

MEDFIELD SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting
March 2, 2023 - 7:00 pm
Dale Street School, 45 Adams Street, also available via Zoom

PRESENT: Mike Weber, Interim Chair
Jessica Reilly
Anthony Papantonis
Mather Eldred
Robert Donahoe
Robert Meaney
Robert Worth
Michelle Kirkby
Teresa James
Carolyn Casey
Dr. Meredith Chamberland
William Werner
Frank Gervasio designee for Kristine Trierweiler, ex-officio, non-voting member
Dr. Jeffrey Marsden, ex-officio, non-voting member
Stephen Grenham, ex-officio, non-voting member

1. Site Tour of Dale St. led by Principal Grenham

➤ Committee members returned from the tour of Dale Street School at 8:04PM.

2. Vote on approval of meeting minutes from last meeting (2.2.23)

➤ Ms. Casey had edit suggestions for the minutes

MOTION:

➤ Ms. Reilly made the motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Papantonis seconded the motion. Roll call vote:

- Jessica Reilly - yes
- William Werner - yes
- Teresa James - abstain
- Michelle Kirkby - yes
- Robert Worth - yes
- Anthony Papantonis - yes
- Mike Weber - yes
- Carolyn Casey - yes
- Mather Eldred - yes
- Bob Meaney - yes
- Dr. Meredith Chamberland - yes

- Robert Donahoe - yes

3. Vote on Statement of Interest to the MSBA

- Mr. Weber confirmed with Dr. Marsden that the statement of interest is due April 12th or 13th.
- Mr. Weber would like everyone to voice their opinion on whether or not we would like to submit that statement. Mr. Weber said we may or may not get MSBA approval, that will come in November or December but we have to submit a statement of interest first. At that time we can also decline MSBA as well. The statement of interest is completed by the Superintendent and the Director of Operations and Finance for the Schools.
- Ms. James asked if there were any associated fees with the submission. Mr. Weber responded there are not.
- Mr. Weber said we have nothing to lose to submit it again.
- Ms. Reilly requested that they open it up for discussion
- Mr. Werner this will come down to costs and the costs are not going down. The idea that we wouldn't submit it and possibly turn down the money doesn't make sense.
- Ms. Reilly agrees with Mr. Werner. Free money is rare and we will need as much help as we can get. But previously the will of the Town was that they did not want to accept that. We are now looking at a more expensive project and we have to figure out if the town will be willing to get behind the project. We need a specific statement from the SBC and get that out so we aren't questioned for that decision again.
- Mr. Weber agrees that there are advantages to the MSBA process like dollars and there are not so good advantages in regards to requirements for the School, like class size for example. The process is lengthy, 4-5 years whereas without that process it would be 2-3 years. So I do agree the public needs to understand, and I would say the dollars, candidly, probably matter most to people.
- Committee members agree that we need to let the public know the thinking behind the decision.
- Mr. Worth stated with that in mind, is there any way to find out what the history has been of towns that have received a go ahead from MSBA and not utilized that for whatever reason.
- Mr. Weber said that he doesn't know that answer. He does know that not passing the vote happens (infrequently) but he doesn't know much about deliberately turning it down the money.
- Ms. Reilly says it's a huge amount of work to get to that point so if you deliberately turn it down that's a huge decision. Turning it down is a massive time waste.

- Ms. James asked if we don't go for the statement of interest, what is the alternative? Mr. Weber responded that the alternative would be to go alone and you are fundraising private funds, designing a much smaller building, and spending more money.
- Mr. Papantonis stated not submitting a statement of interest is completely the wrong decision.

MOTION:

- Ms. Casey made the motion to recommend that the Superintendent, School Committee, and Board of Selectmen submit a statement of interest to the MSBA. Ms. Reilly seconded. Roll Call vote:
 - Jessica Reilly - yes
 - William Werner - yes
 - Teresa James - yes
 - Michelle Kirkby - yes
 - Robert Worth - yes
 - Anthony Papantonis - yes
 - Mike Weber - yes
 - Carolyn Casey - yes
 - Mather Eldred - yes
 - Bob Meaney - yes
 - Dr. Meredith Chamberland - yes
 - Robert Donahoe - yes

4. Formation of a subcommittee to form a scope of work and RFP for a 3rd party consultant to gather community input regarding a new school

- Mr. Weber handed out Article 18 as amended from the 2022 Annual Town Meeting and read it. This committee was awarded \$250,000. Want to tackle public outreach and ask about the independent comprehensive school enrollment capacity analysis. Let's stick with public outreach first. In my opinion it didn't go well last time, so we need to do this better. Get a consultant involved in order to understand what the public really wants. Probably need a subcommittee to tackle the RFP for the scope of work.
- Mr. Papantonis asked, wasn't there public outreach done with the previous project? Why do we have to repeat it now?
- Ms. Reilly responded that there was but this is a different project. Great value in independent source.
- Mr. Papantonis stated we just walked the school. It needs to come down.
- Ms. Reilly said we walked through the school with a lot of people and it comes down to what hits people's wallets.

