

SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting Minutes

Date: September 15, 2021 6:30 PM

In Person at the Town Office Building or Via Public Online Video Conference (Zoom)

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

Member	Position	Present in Person	Present via Zoom	Absent
Phil 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	
Ralph Tulis	Member at large		X	
Peter Latincsics	Member at large		X	
Justin Niderno	Member at large	X		
Briana Ross	Member at large		X	

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Viveiros called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

PRESENT TO SPEAK

None

CHAIRPERSON REPORT

Chairperson Viveiros explained the committee's meeting frequency plan to address speculation about why a few meetings were cancelled. At the start of this committee's work, a member suggested having two meetings per month. The purpose was to ensure a monthly meeting as well as to create a placeholder for an additional meeting within the month should it be necessary. It is clerically easier to cancel a meeting than to add an additional meeting.

The search for a replacement recording secretary has also been in the works as per the request of the present secretary.

Chairperson Viveiros reviewed items 1, 4, 5, 8 and 10 of the committee's charge. These highlight the need to define a Pre-K-8 School, secure state funding, find and recommend sites, adhere to state statutes, and identify potential use for current school buildings if necessary.

PRESENTATION: Scott Pellman, Colliers International

Chairperson Viveiros invited them to attend the meeting to help the committee to better understand the process.

Ken Guyette, Senior Director, Project Management Services at Colliers Project Leaders, said that their job is to provide information to help clients do things like understanding the process and to maximize the reimbursement from the state.

Scott Pellman, Senior Project Manager, offered some guidance on navigating the process, gathering information and getting an OPM (Owner's Project Manager) so the committee can make an educated decision on what way to proceed.

Mr. Pellman presented a high-level overview of the basic tasks using a diagram titled "Wilmington Pre-Referendum Conceptual Tasks- Renovation and New Building Options". It shows that identical initial tasks and completion tasks are needed for both renovating a school and building new. It also shows parallel paths for the two options. Mr. Pellman pointed out that there are similar steps for each. The first thing to do is to secure an OPM consulting firm to gather info and organize it so the committee and the public can understand. They can answer questions from the public so the community has evidence that the committee has done their due diligence. A consultant will also review the information already gathered by the committee as well as look at a recent population study, current costs and develop Ed Specs.

Chairperson Viveiros noted that there is a lot of information and work to be done in every step, and any misstep could result in a loss of funding. Therefore it is important to have a professional working on the committee's behalf.

Mike Makuch asked if there would be a public bidding process to secure a firm to do this work. Mr. Pellman answered that this is correct.

Selectwoman Wiczenski asked if the committee would develop the Ed Specs for the Board of Education to approve, or if it should be done together. Mr. Pellman said that the BOE, the Superintendent and administrators will put together their requirements and approve the Ed Specs and then hand the project to the SBC to make it happen. The SBC shows the BOE the finished project, and then it goes to the state for approval. The OPM (Owner's Project Manager) makes sure things are on time, on budget, and meeting all of the BOE's requirements and that it is suited for the given Ed Specs.

Ralph Tulis asked if the information from the Friar Study should be updated to show more current projections? Mr. Pellman responded saying that they allow you to use the highest projected enrollment

from an eight year period. Friar doesn't have a demographer and that was done by a third party consultant. A consultant will gather the latest data like birth rates, housing starts, real estate changeover. It is necessary to use somebody the state approves. Friar's condition assessment is reasonable but they would want to review it with the maintenance department and facilities director. The purpose is to update schedules and budgets on the projects.

Ralph Tulis asked if the Ed Specs will force planning into one direction or the other such as a renovation/reconfiguration or a new build on a new site? Mr. Pellman said no. Educational requirements and spaces, like a cafeteria that can seat 200 students at a time, evaluate the existing buildings and guide the plan through development to accommodate the needs and financial considerations.

Peter Latincsics asked what a consultant expects a committee to have done prior to coming aboard. Mr. Pellman said that there are no real expectations of an SBC except to offer the consultant helpful information. It is their task to help the committee achieve their goal.

Peter Latincsics also wanted to know if it is possible to submit two parallel plans to Kosta. Mr. Pellman responded saying that the committee can discuss parallel plans when they meet with Kosta, but ultimately can only submit one for the grant. The community would determine which one to attach to the grant application for state funding.

Peter Latincsics asked if Mr. Pellman has ever had a situation where the committee gives the town a range of options for a referendum. Mr. Pellman said that there have been options at a referendum like adding a pool. He recommends coming to a consensus through public presentations and discussions of the SBC, BOE, and BOF because if two options are voted upon and it comes out an even split, the project will be defeated. The best scenario will present itself.

