the state is mandating that we do this and what is the state pitching in to pay for it. They asked how the state can mandate it when they are not willing to pay. Nelson stated that there is no state aid for building. A resident asked how much we have spent so far. Nelson stated under \$100,000. Suzanne Huard asked with the back of the envelope calculation to send the kids to marshwood if that included special education costs. She stated that she it is hard not to think about being a cash cow for Marshwood. She stated that we will have no control over teacher contracts and buildings we will just be given an invoice. She stated that we would lose all control. She stated that in regards to the value of property she wonders what would happen if we don't have a K-something school to educate our children there would be less incentive for families to move here. She stated that we become a community that will lose vitality if we don't have families. Kathy Lamb stated that two years ago we had 190 kids K-6 and now we only have 130 kids. Nelson stated 158 kids. Charlie Putnam stated that he would like to thank the board for doing the work. He stated that his memory of the relationship between the town and Harvey was a miss-measurement of the elevator. He stated that he is not comfortable with Harvey and that may change his thinking on how to vote and he urged them to get the history. He stated that the different between \$800,000 a year and the cost per pupil is a major difference and the values conflict. He stated that he would like to see Rollinsford have a primary school but we have an aging demographic and he thinks the school board should do some research on a tuition based plan in order to have more data for people when they come to vote.

Nelson stated that the board is willing to take more time and get community members involved, we are not locked into anything. Susan Janetos asked if they have projected how many students will be here in ten years. She stated that there was a small town in Maine that bonded for 20 years and then there were not enough kids and they had to close the school and town continued to pay for the building and it is still empty today. Nelson stated that we have not done projections. Robert Megan stated that before we waste money we need to do a cost benefit analysis. He stated that the school hasn't been fixed since Jay Roy was here and you have allowed the building to deteriorate and he would like to see the town come up with alternatives rather than appeal to my emotions. A resident asked if on the ballot there will be options to go to another school district. Nelson stated that there will be one option to vote on and we will not put forward to check into other districts. Bill Hassett asked if there is something that the citizens have to do to have the board look into other options other than these and how can we be sure you will look at the other options. Nelson stated that we want to hear what the people want to happen and if we get a petition warrant article we are legally bound to do it and if we get comment cards we are morally bound to look into it. Woolley stated that the purpose was to hear how the town is feeling about what needs to be done. She stated that we have done the groundwork and the price tags are overwhelming and we need to know how the town feels and we have clearly heard that these are not the most popular and asked if the town wants them to investigate us going elsewhere. A resident stated that the enrollment has dropped to 150 kids and asked why we needed 11,000 more square feet and asked if we were projecting enrollments. Tamara Neidlekowski stated that the board should survey the entire community to ask everyone questions because we need to know how people feel about a community without a school. Nelson stated that if we don't have a school we have no place for us to come together like this. A resident stated that the school board is pushing their agenda and are not trying to listen to the people. He stated that we are saying no and we want a cheaper option and to think outside the box. He stated that we are sick of it and have had it. He stated that he works for the state and they do a CIP every year so it isn't such a big price tag. He stated that it is wrong what they are trying to do tonight. Jim Jalbert stated that we are all responsible for the deferred maintenance. He stated that we as a community don't want to spend money, everyone kicks and screams at town meeting and now we are in a pickle and he doesn't think that the board can be faulted. He stated that it is easy to take shots. He stated that he thinks that there needs to be a longer look at the whole problem. He stated that NH is an aging population and people are leaving our state. He stated that we all need to take responsibility and we need to look at where we will be in five years. He stated that we need to get more involvement with other citizens. He stated that there is no control over Marshwood and the \$800,000 savings could dwindle. He stated that there needs to be a lot more thought and energy. Gary Fjeld stated that the \$800,000 was just a guess it is not a finite number and can change in a second and we don't know what is included in that number. Tamia Porter stated that she worked here with a child in a wheelchair and she is confused as to where he didn't get with a wheelchair. Nelson stated that it doesn't meet ADA compliance. Ingrid Nichols stated that if the chair lift is being used there is no egress in an emergency. A resident stated that you should increase the building maintenance per year and chip away at it like a homeowner would.