- Mr. Papantonis stated so maybe it just wasn't the right plan. What are they going to say? I'm not sure what we are going to gain. If we have a solid plan and we are confident of that plan we can speak to it.
- Mr. Donahoe said we may need a public relations person to help us get to that.
- Mr. Weber said the public outreach that was done prior wasn't adequate enough because our message didn't get through. The results speak for themselves.
- Dr. Chamberland stated that when we say misinformation we may be alienating people. I know we need to talk about the last project, but I don't want to alienate people that voted no.
- Ms. Kirkby stated she thinks that is why we need a common set of facts that a 3rd party will provide.
- Ms. James said that the consultant they used for the MSH project was a mediation consultant although they played a public outreach role. They helped steer our committee through the public outreach process.
- Mr. Weber stated it is challenging to get the public involved and engaged.
- Committee members generally agreed and the conversation continued.
- Mr. Weber we don't need to vote on this, but we'll hold the decision on this until the next meeting. In the meantime, could you please email me if you are interested in serving on the subcommittee. The subcommittee would be preparing an RFP and statement of interest if the majority of us feel like we need help from a 3rd party. We should also be at the point where we all agree the money should be spent on this. So we can discuss that more.

5. SBC Co-Chair Discussion

- Mr. Weber received one email in regards to a co-chair. Thinking that we can vote on that next meeting. I would also like that to be a discussion.
- Ms. Reilly asked if the \$250,000 would be enough to cover everything? (In reference to Article 18 from the 2022 Annual Town Meeting)
- Mr. Werner asked if there was money in the warrant for the upcoming town meeting.
- Ms. Reilly this is not enough.
- Mr. Weber stated that some of this has already been done.

6. Enrollment Discussion

- Mr. Weber asked about what the independent comprehensive enrollment study means.
- Chris Potts, citizen commenter, 7 Curve Street, after looking at other districts, Wellesley in particular hired a 3rd party and they offered a variety of services. Didn't want to mandate this but rather to offer a menu of services the money could be used for.
- Mr. Weber asked Dr. Marsden about how often enrollment studies are done. Dr. Marsden responded that they are done twice a year and go out for 10 years.

- Dr. Marsden stated the issue with the enrollment study was that once MSBA is involved their opinions are what matters.
- Mr. Papantonis stated that we have \$250,000, what is the best way to spend it? If we already do one then why are we spending the money?
- Mr. Worth agreed that this shouldn't be a large portion of the money spent.
- Mr. Werner said time is of the essence to determine how much money we need because we don't want to get to October and have to wait until town meeting in May to get more money.
- Mr. Weber said a fair amount of the previous studies will still be relevant.
- Ms. Potts responded that the school enrollment and capacity analysis are really two separate things.

7. Discussion of late March vacancy of SC member on SBC

- Ms. Kirkby stated that due to the fact that there will be 2 new members of the School Committee starting in March and given the School Committee is also about to embark on creating a strategic plan with heavy lifting in April, May and June she is asking that Ms. Reilly stay on through the end of the school year and then the School Committee would evaluate what makes sense in regards to who would take her seat. Tim and I are not allowed to serve together and Leo served on the previous committee. Likely one of the newer individuals. Mark Cerel reviewed and there doesn't seem to be issues with the way it is currently written. At the next School Committee meeting we are going to discuss what that would look like but as this decision affects this committee as well I was wondering if there is any feedback I should bring back to them. Overarching goal is to create a smooth transition.
- Mr. Weber stated we don't have a say in the manner, it's the appointing authority.
- Ms. Reilly stated we would take the SBC committee's feedback.
- Dr. Chamberland said she understands there is a lot to jump into but she wants a new member to be a part of this as soon as possible.
- Ms. Kirkby stated she would want time for the School Committee to understand as an appointing authority the interests and values of the new people before appointing the new member.
- Mr. Weber doesn't feel like it's a big deal, it's two meetings either way.
- Mr. Werner said throughout this process there will be people absent anyway.
- Mr. Weber said again we don't make the decision.
- Mr. Weber said the next
- Mr. Kirkby said she had the opportunity to visit Mr. Worth's school. Mr. Worth said it was helpful to walk the school and see the side-by-side with this school. It was an MSBA project.
- Mr. Weber suggests that we can do that in April maybe?

Public Comment

- Chris Potts, 7 Curve Street, you have to look at this as a planning project because so much of it is listening and hearing what they have to say.
- Tom Powers stated the proposed project was not what the taxpayers were willing to pay for. Time for new voices and opinions.

Next Meeting Dates

- March 29th, 2023 @7PM
- April 27th, 2023 @ TBD possible site visit to Mr. Worth's school as well

Adjournment

- Mr. Weber - is there a motion to adjourn the meeting?

MOTION: Mr. Meaney made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Werner seconded the motion.

Roll Call vote:

- Jessica Reilly - yes
- William Werner - yes
- Teresa James - yes
- Michelle Kirkby - yes
- Robert Worth - yes
- Anthony Papantonis - yes
- Mike Weber - yes
- Carolyn Casey - yes
- Mather Eldred - yes
- Bob Meaney - yes
- Dr. Meredith Chamberland - yes
- Robert Donahoe - yes

Respectfully Submitted,
Brittney Franklin