

Good evening, everyone. I'd like to welcome you all to the October work session of the Croton-Harmon Board of Education, and I'd like to call this meeting to order. We will move on to the approval of the agenda. I would actually like to make a change to the agenda before we approve. We will change the order of our work sessions, so 5.1 will now be the ECG recommendation.

5.2 will be the review of Tri-State's spring 2020 report. And then 5.3 will be the trustee vacancy. Given that we do have outside presenters joining us, we wanted to move them up and have them be able to present first. So with those changes, recommended action that the Board of Education approves the agenda as presented.

So moved.

Second.

All in favor? Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Oppose? Abstain? Motion carries. All right, and we will now move into new business. Recommended action that the Board of Education accepts and approves the independent audit report prepared by Nugent and Haeussler, PC, for the year ending June 30, 2020, and the management response letter as presented.

So moved.

Second.

On the question? All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Aye. Oppose? Abstain? Motion carries. We will now move into instructional personnel. Recommended action that the Board of Education approves the instructional personnel appointments as presented.

So moved.

Second.

On the question? All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Aye. Oppose? Abstain? Motion carries. And 3.2 recommended action that the Board of Education of the Croton-Harmon Union Free School District hereby ratifies and approves the agreement between the district and employee 1304, dated October 13, 2020, and hereby authorizes the superintendent of schools to execute all documents pertaining to the same and take all auctions consistent with the terms thereof.

So moved.

Second?

On a question? All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Oppose? Abstain? Motion carries. We will now move into the consent agenda. Recommended action that the Board of Education approves all items on the consent agenda.

So moved.

Second.

On the question?

Can we hold on one second?

Absolutely.

Up, up, up, up, up, up. OK, thank you.

OK. All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Oppose? Abstain? Motion carries. All right, well, now we will move into our work session. And first up, we will be discussing-- actually, before we head into the action item, I'd like to turn it over to Denise Harrington-Cohen to discuss the information that we've gotten from ECG and let our representatives who joined us tonight also give their presentation. Thank you.

Thank you, Sarah. Good evening. So this portion of our work session will be focused on the energy performance contract. So back in 2019, Dr. O'Connell, Paul Gibbons, and I met with Bill Bassett, who was a former superintendent, and Aldo Mazzaferro from ECG to discuss the potential for an energy performance contract. This initiative was born out of several factors.

Certainly, the Board and administrative sustainability goals and our Environmental Sustainability Committee. Also, the district budget priorities which focused on sustainability efforts, cost containment, and long-term financial planning. And also, despite all of our capital upgrades, it had been nine years since our last EPC, so it was an opportune time to do so. This has been a year in the planning.

I have to tell you, when we first met with them they said it would take about a year to get to this point. And Dr. O'Connell and I looked at each other and we said what? What could take a year? And even despite COVID we are on track and it is a year in and certainly the planning and the technical specificity involved in this process is rather extensive, so it definitely took a year.

At this point, I'd like to introduce Aldo Mazzaferro, he's the director of technical services with ECG. And ECG, Aldo and the team have just been incredible. They allowed us to meet this timeline despite COVID. They've been an incredible support to us on so many levels. So I just really want to thank them. And also Paul Gibbons who's been deeply involved in this process.

And it has been a heavy lift for his team thus far, so I just want to thank him as well. So Al is essentially just going to do a brief overview of what we've done so far, what we hope to accomplish in the year ahead. He will provide us with a rationale for his recommendation, and then at that point

Terry Geary-- did I say that right, Terry-- from Honeywell will do a presentation of their proposal.

We'll have an opportunity to ask some questions, and then my hope is that at that point, we will award the contract if the board is so inclined to do so. So with that, I'm going to pass it on to Aldo. And Tracy, if you could just allow alto to share the screen. Oh, he's on already.

He's got it.

[INAUDIBLE]

[INAUDIBLE]. Everyone can see my screen?

Yep.

Can you hear me OK?

Yep.

So thanks again for having us tonight. Denise, thank you for that introduction. Before I get started, I just want to thank everyone, and the district staff and the board for having the foresight to really push through during COVID and go for this energy performance contract. This is a phenomenal initiative to be looking at right now, especially.

It's a way to get work done, get lighting upgrades done, get critical infrastructure addressed, and also pursue green initiatives in a energy efficient guaranteed savings way. So nothing we're going to get into tonight requires any cost or obligation at this point from the school district. This is really an informational presentation for us to bring you up to speed on everything that we've been working on and to discuss next steps. So we put together this presentation. I'm going to keep it moving to allow time for questions, but thank you again.

So a little bit about my company, the ECG group, bottom line our job here is to protect the district. This is a big complex project. The foundation of it is financially based with guaranteed energy savings. We're a professionally licensed engineering firm, but all we do is energy performance contracting and owners representative services.

We provide these comprehensive services like Denise said. We started working with the district a year ago, where we didn't even know if an opportunity existed. And I'll talk a little bit about what we've done since then. But we're with you all the way through the design, construction, and into what's called the performance period after the project's built, and you're waiting to see if the project is

actually generating a savings.

Now we've been very successful with this. We've done over hundreds of these projects. A couple of the school districts-- you'll notice a few that are local to you, like Bedford and Mahopac. Many other districts have actually done two phases of these projects. Similar to your district, this would be a phase two project, and that's really because of the advance of technology, where if you did a project, you minimized your energy consumption as much as possible back then, but since then, the technology is now advanced and can drive that even further down.

And it's also being driven by the opportunity for solar, which we'll talk about a little bit. These are some of the New York School districts, but we also work throughout Connecticut and Pennsylvania with Pittsburgh schools, Philadelphia schools. And we're actually also working with Putnam county right in your area, so we're very familiar. Like I said, this is all we do in this industry.

For those of you who weren't on the Board during the phase one project, you may be asking yourself, what exactly is an energy performance contract? At its base, it's a partnership between a school district, and ESCO-- Energy Services Company-- ESCO, and an owner's representative. And the idea is that that ESCO-- in this case, Honeywell is here with us tonight-- is going to come out and identify building improvements, and quantify what those savings opportunity and make those improvements, and guarantee the savings of the performance from those improvements.

All the upgrades are paid for, and you're actually going to generate positive cash flow by doing this project. It's a significant funding source for capital upgrades, and there's no taxpayer impact. It's completely budget neutral. There's no impact to your budget because you're really just offsetting what you're currently paying to the utility.

I like to use this slide here. It's a very simplified financial overview, but it really illustrates what we're talking about here. You earned your current energy budget-- for very simple terms, let's say you spend \$100,000 a year. Through this project, I believe we're estimating approximately a 30% reduction off of that utility budget.

In place of that, instead of currently going forward and paying the utility \$100,000 every year, you're actually going to be reducing that budget and in its place paying off the debt for this project. So you're paying for it in arrears with the energy savings or the energy costs that are already in your budget. It's a reallocation of your budget. And then of course, you're generating positive cash flow on top.

So we've been working with the district for over a year. Like I said, we conducted a preliminary energy study last summer-- summer 2019. And fast forward really to this summer where the district moved forward and authorized us to issue a request for proposals on behalf of the district. We held a kickoff meeting. We invited the ESCOs to join. I believe this happened around July 10, July 12, somewhere in that time frame early in the summer.

And over that time, we allowed the energy services companies, the ESCOs to really do site-specific audits of your facilities. Look for every opportunity in the buildings to find savings. What can they improve? What type of equipment can they deploy to generate savings back to the district?

Fast forward to just after Labor Day. I believe it was September 10 or right around there. The district received two proposals. One from Honeywell, and one from Energy Systems Group, or ESG-- not to be confused with my company, ECG. That can be confusing, especially with the Energy Performance Contract, EPC. And we talked about that, so.

We received those proposals early in September, and my team-- we have project engineers, we have professional engineers who are on our staff who all they do is evaluate these proposals. We look at the savings claims, we look at the site findings, the proposed conditions, existing conditions to really validate that what is being proposed is valid, and it's going to stand up and survive through the State Education Department approval process.

And really what we're doing is making sure that you're awarding a project to the company whose scope of work-- and it's all feasible and based in reality, and accurate. So we've conducted all these evaluations. We went through what's called the request for information process, or RFIs, where we send questions to the companies to clarify things.

These binders and books that we received are-- they're telephone books. To go through them, there's obviously a lot of questions that come out of that. So we spent about three weeks, four weeks or so going through that process, doing the diligence on behalf of the district.

And then in early October, we actually conducted interviews with Denise and Paul to meet the companies, talk to them about their proposal, hear about their approach to different aspects of the project, really to meet the team, the person that you're going to be working with really, more so than a simple proposal on paper.

When we evaluate these proposals, we always loop back to the evaluation criteria that's in the RFP. These are basically the scoring basis or the key criteria that we're going to be evaluating the

companies on. Really we're here tonight to recommend Honeywell to proceed because of their performance in these three main categories, which are actually the highest allocation of points of the scoring criteria. The experience, technical, and then their approach to the green sustainable design aspects of the project.

So a little more about why Honeywell, to break this down, experience why is Honeywell has done many projects in the K-12 market, more so than energy systems group. And they've also actually done the phase one project here with the district, so they're intimately familiar with the conditions, the unique intricacies of these buildings and the HVAC systems, things you really can't pick up without spending a lot of time in these buildings and seeing how they perform over time.

And the technical approach. Now, while Honeywell proposed a proposal that was-- well, they submitted a proposal that was detailed and feasible, and we really didn't have a lot of technical feedback on them, this was more so a shortcoming on the other company side where they claimed savings on an oil to gas conversion, which is actually already in process.

So it wouldn't be accurate for them to be able to claim those savings versus any other company. Additionally, there also were a little bit aggressive on some savings calculations related to the LED lighting upgrade. But in short, those changes to those savings, those things that we knew weren't invalid, really corrupted the financial foundation of the project where things would have changed. We know the state wouldn't have fully approved some of these claims or some of these approaches.

So that was a big moving part there that the district felt more comfortable moving forward with Honeywell because of that. And then finally on the green sustainability initiative. Honeywell really put a big emphasis on this aspect of the project, which we did incentivize them to do so by allocating more points to the green sustainability aspect. They proposed almost 400kw of solar PV across all of the district buildings.

ESG only proposed a smaller array at the transportation building, which really isn't-- I would refer to that more as like an educational type system than Honeywell's proposal, which is really going to drive significant savings, really cut off or offset your electric consumption at some of these schools. I don't want to get too detailed into Honeywell's proposal because I don't want to steal Terry's thunder here. But next initial steps.

Tonight there is a resolution like Denise said. This would authorize Honeywell to proceed with the comprehensive energy audit. No cost, no obligation. This is really just let Honeywell go and spend more time in the buildings and really firm up their proposal, and we'll be back to you in two to three

months with the final results, seeking your formal approval of the contract.

So with that, I think that really summarizes my portion of the slides. I do want to pause here to see if you have any questions about the process or my company, or we can introduce Terry and let him get through the details of the proposal.

I have some questions because I have, although I didn't complete looking at ESG, I did review as best I could the Honeywell proposal. There are a couple of questions I have. I don't know whether it's best to do it now because it has some basis of comparison, or wait till after Terry speaks.

I think it might make sense to let Terry get through his scope on savings.

Does anyone else have any questions for Aldo about the overall process or the two different proposals before we hear from Terry? OK.

Excellent. And you can continue to drive the slides, correct?

Yes, sir.

Oh, I did have one thing that I would appreciate if possible, that is after we're done, if the slides could be shared with the Board so that we--

No problem.

--as a point of reference. I think that's for whomever might be able to do that.

I'll send them to Denise, and she can distribute to the board if that works.

Great, great.

Thank you.

Excellent. So, given the opportunity to present this evening. Appreciate the intro, Aldo. Let me introduce myself. So I'm Terry Geary, I head up-- or Gary, either way. Denise, that works. I've been called both. I head up Honeywell's energy team here in New York.

And as Aldo said, ECG focuses almost exclusively in this EPC marketplace. My team does the same. We do nothing but, I'd like to say New York K-12 opportunities. Although we do a little bit in some of the surrounding states. But I'd say probably 95% of our work is strictly in New York, public K-12 opportunities.

We've got a tremendous amount of experience with the State Ed Department, the rules and regulations for doing energy performance contracts, and a good sense of just the overall timeline, which I'll share here shortly. But I wanted to do was just to give a brief overview of that three inch binder that we submitted a number of months back. And again, this is just a starting point. As Aldo said, with your support, we would move on to do a comprehensive energy audit, and we would ultimately take this goal and turn it into a final contract with the mindset of staying within these parameters.

