

**MEDFIELD SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**Workshop**  
**March 17, 2023 - 10:00 am**  
**Medfield Town Hall - 2nd Floor Chenery Hall**

**PRESENT:** Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke - Chair  
Timothy Knight - Vice Chair  
Jessica Reilly - Recording Secretary  
Michelle Kirkby - Financial Secretary  
Leo Brehm - Member at Large

**ALSO PRESENT:** Dr. Jeffrey Marsden - Superintendent of Schools  
Michael LaFrancesca - Director of Finance and Operations  
Andrea Moores - Secretary

The Chair opened the meeting at 10:06 am with a Roll Call:

- Timothy Knight - present
- Michelle Kirkby - present
- Jessica Reilly - present
- Leo Brehm - present
- Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke - present

The School Committee held a Workshop to discuss grade configuration, space and classroom assessment, and enrollment numbers related to the School Building Committee (SBC) for the new Elementary School Project and to discuss potential additional information needed from the School Committee for the School SBC.

The Committee discussed the following topics during the Workshop:

- Ms. O'Shea Brooke shared Mr. Knight's idea to provide a reference document for the new SBC.
- Ms. Reilly stated that it would be important for the focus to be on the educational aspect as opposed to the actual building itself and felt providing educational background information for the SBC would be beneficial.
- Ms. Reilly stressed the importance of having flexible spaces to allow the District to accommodate enrollment fluctuations as they occur.
- Ms. Timothy Knight requested more information/discussion on the Town of Sharon's townwide feasibility study to understand the benefits of a feasibility study.
- Mr. Knight agrees that grade configuration is important but the Committee needs to recognize and understand the cost drivers of the project and what the Community in turn will accept and support. It is important for the School Committee to move the project forward and remain flexible throughout the process.
- Ms. Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke explained that today's purpose was not to drill down on grade configuration but to gain some of the institutional knowledge and past experience before she and Ms. Reilly roll off the Committee.
- Mr. Leo Brehm shared his previous experience with a townwide feasibility study while employed with the Sharon Public Schools. He also touched on his experience while working in the Newton Public Schools.
- Ms. Reilly questioned if the Medfield Permanent Building Committee has ever done a town wide study that resulted in decisions made at the town level based on that data. She stated that there hasn't been a huge amount of high level strategic planning for the entire town.

- Dr. Marsden reminded the Committee that five or six years ago the prior Facilities Director, Jerry McCarty, did a full assessment of all the buildings in the Town and provided a report.
- Mr. Michael LaFrancesca shared his previous experience with a townwide feasibility study while employed with the Dedham Public Schools.
- Ms. Kirkby wanted to know if there were alternative grade configurations worthwhile to explore to help facilitate a thoughtful process for the SBC to develop alternate grade configuration solutions to address the needs in the District. She recognizes that grades 3-5 is an optimal configuration but are there other configurations to consider.
- Mr. Leo Brehm left the meeting at 10:58 pm.
- Dr. Marsden shared alternative grade configuration scenarios with the Committee. These scenarios were a result of a Leadership Team brainstorming session in October 2022. These groupings are not a recommendation of the Superintendent.
- Dr. Marsden shared the Report of the Reorganization Steering Committee with the School Committee from December 1979. One of the recommendations was to have at least three grades per school to help mitigate student transitions. This report also recommended closing the majority of the Dale Street School and using it to only house the administration offices along with three kindergarten classrooms. Dr. Marsden made the suggestion to share the report with the SBC at their next meeting.
- Ms. Kirkby stated that having the report and other baseline information would help to focus the new SBC since it is a new diverse committee with a variety of different perspectives.
- Mr. Knight was in agreement and felt that the information would help ground the SBC and foster collaboration.
- Ms. O'Shea Brooke stated that space and assessment needs are well defined in the Education Plan which can be included in the packet along with the most recent enrollment numbers.
- Dr. Marsden explained that the spring enrollment data was just submitted to NESDEC and expects the spring enrollment projections in time for the May 23 School Committee meeting.
- Ms. O'Shea Brooke inquired about the SBC potentially sending out a survey to the Town regarding the new Elementary School Project.
- Ms. Reilly shared that she has strongly advocated for a survey and for it to be developed and administered by an independent consultant hired by the SBC. Using an independent consultant will provide a neutral baseline.
- Ms. O'Shea Brooke stressed the importance of fostering collaboration in the decision making process and felt a survey would be an important tool to help facilitate that collaboration. She stressed the importance of finding ways to bring the Community together to be a part of the project.
- Ms. Reilly shared her concern pertaining to the budget. She explained that \$250,000 is available from last year's budget and currently no additional money has been allocated by the Town in this year's warrant. Ms. Kirkby will ask SBC Chair Mike Weber to add the SBC budget as an agenda item at the next SBC meeting.
- Mr. LaFrancesca explained that an article has been added to the warrant for \$250,000 to be used by the SBC.
- Mr. Knight was in favor of a simple survey to help understand residents' of the town tax threshold.
- Ms. Reilly explained that having an independent entity who is neutral administering the survey would be advantageous to the Town and help educate the SBC, lead their decision making, and assist with communications on the project.
- Mr. Knight recommended sharing the costs to maintain Dale Street with the SBC.

The Committee agreed to create an informational packet for the SBC which will include the following:

- Educational Plan
- Updated Enrollment Numbers
- 5 Year Capital Plan
- List of Dale Street Maintenance Projects expected
- Projected Expenses for Memorial and Wheelock

Ms. O'Shea Brooke and Ms. Kirby will work together on the informational packet.

A motion was made by Mr. Knight, seconded by Ms. Reilly to adjourn the meeting.

A Roll Call vote was taken on the motion:

- Jessica Reilly -yes
- Timothy Knight - yes
- Michelle Kirkby - yes
- Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke - yes

**The motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:39 am.

#### **EXHIBITS AND DOCUMENTS**

- Report of the Reorganization Steering Committee - December 1, 1979
- News Article - Committee defends reorganization plan

Respectfully submitted,  
Andrea Moores  
Secretary

**Minutes Approved by School Committee: April 13, 2023**