

NESHAMINY

High school renovation on schedule

Officials are closely watching the contingency fund, which is down to about \$248,000 from \$3.2 million.

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Days, demolition and dollars — that's what construction officials said they're focusing on in the final months of the Neshaminy High School project.

With more than 122 weeks completed, and less than 46 left to go, administrators reported to the Neshaminy school board Wednesday night that the major renovation plan is on schedule.

Besides keeping an eye on remaining demolition and abatement work, officials said they're closely watching the district's contingency fund.

That account started at roughly \$3.2 million to cover any additional work for bidders and any unforeseen costs, such as the climbing wall, which required reinforcements in the structural steel, said business administrator Joseph Paradise.

Now, the contingency is at about \$248,000, said Damion Spahr, project executive for Reynolds, the firm directing the renovations.

"We've managed it conservatively because we didn't want anyone to think that there was extra money out there," Spahr reported to the board. "Is that enough? We don't know, but we do believe that it's plenty to get through the rest of construction. We just need to continue to hold back spending."

More than \$500,000 of the fund has been used to meet Middletown mandates, including roadwork to Old Lincoln Highway. Officials said they were withholding \$100,000 for possible contractors' claims and another \$50,000 in case they needed to pave a gravel lot behind the Middletown school.

"We don't know if when we tear down buildings we'll find something that we don't know is there," said Spahr. "I'd like to see more in [the contingency], but we're still in a manageable position. Things are going to come up. Our goal is to do what we need to and hopefully have something left."

If the township requires the back lot to be paved, and what's remaining in the fund can't bear that last piece, the district and construction officials will have to look at other ways to deal with it.

While a few board members, like William Spitz, said they're concerned about possibly having to pave that lot, other officials, including board member Ritchie Webb, said with Reynolds involved, they're confident that there won't be a problem.

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