I mean, our goal, and we've consistently achieved it is to retain this goal moving forward. As Aldo said, we know what's going to pass muster with the state. We're not looking to propose work that is going to drop out over the next few months. So I want to give a brief overview here.

The project size we proposed was a little bit over 2.8 million. We're looking to tap into available rebate dollars through Con Edison on the thermal side. Rebates are not available with our electric measures just by nature of the utility company that you're with. You're with NYPA. And just the way you pay your NYPA bill, there's not a charge in that bill that funds a rebate program.

So unfortunately there's no rebate programs available on the electric side, but we are going to tap into and maximize rebate dollars available on the thermal side for some of the saving measures. Well, when I show here, in parentheses, 86.7% aidable. What that means, that's a big contributor to making this cash flow beyond just budget neutral, but actually positive.

A significant portion of this job, 86% is aidable, which means the state will contribute building aid dollars toward it. Some energy conservation measures are not aidable, yet they still have very good payback, and they do help the overall economics of the job. But again, the majority of this job which is great news, you're going to get building aid for.

And I believe you're building a ratio is about 26%, 27%. So the thing of it, it's contributing \$0.26, \$0.27 on the dollar for those portions of the work. On top of the energy savings we're driving, on top of the rebate dollars we're going to grab from the utility company. So those will contribute to what ultimately becomes a positive cash flow project.

The savings we are estimating at this point are about 165,000 per year, predominantly energy. You see a small portion there at 5,900 operational savings. That's on the lighting side, and what that is is strictly just lighting material that you will save as we convert to LED fixtures. LED fixtures that have a much longer, useful life and therefore don't burn out as often as your existing lights do.

So again, the district today is spending a decent amount of money just in replacing lamps in Dallas. A lot of that will go away as you convert to LED. So that's what the operational savings number is. Again, it's just the material savings. It doesn't get into any sort of reduction of staff or labor savings.

The cash flow, as I said, it is a self-funding proposition. That was the criteria of the RFP. The RFP set certain metrics for us to use. They asked us to use a certain interest rate for the period of the financing, which is typically a 15-year period. And they had us use a very conservative rate of 3 and 1/4%.

They also had us escalate what the district spends today. Each and every year at only 2% year over year. Again, if you look at the history of your utilities spend, that is conservative. And this is the mindset-- to produce a conservative starting point that we believe we can only better moving forward. Because quite honestly, we've got EPCs now that we've financed over the last month. The interest rate was 1.9%. I mean, the rates are incredibly attractive right now.

So we certainly-- And I don't expect it getting much different over the next year or so. So I think, again, we're only going to better the interest rates that are shown here.

In terms of our ECMs-- ECM stands for Energy Conservation Measures. We had proposed nine different measures. And I'm not going to run through them right here. I'm going to highlight what I believe are three of the more important ones that we're driving most of the savings for this project. While at the same, time really trying to hit a lot of the priorities for the district that were laid out, not only in the RFP, but during the pre-bid meeting, and then just in our discussions as we were doing walkthroughs with Paul and his staff.

So you want to move the next slide, Aldo? The first ECM that I wanted to highlight is lighting. This is certainly a big driver for the project, and that we're doing a comprehensive conversion to LED district-wide, both interior to the buildings as well as exterior to the buildings.

You can get into some of the particulars here. A few of the things that I wanted to highlight, the State Ed Department has very specific guidelines on how to do an LED conversion in order for this work to be aidable. And that's important because again, your aid ratio is about 27%.

So I just wanted to highlight that we are following those guidelines so that this big lighting portion is going to be aidable from New York state. And this work tends to be done second shift. So it is not summer dependent. I know Paul is very used to when you're planning capital work, trying to time it perfectly for a summer installation.

Whenever we get SED approval-- and I will show what I believe is a realistic timeline-- the lighting can be done regardless of what season it is. We come in second shift. The buildings tend to be open until 10:00, 11:00, 12 o'clock at night. I'm not sure of the exact time, Paul, but we'll take on only areas that we can completely retrofit, clean up.

So when the staff and students come back in the morning, that particular area is completely done. And [INAUDIBLE] doing that, like I said, entirely second shift unless we're so lucky that timing lands perfectly with the summer. Then by all means we'll take advantage of the regular shift hours.

And we'll do mockups for the district because anyone who's done some LED work in their home knows that you know LED can come in different colors, light temperatures. So we'll do mockups for the district before we begin doing a mass retrofit so the district can make decisions on the light color that you want uniform throughout the entire district.

Any questions on the lighting measure before we move over to BMS? All good. The second measure I wanted to highlight is building [INAUDIBLE] system.

Sorry about that. I did have a question. Is that solely internal lighting, or would that also include external lighting?

It does include external lighting. The only lighting that it does not include would be any potential-- and just at this point in time-- would potentially be any stadium lighting that you have. Typically, and we have a lot of LED conversions for football fields and the like, the paybacks there tend to be quite worse just because the run hours. Those lights are just not on as long as your typical interior lighting, or your just exterior lights on the side of the building.

However, what may make football or stadium lighting conversions work is it's just the operational costs. We're finding a lot of districts have sizable service contracts to maintain that stadium lighting. And if we can convert it to LED, those contracts would either go away entirely, or just be significantly reduced.

So again, these are things that, although they're not included at the moment, now that we, hopefully, with your support, get selected, we would be able to spend more time with Paul and dig into some of his operational costs to see if that's the case. Do you have sizable service contracts on stadium lighting? And does it make sense to convert that to LED?

You just have that opportunity prior to the RFP when you have a lot of bidders. And I think the mindset

is you don't want to inundate the district leadership with many ESCOs getting in as a way to reserve that until after a selection is made.

OK, thank you.

You're welcome. The other priority measure we wanted to highlight is on the building management system front. Now, what we mean by this is a computerized system that operates the building's heating and air conditioning equipment, gives Paul the ability to schedule equipment on and off, control temperatures during the day, change set points at night or on the weekend to save energy.

Currently, the [INAUDIBLE] has a significant amount of their equipment on a Honeywell automation system. All we're doing with this measure is-- like the LED conversion-- completing it district-wide. There's a number of pieces of equipment, particularly at the middle school, that are on old pneumatic controls, which means they're not connected to Paul's computer where he can't control them on or off, and control temperatures.

And there's also a few-- I'll call it disparate systems that we're going to-- you can see there, the Andover system-- that we're going to convert that to a Honeywell system, so it's all on a single platform and all the equipment will come back to a central PC. Also easily accessible, either remotely on a tablet or smartphone.

I don't want to say, Paul, from your house. They'll be they'll be calling you 24/7. And the other good part of that, that it now gives us the ability to be a second set of eyes into your district in order to protect our energy guarantee. So now we will, remotely. We've got a service department manned 24/7 that can monitor critical points in your district, whether it's status of equipment at night and on the weekend and critical temperature set points.

Again, to make sure that the energy savings that we've calculated upfront and that we've got a hard guarantee with the district are being met. Or if we see something-- excuse me-- if we see something that doesn't look right, we can call Paul the next day. Maybe there was an event, and he just put something into a manual mode and forgot to put it back into auto.

But it creates just a very collaborative partnership between us and the district now that everything is automated, and we can look at it as well. Any questions from the team on this energy conservation measure?

I have a couple of questions. The first is I think I'm the only one who is on the board back when Honeywell came to us in 2010. In fact, I think other than perhaps you, Terry. I'm the only one on this

meeting who was there.

Neal, I was there too.

Oh, yeah. You were here in 2010? OK, which means Iris probably was as well. Question I have is in terms of the systems. I recall we, at the time, discussed having the ability to have control the heating and ventilation through the computer system with the Honeywell system that you described. Is that a system that was installed in 2010?

Is that something that needs to be upgraded, changed? Will that be something that needs to be changed during the 18 years that we are in an EPC with Honeywell, if that's the direction we go. What happens with that material that's already there?

Yeah, great question. So a lot of the controls, a lot of the automation that the district has today was part of that original EPC as well. Since then, though, there's been a number of capital projects where Paul can attest to that more automation has been added to that system. That system doesn't need to be removed. That investment is still intact.

What we are doing is upgrading the server. You know that just becomes a more efficient system. It becomes a faster system, but the existing field controllers that were put in as part of our job, and has been put in under various capital projects in the last five, six years through Honeywell authorized dealers will stay intact. And the life expectancy there can be 20, 30 years.

I mean, we've got automation systems that-- put it this way-- the pneumatic controls at the middle school that I'm replacing with automation probably has been there 40 years. That's not a great thing, but we expect the same life expectancy with the automation system we are putting in. So again, the investment you made in the original EPC 10 years ago, 95% of those controls are staying. We're just upgrading the server software to make it a more efficient system to be faster.

It's also an open protocol system. This is important. So it's not a proprietary system that, moving forward, the district is forced, say, to go to Honeywell-- one place-- to do any sort of additions to that automation system. Honeywell work for an authorized dealer network. I could give you 10 different companies that can compete on future capital projects if you're adding a piece of equipment, and Paul wants to add that to the automation system, and that's part of the bid package.

I'm not the only person that can bid on that. Again, there's an extensive authorized Honeywell network of dealers that have been trained and authorized by us to do that work, so they can to all can

competitively compete for that opportunity. And that was the goal moving forward. Again, the system must be an open protocol non-proprietary system, so it keeps open competition moving forward. And that's what [INAUDIBLE].

Thank you-- one other question. I'm looking for it, and I thought it might've been on page 169, but I'm not sure. You described the maintenance services to be provided as part of this program. And I think some of it you talked about probably, in terms of them monitoring. What else is involved in the maintenance services that Honeywell would provide for this system?

So at the moment, the RFP just asked us to provide the required M&V. M&V stands for measurement and verification. Excuse me-- those are the services to protect the energy guarantee. That's where we will monitor your utility spend, installations complete, gather up all your utility bills on a monthly basis.

As I said, I've got a team that will remote into the district to keep an eye on the automation system, making sure that it's running the way it was originally designed. That's part of our M&V service. Now, that being said, we are a full service mechanical and automation shop.

There are districts that one us to service their automation system, that want us to service their boilers, their mechanical equipment. That's all stuff that's an option through the next step of the comprehensive energy audit period. If the district sees value in that, we can bring those services to you.

There are districts that have the skill set to do that on their own. I mean, we'll provide all of the necessary training for Paul and his staff to run the system that we put in, train them. I mean, they're also very, very well-trained on how to use it today. But for all the upgrades that we make, they'll be retrained on how to use the graphic screens, how to make schedule changes, how to change set points, all of that.

And again, the district may decide that they're comfortable without any additional service, but that can all be added during the comprehensive energy order period if the district so desires.

OK, so that was just the reference there, and there was not detail on that. Now I understand.

Correct. It was really a list of potential options if the district sees a particular fit or a need, so.

Hi, can we just go back one slide for me, please? I just wanted to make sure. I think now I understand some of the abbreviations. I want to make sure I'm following along. So MS is the middle school, I

imagine. Yes?

It is. Yep.

What's a TRV?

Yeah, I apologize for all the acronyms. So it's a thermostatically regulated valve is what it stands for. I'll briefly describe. So some of the old pneumatic controls in the middle school are in unoccupied areas-- could be in a hallway, could be in a stairwell. Those are areas that you put in a-- we recommend putting in a self-contained valve.

You set it for a very low set point like 55, 60 degrees, and you leave it alone. It's just that it doesn't make economic sense to connect those areas to the automation system where Paul can see it back at his PC because those are areas you don't really want to play around with the temperature. They're going to get enough infiltration of heat from classrooms in the surrounding areas.

Quite honestly, that's where we see, in most districts, you're going to have your, highest energy spends. You've got old pneumatic systems in hallways that have full runaway heat that are 80, 85 degrees and they have no control whatsoever.

Right.

So that's what the TRV stands. It's a self-contained valve. It's got a thermometer on it or a thermostat on it. You set it for a very low set point, and you leave it alone. You could tie it back to Paul's PC. Absolutely, we could do that. It's just it's an added expense that I don't think has any additional payback or value.

I know there's a few other acronyms here on this slide. DDC stands for Direct Digital Control. That's the automation system that I'm referring to. You want to get the whole district being digital, whereas, again, a portion of it today is pneumatically controlled.