Ann Grosjean asked when in the process the BOE should start working on the Ed Specs. Mr. Pellman suggested immediately working on a solid draft. Some other tasks can begin without it, but it is needed for a test fit evaluation. Ann Grosjean also asked about the cost difference if the committee goes with a parallel plan because it will be necessary to draw two architectural plans, for example, and duplicate everything. Does it cost a lot more? Mr. Pellman said that it is too soon to work with an architect. He went on to describe the steps a consultant will take, and he said that it will all be presented "apples to apples so everything looks the same" regarding the two, parallel options.

Chairperson Viveiros asked if it is too soon for the SBC to start engaging in conversation with the BOE to start drafting Ed Specs or should they wait to complete the processes of securing an OPM? Mr. Pellman suggested that the BOE start putting them together now and that it is Mr. Stevens and the admin leading the BOE in the development of Ed Specs. He offered to send samples and give him names of consultants to help.

Superintendent Stevens wanted to clarify that the test fit is the cost that goes to voters when talking about getting the money ahead of time. In Mansfield what was drawn up and approved was altered later. Mr. Pellman said that this is correct. After the referendum and the budget is passed, an architect will create a vision for the town. The purpose of a test fit is to find out if the building has enough area and if the building is organized in a way that makes sense educationally.

Peter Latincsics asked if Mr. Pellman had anything like a general Ed Spec for a similar rural town. Mr. Pellman said that the OSCG&R has samples on their website, but those are more for formatting purposes. He recommended that Mr. Stevens ask other superintendents for draft samples. Mr. Stevens said that he already has a sample from Mansfield.

Ralph Tulis asked Mr. Pellman if he has had any experience with buildings that are part school and part municipal. Mr. Pellman said yes, but it gets tricky because the state won't pay for things like portions of a Town Hall or Birth-3 program space for example. It will cover a BOE space and Pre-K space.

Superintendent Stevens pointed out that our town's Pre-K program is limited by space. He wanted to know if they were able to accept more students, would it count towards the square footage allotment. Mr. Pellman said that it counts towards square footage. The state also provides additional money for full day Pre-K programming. Justin Niderno asked to clarify that there is more funding for full day Pre-K covered under state guidelines. Mr. Pellman said that the state provides additional percentage points for reimbursement for schools that go from partial day to full day programs. Ann Grosjean asked if a half day Pre-K program is still reimbursed. Mr. Pellman said yes. There is no penalty for a half day program.

The committee members thanked Mr. Pellman and Mr. Guyette for their helpful presentation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ralph Tulis MOVED to approve the minutes of August 4, 2021. Selectwoman Wiecenski SECONDED the motion.

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: 9 Yes, 0 No

MOTION CARRIED

Member	Vote
Erika Wiecenski	Y
Mike Makuch	Y
Ann Grosjean	Y
Katherine Viveiros	Y
Gary Anderson	Y
Ralph Tulis	Y
Peter Latincsics	Y
Justin Niderno	Y
Briana Ross	Y

COMMUNICATIONS

Chairperson Viveiros reached out to Alice Cassells to invite her to the meeting and to share the committee's questions with her.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Land acquisition:

Mike Makuch reported that the committee will meet on the evening of September 22nd. They will get an agenda out soon. They will make it clear to the public that all options are being considered. They will set a methodology for the evaluation of properties including the school properties already owned by the town. Colliers has a matrix or property evaluation and maybe that tool could be used. There is also information on the state's School Construction Guidance.

Communications:

Ann Grosjean reported that the meeting will be on September 22nd at 1:00. They will send the agenda and Zoom information out soon.

Ralph Tulis MOVED to establish a subcommittee to develop a reconfiguration/partial or full renovation and/or addition option for Hall Memorial School. Selectwoman Wiecenski SECONDED the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Chairperson Viveiros asked how the subcommittee's tasks would be different from what the SBC committee will be doing as part of the Charge.

Ralph Tulis explained his desire to explore the idea of renovating and building at Hall School. He suggested divorcing the 1922 building to eliminate code issues to qualify for funding for a renovation. The gym has potential and the additions on the South have potential. A second wing could be added to South so little kids are on the same level as the gym. It may be possible to phase it so it is not disruptive. The committee can look at energy use, the philosophy of recycle / reuse and the carbon footprint of renovating instead of building new. Kosta will at least give the committee a chance to present a concept plan.

