MINUTES
Trumbull High School Weight Room/Wellness Center Building Committee
February 24, 2022

Present: Chair, Kim Lombardi, John Morello, Julie DiMarco, Mark Sitar, and Lucinda Timpanelli.

Absent: Mike Buswell, Tom Whitmoyer

Also Present: Purchasing Agent Kevin Bova, TPS Director of Operations Dave Cote, Town Attorney Dan Schopick, Chief Administrative Officer Cindy Katske

Call to Order
The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 4:35 p.m. at the Agriscience & Biotechnology Center, Trumbull, CT, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Introductions
Committee members and attendees introduced themselves.

Election of Committee Officers
Motion was made by Ms. Timpanelli, seconded by Mr. Morello to nominate Julie DiMarco as vice chair. The motion passed unanimously.

Review of Building Committee Rules and Freedom of Information Act

Discussion of Process and Timeline
Mr. Cote stated the committee needs to look at the initial procurement of an architect and develop the vision of the committee. We need to request from the Town Council that this committee is authorized to secure architectural services and that the Superintendent is authorized to apply for a grant from the State Office of School Construction and Grant Review. He prepared two resolutions that will need to come from this committee to the Town Council for approval. There are three resolutions that the State requires on application for a grant. One of them has already been accomplished, which is the Town Council’s authorization of this committee. We need resolutions for approval to apply for the grant and to procure architectural services. Before we approach Mr. Bova for an RFP or RFQ for an architectural firm this would be authority to go out and procure these services.

Motion was made by Ms. DiMarco, seconded by Ms. Timpanelli to approve the following resolution to be sent to the Town Council: "BE IT RESOLVED, That the Town Council authorizes the Trumbull Board of Education to apply to the Commissioner of Administrative Services and to accept or reject a grant for the Weight Room/Wellness Center at Trumbull High School." The motion was approved unanimously.

Motion was made by Mr. Sitar, seconded by Ms. DiMarco to approve the following resolution to be sent to the Town Council: "BE IT RESOLVED, That the Town Council hereby authorizes the preparation of drawings and specifications for the Weight Room/Wellness Center at Trumbull High School." The motion was approved unanimously.
Ms. Katske indicated that these resolutions would go to the Council at its meeting in April. Ms. Timpanelli asked whether we need to wait for Council approval before contacting architects. Mr. Cote said we definitely need to wait before applying the grant; we can research but can’t do a solicitation. Mr. Bova outlined the RFP/RFQ process. We can’t use on-call services per the State. Mr. Cote clarified that the State requires a competitive proposal process as part of the architect selection, so he recommends doing the qualification and at the same time receive sealed proposals for the design services. The second part of the evaluation would be considering the price. Ms. Timpanelli inquired about the interview process. It is required to conduct interviews to determine the most qualified. Mr. Bova recommended bringing three architects in and asking them the same questions. Mr. Cote stated that last year $35,000 was approved in the bonding request and another $100,000 is being requested this year for a total of $135,000 to hire an architect. We would at least get through design documents. Ms. Timpanelli inquired about researching references. Mr. Bova stated that we can check references and the committee can visit other jobs the architects have done.

Attorney Schopick stated that the committee can discuss the location for the weight room/wellness center before an architect is hired. The committee needs to create a record with input from the different user groups. Mr. Cote stated that we need to create Educational Specifications as part of the grant process. He located prior plans which are helpful.

Mr. Cote distributed an article about high school weight rooms for discussion.

Mr. Cote stated he had looked at gross square footage requirements by the State for the student population and according to his calculations, it is not a concern.

Mr. Bova reviewed CHRO requirements which are part of the state grant process.

Ms. Lombardi inquired about the timeline for this project. Mr. Cote stated he would estimate 6-12 months for the design process, then we would go through a plan review with the State before going out to bid. If the resolution is rejected by the Town Council and we do not seek a grant, then the town’s purchasing policy governs how we proceed. The reimbursement rate is around 33.9%. Construction would be over a year. Construction during the school year was discussed. Mr. Cote indicated the process with the State is slow.

The Chair noted that item 5 on the agenda, Discussion of Developing a Request for Qualifications from Design for Architectural Services, has already been covered. Mr. Cote started a draft and distributed it to the committee. The committee discussed hourly rates, in-house services, change orders, and hiring a construction manager or owner’s representative.

Ms. Katske inquired about providing enough information for the Town Council to make a decision. Ms. Timpanelli responded that the committee has two Town Council members on it and they can bring information back to the Council. Mr. Cote discussed the difference between hiring an architect for a feasibility study versus for the project.

Fundraiser
The Chair stated that she would like to hold off on the fundraising piece due to the large amount of work ahead.
The Chair stated the committee will bring in the various user groups for input, including representatives from the boys and girls coaches and school personnel. The next meetings will be held March 16 at 7:00 p.m., March 30 at 7:00 p.m., and April 13 at 5:00 p.m., all at the Agriscience & Biotechnology Center. Mr. Cote will submit the two resolutions to the Town Council for its May agenda since the committee will not be ready by April.