Hey, Terry, I just want to be conscious of everyone's time on the agenda, so.

OK.

We should keep going.

I will quickly go through these last two slides. Excuse me-- the measure I wanted to highlight is on really the sustainability front. So we had-- as Aldo mentioned upfront-- we have proposed three

different solar arrays on each of the school buildings totaling about 380kw. The intent here was to-- if you look at our proposal-- it's in areas where you've got newer roof sections.

We purposely stayed away from the older roof sections that are close to 18, 19, 20 years because you don't want to be in a situation where you install solar, and maybe you're doing a roof replacement project three or four years later, and you're taking the panels off and trying to reinstall them. So we stayed specifically on roof sections that are fairly new and have a significant amount of warranty left on the roof areas.

And this also is a measure that is from the state of New York if you can get the payback of this measure down below 18 years, which our proposal shows that that is the case. So this helps not only economically to help drive that positive cash flow that we talked about, but obviously is a big sustainability initiative, a big green initiative.

All the panels will be connected to data acquisition systems that will be on your network. So all of the energy accumulated and generated on a daily basis can be looked at on a website, can be used by teachers and students as part of just an enhanced curriculum program.

It's very important to size of systems so that you're getting full beneficial use of the energy produced. If you overproduce these systems beyond what the building uses, you're not going to get much of a monetary return from the utility company. Last I wanted to show is just a general timeline of what it will look like with your support tonight moving forward.

So with your support, we would move on to a comprehensive energy audit-- that's what CEA stands for. That's to do the detailed engineering to produce a formal contract. That would take about a 12 week period. We produced that contract towards the end of January. We'd like to share our contract with the district and your law firm early in the process, so any negotiations on Ts and Cs can be worked upfront. So that after we deliver the contract, we can usually expect to gain your approval and execute the contract about one month later.

After the contract is approved by the board and signed, we then work closely with ECG to develop the formal plans and specifications that need to be submitted to the State Ed Department. And that's not to say that we're not working closely with ECG throughout the whole CEA period. We typically have meetings at the 30% point, 60% point, and 90% point, keeping them informed of what we're finding, sharing with them our energy calculations.

Because ECG-- and that's really, I think, the primary reason why we're so successful in getting a very

quick approval from the state is that between our staff, and then you've got ECG doing a formal deep dive on all of our energy counts and vetting out anything that they don't believe will pass muster with SED.

So that when we submit to SED-- I mean, we're getting an incredible fast turnaround rate of approval. So we would expect to submit about two months after the contract is signed. I think that is conservative given this scope of work. It's not an overly large scope of work, so I think two months should be reasonable.

And then right now, the backlog at the state, fortunately, is very low. It's only about four to six weeks. So when you submit to the state, it sits there for about a month and a half, they pick it up, they review it, they ask us questions, both of ECG and Honeywell. And as I said before, once we receive those questions, we're averaging approval on about a two to four-week turnaround on a consistent basis due to the quality of the submission that goes in the first place.

So we're looking for approval around the middle of the summer. At that point, the district would typically run an RFP process for the financing, which funds the deal. That normally takes about 30 to 45 days. You can save some time there. You can actually run that process a little bit early during the SED review process and pick up a little bit of time.

But ultimately, we see towards the end of next summer as a conservative starting point. And certainly, we're probably looking at a 12 month installation period. Again, there's some variables here that we can definitely improve upon. There's also some variables that, unfortunately, are outside of our control with the backlog at SED. But it's been consistently very low for a while.

So I think the days of 40, 50-week backlogs, I think they're behind us, so that's good news. And I do see this as a very realistic schedule.

Great.

OK, a couple of questions, because I seem to have a lot of. I don't know if anybody else does. I noticed on your proposal on page 145 you wrote no roof structural work is included in this scope of work.

Right.

Does that mean that based on your analysis, and all can chime in, our current roofs where you propose placing solar arrays can handle the installation of those arrays without structural work?

Oh, I'll take that, Kerry. As the engineer on record for the project, we need to do a full structural analysis. These panels, when we put them on roofs, we've done over-- this project is about 300kw, say 400kw. We've done 3,000 milliwatts. I'm mixing my zeros up.

We've done about 30 plus megawatts of solar designed at this point, so we're very aware of the structural process it needs to go through. Right now, what Terry's exclusion is in that proposal, and it's standard-- and all proposal-- at this stage is that they're not planning to add any additional structural support to the roofs. The assumption right now is that when we put these panels on the roofs, they have adequate structural capacity to hold the weight of those panels.

But through the design process, my company goes out and does a full structural evaluation with all the wind loads, the potential snow loads, and we provide a certification at the end of the day that it's safe to install these systems on top of the roof. So it's a very detailed expensive process to go through, but it has to be done to safely design this. So that does come later in the process.

OK, and--

But--

Yeah, go ahead, Laura.

Oh, you're on mute.

I keep meeting myself. When you put panels on the roof, it doesn't void your warranties?

No, it doesn't. It's called roof warranty continuation procedures. Every major manufacturer of the roof or the warranty holder has their own set of guidelines, and typically there's some costs associated with that, but we already confirmed that Honeywell has those costs included to ensure that basically when they start installation, they take control of the warranty.

Honeywell's responsible for the roof, and then when they finish installation they bring the manufacturer back out to do an inspection and to make sure it was all done appropriately and continue that warranty.

Another question, which I think is probably for Aldo, but did you have something, Michelle?

I had a question, but you can go first. No problem.

OK. And I tried to compare as much as I could in the two proposals that you received, Aldo.

Yeah, I did.

One of the things that I saw in the other proposal-- ESG-- they wrote the location of the high school and the middle school is not conducive to solar, due to all of the concern with shading from local trees as well as obstruction on the roofs.

Right.

[INAUDIBLE] to the good location to install a significant amount of PV, but the energy restructure is that the district pays but is not allowed for the installation of a system that will meet the requirements of SED.

Right.

Now I have a question. From what I know of those roofs, there are no obstructions in terms of trees. Am I right?

There are some areas. You'll notice on the three areas where Honeywell did propose solar. They're actually the smallest of the three systems at those two buildings.

Yep.

And that is because of limited roof area, and also the roof condition, and also the age, which is what Terry was touching on earlier.

OK.

I didn't catch all of your question.

No, I guess the other thing that they said was it's not economically viable at the Elementary School. I'm assuming you've done analyses and said that really doesn't fly as far as you see.

Yeah, it really comes down to the return. The savings that the company is willing to guarantee. And then also versus the installation cost of the system itself. And when it hits that inflection point of-- Terry mentioned this earlier, we kind of brushed over it-- of 18 years-- simple payback under 18 years. That's when it becomes a no-brainer for the district because then you're getting 30% of the system reimbursed.

If the payback is 19 or 20 or 25 years, typically, you wouldn't get aid on that system. So it's really not a cash flow driver for the district anymore.

I have two other questions.

--[INAUDIBLE] what they were referring to.

Neal, we're having some problem with your audio. I don't--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

I'm sorry.

--something you can do.

I'm sorry. I should do this. So, the first question and I'm going to plug this is so you can hear me better.

I think that's better. Yeah.

OK. Is that the-- and I hope you can hear me now. The other proposal said put solar at the transportation building.

Right.

You had said, I think, Aldo, in your opinion, that was more for education, not really for use?

Right. You'll notice it's a small system.

--advantage to putting something at the transportation building?

I wouldn't recommend it. No. Because a transportation facility like that isn't considered an educational facility, therefore you aren't getting any state aid reimbursement on it. Just like if you went and built a new administration building, which I think they have done recently, or renovated it--

Yep, renovated, mm-hmm.

You wouldn't have gotten paid on that work, just like you wouldn't at a transportation garage because there's no educational activities going there. So, again, I wouldn't recommend installing it there. Of probably the 30, 40 school districts that we've installed solar at, none of them have installed them on a transportation garage or a bus garage or anything like that because you miss out on the aid then.

OK, but you made me aware that we are talking about electrification of our bus fleet as a longer term project. The fact that we are thinking about that, and then we would have greater energy need and

more consistent energy at the bus garage, can change that analysis?

That could change the analysis then, because if you are doing that in the future at that time you'll know what the alternative fuel is, right? So when you make that switch, you'll be going from gasoline to electric, right? Which is part of the savings. If you can bundle that with installing solar on that roof at that time, that'll create the free electricity, right?

And it may actually supplement those economics a bit more. But still, you wouldn't be getting aid on that, so--

| would never approach the economics of the other schools though.

Right.

I'm sure it would likely get better because you could install more solar if you've got more of an electric load. And obviously the economics improve when you've got more solar panels. But again, you would never get \$0.27 on the dollar for that cost period. So it would struggle to ever-- it would never, it wouldn't even struggle-- it would never come close to the economics of installing solar on your school buildings.

Right, I understand that. It's just a question of whether or not for the capacity and the needs of the transportation facility with a fleet of electric buses-- which is aspirational, but we're working towards it-- whether it would make sense for that facility to have somewhere to meet those needs, regardless of the SED.

Right. It would change the calculation a little bit, and that's one of the benefits of these EPC projects. I'm working with a client on developing a phase four project where we did our first one with them in 1990. I didn't do it in 1990.

I was going to say. I'm going to challenge you on that, Aldo. I don't think you were there.

But I will say when we work with clients and new technology cuts out-- or just like how solar became suddenly economical for school districts-- we went back to a lot of our clients and said, hey, this is an opportunity you should look at. And I anticipate the same type of thing as batteries become more economical and newer technologies advance going forward.

So, if I'm understanding that correctly, with regard to electrification of the bus fleet and a potential for solar over at the transportation building, that would be something that we wouldn't necessarily be

looking at in this phase of the project but would be something of a subsequent?

Right, right. I think the economics need to change first. Solar prices need to drop, or the technology needs to change, or legislation needs to change to enhance those economics to make it really a no-brainer. Because right now, the best opportunity is to put it on the schools.

And as a follow up to that question, I know-- again, it's all about the economics at this phase, and I totally understand that, but we hear from our community all the time that they would love for our buildings to transition to completely green energy.

And I'm just wondering if-- it's obviously not going to happen right now-- but do you have any sense about when that could be coming down the road or what's going on with the SED? I mean, interesting times, you know? So I just wondered if anybody's talking about this or what you're hearing.

That's interesting. I mean, I haven't heard anything in terms of changes coming. New York SED, they actually just adopted the 2015 code [INAUDIBLE] requirements. So the wheels of change are somewhat slow at the state. But it's not necessarily the state's requirements, rather than as the technology improves. It could create new opportunities like heat pumps and things like that. They can operate in colder weather.

It might make sense to go that direction in the future with some buildings. But right now, with the constraints that we're under in technology and costs and things like that, it's difficult. But I hear you loud and clear on just the effort to go green, right? To get these oil burners and things like that out.

Aldo, as we designed the project and we talked about the bus electrification goals and the transportation department, we did look at the fact-- I mean, when Aldo speaks to the aid component, that is solely because of the confines and the requirements of an EPC, as defined by the comptroller's office. So, to that--

[INAUDIBLE], yeah.

OK.

Yeah.

Great.

So there's a required return in order to meet those confines?

Mm-hm.

So that's why we have to look at what is the return on investment. It doesn't mean at some point we're not moving in that direction. But in order to make this a viable project, that we had to weigh costs and benefits.

Yeah. Yep.

Amanda, I was just going to add to the solar piece. The only reason we didn't propose more solar is, again, you've got-- particularly at the high school and the middle school-- you've got a number of roof areas that are 17, 18 years old. And you're probably looking at a capital project, maybe within the next 5 to 10 years. [AUDIO OUT] time to.

And we've got a number of clients right now that we're tandem with a capital project where they're doing a roof replacement and they're doing a phase three PC to add more solar. Because these solar systems are not proprietary systems. It's very easy to expand on the systems we're installing on the-- I'll call it the good roof areas.

And then when you do a capital project to do a roof replacement, that's the great opportunity to expand on the solar to completely wipe out your electrical load in the building.

Right.

That's the key. So you are definitely on the right step, in the right direction. And I would say just wait for that roof replacement project and really consider expanding the solar at that point. And that's where you want to make sure the sizing is such that you wipe out just the full electrical load of that building and then you can get to the point where you're fully 100% electrification. You can get there.

This is going in the right direction. And the cost for the solar and everything should be certainly a heck of a lot better a number of years down the road. We've seen the c-- and that's what's changed this whole marketplace. The costs have come down significantly from 10 years ago. The paybacks used to be 40 years and it was it was nothing is today. So it's only going to get better moving forward.

