

# News



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## Our Town

# Schools want to push K-8 project up

By ELIO GUGLIOTTI  
STAFF WRITER

Less than a year and a half after the starting time for construction of two new K-8 schools was delayed due to the economic downturn, the city is looking at pushing that time back up for the same reason.

In the fall of 2008, school officials announced a plan to delay the opening of two new K-8 schools in the city three years to the fall of 2015. The city would do minimal work on the project until 2014, when major construction would

begin, in order to maintain the state reimbursement level of nearly 74 percent on the project.

The reason for the delay was to make the project easier for the city to digest financially as a recession gripped the country.

Since then, school officials have completed detailed architectural designs and a detailed cost analysis for the project and all signs are pointing to a nearly \$30 million savings on the project if the city moves the schedule back up.

The project had been estimated to cost \$132 million. Superintendent of Schools Philip Streifer said that because of the slumping economy, the detailed cost analysis for the project now estimates the total project's cost to be slightly under \$105 million. That figure, he said, includes a significant amount of contingency funds for the project.

Streifer said the potential to save millions of dollars on the project prompted school officials to reach out to the city to look into

moving the schedule back to its original timeline.

Streifer said the decision on whether to go back to the original timeline isn't one that school officials can make. Rather, he said the Board of Education is just giving the information to the city and the decision rests in the hands of city officials.

If the project was to be moved back up to its original timeline, the schools would be opened in the fall of 2012. Major construction on the schools would most likely begin next spring,

with preparation for construction beginning this year.

Mayor Art Ward said the city is reviewing the issue. He said officials are weighing the impact of the potential savings against the impact moving the project forward would have on the mill rate and taxpayers.

From a financial point of view, Comptroller Glenn Klocko said moving the project forward would have a significant impact on the city. He said the city had planned its future bonding around the project being

delayed. If the project is moved up, he said other bonding projects currently planned would most likely need to be delayed.

The city would then need to bond for its share of the school project, Klocko added, which would have an immediate impact on the city's mill rate.

"It's a direct mill rate impact sooner rather than later," Klocko said.

Comments? Email [egugliotti@BristolObserver.com](mailto:egugliotti@BristolObserver.com).

## State senate candidate Jason Welch selects campaign coordinator

The Welch for State Senate committee announced in a press release Harwinton resident Tim Bobroske will serve as campaign coordinator. Bobroske will help organize campaign team members,

messages and events.

Jason Welch, the Republican candidate for the 31st senatorial district, said that: "I am very excited that Tim is an integral part of the team. He has a lot of experience campaigning for

this seat with Beverly Bobroske's 2004 and 2006 runs, and he brings much wisdom from that experience."

Bobroske said in the press release, "A lot of people in Hartford just don't get

it. Jason does. Our state has the highest taxes in the nation; the Hartford area has lost jobs 19 out of the past 20 years; and we now have \$60 billion in unfunded liabilities. All of this happened on Colapietro's

watch. Jason has the smarts and the guts to make the tough decisions to turn Hartford around. When the campaign approached me to be involved it was a no brainer."

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the last 14 years, said Eckstrom. Those are the people she'll miss, she said.

"Always lovely people," said Eckstrom.

When asked how she felt to have a party in honor of her retirement, Eckstrom clasped her hands together and sighed, speechless.

When asked what Eckstrom meant to the hospital, Fournier took a moment to collect her thoughts.

"Our slogan is 'It's our hospital,'" said Fournier. "Barbara is the perfect example of it's my hospital."

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