Nelson stated that one reason is that the budget committee asked the board to stop coming each year asking for money and to find out what it would cost for everything to be fixed and we are doing the research we were asked to do. Madeline Cambo stated that when taxes go up the property values go down and if we send the kids to Marshwood the school could get repurposed into a town hall center. Bob Letour stated that he is interested in other options, do you not have a study by Marshwood telling you exactly how much it would cost. Nelson stated that the Superintendent contacted Marshwood informally to ask them if they had room and if they are willing to take kids and know what the cost is for next year. Bob Latour stated that it would be \$9213 per student and we are paying \$16,000 now and if you add the bond it would be over \$20,000 per student and we could get it for \$9213 in Marshwood. Nelson stated that does not include transportation and special education. Bob Latour stated that is a tremendous savings. Brian Pelleran stated that someone mentioned putting in an elevator for ADA compliance and that the current system for a wheelchair is a violation of life safety codes due to blocking egress but the fire chief can make an exception as long as he is ok with the current system and asked if we could do a small project. Ingrid Nichols stated that they were tasked with looking at the comprehensive needs. Michelle Small stated that she has been in town for 30 years and she would hate to see us lose the grade school but she is not interested in having her taxes go up either. She stated that when you take the grade school out you are stripping the roots of the town and the kids and this is the focal point of where everyone meets and we were introduced to a lot of people through the school. She stated that when you farm out you lose an important component to a small NH town. She stated that picking away at it has done us well in the past. She stated that when you rush to ship kids off you are changing the entire atmosphere of the town and she doesn't know that it is positive. Larry Marcotte asked what the contract is with Marshwood. Nelson stated six years. Larry Marcotte asked if it is conceivable that they can say see you later. Nelson stated yes they can if they have no room. She stated that k-3 would go all the way to Eliot which is a 45 minute bus ride for a ½ day. Jody Lavoie Carnes stated that she would like to thank the board for their work and transparency. She stated that this is not the only thing we have to look at we have to look at the town proposal as well. Sandy Early stated that she is worried about the tax rate and house value, what happens if there is no school. Madeline Cambo stated that if taxes go down we become a more desirable community. Sheila Riley stated that she would like to thank them all for their work. She stated that on her 2014 tax bill the total tax rate is \$26.50 per \$1000 and of that \$26.50, \$17.12 goes to the grade school. Nelson stated that is k-12. Sheila Riley stated that \$3.89 per thousand is everything else in this town. She stated that she is very sensitive to the sense of community with the school and she looked at is the quality of Marshwood equal to the value or better. She stated that it is pretty darn close and we need to think of that as a possibility. She stated that we need to talk to the planning board and come up with a long term plan. She state that the population of Rollinsford is aging and fewer new homes are being built on an annual basis. She stated that there is very specific information out there by the planning board and 158 kids is 40 kids less is a concern. Kim St. Hilaire stated that there is a proposal that was given to the school board from Marshwood and she saw the numbers and it is half the cost. Nelson stated that it does not include special education and transportation. Kim St. Hilaire stated that she doesn't know how

she came up with that cost. Nelson stated that special education can vary wildly from year to year. Kim St. Hilaire stated that there is a petition warrant article to include our children in MSAD 35 if anyone wants to sign it. Norm Grount stated that he would like to thank the board for their work. He stated that this is only a fraction of the problem of the town. The big picture we are fixing things and not fixing the problem. He stated that the real problem is that we don't have enough tax revenue and we can't put the burden on our residents. He stated that the town is very business unfriendly in the past and bought property in Dover in order to prevent houses coming in to slow down residential growth. He stated that we need businesses to take the tax burden off the residents. He stated that this is not just a school problem. He stated that it would be sad to see the kids leave this town and we would have no control over that. A resident stated that this town is the 21<sup>st</sup> highest for taxes in the state and we are the 9<sup>th</sup> highest for paying teachers and we are going to drive people right out of this town because you can't afford to live here to retire. A resident asked if they looked at the cost of building a new school. Nelson stated that this site is grandfathered and we can't build a new school here and buying a new site would triple the cost because site work would have to be done. Lucy Putnam stated that in 2001 there were 210 students in the school and today the students per class has gone down drastically and we have 50 less students and we haven't reduced teachers. She stated that she is confused because we are looking at everything staying the same and there are other cost savings that can be done. She stated that it would be a tremendous loss to the town to lose this school. Tamia Porter stated that there was a space needs committee that looked at this and she believes that everything they wanted to do was around \$2 million and she doesn't know how that turned into \$7 million. She stated that there is attic space and asked if that was looked at. She stated that it would be a huge negative if we lose this school. Nelson stated that we did look at the attic but we would need elevator access and a stairway added to the cost so we ruled that out but the study has been looked at. Emily Leach stated that losing the school would be a detriment to the community and she would encourage the board to look into options. She stated that an emergency can become real in the blink of an eye and safety is important so she would not like to see this delayed that long because the safety of our children needs to be addressed sooner rather than later.

4. **Next Steps:** nelson stated that the board would like to form a community committee to help us move forward. She stated that we need to get the word out to get a group together with as many points of view as possible. She stated that there was a suggestion of a town survey and we will talk about that at the next meeting. She stated that this Wednesday is a budget committee meeting at 6:30 at RGS. She stated that Thursday is the regular school board meeting at 6:30 at RGS. The public hearing on the budget is on January 17<sup>th</sup> and the deliberative session is on January 30<sup>th</sup>.
5. **Adjournment:** The forum closed at 7:55pm.

Katie Krauss  
Board Secretary

Pending Board Approval