Gentleman, we spoke about the financial impact. And I would like to hear a little bit about our approximate carbon footprint reduction as a result of this project.

Yeah, I can pull the stats up while we're speaking, but the EPC initiative-- I say it all the time-- I go to presentations-- not really in the last six months or so-- but I have seen the presentations in

Connecticut and New York where they do these are the towns and municipalities and school districts that went through, that have cut down their carbon emissions, this is what we're tracking them at, this is how they've reduced their energy consumption. Which is directly related to your carbon footprint.

And you can see the districts that have done EPCs are far and away-- really a tier a part from the traditional you know slow and steady, do your lighting as it goes. These projects are laser focused on driving your energy consumption down, minimizing that completely, and as a result that's cutting down your carbon emissions because that power plant down the street-- metaphorically-- doesn't have to generate that kilowatt hour anymore, right?

There's a saying in energy efficiency that the cleanest unit of energy-- I think it is-- is the one that's not used or not produced, right? So the energy efficiency approach to these EPCs is a way to do it. It's a way to go about it for sure.

I was going to say, Aldo, in our response, we actually do have a very detailed greenhouse gas emissions reduction report that's tied directly to what we're proposing in the way of scope. I've got it here and I'm looking at right now, but--

Oh, great. Thank you.

--by the typical greenhouse gases of carbon dioxide, sulfuroxide, nitrousoxide, and it's got the tons of reduction that we anticipate to achieve. So we will certainly update that through the comprehensive energy audit period and show the district the final impact of greenhouse gases that these measures have. It's significant.

Can you just speak to those projections, Terry?

I'm

I'm trying to find--

I've got a few of them here.

[INAUDIBLE]

Yeah. It's different metrics. One of them is you can equate the greenhouse gas savings or greenhouse gas emissions or your reduction in your CO2 footprint back to tons of waste recycled instead of sending it to a landfill. And over a 10 year, that's equivalent to 4,000 tons of waste recycled with this project. Over five years, it's about 2000. Over one year, it's linear, so it's a little less than probably

about 400 tons of waste recycled. Another metric is acres of forest preserved from deforestation. This one over a 10 year is about 90 acres of forest preserved from deforestation. So there is tons of different metrics. That's a very intangible thing to picture.

Look at the first table, Aldo, You'll see the actual tons of the gas reductions. So you can just-- if you look at the tons of CO2 reduction, it's over 1,100 tons of CO2 reduction.

Now, just for the board's information, you are looking at the attachment to page 168 of your report?

I am looking at-- yes, I am.

That's your B-2. So anybody else who wants to look at that, I see it right here in front of me.

Yeah, if you look at page 2 of that report, you'll see on the top of page 2, Neal, the actual tonnage by gas type of reduction.

Yeah, I see it.

And so like I said, we will certainly update that throughout the comprehensive energy order period to tie it off to what the final scope is, but it is a significant impact on your greenhouse gases.

Thank you.

I had a question on the solar. That this postulates it's only rooftop solar. Is that correct?

Correct.

I wonder whether there are any locations that should be considered on district grounds that might be viable for surface solar installation, for instance, near Spencer field.

It's challenging to do a large ground mount system unless you have a very large amount of area to install the system. Think of it as-- there's fixed costs that you need to overcome to do a ground mounted array, and when you only have a small area to do that, the economies of scale are worse than if you can overcome those fixed costs with the two soccer fields worth of solar or something like that. And I can't think of anywhere in the district or on the district facilities or grounds that has that quantity of area. That's also-- soccer fields and things like that are always being used by school districts too. That becomes somewhat of a hot button item where you're taking over a soccer field for a 20-year solar array.

The only time we've done it is further up north at Pine Plains School District, actually. We did one

recently. They had a set of land set aside that's never been used for anything. They wanted to do it. I think it's on the front lawn of their high school.

Thank you.

And the tariff was a little bit different back then too, Aldo, right?

Right. The economics are different. Like I said, legislation drives these projects a lot of times. So if the laws change, that can change the economics overnight for the better or the worse. It goes both ways.

Yeah, you used [INAUDIBLE] a very large ground mount system and apply it to any of your buildings and get credit for it, and that's no longer the case. You've got to connect that system what they call directly behind the meter, so think about that. If you have property, in order for you to get the monetary credit for the energy you're producing, you've got to bring that system back to a particular building where you've got electric [INAUDIBLE].

In the past, the tariff was it was quite a bit different. You could produce it, send it into the grid, and get credit for all of your buildings. It's no longer that way. So when you think about having to tie it back to a building, the most economical form of solar becomes a roof mounted system. If you got a good roof, a new roof, and it's structurally sound, it's going to be by far your best payback.

I have a couple of questions as well related to the solar. Somebody mentioned, I can't remember if it was you, Terence, but batteries and whether or not it would be a useful part of either this or a future proposal because we are really something around 9 or 10 months usage, and then the summer, there's tons of sun but very little actual usage of HVAC and lighting and a bunch of other things. So does it make sense? Because when you sell that back, then net metering is virtually useless. They don't pay you much. So how do batteries sort of fit into this equation?

So right now, I don't know if I made this clear in the beginning, so my company we run these RFP contests for school districts constantly. So we have rounds of proposals coming in, two a month, two different projects a month, sometimes three projects a month. So we're constantly seeing the cutting edge of newest technology available, and I'm waiting for the day that the solar battery type proposal does come in, once it hits that inflection point on the economics where it does make sense to do it.

But right now the technology really isn't quite there in that the size of the batteries that you would need to put on site to accommodate the backfeed from a large solar array like that over the summer, it becomes too costly. It really doesn't pay for itself. The technology is also in somewhat of its infancy

right now, where it probably wouldn't make a lot of sense to delve into that until you can see that it's working properly and you have that technology, but I'm waiting for it.

The other part that needs to change too is the incentive for school districts or any end user of electricity to do it. Meaning, it might make sense to have batteries if you pay a very high peak electricity rate and a very low off peak electricity rate because then you could charge the batteries overnight during the off peak or with solar and then discharge them during that peak period. And right now, the differential in economics between those two peak periods isn't driving the potential savings from that investment enough. Does that make sense?

It does. Yeah. The question related is I don't actually know what 400 kilowatts is. Like, I don't what we use now or what we would anticipate using if everything was LEDs and everything was automated and all that too. So what are we talking about? Like half of our energy? A quarter of it?

I believe that the biggest building, biggest system, which is Carrie E. Tompkins Elementary School, that's the biggest system. I believe it's about 50% of your annual usage in electricity is going to be offset by what that solar array generates, so that's a significant chunk right there.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

--meaning the array at CET offsets about 50% of the CET electricity. Is that what you're--

Exactly.

You got it.

OK. And that also includes the fact that we didn't choose, based on the roof age, we didn't choose to put them everywhere.

Correct.

So as we go forward and replace roofs, we can talk about it then and get-- maybe we'd be at 500 or 600 kilowatts.

For sure.

I don't know. I don't know what that looks like. OK. The other thing I had a question about, oh, it was about the transpiration garage because it's really far away, actually, and it's also in the woods. So I don't even know if solar makes sense there, but if we had like just tons of excess power, is it possible

for us to bring it directly there or is that just unrealistic because it's like three miles away?

Yeah, I think it would be unrealistic because of the cost of running the wiring. You could apply that cost to the electricity that you would be bringing there, and I bet it would come out to be more expensive to take that approach than to just pull from the grid at that site.

Right, right. OK. And I think last question is there was something about sort of the monitoring of systems by ourselves and by Honeywell. Obviously Honeywell has incentivized to save us money because they're guaranteeing it, right? What are our responsibilities as far as that goes because what if the principal at the middle school likes it to be 82 degrees during January and likes it to be 66 degrees in August? Do we have constraints? I mean, those are unrealistic, but do we have constraints like that?

As part of the contract, there are going to be operating conditions that the district is agreeing to operate the buildings under, and I always make a point to never go out and do that, make those assumptions in a vacuum. It needs to be talked about with the district. Everyone needs to understand that this building is going to be maintained at 70 degrees going forward, and we're not going to overheat the building. This is a state-funded, tax-funded building. We're going to make this building run as efficiently as possible. The required heating temperature is 68 degrees from the State Education Department. Usually we don't go that low on it. But yeah, it's really about communication, getting the cultural awareness out there that no, this is energy waste if you're heating a building up to 75 degrees, right?

Right. Yeah.

No need for that. Same with the cooling, more expensive.

And then, very related, is like who has ultimately the ability to change if it seems like the temperature is hitting 72 and you don't want it to, who's responsible for that change and who's authorized to make the change, to say lower the heat? Can Honeywell just say, you know what? They're not doing what they're supposed to do, so I'm going to lower the heat.

No, Honeywell--

I can answer that one.

Because [INAUDIBLE] does that, right? They'll give you a few thermostats, and then they'll say, oh, [INAUDIBLE] at peak period, we're going to drop your air conditioning.

Correct. No, contractually we don't have the right to do that. It's your building. You control it. And even though you set up, as Aldo explained, parameters that, hey, our calculations are based on the following parameters, I would tell you that moving forward, things change slightly, and that's OK. What we do in those situations is we quantify what the impact is to the savings. We can have ECG review our calculation, and we just make a small adjustment to your actual utility spend.

If the district changes the use of a building and runs it Saturday and Sunday, or they decide, you know what, for particular wing, we're going to have 72 degrees as the set point versus 68. It doesn't mean the whole guarantee is void. That's my point. It just means you got to spend a little bit more energy. We can quantify that. We can share our calculation with ECG so they review and approve it, and then we just make that adjustment when we look at your actual utility spend. Doesn't mean you can't make changes. It's your building those. Those are your decisions.

So on that, how do your calculations take into account what we have discussed during the pandemic period, which is that we need to perhaps keep windows open in colder weather, perhaps increase airflow in order to ensure, basically, trying to minimize the possibility of exposure to the virus? Is that kind of in here, or is that something really by the time this work is done in 2022, we figure that's not really going to be a big issue.

That's really the latter, Neal, where we're actually-- it all comes down to what's the performance period, meaning that's when we're looking to see when the savings should be being generated. And the timeline that Terry laid out shows that starting in 2022?

Yep.

I'm looking for some wood to knock on right now.

I think we all are.

I think we'll be in a better position by then hopefully, but we have districts also in the performance period right now who are running more outside air, bringing more ventilation in, and we're saying to them, do what's safe for the buildings. Follow the guidelines from ASHRAE. We can easily quantify what that impact is to the buildings in terms of your energy usage. It's kind of the same thing as overriding the temperature setting.

Performance period is 15 years or 18?

18. The financing period is over 15. It's kind of a unique intricacy of this SED market working on these

EPCs.

Financing could be longer. I think most districts [INAUDIBLE] 15 because that's how they pay out the building [INAUDIBLE], right?

Right, right.

And obviously if the cash flows are as positive over 15 years, that's certainly better for the district. You're paying less interest on the loan. So that's why most districts will certainly finance for less, and you don't have to go the full 18 year term. I mean, if you look at our phase 1 EPC with the district 10 years ago, I think after four or five years, they canceled the M&B contract because we were consistently exceeding the guarantee, and that's the goal. I mean, this is an engineered solution, so if we make a mistake, it's going to rear its head right away, and we're going to try to fix it on our dime, but the opposite is true.

If it's successful, it should be continually successful year after year, and most districts, if you show three or four consistent years of exceeding the guarantee, they will opt out of that M&B service agreement. Now with it, the guarantee goes away, but again, their confidence level after three, four, five years of consistent performance is there, and I would support that wholeheartedly. Like I said, if an error, if there's a mistake, it's going to show itself quickly, but the opposite is true.

If we exceed in year one, we're in very good shape, and we don't tend to guarantee 100% of what we calculate. If my calculation says you're going to save \$100, I might guarantee 90 or 95, and the contract is written, obviously, all those additional savings are yours. I don't share in any excess on the guarantee. So again, more often than not, districts are exceeding the cash flow that we present as part of the contract because, again, the savings are greater, and Honeywell doesn't share in that overage.

Thank you, Terry. I would just also like to point out that we are looking at the 15 years, and I'm looking to roll in what is outstanding on our existing EPC, so we would refinance that now because the rates are lower. There [INAUDIBLE] may have some timeline restrictions, so we are going to try to time it so that we can do that. The other thing I would like to point out is, just to clarify things here, the district is committed to sustainability, and aid and cost will not always be the driving factor. However, this is not our sole effort on behalf of sustainability. This is one component, and this component has financial parameters that we need to stay within, so I just wanted to clarify that.

