

# Cost Analysis for Municipal Operations at 204 Sisson Road

---



**November 21, 2022**

---

**Town of Harwich**

**Written by Joseph F. Powers**

**Town Administrator**



---

## Purpose

The purpose of this report is to outline the anticipated annual costs of continuing operating the building at 204 Sisson Road (the former middle school) for municipal government operations including cultural affairs programming and recreation programming throughout the building and in certain outdoor or open air areas.

For the purposes of this report, the building will be referred to as the former middle school which is understood to be for “municipal use” as defined in the town’s Zoning Bylaw as “A use, whether in a structure and/or on a parcel of land, owned and/or operated by the Town of Harwich.”<sup>1</sup> “Municipal Use” is permitted by right throughout every zoning use without exception.

## Comparison

This report will rely upon comparisons to the Community Center located at 100 Oak Street which provides municipal programming in the areas of recreation, social, educational and other similar activities.

Facts	Community Center 100 Oak Street	Former Middle School 204 Sisson Road
Constructed	1999	1937
Renovated	N/A	1990
Open for municipal use	2000	2014 – returned to town 2016 – programming began
Square footage	32,000	78,800
Rental spaces	6 rooms 1 multi-purpose room 1 gymnasium	19 rooms 1 multi-purpose room 1 open-air courtyard 1 Auditorium 1 Gymnasium Athletic Fields

## Operational Cost Comparison

The table below outlines the operational costs for services (repairs, services, maintenance) and utilities for both the Community Center and the former Middle School in Fiscal Year 2022. These costs do not reflect custodial costs or other personnel-related costs.

Generally speaking, it has been assumed that the estimated operational costs for the former middle school generally run about \$150,000 to \$180,000 a year in previous years.

---

<sup>1</sup> Town of Harwich, MA; The Code, Part II: Zoning Bylaw; Article II Definitions, §325-2 Word Usage and definitions.

**Table 1 Operational Cost Comparison**

Location	Community Center	Former Middle School
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 Oak Street</b>	<b>204 Sisson Rd FY22*</b>
Service Expenses	\$50,850	\$40,772
Utility Expenses	\$94,884	\$76,719
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$145,734</b>	<b>\$117,491</b>

By further comparison, the same expenses for operational costs for Town Hall (732 Main Street) were \$90,500 in Fiscal Year 2022.

The town assumes that the operational costs for the former middle school will increase in the areas of utility expenses if programming is expanded throughout the building in future years. However, the total operational costs may not necessarily increase beyond the past assumption of \$150,000 to \$180,000 (excluding personnel costs).

### **Capital Investment**

The Capital Outlay Plan for the ensuing five (5) fiscal years (FY 2024 to FY 2028) breaks out the facilities maintenance proposals for twelve (12) town properties/buildings throughout the community. The former middle school is included in that list of facilities.

It is important to note that most of the capital requests for the former middle school in Fiscal Year 2024 are items that the town described back in 2011 in a report titled as "*Harwich Middle School Information Packet November 2011*".<sup>2</sup> Specifically, that report noted the following items from a list of sixteen (16) bullet points which are accounted for in the FY 2024 Capital Outlay Plan for the former middle school:

- HVAC: Boilers;
- Windows; and
- Auditorium (specifically the "bi-fold" wall)

The proposed capital expenditures in FY 2024 for the former middle school total \$1,982,427 and are broken out in the table below (Table 2) as mechanical work (\$1,510,000) and building upgrades (\$472,427).

The capital outlay requests are the result of joint efforts and discussions by and with Sean Libby, Facilities Maintenance Manager and Kara Mewhinney, Director of Cultural Affairs.

Ms. Mewhinney has developed a comprehensive action plan for cultural affairs programming (assumed to be predominately held at the former middle school) which is presently under review and discussion.

---

<sup>2</sup> *Harwich Middle School Information Packet November 2011*, Pg. 34

The section on estimated revenues at the former middle school later in this document is predicated on the successful adoption and execution of the FY 2024 capital plan for 204 Sisson Road.

**Table 2 FY 2024 Capital Request for 204 Sisson Road**

<b>Mechanical work includes:</b>	<b>\$1,510,000</b>
Boiler	
Water Heater	
Generator and switch	
Partial window replacement	
Fire systems	
<b>Building upgrades include:</b>	<b>\$472,427</b>
Auditorium bi-fold wall replacement	\$187,152
Auditorium sound system	\$150,000
Auditorium seating	\$85,275
Auditorium lighting	\$50,000

## **Building Components**

As part of the ongoing effort to analyze and recommend programming at the former middle school, the Director of Cultural Affairs and the Recreation and Youth Director were tasked with developing program concepts and related estimated revenue at that location.