**Adjournment**
Motion by Mark Sitar, seconded by Julie DiMarco to adjourn at 5:46 p.m. The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Katske
Temporary Clerk
Resolutions are required for filing FORM SCG-1049: School Construction Grant Application

SAMPLES OF THE THREE REQUIRED RESOLUTIONS:

(1) RESOLVED, that the **legislative body** authorizes the **town / district / RESC / academy** Board of Education to apply to the Commissioner of Administrative Services and to accept or reject a grant for the **proposed project** at the **school name**.

(2) RESOLVED, that the **building committee** is hereby established as the building committee with regard to the **proposed project** at the **school name**.

(3) RESOLVED, that the **legislative body** hereby authorizes at least the preparation of schematic drawings and outline specifications for the **proposed project** at the **school name**.

Replace the underscored / italicized phrases above as appropriate:

- **Legislative body** – Town governing body such as town council; except for regional school districts, the town governing body is *not* the local Board of Education.

- **Proposed project** – The type of construction such as alteration or roof replacement for which a grant application will be submitted; multiple facilities may be referenced in one resolution, but the facilities must be separately identified and the type of construction needs to be facility-specific.

- **School name** - The specific facility at which the construction will take place; multiple facilities may be referenced in one resolution, but the facilities must be separately identified and separate grant applications for each facility are required.

- **Building committee** – A standing building committee or a new building committee formed for the specific project.
BE IT RESOLVED, That the Town Council authorizes the Trumbull Board of Education to apply to the Commissioner of Administrative Services and to accept or reject a grant for the Weight Room/Wellness Center at Trumbull High School.

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Town Council hereby authorizes the preparation of drawings and specifications for the Weight Room/Wellness Center at Trumbull High School.
FACILITIES | FITNESS

Inside the Modern High School Weight Room

Paul Steinbach
May 10, 2018
Icons, innovation and plenty of iron pack the weight rooms in (clockwise from top left) Rockford, Mich., and LaPorte), Bowie and Athens high schools in Texas.

Underneath the seating of a new $22 million basketball arena at LaPorte High School in football-crazed Texas is a 4,600-square-foot weight room, two walls of which are lined by multiple sets of dumbbells weighing up to 100 pounds in 5-pound increments. In the middle of the room are seven double-sided, multipurpose racks that can accommodate both squats and cable exercises simultaneously. The space, which opened last August in time for the 2017-18 academic year, accommodates nearly 100 athletes at a time with training techniques both traditional (leg-extension and curl machines) and trendy (plyo boxes), and the LaPorte Bulldog logo is literally everywhere.

It's enough to spur envy in most high schools and even a few colleges, but LaPorte isn't satisfied. In April, the school will unveil a football field house containing an 8,000-square-foot weight room that athletic director Todd Shoppe describes as "even bigger and better" than the one still months shy of its first anniversary. "It won't be just a football weight room. We can't afford to do that," says Shoppe, who oversees some 1,000 student-athletes competing in 15 sports. "We have to try to make use of every inch that we've got with all of our sports programs."

While exceptional, LaPorte isn't alone. High schools across the country are giving their strength training areas a lift in both style and substance. Here are five key developments in contemporary high school weight room design:
The Rockford Ram is displayed prominently on a stretch of synthetic turf (Photo courtesy of Rogers Athletic)

**SPACE**

It's not uncommon for high schools to opt for multiple weight rooms. Last June, Kimberly (Wis.) High School opened a second, 6,500-square-foot weight room to complement its existing 4,000-square-foot space, which has been retooled to better serve girls. Dumbbells are available in 2½-pound increments as opposed to 5-pound increments, for example, and pull-up bars are set at lower heights. "A lot of it's the same," athletic director Ryan McGinnis says of the gender-specific training approaches, "but girls have different bodies and different needs, so those needs are met, as well."

while school colors coordinate the Kimberly (Wis.) Papermakers’ training space. (Photos courtesy Luke Jones, Dynamic Fitness & Strength)
Square footage can turn a weight room into a comfort zone. "We have a 5,000-square-foot weight room and we got to start using it June," says Paul Essary, athletic director at Athens (Texas) High School. "We can accommodate at least 60 athletes at one time and be very safe and organized doing it."

That's a five-fold upgrade over the previous strength training space at Athens, and Essary, who has served as the school's head football coach and AD since 2009, feels student-athletes can finally reach their full potential. "The thing that I like that I've never had enough of is leg-exercise equipment, and one reason was we didn't have the facility. That's no longer the case," Essary says, pointing to his new hip sleds, leg-curl machines and squat racks. "I think it's really going to pay off for us in the future. Our kids are getting extremely strong in the lower body."

(Photos courtesy Luke Jones, Dynamic Fitness & Strength)
EQUIPMENT

Many schools opt to partner with a particular manufacturer for the bulk of their equipment needs, and manufacturers have been innovative in making both the individual pieces and the spaces they occupy as functionally efficient as possible.