Does anyone else have any other questions for Terry or for Aldo?

Maybe just one more about batteries. So if we pull that way, way back in, and say, well, what if we need backup power just in case of a six-hour power outage or whatever? Like even if it doesn't necessarily have a huge payoff, there is a payoff in the value it provides. Is that something that has been considered or could be? Or is it just it's not really-- doesn't make sense and the EPC wouldn't allow it?

Yeah, the backup generation, even if it was a traditional diesel, oil fired backup generator, that's really not considered energy savings, so the state wouldn't allow it through here because now you're just generating it in lieu of pulling from the grid. I haven't seen that proposal yet, but I'm waiting. I'm waiting to see it.

All right.

Well, thank you both.

Denise, I have a quick question for you. Terrence mentioned an RFP for financing. That confused me.

We will most likely go through Capital Markets. They're our financial advisors. They produced the first EPC. We are working with them on our long term financing, so we would utilize most likely Capital Markets. However, we are going to RFP, that service, I believe next year, so it would be our fiscal advisors at that point. There's a fine line between the financing component, and we would like to keep it completely separate from the EPC itself.

So I guess the question, perhaps to be clear, is what we'll be doing then is borrowing the \$2.8 million to do the work.

Right.

OK. And that would be through-- what is the requirement regarding voter approval for that borrowing?

[INAUDIBLE] Oh, you can answer, Aldo.

Voter approval is not required for these projects because it's completely budget neutral. It pays for itself. Now, that's not to say that's not an option, and we can definitely consider that and work with the district. I understand budgets are tight right now for everyone, so we'll help you if you want to pursue that for sure.

There is additional aid available if you do pursue that. The state will [INAUDIBLE] another 10% in aid dollars, but, as Aldo said, it's not a legal requirement. But more districts are doing it for that additional aid, and positioning it very well that, again, the public-- you're not voting on the ability for us to do the work, you're simply voting on the state giving us more money. And if the referendum is written that way, I would tell you that would pass with flying colors, but it's still something to be your call certainly. Whenever you go to the public, it tends to be--

[INAUDIBLE]. Right?

Yeah.

Yeah.

The RFP and the financing is nothing more than just banks competing to be the lowest interest rate, which is great, and the markets are phenomenal right now.

Time to do an EPC.

Or refinance, as Denise was saying, it's a great [INAUDIBLE].

One more question. The solar system, can it be disconnected from the grid? In the case of a power outage, can we still use it?

No, not during a power outage. Actually, it's a requirement, a new code requirement, that it has a rapid shut down within a certain distance of each array or string of panels because of the risk that during a power outage or during some event like that, it could be backfeeding the grid. So picture utility workers further down the street who think that the grid is off or turned off or isolated at that point, they're not aware that the school district has a solar array a few blocks down on the same line, and it could be backfeeding, and it could create a dangerous situation for someone who isn't aware.

So there's not a system like at people's homes, there's a-- basically, it like disconnect?

Right. That's when you need the battery-- integrate a small battery to power a home, like a Tesla power pack is one.

No, I mean like the solar panels, actually, they function, and they can power things in the home without the power going out to the grid. You know what I mean?

Right, right.

OK.

Yeah, it's just different by locale. I mean, there's different rules, regulations around that. But as Aldo said, the State Ed Department has adopted a new electrical code for rapid shut down that doesn't allow that. Residential areas in other states will allow that, so it's just very much locale driven.

Got it. OK. Thank you.

All right. If no one else has any other questions for Aldo or Terry or Denise, I would like to propose that we then move on this action here under 5.2, but I'm actually going to make an amendment to this. This was put up into the agenda as just sort of a blank, it just says ESCO, and I would like to move that we change that from ESCO to-- I'm sorry-- to Honeywell. Does that work for everyone? OK. So then I will read through this. So recommended action that the Board of Education approves the appointment of Honeywell Energy Service Company to perform the comprehensive energy audit, CEA, of the district facilities.

So moved.

Second.

All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Oppose. Abstain. Motion carries. All right. Well, thank you very much, Terry and Aldo, for coming to speak with us this evening and giving us a breadth of information to review, and we look forward to seeing then the comprehensive energy audit.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

Thank you.

Thank you, guys.

Have a great night.

Have a great night.

Thank you.

All right. So with that, we will move into our next work session topic, which is a review of the Tri-State's spring 2020 report, and I will turn it over to Dr. O'Connell and Mr Griffiths.

Well, this is an easy one, so I'm going to turn it right over to John Griffiths, and we'll try to be succinct.

Great. Tracey, if I could just have sharing privileges.

You're good.

Great. Thank you very much. So good evening, everybody. It's with pleasure that I present to you the findings of our critical thinking consultancy that was performed by the Tri-State Consortium back in February from the 26th to the 28th. As we probably know, this consultancy is one that we do every three years. We invite a team of colleagues from neighboring districts to come in and to visit our district for three days, and those participants represent a lot of different areas and bring with them a lot of expertise.

And throughout the three days, we prepare for them a schedule that really looks at basically three different areas-- what happens within our classrooms through visitations to classrooms, watching the work of our teachers and students at each of our buildings, interviewing various focus groups of teachers, students, administrators, board members. And a lot of their work is looking at the digital artifacts that were compiled for them that really display what we want them to take a look at with regards to critical thinking through problem solving as it exists right now in all of our schools.

The first thing I would like to share-- and this presentation really just pulls a lot of verbiage directly from the report that is supplied to us by Tri-States-- was some of their initial impressions. I think this was a good place to start off because the first thing they denoted was how our district goes really above and beyond what is expected from New York State. And I thought that these two quotes that were stated early on in the report really were something that were echoed throughout the report as the team reflected that a lot of what they saw in our work was aspirational. It really reflected a striving towards what we are aiming for in our strategic coherence plan as well as our profile of the graduate.

I next really wanted to bring the board's attention to the next slide, which they mentioned our extensive leadership structure support for this effort. And I thought that it was important to really show this list that was pulled directly from the plan and highlight it here because I feel that we have an incredible structure here in place at Croton-Harmon. As a team, a professional team, I think our work each year is praiseworthy, but last year getting ready for this consultancy, I've got to say was labor intensive.

It truly had to be a team effort, and it had to be collaborative, and I think something that you see as you go through the report is that the processes that we go through are iterative. We see that we hear them use the word iteration a lot, and our ability to have reflective collaboration, and that's really a tribute to the leaders that we have here. We empower our professionals to apply innovative practices in a way that matches their teaching philosophies and their student needs, and that's something that really came through in many areas of the Tri-State's reports back to us.

I included this selection from the report as it captures something that I think really is worthy of being shared and celebrated because this quote really speaks to our iterative process. Here there was a comment on the creation of the rubrics, and one of our curriculum coordinators said in the interview, "When we first started, we all had our separate ideas. It was a heated process. We went away, and we came back. We went away, and we came back. Developing the associated rubrics and their specific performance expectations proved equally complex, involving extensive professional development, time, and support. The process pushed us to articulate what we were looking for. Indeed, the process itself increased awareness and ownership of the district vision, perhaps even more valuable than the rubrics produced."

So when I think why we stand out in the mind of so many as a district, I really come to quotes like this because it's endemic of work not being superficial, not being a district that produces goals that sit in a binder and collect dust, but something that we really achieve buy-in through a shared ownership, and I think it really shows. So onto the consultancy. So the focus of our consultancy centers around, in this visit, three different essential questions.

There are two different kinds of consultancies, one which is more summative, where the Tri-State's team will come in and take a look at all nine of their indicators. We chose to really pull them in early in the work for more of a formative view on work that's really, honestly, still in its fledgling stages, especially when we're looking at the relationship of critical thinking and problem solving so that we really got feedback early on in our implementation process on where we need to go and get the insights from our colleagues and Tri-State's. So these were the three questions, really probing if we

have a common understanding, if we have a good professional development system in place, and if we are starting to see evidence of critical thinking through problem in the work of our students.

So the next part of the presentation, I'll just quickly go through the findings for each of those three essential questions as presented to us in their report. When we look at the response that they gave to us from our first essential question, I share with you first some of their findings. Some of the things that they found in terms of our articulation of a shared definition of critical thinking through problem solving points to the written definitions that we've created, the rubrics that we've created, and how these were all internal processes. How the creation of these definitions and these rubrics really moved us towards our vision, and that it happens in a flexible way, one that acknowledges academic freedom. And in this, it's denoted that they feel that this really promotes a positive environment for change.

When it comes to their recommendations in this area, they really feel that there is strong evidence of critical thinking in our work and that we need to continue to really have the critical thinking shine through problem solving, and this is not surprising. Our definition and work in problem solving was new to us, really started at the beginning of the last school year. And yet, in the second paragraph, they really applaud our definition of problem solving as it's aspirational. It asks problems to be grounded in real world problems, to cut across disciplines, and obviously this is going to create over time a real deep student experience, and yet we are early on in the process, and this is something that is going to take time and effort on the part of everyone here in the district.

In looking at the second essential question, which takes a probe at the professional development structures that we have in place, I share with you a list that they provided with regards to their findings on professional development. And as I look at this list, I really sort of note that there are two different types of findings-- one that really highlights some of the effective structures for professional development that we have in place, things such as peer leadership, dedicated time for professional learning on Wednesdays, the use of learning walk to the part of administrators to really get insights in terms of what's happening in classrooms.

And the other are really programmatic, those things that we have as programs within our professional learning, and a real highlight, once again, on a lot of self-initiated professional development along with district initiatives like LATIC. When it comes to the recommendations with regards to professional learning, it really centers around how to strengthen our work with problem solving, to think about how we could use rubrics to examine student works, and have the examination of student work inform future professional development. It has us take a look at structures we can

have for our own internal growth, recommending things such as sharing best practices, whether those best practices are things that principals might be sharing with the faculty or best practices in terms of teacher sharing with teachers.

With regards to the third essential question, and this really was the biggie. We gave them a lot of digital artifacts to explore and say, well, how is our initial work with critical thinking to problem solving looking from your perspective? When it came down to their findings in this area, some nice things that were highlighted by the team were things like our design of innovative spaces for learning, our attention to scheduling, our attention to assessment through standards-based report card, our commitment to co-curricular activities that really become a place where application of knowledge and skills can happen to real world problem solving.

Further findings were really mentioned that were then tailored to our three different school buildings. At the elementary school, really highlighting the STEM program we have in our library, our commitment to experiential learning through Science 21. At PVC, their really strong focus on Fast Efficient Baseline Assessments, really starting to use our critical thinking rubrics to assess where students' critical thinking skills are, the CHANGE Project in eighth grade as a real centerpiece of our current efforts around this area. And at CHHS, really some nice comments on how different classes are really highlighting research and analysis, and really having an opportunity in that research and analysis for students to make relevant connections to real world issues.

When we go to their analysis of the work, they note that there's a wide variation of practice right now. They note that students are clearly engaged, that they go through a school building that has very positive classroom cultures, yet critical thinking through problem solving is not yet something they find central to our instruction. It is something that we see teachers making really good progress in terms of these moments, and yet it's not something that's really infused throughout our curriculum, which really came as no surprise, once again, with this being the first year of this work.

But the next paragraph then really recognized intention, really states, once again, how they see flexibility in how we're approaching this, honoring our teachers with their different areas of expertise with their different students with different needs, and celebrating this as part of the district values. And with that, recognition of that value, having us consider how as we move into the future, we can make the expectations for critical thinking more explicit. So I'll move on to the conclusions that they have overall in our report.

The first thing really was something to acknowledge and celebrate because there were some areas

that they really lauded as being exceptional in terms of moving us towards our strategic coherence plan. The CHANGE Project at the middle school, the STEM experiences that are really becoming part of our science programs K through 8, our peer mediation program, the high school's CHOOSE project, the arts program, especially with their focus on critique, our advisory program at the high school, and elementary mathematics cycle for enrichment and reinforcement. When we look at the recommendations that the team brought to us, they really listed their recommendations in terms of three transitions that they recommend.

The first transition that they call shift from vision to implementation really discusses how we use the work that we've done in creating common definitions, in creating rubrics, to use them in a way that more explicitly incorporates them into instructional planning throughout the district. In the second transition, shift from implementation to results, really discusses how we might consider the assessment of the work, knowing that this type of work is very, very rich. And people will always ask for a quantitative assessment, really having us also consider how we're going to really take qualitative measure and how conversations that really inform our work through that lens as well.

And with regards to the third transition, shifts in knowledge and skill that future students will bring and the current needs to address the new skills and experiences the future students will bring really comments on how the work that we will be doing in the earlier years of students will eventually impact what we will need to do in later classrooms as students move on. Mentioned in the report were things such as the CHANGE Project in eighth grade and how that might have a consideration, after undergoing that kind of experience, on how it might inform the work in ninth grade. So with that, we have spent a lot of time with this report. We're really happy to share this brief overview of the report with you and really consider how it informs this year's work and obviously will inform work as we move into the future.

But to start in the present tense, we have some focuses that we would like to highlight for this year. And first and foremost is the reality of where we are, that we are in the pandemic and that we are managing the new challenges of hybrid and remote instruction. But as we do that, it is not time to just stop the work that we are doing, the good work of the strategic coherence plan, but really consider how we could take those past practices that were geared towards critical thinking through problem solving and make sure that we're not losing them, but infusing them into this year's learning models, whether they be hybrid or remote.

Certainly to take the contents of this report and begin really getting the critical thinking of our administrators and teachers throughout our buildings to think about the implications of this report on

their practice. And lastly to really consider how the new approaches that we have in instructional planning-- I've presented a few times to you the notion of learning arcs. I believe that where we are with instructional planning because of the pandemic can really be an invaluable opportunity as a lens through which to think about these recommendations and to really start to make that an explicit consideration is something that I think is very much in order for this year. So with that, I will take a breath and really entertain any questions or conversations from the board.

I have a question or comment, but I don't know if somebody else wants to go first. I seem to go first a lot.

You can go first.

Thanks. I was very pleased with the findings and discussions by the two presented in reading the report itself, but there's one thing that I noted, and you kind of touched on this, which is in page 16, to some extent, it is intentional that critical thinking and problem solving are not always explicit and not always central to instruction. The evaluators went on to say teachers use common definitions and rubrics in various ways, differing in purpose and scope. Some use it for planning. Some use it for communicating expectations to students, and some use it as a culminating assessment. The end of that paragraph they say students, teachers, and administrators could benefit from the clarity of articulated expectations.

Now, what that leads me to think about is parents and the community because the strategic coherence plan and everything we've been working on is something that our staff is very invested in. But depending on a particular teacher and how that is utilized in that teacher's classroom, it may or may not translate to something that parents see and parents understand. And I'm wondering what your thoughts are about that question, the question of communicating that here's a tool that everybody uses differently. It's towards the objective, and this is how we see it to the parent community.

Sure. When we've been working with the rubrics, when we think of rubrics, we think of rubrics as a tool for assessment. So we think about we are teaching whatever we're teaching, and the rubric is the lens through which we're going to be able to obtain a measure. So much of the work we did actually was two years ago. The rubrics were created three years ago, and two years ago, some of our work with the IDE Consulting Group really took a look at how we are using the rubric as the building blocks for instruction. And it makes a lot of sense.

If this is what we're going to use to assess it, we've got to make sure that somewhere in the design of

our instruction we are asking the students to do the things that are in the rubric. So it's really creating a process for backwards designing instruction with regards to critical thinking, and that's challenging work. It's meaty work, and where I think we need to go is to have teachers very, very comfortable with all of the skills that are implied in the rubric, continue to have them be able to really ascertain when you're dealing with the content of a curriculum, of a unit, to make the connection with what parts of the rubric it makes sense to really highlight and infuse into the essential learning of what I'm teaching right now.

And then, to your point Neal, really make the connections to parents that we are studying this topic, and yet within this topic, we will be really featuring some very essential skills in critical thinking, and really make the connections between the content, the way the content is assessed, and the critical thinking that is infused into that content and how the rubric is used to assess.

Thank you.

Anyone else have any questions?

I actually had a question just with regard to-- it kind of follows along to Neal's topic about communicating to parents. I know we've reviewed this report. Do we have thoughts or ideas, and maybe this is something for the communication [INAUDIBLE], with regard to communicating the report and also what the focus items that you just spoke about for this year, and how the feedback that we've gotten from Tri-States is going to feed into this year's focused and future practice, and how we communicate that out to everyone.

Yeah. I've been looking forward to this evening because now that we really have given you this report and shared it in turn with the community at this public session, I'm really, really happy because I think-- and it goes back to Neal's question, how we are able to communicate our work, their findings, I think goes a long way to have our efforts celebrated, who we are as a learning community celebrated, and also really give the community a clear depiction of where we are in our work.

The wonderful thing about education is our work is never finished, and this really shows the community that we have a focus in a direction, and I think will be great to celebrate this moment because it means that a year from now, we're able to come back and really denote all the progress and growth that we've achieved. So how we do it, Sarah, is TBD. Certainly this report that I presented tonight is certainly out there and could be a springboard for sort of more of a concise depiction of everything that was contained within the full report.

Great.

Yeah. So the communications aspect, I think it might be useful to get a two pager that is something that we could share with the public, perhaps via K-12. It's something for the communications committee to discuss. Sort of the basics. These are the questions that were addressed. These are the kudos that we received. These are the recommendations we received, and this is what we-- some of the initial thoughts we have about what we plan to do about those recommendations would definitely be something that would be useful to communicate to our public.

Great.

[INAUDIBLE]. Hi. I had a question. On one of the pages, I think it's page 11. It talks about the fact that there are so many parts to the profile of the graduate. There's so many skills, and that while critical thinking is one and that this approach-- we seem to be focused right now on just one, and that it might be more beneficial to bring all of the attributes in, and the language they say is, "The district could address these attributes one at a time, but a more powerful approach is to integrate them into ongoing work." Can you just follow up on that for me and shed some light because the district leaders suggest a more powerful approach. What's the thinking there with administration?

So like the report says, one way to tackle the profile of the graduate would be to say we're doing critical thinking this year. We're doing creative thinking next year. We're doing communication next year, self-directiveness the next year, empathy the next year, and then you run out of years because it's a five year plan and there's six profit attributes. So what they're referring to is really came out of the conversations we were having with them.

And it was to say that what we have found as we have been working through critical thinking through problem solving, it has been a broad enough topic that we have felt like we've been able to really bring so much into it. So as you're looking at a critical thinking, one of the things that you have to do in our rubric is to really understand perspective and be able to listen to other people's opinions and either defend your own or defend why you value someone else's opinion. Key component in our rubrics of critical thinking. Well, right there, there's empathy because you cannot do that without empathy.

And the more that we have then found, and there we are. Now you've got to defend your thinking as part of the critical thinking rubric. How do you defend it? That involves communication. So the more that we have been doing this work, the more we're seeing it is really just an entree point to all of the other profile of the graduate initiatives. So what they're referring to there is that we are really taking

on a lot of the profile holistically as we're concentrating on developing these rich problems that require critical thinking.

I do remember when we went through the whole planning process, so much of it was about how we needed to be laser focused in order to really make change. That was a theme that the gentleman who led us through the process kept bringing us back to. That's why I think also that was an important part of really focusing in on one key aspect of it.

We actually, if you remember, were trying to move towards creative thinking, and we put the brakes on that to say let's go back because we felt we were losing that laser-like focus that Jonathan [INAUDIBLE] spoke about. So that was kind of a little aha moment at the time, and I think what makes me so incredibly proud and reflective of this report really is a full K-12 report. In our previous Tri-States, we really were looking at particular areas, whether world language, at the time, which was just a-- not just-- but a 512 report, and when we looked at other areas.

This really not only was K-12, but went beyond a single department. It was the entire, entire system, where we've had K-12 social studies at another point. We've had school counseling, guidance, and that area, but this particular Tri-States was K-12 and the entire, entire system.

And will we be building-- I think you said this, Karen, but I just want to make sure-- so will we be building the real life or real world experience into the problem solving learning so that the students can make that connection between what they're learning and the problems that they are reviewing?

That is the goal. The goal is the learning is it happens through the problem, and the best of problems are transdisciplinary. They don't exist in one classroom, but really, like the real world, they have to call upon us to bring mathematics and history and the arts to really to find a solution. And we design those problems, and with those problems being deep and rigorous enough, we have to apply a high degree of critical thinking to their solution, and that really is our goal.

And what they really denoted was they're seeing that that's happening as our different teachers with their own creativity and ability and drive are doing in a lot of different ways, and now what we're seeing in the recommendations is how do we help our teachers to have it be something that is more even and explicit throughout the system?

I like the thought of-- I never thought of connecting that eighth grade project to the ninth grade. That would be wonderful to make that connection.

So powerful.

John, when I said succinct, you really delivered. Thank you.

All right. Thank you both. Thank you, John and Dr. O'Connell, for reviewing the Tri-State's report with us. If no one else has any other questions, we will move on to our third topic of the evening. OK. So the third thing that we had to discuss during our work session tonight was the trustee vacancy, so I'll just start for a minute and kind of go over everything.

So during our October 8 business meeting, as we all know, board trustee Beth McFadden shared that she would be resigning her seat because she's moving from the Croton-Harmon community. On October 12, she officially tendered her resignation. We thank her very much for her service and are disappointed to see her go, but we wish her and her family all of the best.

So with regard to the now vacant seat on the Board of Education, I do want to be very clear to any community that is watching this evening that this evening's work session is the first time that the board has had an opportunity to discuss our next steps. We have not made any decisions. We do have these conversations in public during our meetings, and this is the first opportunity we are having to do so. In the time between these two meetings, I've done some research. I have looked into our board policy and ed law, and I'm sure many of us have. I've also spoken with our district attorneys to identify our various options and the timeline.

So if I can, I'll go through a quick rundown of the options as they are. So there are three options. The board can appoint a qualified person to serve until the next election cycle. We could hold a special election within 90 days, and the winner of that election would serve the remainder of the outstanding term. Or lastly, we could decide to not proceed with either of those options within that 90-day time frame and operate with six trustees. However, after the 90 day period, the district superintendent, so in our case the Putnam Northern Westchester BOCES superintendent, or [INAUDIBLE] could-- may, but not must-- appoint a qualified candidate to our board to serve until the next election cycle.

There are obviously a lot of considerations that need to be taken into account with each of these. I can go into a few of the considerations I've thought of, or I'm happy to open the floor to the rest of us now to discuss and think. I know we've all been-- I know Neal has done some research as well on some neighboring districts and things that have gone on there and some potential options that present themselves for us there.

Sarah, would you mind just going into some of the considerations a little bit more.

Sure. Absolutely. So with regard to an appointment, there is no set protocol that a district has to follow. The board can appoint, or we could go through the process of soliciting interest and conducting interviews and gaining some interest from the community as to who would like to fill that position until the next election cycle. So it would be someone who would fill the position until the, as it currently stands, May election. Or, I'm sorry, they would fill it until the July reorganization meeting.

So the route of going with a special election, there are a lot of logistics involved with that that would make it a difficult endeavor. In this spring, there was an executive order for there to be a fully mail-in ballot in voting for our trustees and our budget. There is no executive order that would allow us to provide for a full mail-in balloting right now, and we're also in the midst of national, regional, local election cycles, so being able to do that.

There's also the cost associated, if the mail-in were possible, the cost associated with in an in-person vote, but also particularly right now the safety concerns that you would have to look at with regard to an in-person vote. We're looking at-- we're having the instance with the national election in November that we are going to have to have the high school be all remote for that day because we will have people in the building. It would be the same type of thing. So that makes that particular option probably a logistically harder hurdle.

And then third option is not appointing. That essentially leaves it with either giving that responsibility to a third party or operating with only six trustees, which obviously, hypothetically, puts us in an issue with voting deadlocks and things like that, nor do I think it's, personally, the best way to proceed. But so those are some of the considerations that I've thought of, and I'm happy to open the floor now to the rest of you to see what everyone else is thinking.

Just for clarification, I think in your third case, you said that we could just do nothing, in which case, within 90 days, a competent person would be selected to fill the vacancy till the next regular election by someone else. My reading of Policy 2120 says that that person who would make that appointment would be the district superintendent, but I think you mentioned [INAUDIBLE].

Right. So by district superintendent, that means our BOCES superintendent, not Doctor O'Connell. It means the larger district superintendent or BOCES' superintendent. Then again, that is a they may, right? They may make that. It is within their power to appoint someone to the board. It's not a must. They don't have to appoint someone if we hit 90 days, and we haven't appointed someone. That will definitely then be taken out of our hands. It's a that could happen then at that point.

