

## SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE

**Regular Meeting Minutes**

**Date: 04/07/21**

**Via Public Online Video Conference (Zoom)**

**6:30 PM**

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

<b>Member</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Superintendent Stevens	Superintendent of Schools	X	
Erika Wiecenski	Board of Selectmen Representative	X	
Mike Makuch	Board of Finance Chairman	X	
Erica Bushior	Board of Education Staff	X	
Ann Grosjean	Board of Education Member	X	
Katherine Viveiros	Construction Industry Experience	X	
Gary Anderson	Member at large	X	
Peter Latinsics	Member at large	X	
Justin Niderno	Member at large	Absent	
Briana Ross	Member at large	X	

### CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Viveiros called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM. Chairperson Viveiros welcomed Willington Board of Education Staff Member, Erica Bushior, who was appointed by the Board of Selectmen. Erica has worked within the Willington school district for eight years.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

First Selectwoman Wiecenski MOVED to approve the minutes of March 17, 2021. Ann Grosjean SECONDED the motion.

DISCUSSION:None

VOTE: 7 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstention

MOTION CARRIED

<b>Member</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Erika Wiecenski	X
Mike Makuch	Abstained
Ann Grosjean	X
Katherine Viveiros	X
Gary Anderson	X
Peter Latincsics	X
Justin Niderno	Absent
Briana Ross	X
Erica Bushior	X

### **APPROVAL OF COMMUNICATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES**

First Selectwoman Wiecenski MOVED to approve the Communications Subcommittee Minutes of March 26, 2021. Gary Allen SECONDED the motion.

DISCUSSION:None

VOTE: 8 Yes, 0 No

MOTION CARRIED

<b>Member</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Erika Wiecenski	X
Mike Makuch	X
Ann Grosjean	X
Katherine Viveiros	X
Gary Anderson	X
Peter Latincsics	X
Justin Niderno	Absent
Briana Ross	X
Erica Bushior	X

### **PRESENT TO SPEAK**

None

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

- a. **Letter from Superintendent: communication with Office of School Construction, Grants and Review**

Superintendent Stevens submitted a letter highlighting notes he took while having a conversation with Michelle Dixon of the OSCGR. He asked her if the 2019 enrollment projection data was sufficient for a preliminary conversation and then Ms. Dixon asked several questions herself.

Peter Latincsics referred to the statement that there are a number of other schools reducing from multiple schools to one at this time. He asked what OSCGR's response is to that and if there are other options on the table to consider from their perspective.

Superintendent Stevens stated that Ms. Dixon's point was that there are a lot of districts looking to go from multiple schools to one by either renovating or building. The percentage rate of what is reimbursed differs between the two options. There are a number of project items that don't qualify if a district is renovating a building. However, the majority of project items do qualify if building new.

## **COMMITTEE REPORT**

### **a. Communications Committee**

Superintendent Stevens, Ann Grosjean and Gary Anderson reported. The subcommittee met to identify and draft a purpose. They determined what publications they would use and how the Chair will approve communications. They developed sample posts and they considered various types of communication. They worked on an FAQ document and they are accepting suggestions from the committee. The goal is to present accurate, essential and up to date information as well as to offer the public appropriate ways to address the committee to ask questions. The public is always welcome to be Present to Speak at the meetings. The subcommittee will form a blanket statement to direct people to the town website if they ask questions on social media. Documents are shared publicly on the school district website within a file titled School Building Committee 2020-2021. The committee considered having the SBC email provide an automated response.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **a. Questions identified for the Office of School Construction, Grants and Review**

The committee is determining what data about history and stats is important to share with the OSCGR before they come on site. They are also choosing questions to ask of the OSCGR.

Chairperson Viveiros wants to ask about options and the grant process.

Superintendent Stevens said while talking with Ms. Dixon, she was asking him questions and it is possible that the OSCGR will bypass the committee's questions altogether and just make a recommendation. However the committee does wish to know answers to help the public understand the process.

Mike Makuch suggested that the committee ask about green solutions such as capturing and using rainwater. Chairperson Viveiros replied that there are requirements about things like water saving elements. A project manager hired by the committee will know more about such things.



