

Engineering funds go to the school

Two-room addition at LAS moves forward

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HAMPTON FALLS — Although they have been delayed longer than expected, the Hampton Falls School Board is still working on plans for a two-classroom addition at the Lincoln Akerman School.

Board Chairwoman Ellen Christo went before the Board of Selectmen last week to request impact fee funds to pay for the project's initial engineering costs.

Impact fees, which are associated with the growth ordinance and total school population, are intended for use by the school to compensate for population growth.

At the Aug. 19 meeting, selectmen discussed the original March 18 motion and the way in which impact funds were intended to be released.

Minutes from a March 18 Board of Selectmen meeting indicate Christo came before the board to discuss the release of \$235,000 for a two-classroom addition to the school. At the time, selectmen "approved the release" of impact fees up to that amount, provided "there is a signed, approved agreement for design and construction."

"The wording in our motion before was very specific," Selectmen Chairman Michael Farinola told Christo on Aug. 19, citing the stipulation that there be plans for the addition.

According to Christo, a contract has been signed with Compass Point Properties for general contracting work, although the plans have yet to be approved by the necessary town officials including the fire chief and building inspector, and the state fire marshal.

Christo informed selectmen that the School Board was seeking funding for outstanding engineering costs. According to Christo, there had been previous discussions with town officials regarding the fact that \$10,000 in engineering costs might be needed for the project. "Engineering has to be done before we even seek approval," Christo said.

During the March 18 meeting Christo said the board hoped the addition would be complete by the last week of August. According to Christo, the project is "taking longer than we originally thought."

She said the extended time frame for the project caused her to come to the Board of Selectmen for the release of funds for a specific outstanding bill. Since the School Board thought the project "would be further along" and all approval taken care of at this point, Christo said her board would also have anticipated the "lump sum" of impact fee funds would "be in our bank account by now as opposed to sitting in the impact fee account."

Although selectmen eventually voted to "authorize \$8,150 for engineering fees and approve the release of \$5,360 to pay for engineering fees," they also decided to leave the original March 18 motion intact.

The connection between life and safety code compliance issues at Lincoln Akerman was also discussed at the Aug. 19 Board of Selectmen meeting.

Farinola questioned whether "the upgrade triggered the other work (to bring the school into compliance with the life and safety code)."

Despite the "hesitation building anything because the rest of the building is so out of code, technically, it is a different project," Christo said, "but we are certainly looking at all the stuff at the same time."