Chairperson Viveiros asked if Mr. Tullis felt like we could do this as a subcommittee without the assistance of Colliers? She thinks this committee has to do this work anyway. She questioned the timing of adding this subcommittee saying it may make more sense to get a professional to help. Ralph Tulis said we need to do it ourselves before sitting with a consultant. It requires investigation of the existing school including additions. He wants to check grades to see if an addition would be feasible. He thinks there is potential there. Mike Makuch questioned if it is the right time to do this given the public's concern that we are already focused on one particular path.

Gary Anderson stated that we heard a really good presentation from professionals and we have to go back to the beginning to look at all options and follow our charge. Eventually some options will come to the

forefront. For right now we need to go back to the beginning and have experts lead us. We will then choose 1-2 directions and march forward.

Ann Grosjean said that if we go through processes with a project manager, we'll have answers to questions as they arise (specifications etc). So it is not the right time, but maybe later with the project manager.

Peter Latincsics supports the subcommittee. Having parallel subcommittees working on different aspects of this entire project makes sense.

Chairperson Viveiros said that the land acquisition subcommittee will consider both paths. They are looking at new land and land already owned by the town. They only had one meeting so far and that was because there was possible land for sale.

Briana Ross expressed a concern that a subcommittee focusing specifically on one path may cause division or misunderstanding within the committee.

Justin Niderno offered to help on this subcommittee and he thinks the full committee needs to figure out what needs to be done first and focus.

Mike Makuch liked the idea and has been holding out hope that this could be one of the solutions. The legacy of Hall School is important. He wondered if we could reuse the property within the requirements. He is sensitive to the public's concern that the SBC has already picked the path to build a new school. Ralph Tulis said that this is why it is a good time to create the subcommittee because it shows that we are indeed looking at all options.

Chairperson Viveiros said that lots of us like the idea but the timing is not right. She recommended bringing it up in a future meeting. Ralph Tulis stated that he will not let this idea go. Gary Anderson asked Ralph Tulis about saying he won't let go of the idea. He asked if he will give up on the idea if it is determined that it's not feasible. Ralph Tulis said that creating this subcommittee will help dispel the perception that we are going one way. He believes that this is a parallel path worth exploring in the best interest of the children and the community.

Selectwoman Wiecenski loved the idea. She said that the SBC asked for funding and we heard that they want to make sure we are looking at both avenues. We have not decided. The concept is great, she's just not sure about the timing. A proposal for how dollars are going to be spent will be seen and that will help clarify that the committee is looking at both options.

Ann Grosjean agreed with Selectwoman Wiecenski. She liked the plan from Colliers where we will follow two paths simultaneously, get project managers on board and then possibly make a subcommittee to renovate Hall School but we really need the guidance of a project manager no matter what.

Peter Latincsics encouraged Ralph Tulis to carry out the motion. He thinks there is hyper scrutiny when talking about this subcommittee as opposed to the creation of other subcommittees.

VOTE: 3 Yes, 6 No

MOTION FAILS

Member	Vote
Erika Wieceński	N
Mike Makuch	N
Ann Grosjean	N
Katherine Viveiros	N
Gary Anderson	N
Ralph Tulis	Y
Peter Latincsics	Y
Justin Niderno	Y
Briana Ross	N

Peter Latincsics MOVED to add to the agenda under new business. He requested the establishment of a finance subcommittee for the purpose of looking at revenue for school projects and costs for potential school projects. Selectwoman Wieceński SECONDED the motion.

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: 9 Yes, 0 No

MOTION CARRIED

Member	Vote
Erika Wieceński	Y
Mike Makuch	Y
Ann Grosjean	Y
Katherine Viveiros	Y
Gary Anderson	Y
Ralph Tulis	Y
Peter Latincsics	Y
Justin Niderno	Y
Briana Ross	Y

OLD BUSINESS

a. School Building Committee Funds

Chairperson Viveiros said that the committee has gone to the Board of Finance twice for funding. The Board wants to allocate certain funds to certain parts of the mission, but it doesn't make sense to allot 50% of the money on plans for building a building and 50% on a renovation. There are more items in the committee's charge that require consultants, that the BOF needs to consider. Additionally there is still a need for funding to hire a recording secretary.

Gary Anderson suggested we give the Board of Finance a copy of the document Colliers shared this evening to better explain what funding is needed immediately.

