

Marconi Center Lands Big Donation, Ponders Expansion

by Alan Pollock

CHATHAM — Though it hasn't technically had its grand opening yet, the Chatham Marconi Maritime Center (CMMC) is already pondering an expansion. The news comes as the center announces the receipt of a significant financial contribution this week.

CMMC has received a \$100,000 donation from Qualcomm to support its mission of science education and preservation of the history of wireless communications. The donation was formally announced in a news conference Wednesday, after The Chronicle's deadline.

Qualcomm's donation was part of its 25th Anniversary Technology Innovation Partner Award, which it granted this year to Chatham summer resident Dick Lynch, executive vice president and chief technology officer of Verizon. Part of the award is a \$100,000 grant to be made to the nonprofit organization of the winner's choice, and Lynch chose CMMC.

"This is an enormous boost for us," CMMC President Chuck Bartlett told the group's annual meeting Saturday morning. The funds will be used to enhance exhibits at the center and to expand the organization's Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education program. The gift also gives a morale boost to CMMC's volunteers, who are still recovering from the push to get the center ready for operation over the summer. "A gift of this kind re-energizes an organization, as you can imagine," Bartlett said.

In a press statement issued last week, Lynch said the partnership between Verizon and Qualcomm has helped lead to some of the great advances in mobile communications in recent years, and drives one of the true growth engines of the world economy. "That's why it's

fitting that we're together as partners here at this historic wireless coastal station in Chatham—one of the most significant places in the history of wireless communications—to begin to lay the foundation for the next generation of

discussions about the need for additional space at the new center. "There's a lot that's not in that building," Messina said, referring to the renovated Marconi operations building. CMMC has only one small office and two small bathrooms, and no

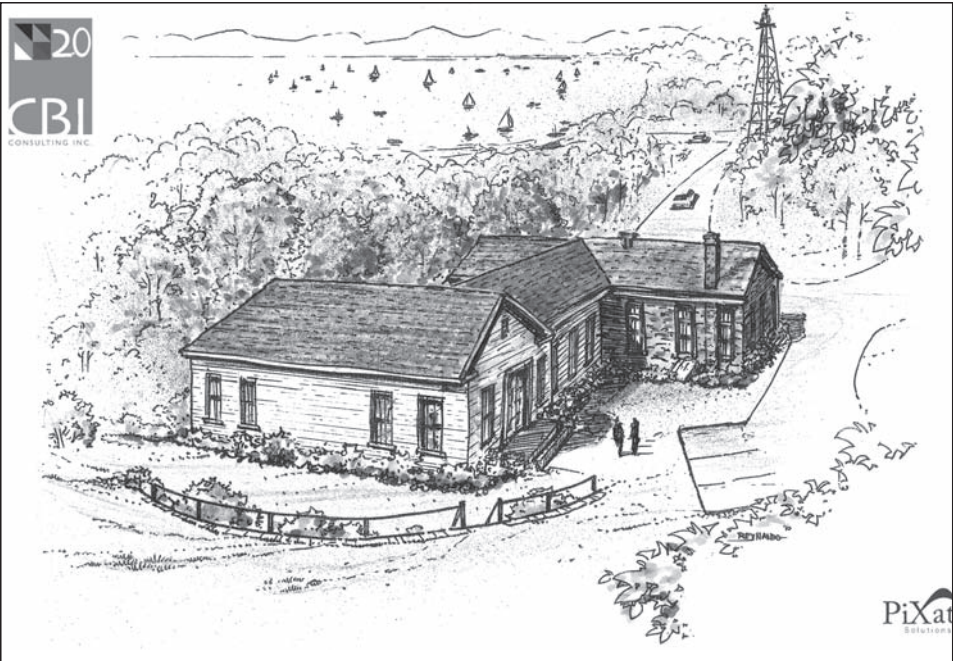
the planning board, conservation commission, zoning board and other entities. It would need to be compatible with the historic operations building and the rest of the Marconi campus, and would also likely require approval by selectmen.

"This is just a concept of what we could do," Messina said.

In the meantime, CMMC is still adjusting to its new home, and is ramping up for its official opening next summer. In the 42-day "preview opening" this summer, the center attracted 2,781 visitors. "That's about twice the number we expected," Bartlett told the annual meeting.

