

SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE

Date: December 21, 2022 6:30PM

Regular Meeting Minutes

In person TOB Common Room & Public Online Video Conference (Zoom): Recording

*Minutes are not official until approved at the next regular meeting

Member	Position	Present via Zoom	Present in person	Absent
Katherine Viveiros	Construction Industry Experience			X
Phil Stevens	Superintendent of Schools		X	
Erika Wiecenski	Board of Selectmen Representative		X	
Mike Makuch	Board of Finance Chairman		X	
Ann Grosjean	Board of Education Member	X		
Gary Anderson	Member at large	X		
Ralph Tulis	Member at large	X		
Peter Latincsics	Member at large		X	
Justin Niderno	Member at large		X	
Briana Ross	Member at large	X		
Christopher Tillona	Board of Education employee	X		

Also present: Scott Pellman, Owner's Project Manager from Colliers and residents

1. CALL TO ORDER

First Selectwoman Wiecenski called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

2. PRESENT TO SPEAK

Nicholas Tella, 49 Mirtl Rd, discussed how he felt the mill rate they were looking at was too high and why. He explained how he strongly felt the townspeople need to know what the upgrade costs are. He discussed his frustration with what is being shared at the meetings and put on the flyers. He felt the townspeople were being manipulated.

3. CHAIRPERSON REPORT

None.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

a. SBC regular meeting minutes of 12-7-22

Motion by Mike Makuch to APPROVE the minutes from the SBC regular meeting December 7, 2022. Justin Niderno SECONDED the motion.

Discussion: None.

All in favor, the motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

Superintendent Stevens explained that Chairperson Viveiros had received a few emails and they will be shared at a later date with the surveys.

M. Makuch discussed that he had personally received a few emails from some residents and he directed them to send emails to the school building committee email instead.

R. Tulis wanted to know when the committee would be able to view these emails.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski reassured the committee that Chairperson Viveiros had shared previous emails but since she was not there she was unsure about the current emails.

A. Grosjean explained that any emails that are received with questions that are relevant to the community the answers would be in the FAQ.

6. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Communications

i. Townwide postcard mailer

Superintendent Stevens shared the postcard that was sent out to all residents and he felt it was important to start discussing what should be on the next mailer.

ii. Survey

Superintendent Stevens discussed that on the flyer there was a QR code to the survey and he also listed all the locations the survey is available.

b. Land assessment

M. Makuch stated that there was no new update. He wanted to mention the topic of conflict of interest and that he would be willing to talk to anyone in the community regarding the process. He stated that he and the committee took this very seriously and wanted to be sure it was done correctly.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski discussed how the committee needs two appraisals. She wondered about the timing of this process and if it was reimbursable.

S. Pellman explained that once the project is chosen then they could reach out for a second appraisal and it is not usually reimbursable.

The committee discussed their timeline and what tasks need to be completed.

R. Tulis discussed public property rights and that the conflict of interest is not a real matter.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski explained how she has tried to stay neutral and abstained on votes because the property that the committee is looking at is owned by her mother-in-law and late father-in-law. She never wanted her personal connection with the property owner to interfere with this committee and what they are trying to achieve. She explained she or anyone on the committee could discuss this further with community members. She does not want the community to think the committee is hiding anything and they are all open to discuss as needed.

c. Finance

P. Latincsics explained that the committee met before this meeting. They reviewed the committee's expenditures. He reviewed the budget and what their expenses have been and will be going forward.

The committee discussed how they share this online and having too many documents posted. They also stated it's an ever-moving document so sharing it during the meetings seems to be the most effective way. They also discussed funds that are not utilized.

P. Latincsics discussed project costs as well. He explained what the committee learned about the cost of the project. They decided to go with 20 years instead of 30 years and the interest cost went down quite a bit. This is for any project they choose. He discussed that in their meeting it was suggested to have a range of the bond costs to share with the public. He also inquired with S. Pellman about the water, utilities and road improvements at a new site.

S. Pellman explained about a project contingency that covers this. The state will cover wells that are brought in but the state will not pay for a waterline being brought into the site.

R. Tulis discussed the mil rate and what numbers could be used to make it easier to calculate for townspeople. Also what would be included in this; boats, cars, campers, etc.

The committee all agreed this can be confusing but are hopeful once a project is chosen it will become a little clearer.

7. OLD BUSINESS

a. Community outreach (additional dates)

Superintendent Stevens discussed the outreach programs and suggested adding more dates at the transfer station. He also explained that at the January 5th meeting at 5:30pm there will be childcare provided and pizza/donuts.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski reviewed the attendance of these programs and that many community members are hearing different facts about the projects. She expressed consistency and accurate information shared is essential.

The committee discussed the importance of advertising the pizza or donuts at these meetings. It is so important to entice the public. It was discussed that they would try and have the pizza be donated but if not a motion needed to be made on how to pay for them.

Motion by First Selectwoman Wiecenski to spend \$500.00 on refreshments for future community sessions. Peter Latincsics SECONDED the motion.

Discussion: None

All in favor, the motion carried unanimously.

Superintendent Stevens inquired if weekend dates should be added.

The committee agreed it was a great idea, but be careful to not have a quorum. They discussed how to set up the dates and what would work best with scheduling. They also discussed what should be on the next postcards to catch the public's attention, including the price range. They explained not wanting to send out too many postcards.

8. NEW BUSINESS

a. School Building Committee officers

First Selectwoman Wiecenski explained that Chairperson Viveiros is stepping down from the chair position. She will still be on the school building committee. She also discussed that at the next meeting on January 4th it should be on the agenda to at least elect a new chair and vice chair.

The committee discussed how to go about electing these two positions, starting with anyone interested.

9. FUTURE BUSINESS- ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

First Selectwoman Wiecenski discussed that S. Pellman will most likely be able to discuss a very specific timeline at the next meeting.

P. Latincsics requested to have an update on the Friars Report. He also had some confusion and concern with S. Pellman's timeline and gave his own opinion regarding the steps.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski explained what and how they are doing to complete these steps and that they would be sharing concrete information at the January 4th meeting.

They decided the approval/process for the projects should definitely be on the next agenda.

10. PRESENT TO SPEAK

Nicholas Tella, 49 Mirtl Rd, shared his concerns towards this process and rushing through it. He suggested having a zoom call as an outreach session. He thought maybe they would have more people in attendance. He also suggested sending the flyers home with students at Center and Hall School. He thought if the committee could connect with the public emotionally that would draw more people's attention. He thought for the respect of the people of the town they should have a mil rate and cost shared with them so they know when they are voting.

M. Makuch wanted to clear up some misinformation that was being discussed throughout the town. This was regarding the CIP throughout the two schools and what that means. This included; the funds, what the improvements mean and how this affects the committee's charge.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski explained that CIP is not the charge of this committee. The committee's charge is to come up with a prek-8 school. It's not that it's not an option, it's just not this committee's charge. This committee will decide which option goes to referendum then the town decides from there.

P. Latincsics explained this is why he felt it was so important to revisit the Friars report and the process he requested on the agenda for January 4th. He also discussed what some townspeople discussed at the last outreach presentation.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by First Selectwoman Wiecenski to ADJOURN the meeting.

Mike Makuch SECONDED the motion.

All in favor, motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:34 PM

Next regular meeting: January 4, 2023

Nicole Fusco
School Building Committee Recording Secretary

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TOWN CLERK