Ralph Tulis asked why not ask for what we need now and then go back in the future for other things. Chairperson Viveiros said that we did that. The Chair of the Board of Finance, Mike Makuch, made an adjustment and reduced the funds to \$30k instead of \$100k, yet it still got voted down. Chairperson Viveiros said that the BOF wanted to allocate funds specifically for certain things. It's not as easy as that.

Ann Grosjean asked if it is true that there must be a town meeting to approve the allocation of funds every time there is a request of the Board of Finance? Mike Makuch answered Yes. The School Building Committee asks the Board of Finance for funds. If it is approved, the Board of Finance puts in a request with the Board of Selectmen who then call a town meeting. Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that she has the same concern. Steps in the process and holding town meetings come with costs. It should be clear what the funds are being used for because all work is done in public. The flowchart shared by Colliers this evening makes it clear what is needed. It is the School Building Committee's decision how to use the funds.

Peter Latincsics agrees that there are some immediate costs and perhaps if we ask the BOF for a smaller amount of funds to begin working on things, it will be better received. Mike Makuch replied that the committee should ask the BOF to recognize that they have looked at the document again. There should also be respect given to the petition, and the process should move along as the taxpayers have determined.

Chairperson Viveiros added that the document from Colliers still does not include all of the consultants that we may need to hire.

Ralph Tulis asked who is going to contract with the design firms. Chairperson Viveiros replied that they will be hired by the Town of Willington and that money is not included in the allotted \$100k funds for the SBC. Ralph Tulis clarified that we have to bid for an OPM and then the BOS opens them. The committee will have the opportunity to review them. He asked what happens after it is decided to enter into a contract for that dollar amount for those services. Selectwoman Wiecenski said that it would not need to go to a Town Meeting at that time. .

Chairperson Viveiros MOVED to modify the language as recommended and submit it to the Board of Finance for approval. Ann Grosjean SECONDED the motion.

DISCUSSION:

The committee discussed the importance of exact language and details in the document. For example, the project number attached to the funds was added, some language was refined and a statement that the appropriated money is coming from the reserve fund for the SBC was included.

VOTE: 9 Yes, 0 No

MOTION CARRIED

Member	Vote
Erika Wiecenski	Y
Mike Makuch	Y
Ann Grosjean	Y

Katherine Viveiros	Y
Gary Anderson	Y
Ralph Tulis	Y
Peter Latincsics	Y
Justin Niderno	Y
Briana Ross	Y

b. Request for Proposals- Owner's Project Manager

Chairperson Viveiros said that we need to get through appropriation of the funds before talking about this. Superintendent Stevens suggested that committee members go back and review documents in the shared Google drive. There are samples in the folders of Mansfield's RFPs, RFQs, statutes, codes, ADA information and so forth to review. Ralph Tulis would like to see a draft RFP and RFQ at a future meeting and start outlining what needs to be included.

c. Committee member volunteer for recording secretary

Chairperson Viveiros asked if any other committee member would like to volunteer to do the SBC Meeting Minutes moving forward. Selectwoman Wiecenski hesitates to ask a committee member because as Briana stated, it is difficult to participate fully in the meeting while also taking copious notes. She said that perhaps with a staffing change in the selectman's office there may be salary savings to put towards a recording secretary for the fiscal year. She'll talk with the business manager tomorrow about this. Then a person has to be recruited and appointed by the BOS.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Enrollment study process overview

Superintendent Stevens said that the Colliers report explained some of this information. It is clear that enrollment has to meet criteria for the OSCGR. The Ed Specs are based on the 8 year high and formula for square footage. The information about how size is determined can be found in the Connecticut School Construction Standards and Guidelines document. An enrollment study is typically \$3,000-\$5,000 and it is necessary for going forward in the grant process. Chairperson Viveiros said that funding for the enrollment study would be helpful regardless of which path is taken. Ann Grosjean asked if the correct numbers are necessary for the Ed Specs. Superintendent Stevens said that it is important to have a ballpark of class numbers, which is why it is recommended that it is done right away.

b. Discussion on questions to Hall Foundation regarding Hall Memorial School

There has not been any response from the Hall Foundation at this time. Peter Latincsics shared the generated list of questions with the committee. He thinks that the Hall Foundation has closed meetings to conduct affairs, so maybe we could send questions to them to discuss at their meeting and then they could send a representative who is more aware to our meetings. Chairperson Viveiros said that the questions have already been provided to the Foundation. The committee reviewed the questions.

