

SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE

Date: February 15, 2023 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 6:39pm		
Phil Stevens	Superintendent of Schools (non voting)		X	
Mike Makuch	Board of Selectmen Representative/Chairman		X	
James Marshall	Board of Finance representative		X	
Ann Grosjean	Board of Education Member/Secretary	X		
Gary Anderson	Member at large			X
Ralph Tulis	Member at large/Vice Chairman	X		
Peter Latinsics	Member at large		X 6:36pm	
Justin Niderno	Member at large		X	
Briana Ross	Member at large	X		
Christopher Tillona	Board of Education employee	X		
Erika Wiecenski	Member ExOfficio (non voting)		X	

Also present: Residents in-person and online

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Makuch called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM.

2. PRESENT TO SPEAK- Comments may be limited in time to allow all present to speak

Nick Tella, 49 Mirtl Rd, wanted to discuss Hall School, what happens if it goes back to the foundation, and how much the property is valued at. He expressed concerns about the property tax that the Hall Foundation would have to pay and how the SBC felt about that.

Donna Cook, 77 Common Road, she wanted to encourage the SBC to determine the true cost of the new school to the town. She explained she thought they should look at all of the costs including, the roads being fixed, water being brought in, and so on. She stated that she believed it should be submitted to the Board of Finance for review to ensure it would work with the town's budget.

3. CHAIRPERSON REPORT

Chairperson Makuch explained he would table this until the end of the meeting.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

a. SBC regular meeting minutes of 2-1-23

Motion by First Selectwoman Wiecenski to APPROVE the minutes from the SBC regular meeting of February 1, 2023. James Marshall SECONDED the motion.

Discussion: None.

All in favor, the motion carried unanimously.

b. SBC special meeting minutes of 2-3-23

Motion by First Selectwoman Wiecenski to APPROVE the minutes from the SBC special meeting of February 3, 2023. Justin Niderno SECONDED the motion.

Discussion: None

All in favor, the motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

Chairperson Makuch explained that email traffic had slowed down in the past few weeks. He also stated that the FAQ's have been updated with all the questions that have come through emails.

6. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Communications

Superintendent Stevens explained that the committee had not met but they were working on presentations. Some included items for the Board of Finance meeting, the blackout period and explanatory text.

The committee discussed the mailers that have been sent out previously and when they would send them out again, how many would be sent out before the referendum.

b. Land assessment

No meeting but there will be more to discuss further in the meeting.

Chairperson Makuch briefly discussed that some townspeople had mentioned wanting to view the matrix of the properties the committee studied released to the public and he explained they planned to do it soon.

J. Niderno inquired if they should wait until they are sure the current property, they are looking at is 100% the site they will use.

Chairperson Makuch explained that this was a very good question and there are two sides to that. He really wanted the public to be able to view this matrix, but he understood the other side too.

The committee discussed if they should wait until the negotiations are fully complete or what the process should be. They agreed the public needs to see this matrix sooner than later. They also discussed how there is a nonbinding agreement with the current property they are looking at. They discussed the typical time frame with S. Pellman when releasing this type of information.

c. Finance

P. Latinsics stated they had not met but they had been quite busy evaluating the costs. He then showed the expenditure report on the screen and explained the report in length. He explained they were on budget.

7. OLD BUSINESS

a. Owner's Project Manager (Colliers) update

i. Phase II environmental results

S. Pellman explained what their findings were thus far, with the monitoring wells. He discussed the email he sent the committee with an updated milestone schedule. He also drafted the architects and construction managers qualifications for review from the committee.

Chairperson Makuch explained why they were conducting these monitoring wells and wanted to be sure the public understood the backstory as to why they were performing these tests.

8. NEW BUSINESS

a. Funding for Zoom (extended capacity)

Chairperson Makuch discussed how the committee pays extra to allow more people to attend these meetings via zoom.

Motion by First Selectwoman Wiecenski to APPROVE \$53.18 for extended zoom capacity. Ralph Tulis SECONDED the motion.

Discussion:

The committee discussed how often this is billed, what this charge included and if they still needed the extended capacity.

All in favor, the motion carried unanimously.

b. Map 24, Lot 9 Adamec Road appraisal

Chairperson Makuch explained the original appraisal needs to be updated. The last one was in August, and they only stand true for so long. He explained the process that needs to take place and that he was able to find two appraisers as required.