Essary chose for Athens a brand of squat rack that features a bench that slides along a track, allowing it to be pushed back, stood upright and stored out of the way within the rack footprint.

At Evergreen Park (Ill.) Community High School, four squat racks among 12 total feature uprights that can be inserted in the floor and removed like volleyball stanchions, allowing the resulting space to accommodate additional uses — such as rope training — beyond plate-loaded lifting.

Some 400 Mustang logos accent the weight room in Evergreen Park, Ill. (Photo courtesy of Samson Equipment)

Kimberly High School went with an in-state equipment supplier that was willing to work with the school’s strength coach in designing custom racks — 14 in the larger room alone. "That was a huge plus," McGinnis says. "They were very eager and willing to create what we wanted so those spaces were put to the best use for our student-athletes and our students. Because of the custom design of the racks, there are more bars moving at the same time — four bars at each rack — so you could have 56 kids performing a movement all at one time. It becomes more efficient, and you get kids in and out more quickly."
Schools have also complemented their traditional plate-loaded and cable equipment with functional pieces such as medicine balls, resistance bands and stretches of synthetic turf for sled work and agility training.

Evergreen Park made sure its weight room also included plenty of cardio options — 12 elliptical trainers, eight bikes, three treadmills and two stepmills. "We needed somewhere that our P.E. kids wanted to go, not the traditional football weight room. Somewhere where they're like, 'Hey, this is like a health club. The equipment's real nice, and it doesn't bother me to work out.' And that's what we've got," athletic director Jim Soldan says. "We used to get maybe 20 kids to come to our weight room after school. We're at capacity every day after school for three hours."

![Abundant glazing gives Athens athletes a view of the Hornets' football stadium. (Photo courtesy of Rogers Athletic)](https://www.athleticbusiness.com/facilities/fitness/article/15153901/inside-the-modern-high-school-weight-room)

**BRANDING**

Racks, dumbbells and plates are customizable in school colors and logos, as are Olympic lift platforms that may be free standing or embedded flush into wall-to-wall rubber flooring for a finished look befitting a major college or professional weight room. The platforms at Athens, for example, alternate between the school's "A" and Hornet logos.

At Evergreen Park, large cutout Mustangs covering the walls set the aesthetic tone for the entire space. "The branding is unbelievable," Soldan says. "There are like 400..."
Mustangs. It's crazy. Every dumbbell, every weight — everything is branded with a Mustang on it.

High schools such as those in Arlington are investing not only in the best strength equipment available, but state-of-the-art audio/visual amenities, as well. (Photo courtesy of Hammer Strength)

**AUDIO/VISUAL**

State-of-the-art sound equipment is nearly as commonplace in the modern high school weight rooms as the squat rack. Evergreen Park has 12 speakers in its space, but the system is set up to lower the volume on music anytime an instructor is using a cordless microphone to communicate with kids while they work out. Same goes for the sound system at Athens. "As a coach, it was hard to communicate when the music's on. You'd scream and maybe half the kids would hear you," Essary says, adding that with his facility's new cordless mic feature, "You can walk around the weight room and say motivational things like, 'You're working hard — keep it up' or 'We have to get a little more intense' — and everybody can hear you."

Evergreen Park's weight room includes three TVs, with the largest serving as a motivational device. "Our P.E. classes wear heart rate monitors two days a week," Soldan says. "When they go in the weight room, that 80-inch TV displays a screen that has every kid's name and what their target heart rate is so the kids can watch while they're going up and down trying to reach the goal."
Lee County, Texas, also investing in the best strength equipment and state-of-the-art audio/visual amenities. (Photo courtesy of Dynamic Fitness & Strength)

GOALS
Weight rooms are no longer afterthoughts as new athletics facilities are constructed on high school campuses across the country. For many sports programs, strength translates directly to success. "We just feel it's a major part of your physical development. Not only football, but all sports," Essary says. "If you don't get in the weight room and make yourself stronger, you're not becoming the best athlete you can become. And if you're not becoming the best athlete you can become, you're not giving your team a chance to be successful."

"No question that weight rooms are taking on a new dynamic, a new aesthetic and a new purpose," McGinnis says. "We consider our strength program as the hub of our athletic department, and in a lot of ways a kind of hub for our students in their P.E. classes to be fit and begin to understand their bodies."

"We have a P.E. class in strength and conditioning, and they're in there every day," Soldan says of the Evergreen Park weight room. "Our other P.E. classes rotate and are in there minimally twice a week. We're on a four-block schedule, and it's probably used for curriculum two blocks a day every day of the week."

It wasn't always this way. "If you put it on a scale of one to 10, my old weight room was a 2. This is a 10," Soldan adds. "We're a school of 800, and we have a weight room that can accommodate 71 kids that is nicer than any weight room that I've seen anywhere in my area for a school our size. I couldn't ask for anything better."

This article originally appeared in the May 2018 issue of Athletic Business with the title "High school weight rooms reset the bar." Athletic Business is a free magazine for professionals in the athletic, fitness and recreation industry. Click here to subscribe.