c. Request for finance subcommittee

Peter Latincsics MOVED that the SBC add a finance subcommittee to look at potential revenues and costs for any project the committee considers or pursues. Selectwoman Wiecenski SECONDED the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Mike Makuch asked what the subcommittee could get started on now because it will take time before we are ready to move on some of the tasks. Peter Latincsics said that there will be parallel activities with consultants and other entities as the direction is defined. But there are certain things that are basic for our charge such as determining what the town can afford. We can look at things like the capital budget, different economic factors like the effects of COVID and the foundation issues. We need to look at these things to understand, from an economic base, if we can support a project of this scale. Then we will evaluate different options in that context. We know our town better than consultants do, and we have resources like the BOF and the economic development commission to help us determine how to support the project. We can also do a cost benefit analysis. We can work with the land acquisition subcommittee.

Mike Makuch said that Peter Latincsics made some good points and as the process goes on and when we get to the point when we present actual options to the BOE or the townspeople, the cost per pupil and square foot will make sense to share. Some things are broad and overlap with the responsibilities of the BOF and the CIP committee. So it is important to narrow the scope so as not to become burdened with too much work and drift to many different directions. Finding out the numbers that come with the different options is a good idea.

Chairperson Viveiros said that a subcommittee is not necessary now because the OPM will analyze the two parallel directions and define the scope and budget. Peter Latincsics stated that maybe the SBC can ask the town if they can afford it. Peter Latincsics thinks we should look at cost independently from the OPM. There can be disagreement there and having a financial check with our own subcommittee would be a helpful check. Chairperson Viveiros said that this is a good point. There is nothing to do now so is now the time to begin this subcommittee? Peter Latincsics replied that the subcommittee could look at baseline issues now and the BOF can help. Things like what is the tax base now, what is driving the economy in town. It won't affect the OPM's work later on. Chairperson Viveiros asked what 3 things this proposed subcommittee could do now. Peter Latincsics replied that they could find out the present per pupil cost and how that is impacted by having two schools. Understanding what we have now, what we're paying for now is helpful. Superintendent Stevens asked where this falls in our charge. Selectwoman Wiecenski said that she agrees with Peter Latincsics and that everything regarding finances is in our charge. When it comes to a \$45 million project (amount taken from Friar study) finances matter. So we should make a subcommittee. Chairperson Viveiros highlighted item 7 of the charge pointing out that we have to know where we are before we know where we're going.

Superintendent Stevens stated that he agrees with the subcommittee. Things like taxpayer impact and bonding have already been done and it is important to do again. If that is the intention, it might be better to have new numbers first. Superintendent Stevens made it clear that he will not produce a slash list of staff to go to one building beyond very obvious things. He was still trying to determine where the things

fall within the charge, what we are specifically looking at, what we are holding back at this point and what is different from what we did for the Friar study? He agrees that a finance subcommittee is important as well as helps improve transparency.

Mike Makuch suggested that between now and the next meeting Peter Latincics could determine an actual scope and guidance for the subcommittee and people can send suggestions and offer to serve. Peter Latincics agreed that it is a good idea to specify the scope and put it on the next agenda.

Ralph Tulis added that there is a lot of benefit to know about costs of running schools, etc. Starting to get a handle on what those numbers are now and having a baseline will help going forward. Tax payers will want to know how they will be affected including what costs are now and what they will be. To the public it is more credible coming from this committee rather than a consultant.

Selectwoman Wiecewski MOVED to table the motion and add it to the next agenda. Gary Anderson SECONDED the motion.

NO DISCUSSION REQUIRED

VOTE: 9 Yes, 0 No

MOTION CARRIED

Member	Vote
Erika Wiecewski	Y
Mike Makuch	Y
Ann Grosjean	Y
Katherine Viveiros	Y
Gary Anderson	Y
Ralph Tulis	Y
Peter Latincics	Y
Justin Niderno	Y
Briana Ross	Y

PRESENT TO SPEAK

None

ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Viveiros MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:19 PM. Peter Latincics SECONDED the motion.

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: 9 Yes, 0 No

MOTION CARRIED

Member	Vote
Erika Wieceński	Y
Mike Makuch	Y
Ann Grosjean	Y
Katherine Viveiros	Y
Gary Anderson	Y
Ralph Tulis	Y
Peter Latincsics	Y
Justin Niderno	Y
Briana Ross	Y

Respectfully Submitted,

Briana Ross

School Building Committee Member and Recording Secretary

RECEIVED
WILLINGTON, CT.

2021 SEP 22 P 2:23


TOWN CLERK