

EXCERPT FROM LEGISLATIVE BUILDING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES--VISIT TO OWATONNA S.S. & H.
MAY 21, 1966*

The meeting was reconvened by Chairman Popp at 10:00 a.m.
At the Owatonna State School.

Present in addition to Commission members and staff were:
from the Department of Administration: William E. Stevenson, Assistant
Commissioner; Paul Cummings, Assistant State Architect; from the Department
of Public Welfare: Morris Harsh, Commissioner; Dr. David Vail, Director,
Division of Medical Services; Kent T. Hawkins, Institutions Administration;
E. J. Foss, Business Manager; and W. E. Ballentbin, Chief Engineer, Also
present meres Representative John A. Hartle: Jerry Walsh, Executive Director,
Minnesota Association for Retarded Children; and Mrs. William Woehrlin,
Governmental Affairs Chairman, Minnesota Association for Retarded Children.

Brochures presented to the members are on file in the office of
the Commission.

Mr. Henderson presented background information on Owatonna State
School, details of which will be found in the brochure.

He then presented the requests for the next biennium.

The requests for Owatonna State School for the biennium beginning
July 1, 1967 are as follows:

1. New service building	\$ 600,000
2. Security unit for Cottage 17	90,000
3. Addition to school building	300,000
4. Standby generating unit	5,000
5. Streets and sidewalks--repair, construction, lights	58,000
6. Playground area improvement	12,000
7. Repairs to cottages and other buildings	21,000
8. Repairs to deep well pump	4,000
9. New paint shop	25,000
10. New garage	<u>10,000</u>
TOTAL	\$1,125,000

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LARSON: Do you have to turn down many applicants?

HENDERSON: In the last month or so we have had fifteen applicants whom we turned down. Many of the children who are referred to us are not the type of children that we feel we can do a good job with. I don't feel that an institution is the best place for children.

POPP: Don't you feel that you might be a little too selective?

HENDERSONS Perhaps we are. However, we have certain ideas on which children we should take.

POPP: Who sets up the criteria for admission here?

VAIL: Dr. Bartman set up the present criteria. Perhaps this will have to be re-evaluated.

POPP: Do you have any mongoloids here?

HENDERSON: No.

POPP: Why don't you? You can train a Mongoloid to do things.

VAIL: The law states that the purpose of the institution is academic education and vocational training and I would surmise that the great majority of Mongoloid children would not fit into that category. They are trainable, but that is not what the law specifies.

POPP: Don't you think that we need a complete re-evaluation here? If we are going to continue this institution for the educable we aren't going to have any students--they will all be in the public schools.

VAIL: I agree with you. We have been trying for two legislative sessions to have the law broadened. Last session, the law was amended to read:

The Owatonna state school shall be used as a state institution to provide academic education, vocational training, and such related services as are necessary to achieve the same for mentally deficient persons under age 21.

Laws 1965, Chapter 293

POPP: I think that before we can build anything here, you will have to establish a definite program.

HURSH: Actually, in our building requests we are asking you, to consider something that technically we do not have the authority to perform. We hope to have the function of this institution changed in the next session.

SCHUMANN: Is it your intention to provide services for the child here that no other institution in the state is able to provide?

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HENDERSON: There are other institutions which have the same type of children; however, they cannot provide the services which we hope to provide here.

OLSON: It seems to me that we are trying to find a program to justify the existence of this institution. I think we ought to have the needs before us and build accordingly rather than try to bring in a program to fit the buildings we have. I think that the Department of Public Welfare should take a long hard look at this institution before they ask us for any buildings.

HURSH: I would think that we would be able to do this before your allocation meetings.

HARTLE: I think that we will have to convince the people of Owatonna that we have to change the function here. The public schools are actually taking care of the students we are supposed to be taking care of.

POPP: In regard to this service buildings—are you requesting a complete kitchen facility and a warehouse?

HENDERSON: Yes; it would also have a canteen area where the children could come for snacks.

POPP: How far are you from Faribault?

HENDERSON: Fifteen miles.

POPP: Had you ever thought of the possibility of using Faribault for your food service—having the food prepared there and trucked here?

HENDERSON: No, we have never thought of this. It certainly would be a possibility. However, we would still need facilities for serving the food, washing the dishes, etc.

HEUER: I notice that this request has been increased \$100,000. What is the justification for this?

CUMMINGS: This figure was actually arrived at three or four years ago and by the time we get the building constructed it will be another two or three years. With the current escalation in building costs, it will cost us at least this much to build the facility.

KIRCHNER: Is this building being planned in terms of a population here of 200?

HENDERSON: I think that we planned it in terms of 250 or 300. It would be unfortunate to build such a central facility and then have no possibility for expansion.

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SCHUMANN: Have you ever thought of using group therapy here? The Corrections people seem to think that it works very well.

HENDERSON: We have tried a little of this, but we really don't have the necessary staff.

LARSON: Wasn't there some talk at one time about closing a bridge so that the children could have a playground area?

HENDERSON: Yes. We would like very much to close this bridge; however, the city feels that it is a necessary traffic artery. We do have quite a problem with traffic there during the rush hour.

KIRCHNER: It seems to me that there was some talk of the city's acquiring some of the property here. Perhaps there could be some negotiations on this matter.

STEVENSON: Why are you connected with the city mains only for emergency service?

BALLENTHIN: We are located so high above the city, that there is not enough water pressure here.

SCHUMANN: What happens to the children who are released from this institution?

HENDERSON: Almost all of them go back to their community.

POPP: If you transfer some of your land to the city how much land will you have left?

HENDERSON: About ninety acres.

OLSON: What is your authorized complement of staff here and do you have any vacancies?

HENDERSON: The complement is 146 and we have six or seven vacancies.

The chairman then thanked Mr. Henderson for his presentation and the meeting was adjourned.

Following the meeting, the Commission members toured the school.