

West Elementary School Building Committee Minutes

Thursday, June 25, 2020 – 7:30AM

Participating via remote

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| Access Voting Members: | Chair-Paula Colby-Clements, Shelley Berman, Andrew Flanagan, Rick Almeida, Heather Eigen, Jennifer Hunt, Susan McCready, Janet Nicosia, Siggie Pfendler, Paul Rollins, Elizabeth Roos, Donna Walsh |
| Non-Voting Members: | Mark Johnson, Esq., Tracey Spruce, Esq., Paul Szymanski, |
| PMA Consultants (remote): | Kevin Weeks, Brian DeFilippis, Steve Rusteika |
| SMMA Architects (remote): | Lorraine Finnegan, Matt Rice |
| Other Participant: | Steve Nembirkow, APS Chief Operations Officer |

West Elementary School Building Committee Chair (SBC), Paula Colby Clements, opened the meeting at 7:30AM. Because of the emergency state of government due to Covid-19, all SBC members are participating via Webex. All votes will be taken by roll call at this meeting.

Approval of Minutes; Approval of Invoices and Change Orders. Vote expected

Minutes were reviewed, changes made – clarification on square footage amounts discussed and approved.

On a Motion made by Shelley Berman and seconded by Susan McCready, the West Elementary School Building Committee approved the June 11, 2020 meeting minutes. On a roll call vote, the motion for the June 11, 2020 meeting minutes was approved on a 12-0 vote.

Discussion of space that exceeds MSBA guidelines including discussion of Flexitorium and Mechanical Penthouse.

Brian Defilippis went over the sq. footage that was cut which was approx. 5,000 sq.ft. The diagram depicted those spaces in orange where the changes were made; the items in grey are appropriate and keep as is. There was a lot of good open discussion. The net is approximately 3.5 million. We would net the benefits of a 1000 ft. stage if Flexitorium is taken off. Still pending is the DESE reviews of Special Education space.

The Superintendent stated that the multi-purpose room could be reduced to the size of 2 classrooms. The library in a new West El building will be close enough to the Pre-K, and a section could be designed for the Pre-K. The cafeteria would need to have a section for the Pre-K but also close enough to that side of the West Elem building to be shared. The nurses' office area (general medical) could be reduced as well – as long as it is big enough for 6 cots. This will be one nurses station, but 2 designated areas, not completely combined. The other spaces were pretty critical. The admin office was important to have as well as the conference room where services were provided were also important to have that space, but the ancillary spaces could come down. The media center could have a space where there would be a sound/secluded area for certain services/sensory issues. Ms. Finnegan does believe the proposed 5,000 sq. ft. media space area provides sufficient space as it is bigger than what is in West Elementary. Ms. Roos did state her concerns about the current West Elementary media center being overcrowded. Ms. Finnegan responded that during the schematic design phase they will work on refining space usage in the common areas.

Ms. Nicosia asked on how close we are to MSBA's base guidelines of 90,000 square feet. Ms. Finnegan stated there was a reduction of 3,500 net sq. but we're still not quite there. If you take these changes, there still is a 40,000-net sq. footage difference. However, that is still without hearing from what DESE will approve for Special Ed spaces. If DESE approves the Special Ed spaces, then we would only have a difference of 30,000 net sq. foot delta between what is allowed by MSBA. This means what MSBA allows

and ineligible (not reimbursable) would be approximately \$27m. The penthouse is not included in this square footage.

The Chair wanted to remind the public that we do have 2 schools which do need 2 separate buildings with some common spaces. That is the reason not everything can be shared.

The Chair reviewed the background of the mechanical penthouse and where we are now. The MSBA policy has changed and will not allow the penthouse. Ms. Finnegan explained all the net floor area – all the spaces – classrooms, dining, etc. – net sq. footage which totals 136,000 sq. ft. and then are allowed to multiply a maximum of 1.5 which comes out to 68,000 sq. ft. This is the formula and if this goes above the 1.5, MSBA won't reimburse it. Included in the 68,000-sq. footage are electrical/maintenance areas, elevators, stairs, etc. which make up the grossing factor. The 8,000 sq. would be carried after the 68,000-sq. ft.– trying to get 8,000 sq. ft. into this is a challenge. You would have tight spaces throughout the school. MSBA is asking for this to be part of the 68,000-sq. ft. and it's too large to be part of this. It has to be in the non-program space.

Ms. Nicosia felt that the Committee has hit a wall and it's time to wrap it up and move on. She doesn't think that MSBA will change their opinion. There are other options that may help which Ms. Finnegan has brought up and so we will work with those ideas. The Superintendent agreed that Ms. Nicosia makes a good point. Although he does not think there is any harm in asking MSBA to reconsider their decision by sending the letter to MSBA. The Superintendent still feels the chances of MSBA changing their minds is minimal, but still wants to send the letter.