Motion by Ralph Tulis to APPROVE \$1,250 to update the previous appraisal from Hagearty. Katherine Viveiros SECONDED the motion.

Discussion: None

All in favor, the motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Ralph Tulis to APPROVE \$3,000 for a second appraisal of the property by the firm CBRE. Katherine Viveiros SECONDED the motion.

Discussion:

The committee discussed if these two firms have the right qualification and the timeframe.

All in favor, the motion carried unanimously.

c. Updated Financial information and Tax impact tool

Chairperson Makuch explained three different presentations that are being worked on by numerous people including the finance subcommittee. He discussed that there also was a video tool created to help taxpayers determine their tax rate. He explained in length how it works.

The committee discussed the information being shared and made sure it was accurate. They discussed in length the different numbers that were shown between the town and this committee, including the bond and project costs. They also discussed how important it was to make this simple and understandable for the public.

R. Tulis shared his screen and presented a slide show about a new school facility's estimated financial impact on the average person. The slides discussed; what the committee had done to date, the overall space and financial issues that are yet to be finalized, the current estimated costs for the new facility, the expected taxpayer's share of the costs with or without a space waiver, how the project will be financed, the long term financing (bonding) and its effect on the taxpayer, why there are 2 scenarios for the many options, advantages/disadvantages of the 2 pay off methods and which method of bond payoff is wise for Willington. He then shared a chart showing the difference between the 2 options as numbers were adjusted. He also shared a graph showing the change in mill rate over time. He explained this tool was for this committee and the Board of Finance, not necessarily the public.

The committee asked questions and discussed the charts that R. Tulis presented. They also discussed the struggles with sharing some of this with the public since some of the numbers are being predicted. They stated that it's hard to know what growth will occur in the future besides a

school project. They discussed how confusing the space waiver can be to the public and trying to assist the public in understanding the different scenarios.

Superintendent Stevens then shared another version of the charts R. Tulis shared. He tried to simplify the assumptions and feedback. Just like R Tulis' any taxpayer can put in their personal numbers and the rest of the numbers in the chart change. He then shared a few slides that would walk the public through how to find the website, links, and how to enter their address for their results.

The committee discussed the chart, what should be added or changed, and what the different numbers meant from the savings the year the school opens to predicting the future and trying to know what will increase and what will decrease. They discussed leaving the tool as is and sharing it with the Board of Finance tomorrow (Thursday, February 16th) for more guidance. They also discussed when the "how to" video and tool should be shared with the public. They also discussed what to share with the Board of Finance.

9. FUTURE BUSINESS- Items for future Agenda

First Selectwoman Wiecenski inquired about having the milestones schedule and the agenda items lined up to make sure they were not missing anything.

10. CHAIRPERSON REPORT CONTINUED

Chairperson Makuch discussed the hard work that had been done throughout the committee. He expressed his concerns with some of the committee members contacting outside agencies and groups, particularly without the chair knowing. He stated that he did not want to discourage the hard work, especially when he understood subcommittees sometimes have to do that. But he asked everyone to be careful contacting outside agencies as an SBC member without the chair being aware. He understands why some of the committee members need to do it but be responsible about it. He also clarified that the foreseeable costs are included in the land and there already is a public document out there that shows the contingency. He also explained they are planning for on-site wells and not looking into the cost of running a water main, as it would be well beyond the contingency. They will handle that in the future if needed.

11. PRESENT TO SPEAK- Comments may be limited in time to allow all present to speak

Nick Tella, 49 Mirtl Rd, was very pleased with Ralph's calculator and that it was not confusing at all. He felt it captured everything. He stated that he felt both calculators should have a disclaimer stating that the true costs of the project are not being captured. He also discussed operational cost decrease being all speculation. He stated that Superintendent Stevens had mentioned before that some staff might be let go but will not discuss it further because he does not want teachers to leave now. He asked for an explanation as to what staff would be let go. Lastly, he felt Erika had stated she stepped back from this project and is not voting and such. But he felt she in fact is deeply involved in this project and he stated that her family was set to take advantage of the taxpayers. He explained that she should be totally excusing herself from the process and project. He felt she had tainted this project already.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Jim Marshall to ADJOURN the meeting.

Justin Niderno SECONDED the motion.

All in favor, motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM

Next regular meeting: March 1, 2023

Nicole Fusco
School Building Committee Recording Secretary

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WILLINGTON, CT.

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TOWN CLERK