Superintendent Stevens reminded the committee that the OSCGR will make a recommendation but that we don't have to follow it. The OSCGR gathers only pertinent information to make an informed recommendation. They may just say what they will support, what they won't support and why. Ms. Dixon told Superintendent Stevens that Mr. Diamantis ("Kosta", Commissioner of DAS, Director of OSCGR) may send a team out to walk the buildings or he may choose to do so himself. The team will ask questions and then return to their office to talk things over before meeting with the committee to share what they recommend.

Chairperson Viveiros stated that we are seeking their input on how to maximize funding to improve our schools. They don't have a problem granting funds as long as they know it is a good investment. The intent of the presentation is to give the OSCGR some background information before inviting them to walk the schools. The presentation includes information the OSCGR asked for. It is all public information.

Superintendent Stevens said that the OSCGR asked about a Special Education Instructional Summary which explains how students with special education needs are being serviced within the schools rather than being outplaced.

Ann Grosjean asked if the 2019 Enrollment Data was sufficient. Superintendent Stevens said that yes, it is fine for a preliminary conversation but if something is done to the buildings it will need to be updated because it impacts the required size of the building.

First Selectwoman Wiccenski asked if that is true if a building is renovated to new.

Superintendent Stevens said yes and there are penalties for things like having a large school such as Hall School that is too large for the number of students.

The committee will still create a list of questions and submit them to the OSCGR and formally invite them to come visit our schools.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. Office of School Construction, Grants and Review preliminary meeting document**

The committee reviewed a brief presentation that was drafted based on the information requested by Michelle Dixon. The information will be sent with the request to OSCGR to tour the school buildings.

### **b. Pre-referendum checklist and space standard worksheet**

The committee reviewed a checklist required as part of the grant application. The required space standard worksheet was also reviewed which indicates square footage allotments based on projected enrollment.

### **c. Review 2019 survey and data**

The committee reviewed the 2019 survey results. Superintendent Stevens suggested that the next survey be launched after a meeting with OSCGR so that more relevant and specific feedback is gathered.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that if townspeople know that a renovation means significantly less funding, they may respond to a survey differently.

Chairperson Viveiros said that it is important for people to know the facts about what is funded by the state and what is not.

Peter Latincsics asked if the economic impact of what happens to abandoned buildings is included in the state funding. He said there should be a balance between the potential of building new and the cost of closing old buildings and possibly temporarily maintaining them until a new purpose is determined. Chairperson Viveiros said that part of the committee's charge is to identify possible uses for CES and HMS if we build new as it may offset having to "close the schools". Superintendent Stevens replied that it is unlikely the state will provide funding to support closing buildings because they only invest in what is happening going forward. Peter Latincsics asked if the State Department of Education could repurpose a building for a charter school for example. Superintendent Stevens said that question could be asked. Ann Grosjean asked if Collier's said they would help brainstorm ideas for the usage of the old buildings. Chairperson Viveiros said that yes, they will for a fee as identified in the RFP. First Selectwoman Wiecenski asked what was being done with the Mansfield schools now that they are building one bigger school. The committee agreed to follow up with Mansfield.

**d. Suggestions for next agenda**

**I. Request for Proposals: Owner's Project Manager**

- Consider aiming to meet with OSCGR before the next committee meeting
- Start developing an RFP (Request for Proposal) for a Project Manager including specific work the committee wants done and pricing, refer to Farmington, South Windsor and Mansfield's RFPs for reference
- Perhaps form a subcommittee to work on an RFP to be approved by the whole committee
- Send formal invitation to visit schools, and submit data to OSCGR before the May 5, 2021 committee meeting

**ADJOURNMENT**

First Selectwoman Wiecenski MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 PM. Mike Makuch SECONDED the motion.

DISCUSSION:None

VOTE: 7 Yes, 0 No

MOTION CARRIED

Member	Vote
Erika Wiecenski	X
Mike Makuch	X
Ann Grosjean	X

Katherine Viveiros	X
Gary Anderson	Left meeting at 7:32
Peter Latincsics	X
Justin Niderno	Absent
Briana Ross	X
Erica Bushior	X

Respectfully Submitted,

Briana Ross

School Building Committee Member and Recording Secretary

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TOWN CLERK