Can I just get a clarification?

Sure.

What we're talking about is filling a seat for just through June 30. I think he said to the July reorganization.

Correct.

Basically to see would only be filled until June 30, which means in the May election, the very next May election is when that seat would be filled, and that election would run with the person who receives-- so if you have two at-large seats, then the third highest vote getter would take the remainder of the term for this vacated seat? Is that the way it works?

Yes. So that is the way that it would work, and I confirmed that as well with our attorneys. So because our seats are at large in this coming election cycle, there would be two seats at large and then this vacated seat. So the top two vote getters would get the three year, the full term. The third highest vote getter would get the remainder of the term, so essentially a two-year term of the remainder of this seat's term.

And so we're talking about appointing someone basically for about four months? They would serve for five months.

A clarification, which is based on my experience because I came on the board to fill a vacancy.

That's right.

And I came in third at that point, and I was then appointed effective immediately, not at the reorg meeting. The policy and the law says that the vacancy who will-- that person who is elected in that immediately assumes the responsibility. So we would be talking about appointing someone who would serve until the vote in May of 2021.

OK. So they--

Thank you for that clarification.

Let's say if we appoint someone, let's say January 1, they would only serve till May 19.

Right. Unless they ran and came in third, or they ran somebody else might. So the other thing I just want to point out is that under the law, Education Law Section 2113, the vacancy obviously, State Ed

does not have the authority to appoint someone. State, "If a vacancy in the office of trustee of a union free school district exists, the commissioner of education may order a special election. When such special election is ordered, the vacancy shall not be filled otherwise." But the district superintendent, the BOCES superintendent, may appoint for the balance of that term until the next election.

Thank you for that clarification, Neal. My apologies. I misread that. If people-- I'm happy to open the floor and see what people's thoughts are in terms of what next steps.

I just have one question for clarification because-- I am just wondering, so if an incumbent runs again, and if that person came in third, they would get the two-year term?

Correct.

Yeah.

OK. Just wanted-- yeah. So it's like by the seat?

Yeah.

Yeah. So let me start, just throw something down. I think the fundamental question is for us, whether or not we believe that we should proceed with a smaller bench, so to speak, six instead of seven, until the election, or whether we feel it is best to fill that seat some time prior to the next May election. I think that's the fundamental question, and I'm going back and forth in my own mind as to what is best as far as that's concerned. I think once you-- if we've decided we want to fill the seat, then the question is how?

Yeah. I would agree with Neal. I think this. I agree with Sarah. A special election just not sound feasible. And I've been going back and forth on this because I'm like I don't-- if we're talking about-- when I was looking up what the-- how you go about replacing a trustee, they said if we're talking about someone serving for four months, five months, I mean, that means that's a lot of energy and effort that we would be putting in to, and community members that expressed interest, in to serving on the board for-- they would be coming in right at the beginning of budget season. We're right in the midst of budget season. Have to ramp up really quickly for a four-month period on the budget. They'll be jumping in cold.

So on one hand, I'm thinking, oh my gosh, that's-- like the thought of trying to do a board training, trying to bring someone up to speed and give them all of the tools that they would need to be

successful is on one hand in favor of continuing with six. And I don't think BOCES would say, oh, no, no, no. We're going to give you a seven. I think if we said we were comfortable with proceeding with six, BOCES would say, all right. That's your district. But on the other hand, the workload is tremendous that we're all working under, and having a seventh person at the table is always advantageous.

The process for figuring out how we would want to proceed would be the next task that we'd have to try to develop. So I don't know. I'm really torn between those two options for some of the reasons I just stated.

Anyone else have any thoughts?

Yes. I have a few. So I've struggled with this over the past several days thinking about it, and I think there are a lot of considerations that we need to take into account. I think that selecting-- and I'm not going to put these in any particular order. Number one, I think that, historically, we have been a fairly collaborative board, and we rarely have contentious votes that come out even vaguely close to being a tie. So in that sense, I think that we could survive with six. I think the likelihood of deadlock is pretty slim given our history as a board, and I think that argues somewhat for sticking with six.

If we were to decide to try that we did not want to stick with six through until the spring, I don't think we should let it fall to BOCES to make that determination who our board members should be. I think it's something that we need to do, and obviously this is something that yes, BOCES could. The question is is it something that BOCES would? I don't know the answer to that question. But if we are going to pick someone, then it needs to be by some kind of process. I think it would ideally-- I mean, ideally we would have a special election and put it to the voters. That would be ideal, but we are in an unusual circumstance now, I agree, and actually running that special election would be problematic.

I have a hard time seeing how would-- I think it's doable. I just I worry about the expense and the effort. If we're going to pick someone, then I would say it would definitely need to be through some kind of a nomination process that we would need to define in which individuals could put themselves forward as nominees. I don't know whether that could be just by their sole fiat of deciding that they would like to be a nominee or someone else putting them into nomination or whether we would require-- I don't know whether we can, actually, require petitions. Might be something to also consider.

And even if we do that there, I think that the selection amongst the nominees would be fraught, could potentially be fraught, and could potentially lead to division in our community in that it's not really the result of an election, it's something that we're doing. Admittedly, we have the power to do it, but I

grow a little bit concerned about how we-- no matter who we select, someone will probably be upset.

So, Josh, just to piggyback on that. Neal, I'm actually going to ask you if you could-- just because I know that you reached out to the Brewster Board of Education, who's recently just filled two seats on their board, and [INAUDIBLE] and Neal spoke with them about what their process was so that might be helpful in terms of thinking about what kind of processes we could employ.

Sure. So first off, I tried to find wards in our area that has filled vacancies recently. One was the City of Rye, when Karen Belanger became the head of [INAUDIBLE], and she resigned as the member president of that board. The vice president said I can become president, and there was someone else who came in, if you will, as an interim for the balance of the term until the next election. I believe it was a former board member. As an aside, in the village of Croton, that is how the village has most recently filled a vacancy by asking a former village board member to replace-- that was Ian Murtaugh who replaced Casey Raskob when he became village prosecutor.

But more recently and more significantly, I suppose, I spoke with Brewster, spoke with the district clerk and also the president. They had two vacancies that arose in the month of June of 2020, and they went through a search process or application process. They basically asked people within the Brewster community, the district, who had an interest in serving on the board to provide a letter of intent or interest and a resume and a commitment that they had looked at the calendar of the board meetings, and they had looked at policies, and they have a board member handbook, and they understand what the job entails, and they're willing to take it on.

They then, as part of that-- and I'm looking for my notes here-- they actually said what we want you to do in your letter of interest is give us the reasons why you're interested in serving as a trustee and the qualities or experiences you have that you believe are relevant to the position. They got 20 applicants, two of whom were district employees and who were knocked out for that reason. They looked at the 18 remaining applicants, the board did in an executive session, and selected 7 individuals as finalists, so to speak.

They then conducted what would be akin to a meet-the-candidates night, where, on a Zoom meeting, they had each of the individuals participate, provide opening statements, closing statements, and respond to a series of questions that were asked by board members. Before that meeting, they solicited comments from the members of the public in terms of what questions the members of the public thought should be addressed to the candidates. Each of the questions were asked sequentially, the way you would do it as we have in a League of Women Voters forum or whatever.

And Zoom was open to the public. People could watch. And afterwards, they took about a week thereafter and asked for community comment on the candidates, what they had seen and what their thoughts were about the candidates, and then met in executive session, considered each of the 7 candidates, considered what they had heard from the community and during the meeting, and selected two candidates that were then appointed by the board. So that was a-- and they said we did this as a very inclusive process because we had concern that, knowing our community, our community wanted to be part of the process and wanted to feel that they were given the opportunity to participate and to comment.

Obviously though, as you can imagine, it took a lot of work. It was a lot of work to solicit, have the initial review, have the meet the candidates night, and then end up with another session of the board to select the two who would be appointed to those two vacancies. So that was the process they used. There's no right, wrong way to do it, but that's how they worked it.

And if I can just jump in because I do have a little bit of information about Brewster. I don't know if you recall the circumstances of that Brewster was facing in June, in May and June, but I think they were in a place where their community was extremely divided, and they were not-- they had some-- I don't want to make another district's misery a topic for us, but they were in a place where it was probably more essential than anything that they wanted their community to continue to support and recognize that the leadership team was there for them. I think it was probably extremely critical, especially the circumstances surrounding that departure of at least one of the trustees.

Correct.

Another thought. If we were to appoint, given the short amount of time, first of all, this is someone who would only serve until May if we were to make an appointment. Is that correct?

Correct.

I believe that's correct. So whoever we appoint would serve only until May, assuming our election happens on time and isn't changed by public health situation. They would only serve until May.

Actually, Josh, can I ask a follow-up question on that? Because what you described was the person who filled the position until May, then ran and won the election. But let's say--

No, no, no. I was not--

Any person who ran, it does not have to be the same person?

Correct.

Great. OK. Thank you.

Correct. Anybody could run. The person who is appointed could come in first, and then somebody else is second, and then the third person would be in the replacement would have the rest of Beth McFadden's term. My situation, the individual who resigned, resigned less than 30 days before the election, and so there was no filling of that vacancy by appointment before the election in which [INAUDIBLE] was elected to assume the remaining year of that term.

OK. So my point is that if we appoint someone, we are coming straight into budget season, and we have a lot of tough stuff on our plate. Sort of argues for if we were to appoint someone, perhaps it should be someone who has some significant experience, and just something to think about. No, seeing as it is definitely, no matter what, it's a caretaker essentially a caretaker position, right, since it's only until May?

That's true, although that person could decide to run again. I will see--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

--when I mentioned the individual who replaced. I think this is both true in Rye City and also the individual who went on the board, the village board when Casey Raskob became the village prosecutor. That was Ian Murtaugh. He said I am just filling out the remainder of this term. I am not going to run for election in the next election cycle.

Andrea? Iris? Brian? Your thoughts? Iris, I'm sorry. You already have given some initial thoughts. Andrea or Brian?

I'm just weighing back-- is not having the community choose-- I'm just thinking that there's benefits to waiting to the election because then it's very clean. The community has selected the person, and we've heard-- we're not interpreting. Nobody's interpreting. That's it. It is purely the community, and the person comes on in May. And then that person will have to be totally vetted by the public by running for the position, which is a really good process that all of us have had to go through. I think it strengthens you as a candidate, honestly.

So I'm kind of leaning towards that because if the person's there in May, it's really not that long a

time. I do think, though, I'm trying to think the benefits of bringing somebody on. I'm leaning towards keeping the position open until May. That's what I'm thinking because even just bringing somebody on at this point would probably, as Iris points out, would be helpful to us, but I think it's a bit of a pickle in terms of our community.

And what if we did? I would like it to be somebody who had the experience, who could really be turnkey and delve right in. So I would think we would want-- we have at least four members that I'm aware of the community who have-- five members of the community who have served as school board members already that we could consider. I think the idea of doing a full process the way Neal described, and it sounds excellent, but they started in June. I mean, we're practically going to be in May by the time that's done. So that's-- I'm not definitive yet, but I am leaning towards maybe just keeping the space open till May and have the community decide.

Have we reached-- I'm sorry. Go ahead.

We have not reached it. I don't know what you were going to ask, but I'm going to go ahead and say like absolutely not. This cannot stay open. We will have our heads on spikes, and the community will be outraged. I already know that, and I do not want an election. That's way too much work, and we are not required to do anything except appoint somebody.

And so I think-- I'm basically opposing all of what was just said basically because I don't think that the community wants nobody. I don't think that the community wants some of the same old people who have been around. I think they want a new person with perhaps not new ideas, but at least a new voice, and anything less than that is going to be outrageous, and people are going to be up in arms.

Right, but Brian, what are you basing that on? I mean, I went on Facebook. I saw what five or six people said, and I don't think we should be making our decisions around that. There was an election with 2000 people, and that election could be interpreted in many different ways. So I'm really open to the idea of-- as I said, I'm not 100% definitive, but I don't know that we've heard enough from the public to really know what people want.

If the process that Neal described would give us that outcome if we think it's worth it, I would go through that. Is it going to be distracting from the work that has to be done? Is there another way to do it? I'm open to hearing about that.