Read Moffett, who has coordinated the construction of CMMC's exhibits, said his committee is working on ways to improve the existing displays ("The visitors sometimes get lost in the equipment," he said) and to develop new ones, like one on the future of wireless technologies. Moffett said he is looking for volunteers who have creative ideas for exhibits that tell the story of Marconi and the science behind radio.

Bartlett said another grand goal for CMMC is to become the center of STEM education on Cape Cod, providing training for local teachers, most of whom have had no training in technology or engineering. The U.S. Ranks 48th in the world in science instruction, and a survey last year indicated that almost a third of manufacturers reported that they have trouble finding skilled workers. It is possible that today's high unemployment rates might be lower if the nation had invested more in STEM education, Bartlett said. CMMC also intends to begin inviting students for field trips and after-school programs as soon as a wheelchair ramp is installed at the site, something which will be done early next year.



An architect's rendering of the proposed addition to the Marconi Center, as viewed from the rear of the operations building. CBI CONSULTING, INC.

growth and technical excellence," Lynch said.

Lynch, who read about CMMC in articles in The Chronicle, is "really a wonderful guy" and a world-class leader in wireless technology, Bartlett noted. "We've got, as a friend of the organization, someone who's nationally and internationally known," he said.

CMMC First Vice President Frank Messina said Lynch has also suggested other possible financial resources for the organization, and that has helped spur

proper space for historical archives and equipment storage.

While plans are in the conceptual stage, CMMC is considering the construction of a 2,000-square-foot, two-level addition to the rear of the operations building, which would provide space for a 50-seat theater, a classroom, office space, additional rest rooms, a workshop and archive space. "These are things which we sorely need," Messina said. The addition would not only require a new capital campaign, but would also prompt regulatory review by

STUDENTS GET A TASTE OF OPERA



As part of its outreach program, Cape Cod Opera brought highlights of Mozart's "The Magic Flute" to several area schools last week. The performers made a whirlwind tour that included Harwich Middle School, Cape Cod Tech, Chatham High School and three other schools on Thursday and Friday, with the goal of introducing students to an art form they might not otherwise experience, opera. The program is funded by local cultural councils and the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Arts Foundation of Cape Cod, TD Bank, the Cape Cod Five and the Friends of Cape Cod Opera. For information, visit www.capecodopera.org. ALAN POLLOCK PHOTO

School Committee Recommend Level Staffing Budget For FY12

by William F. Galvin

HARWICH —The school committee is recommending a \$15,286,841 budget for FY12, up about 1.4 percent from this year. That budget is a \$230,245 increase over the one put forward by the school administration.

The school committee approved its budget last Wednesday. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Carolyn Cragin said this week she was instructed by Town Administrator James Merriam to present a level-funded budget and that is what her administration did. That budget was \$15,056,596.

However, that recommendation was below the "level-service" budget by \$230,245 and represented a cut of four professional staff — teachers, Cragin said. The school committee decided after some discussion to present a level staffing budget, adding the \$230,245 into their recommended budget.

In the past, Cragin said the committee presented what they termed progressive budgets, in the 4 to 6 percent range, but last year they put forth a basic budget because of economic conditions, Cragin said. She added this year they "took charge and looked under every rock and cut basic materials."

While instructional salaries are up 1.1 percent to \$10,864,897, instructional expenses took an 11.69 percent hit, nearly \$100,000. Operational maintenance expenses also had a 2.38 percent reduction.

The expense side of the budget has dropped to \$4,191,699.

But Cragin is particularly pleased with the addition of a middle school foreign language teacher at \$44,957, which provides foreign language education in all grades in the school system. This is a goal, the superintendent said, that they have been working on for a few years.

"This budget maintains the staff we currently have and does the best job that's reasonable under the circumstances to maintain services the community expects from the schools," Cragin said.

The superintendent said school regionalization does not play into this budget and would not until the districts feel the benefits of such a merger. However, should Chatham and Harwich support a regional district, there would be a need for some transitional funding, she said.

The school committee has also recommended two articles for the annual town meeting: one seeks \$104,385 for technology purchases for the three schools and the other seeks \$88,242 for maintenance projects.

The school committee has set a public budget hearing for Wednesday, Nov. 10 at 6 p. m. at the activity room at Harwich Elementary School. The school budget will be forwarded to the town administrator for his recommendation and passed on to selectmen in early January for their review.