Their results were predicated on the assumption that both “wings” of the building could be utilized with limitations on certain locations.

The building has been previously described in the 2011 report as consisting of two (2) distinct wings with one wing having two (2) floors (assuming the basement level is not used for programming purposes). For the purposes of this report, the building is understood to be comprised of three (3) distinct components:

- **Classroom Wing** (front, right and rear);
- **Activity Wing** (front and left); and
- **Athletic Fields** (rear of the property).

The table below identifies the available space for use by wing.



**Table 3 Available space**

Wing	Available space
<b>Classroom Wing</b>	
First Floor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 22,400 square feet;</li> <li>• 14 classrooms;</li> <li>• Open Courtyard (80' x 120')</li> </ul>
Second Floor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 22,400 square feet;</li> <li>• 14 classrooms;</li> <li>• Library (75' x 42')</li> </ul>
<b>Activity Wing</b>	
First Floor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 19,600 square feet;</li> <li>• Lobby (20' x 34');</li> <li>• Former cafeteria (60' x 62') (now known as multi-purpose room);</li> <li>• Food Service Area (30' x 70') (kitchen);</li> <li>• Auditorium (60' x 62');</li> <li>• Former music room (34' x 38') (now known as the green room);</li> <li>• Locker rooms (34' x 90');</li> <li>• Gymnasium (60' x 100')</li> </ul>

## **Municipal Operations and Programming**

The following information on estimated revenue derived from programming is based on the following assumptions:

1. The front and right side of the Classroom Wing on the first floor will be reserved for municipal government purposes only (namely department head office space) and should be not be used for programming purposes;
2. The rear of the Classroom Wing on the first floor will be reserved for possible municipal government use or subleasing for non-profit purposes;

3. The second floor of the Classroom Wing (front, right and rear of the building) **excluding the library** (which will be reserved for municipal government meeting space with some potential for meeting rental space in the future) will be used for cultural affairs programming;
4. The Activity Wing of the building (front and left side) will be used for cultural affairs and recreation programming; and
5. The fields behind the building will be used for recreational programming.

These assumptions along with the previously referenced assumption that the capital requests for Fiscal Year 2024 will be approved. Further, it is assumed that the upgrades to the Auditorium (described in Table 2) are completed in the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2024.

### Estimated Total Revenue

Both the Director of Cultural Affairs and the Recreation Director provided narratives supporting and describing the programming that would bring in the estimated revenues. Those narratives will be made available separate from this report.

*Table 4 Estimated Programming Revenue*

Location	Usage		
<b>Activity Wing, 1st Floor</b>	Auditorium/Multi-purpose	\$45,000	
	Green Room	\$4,500	
	Courtyard	\$12,500	\$62,000
<b>Classroom Wing, 2nd Floor</b>	Cultural Arts programs	\$67,000	\$67,000
<b>Gymnasium and Fields</b>	Gymnasium	\$75,000	
	Fields	\$10,000	\$85,000
		<b>Total Estimated Revenue</b>	<b>\$214,000</b>

### Other Considerations

This report has been compiled after lengthy discussions and efforts with staff. Eric Beebe, Sean Libby and Kara Mewhinney were instrumental in providing data, narratives and insight that support the overall effort of this report and deserve acknowledgement for their efforts.

This report does not delve (with the exception of the reference to the 2011 report) into prior actions, debates or discussions regarding the use of former middle school.

Nor does this report revisit the creation of and resultant votes on the non-binding referendum presented to the voters at the 2016 Annual Town Election.

This report is based on the vote of the Board of Selectmen on April 23, 2018 to extend by six (6) years the so-called "2-year trial" initiated by the Town in 2016.

---

Lastly, this report is the formal response to the Board of Selectmen's directive arising out of the Fiscal Year 2023 budget discussion for the Town Administrator to provide a cost analysis of the operation of the former middle school at 204 Sisson Road.

### **Conclusion**

This report is presented to the Board of Selectmen for review and discussion at your regular meeting on Monday, November 21, 2022. This report is presented with the knowledge that a broader discussion on capital needs will occur at joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee and Capital Outlay Committee on Monday, December 5, 2022.

I look forward to presenting this report, its findings and participating in the Board's discussion of the same.

Thank you for your time and effort in reviewing this report.

Respectfully submitted.



Joseph F. Powers

Town Administrator