Well, I mean, my understanding is that an appointment must be made. So we can have an election. We can have an interview process. We can have community involvement, but none of that is

required. I think doing nothing is going to be a really tragic mistake, and so some action must be taken. And my feeling is that it shouldn't be somebody-- I don't know what experience is really necessary, to be honest. I had none. I didn't even run for this position. So does that make me a weak board member? I don't know. But I don't think it's a necessity.

Well, Brian, let me ask you this. Coming in, imagine if you started on January 1 in the middle of budget season. I'm just trying to figure out if you're bringing someone in that knows-- do you feel you were ready to-- budget season there was no-- well, when we say budget season, just to be clear, we start talking about looking at the budget and making the decisions as where we need to go and what budget we're going to adopt.

Well, I think that--

I mean, how do you make that decision cold if you have never-- if you don't have any of the information about what it takes to run certain parts of the district, how do the parts interlock. I'm not saying it can't be done, but what do you envision as the way we could bring someone up to speed really is what I'm asking because if [INAUDIBLE], I'd like to hear it. I would rather not have to make this decision tonight, to be quite honest.

It's too important to, at 10 o'clock at night to say OK, this is what we're going to do. I personally would not vote. I would abstain because I told you. I'm torn. I don't know. I'm not going to be ruled by Facebook if that's where it's coming from because there's a lot of community that doesn't go through Facebook, and we don't want to shut their thoughts out as well. But that's neither here nor there.

I just want to know what kind of map or plan would you see for us going forward that would make this a process, realizing that where we're backing into November, right? And we can only do things when we meet as a group of seven. Contrary to what folks may think, we can't have discussions over email or on the side. We have to all come together to even talk.

So if you're looking at November, and we're moving into the months where people are tied up with all kinds of other obligations. What's the roadmap that we could conceivably put together that would be legitimate? I'm not saying it can't be. I just want to get ideas so I can think about it.

Well, I think the premise is-- I disagree in some ways, fundamentally, with the premise because I don't think that there was anything in my training or onboarding or anything else that really specifically made me ready to look at a budget, nor did it give me the ability to be on a particular committee, nor did it really give me the ability to read the public and private messages and sort of form an opinion

on them. The only thing that the roadmap and the training really does is it tells you a little bit about this sort of the basic inner workings of like how does a board even work.

But to me, I don't know that-- I don't think that that is a very critical piece. I mean, the person that comes onboard brand new, Beth came on. She figured it out along the way and asked questions where needed, but mostly listened for a little while. And that's kind of the roadmap that-- I'm not sure how many times I even spoke in a meeting for the first couple of years.

That's my point. You usually spend that first year-- we all did. I did. You sit back, and you kind of are an observer as you're learning. That's exactly my point, Brian.

Sure. So why not start now?

What do you mean start now?

Why not have somebody start immediately? It's likely to be a person who has interest in the board anyway, and there's certainly no harm in having someone who is a board member, who is observing and participating to a small extent, and I don't know that it takes away from us in any major way. But I do think that doing nothing is potentially damaging.

If I could add, I am undecided, but I will say two things. One, we do have the authority to keep the position vacant if we so decide. But the other thing I'm thinking about is, and this goes to a question of fairness to the community and to people who may be interested, and that is, and it goes back to something that Andrea was talking about really wanting to allow the community to have its say, and that is if we go through a process and we should select Person A for that vacancy, we've got to balance two things.

One, how will that Person A be helpful to the community and to us, the governing team as we are going through the work that has a very short duration? And the other part to it is do we put that Person A in a different plane when it comes to the vote for trustees in May because that Person A-- who we've selected, not the voters-- is an incumbent, albeit an appointed incumbent. And with being an appointed incumbent carries something with her or him, I'm thinking. And that might not be fair or appropriate to the community either. And I don't know how I end up on this question, but that's something that comes to my mind.

I think that my response to that would be that they have entrusted this responsibility in us, so it is absolutely within our power to leave it open. It's within our power to ask somebody from wherever else to appoint somebody, which seems unlikely. It's also within our power to appoint somebody

through whichever process we decide is fairest. And I don't think that the community will view that as an abuse of power or somehow a breach of trust because it is our job. It is, in fact, in the job description of this is what-- this is the number one thing on the list of things you could do. It's the first one.

In what? I'm sorry. Brian, what's the number one thing?

Appoint a person to the board.

If you look at the statute and list the different possibilities, the first thing is you can appoint. The second thing is you can have an election. The third thing is you can have the district superintendent. So if you look that as an ordered priority, that's the number one priority. And Brian, I just want to say, you make some valid points, and I'm considering carefully what you said.

I mean, in terms of just my own personal view on it, I do think that there is a benefit to appointing in that in particular if we-- I think going through a process of soliciting interest and having community members who have an interest in filling this role, whether it's simply for four or five months or it's something that they would look to then run for election in the coming election cycle, I don't know that it would necessarily put them in an unfair advantage in terms of if they decide to run, but I do think that this is a way to-- I do think it's worthwhile.

I think it's a way of working with the community and showing them that we want to make sure that we are-- we've got all the seats at the table filled and people who want to be involved have the ability to indicate that interest to us. I don't think-- it's certainly not a decision any of us should be making lightly, and it's not a decision that we have to make tonight, but I do think it's worthwhile looking at appointing a person versus leaving the seat open. While I do understand the-- we are a very collaborative board, and I see it does put a little bit more on our plates in terms of taking on going through any indications of interest, things like that, and holding interviews if that's the route we decide to go. But I think it then provides for a full board, and I think that's beneficial to the community.

Sarah, I think what you're saying-- I'm sorry, Josh. I was going to say I definitely am hearing-- I like the fact, not even looking at it about our term or what we need like for this year, but using it as a process to get individuals involved in the school district. So even if it's a longer process, that's where the value comes from is that angle of it and making sure that we're really, fully reflecting what the community wants. So I was looking at it from the idea of just doing what's expedient because there's so much

work to be done, but I'm thinking that no, it's not. The value is actually in the process of gathering [INAUDIBLE], and I'm beginning to lean towards that idea.

If value is in the process, then I'm not sure that we want a process that is quite as long as Brewster's was. I think it should be somewhat expeditious, but it still needs to be thorough and rigorous, which means--

Just to let you know, Brewster sent out their letter on June 29 announcing the vacancy and the solicitation, gave 2 weeks for people to submit, reviewed the 18 submissions 6 days later, interviewed the candidates 1 week later, 2 weeks after that selected, and on August 18, which was 6 weeks or 6 and 1/2 weeks after, maybe 7 weeks, after they announced the second vacancy, they had made an appointment. So obviously it was in the summer. People were not as stressed in terms of work to be done, and people were all sitting at home because they were closeted because of the pandemic.

But it is a process that they completed in 6 weeks with 18 expressions of interest, and I have a feeling that we would not have that many expressions of interest. So the time frame could be shorter. If we decide to do this, we could have it done by the end of the year. It would mean some work for us in November and in December, but it could be done.

I don't want to rush it, but I don't want it to take too long either. There's arguments for being rigorous and deliberative, and there's arguments for expedience.

Well, the one thing I will tell you from my discussion with the president of the Brewster Board is that, without going into the specifics of their deliberation, he did say their discussions both in winnowing down the initial candidates and in consideration of the finalists was rigorous. They had a-- so it was a process that she felt for her community was provided the sufficient rigor and community participation that there were no outward, except for one, complaints about the process. She did say one member of the board ended up abstaining because he felt, and one of the things that Andrea had said, that really the only way to choose someone is by a special elect.

And even though he went through the process, he ended up saying you know what? I have nothing against these people, but I'm not going to vote for them because I think we should have had an election. That was his personal choice on the vote, but otherwise she'd said nobody, even the candidates who were not selected, raised any complaint about the fairness, rigorous, appropriateness of the process they used in that district.

Now, our district--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

--a lot more vocal people that if they don't win, it's not going-- I don't think it'll be as transitional. Either way, where are we? Only because--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

Correct. We've been discussing this for about 40 minutes, 45 minutes now. So are people feeling that they have come to a decision on their own as to where they're leaning?

I have one question. Just in terms of what the timetable would be, just because we haven't really talked about that, to do a special election because you have to give time for candidates to file petition. Do they have to go through that same process if we-- how quickly could we do a special election in terms of the time--

The time frame would be that you've got to provide people an opportunity to submit petitions. You then got to, because we don't have a waiver of people obtaining signatures, so anyone who wishes to run would have to get 25 signatures submitted to district clerk. District clerk would [INAUDIBLE] schedule election for a particular day. We'd have to provide for absentee ballots, whether we're providing for-- we couldn't provide absentee ballots for no excuse.

It's same to everybody, an absentee ballot, as we did in June, because that's not authorized. So we'd have to say-- you'd have to have people basically say they cannot come and whether or not they have to give a reason or whether they can just say COVID as we can do in the general election. And then we would have to print the ballots, and you've got military ballots, supposedly. I don't know if we have any. They would have to go out. So we're talking about not getting it done any quicker than the process that we would do, probably longer.

If I read it correctly though, that process does need to be done within the 90 days, correct?

I don't believe-- let me get--

I would have to double check on that in terms of-- that was my reading.

I think we all agree that, in a time when the district has such stretched resources, that running a special election, getting booth, paying for election chairs is probably not the most wise use of our limited resources.

I mean, it also brings into effect the where it would take place, given that we don't want to have lots

of people, lots of visitors in a building, and generally we hold our elections in the high school. So there's that consideration as well.

The beauty of the special election is that then that person serves till the end of the three year term. There's no additional election they would run in May.

Right.

I'm sorry. I think we still-- I think we probably have some questions to think of and some things to consider. I don't want to push anyone on making a decision at this point, and it's 10:30 at night. Could we table this and plan for making a decision on our next steps at our November business meeting? I believe [INAUDIBLE] November.

I think that makes sense.

I mean, I'm just, I'm not ready to make a decision. I don't know if the rest of the board members are. I don't want to hold anyone-- I just keep going back and forth in my mind, so I don't want to make it sound like--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

It's an important decision. I don't think it should be a rushed process.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

If that would be to table it and come to a decision [INAUDIBLE]

There are two, perhaps actually three, depending upon our choices, there are three actual decisions that need to be made. Decision number one is do we intend to fill the position before May or not? That's decision number one. Decision number two is the method by which we fill the position. If we choose to fill the position before May, then there is the decision to be made about how we select the person. Do we do it by special election, or do we do it by appointment? And then, there is the following question is if we choose to do it by appointment, then by what strategy do we do it by appointment?

So I think we might be able to actually dispense with one of those questions today. I don't know. Can we dispense with the should we fill the position or not?

I don't believe that we can make that decision now because Iris brought up some good points.

Andrea brought up some good points, and then she said, well, maybe I feel the other way. Though there are those three decisions, I think it is pretty clear that the second question, special election or appointment, is, for a lot of reasons, we would go for appointment. But the first question, I'm not ready to decide, and the third question, I'm not ready to decide. But you have to decide the first question, and I think that is something that we should reconvene in two weeks.

So then again, yeah, I do think that putting this onto the agenda for the November 5th meeting and coming to that meeting prepared to make a decision on those items is our best course of action. As we've stated, we do have an executive session. It is 20 minutes to 11:00.

I'd like to move to table the topic until the November meeting.

It was just a discussion. There was motion.

There's no reason to move.

OK.

With that then I will move that the Board of Education enter into executive session to discuss the employment of a particular person or persons.

Sarah, just before-- can I just say one thing on it? I don't know the board officers will be meeting-- well, of course you will be meeting.

We will.

If you can-- you have a very-- I'm so tired right now. You have a good handle on our calendar. If you can show us what our calendar would look like if we attempted to do some sort of interview process. I don't know where we are with our work sessions.

Certainly.

I know we have this thing coming next week and a couple of-- if you could just give us a sense of what we have on our table right now, that would be helpful. Not tonight, but before the November meeting?

Yep.

Thank you.

And Sarah, as I just saw the rest of the board know, I have forwarded to the board officers the various pieces of information that I have shared tonight, so the calendar and time frame that was used in Brewster is there so that you can use that kind of as a guide to think about how that might apply if we go in that direction.

Great. Thank you. All right. So I've moved that action. Anyone want to second it? I'm sorry. Move it?

Moved.

So moved.

Second.

Second.

I don't know who moved it.

OK. All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Oppose. Abstain. Motion carries. With that, for any community who are still watching us, we will be expected to adjourn immediately following executive session. So we will be stopping our live streaming for the night. Thank you for joining us.