The Chair stated we need to make decisions today regarding reductions on the mechanical penthouse and flexitorium. The submittal of the FAS renderings must be done by July 8 to be able to be on the MSBA July 22nd meeting. The Chair wanted some direction from the Committee on what to do. Mr. Johnson thinks we need to move forward without the mechanical penthouse included; others concurred. Mr. Almeida said it is much more important to have the educational space rather than include the mechanical penthouse. It is nice to have, but we can't sacrifice the Educational space. The committee consensus is the penthouse will come out of the FAS renderings.

The next decision is whether we should send the letter to the MSBA. The Chair feels it is still worth having the dialogue and ask why MSBA changed their minds. Mr. DeFilippis feels the letter is considerate and respectful, Ms. Finnegan likes the letter too, and that this puts it in the record. Ms. Pfenkler likes the idea of sending the letter. It's worth pushing this issue even if in the end the MSBA may not change their minds.

Next decision is on the flexitorium. MSBA won't pay for an auditorium. The flexitorium is roughly a \$6m addition to the project. The Chair stated that in her research she discovered the demand for rental space is there but not as high for this type of space vs. a traditional auditorium. They would have to look at this as a true revenue stream for the town and that is not the case now. Should the Committee take out the flexitorium out and re-image the cafeteria to a cafetorium – similar to Bancroft's? The Chair is mindful of a substantial decrease in state revenues – while still having other town projects to pay for and fears that any addition to the project costs will be detrimental in support from the public.

Ms. Hunt is concerned that cafetorium space shared with the PreK will be a challenging space. Ms. Roos felt it was a short space with more students at West Elem than at Bancroft. Ms. Roos asked how would this be presented at Town Meeting. The Chair thinks there will a presentation at Town Meeting, but probably done in a lump sum. The Town Manager would go to Town Meeting with a bond authorization request. Ms. Roos feels it is not a lot to ask for and that the flexitorium is worth the price. Mr. Johnson feels the building must last 50 years, so should be flexible enough to deal with the changes in education

as they go forward. Ms. Finnegan said the flexitorium decision must be made by August 26th before starting schematic design.

The Town Manager will bring costs analysis relative to what this will be to the average tax payer for the next meeting. Ms. McCready also asked the cost analysis for all other town/ school projects which may be in the pipeline as well. The Town Manager will model all these costs and bring this info to the next meeting. The Chair stated that she is getting questions on the costs and size of the West Elem project vs. what was done at Bancroft.

The Committee needs to educate the Community that this is a 2-school project . There is a rationale behind the costs, but this is a larger project than previous ones. Costs does come up in every building project, so if we include the flexitorium we need to give the rationale as it is not a small cost. Ms. McCready said she is a big proponent of investing in our schools. Ms. Spruce asked for the FAQs to be put up on the website so that all Committee members can refer to. The Superintendent said the FAQs will be going up shortly after he receives all the feedback from the Committee. It would also be beneficial to include in the cost analysis the new reduced costs from Lorraine and Brian. Dr. Berman is torn on the flexitorium, sees the benefits and wants to be conscious that we state the space is for 2 schools. Ms. McCready said that there needs to be an explanation on why we would value a flexitorium for this elementary population, but not value it for other populations in town. We would need to have a solid answer. Ms. Nicosia wanted to know the hours that the flexitorium would be used during the school hours vs when it would be used after hours. Ms. Nicosia doesn't know if the case has been made for a need. Liz responded that a typical 3-month schedule was created to demonstrate the need. Decision was made the Committee will look at this data again at the next meeting.

Discussion of public meeting in July along with update of web design

Ms. Colby Clements noted that the website is now almost done. Mr. DeFilippis displayed the new web page, explained the design work so far, showing the FAQs, background info, link for questions to the Chair, etc. A public meeting date was set for Tuesday, July 14 at 7PM. A press release will be sent to the Newspaper; a message to all school parents will also be sent out and a request to the Town Manager for an email blasts or announcements in Town messages. SMMA will make a presentation after an introduction by the Chair. We will bring up a discussion on the flexitorium.

Selection of Next SBC Meeting date(s) and main subject.

The Committee will meet on Thurs, July 9th at 7:30AM and will have further discussions on the flexitorium.

Adjourn

On a Motion made by Sheldon Berman and seconded by Liz Roos, the West Elementary SBC voted to adjourn the meeting of June 25, 2020 at 9:09AM. On a roll call vote, the Committee voted 12-0 to adjourn.

Respectfully,
Alison Phelan, Recorder

CERTIFICATION
Town Clerk and Chief Strategy Officer
Austin Simko

Date:

Town Stamp: