

WESTWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS BUILDING PROJECT COMMITTEE
Westwood, Massachusetts

MEETING MINUTES
January 22, 2021

Attendance and Call to Order

The meeting, held remotely¹, was called to order at 8:01am by Chair Maya Plotkin. Also present on the video conference were: Ken Aries, Brian Bayer, Allison Borchers, Christopher Coleman, Sarah Cronin, John Cummings, Charles Donahue, Pam Dukeman, Mary Kate Ferreira, Jen Flanders, Abby Hanscom, Nancy Hyde, Lemma Jn-baptiste, Josepha Jowdy, Carol Lewis, Michelle Miller, Anthony Mullin, Emily Parks, and Amanda Phillips. Mrs. Hanscom and Mrs. Phillips both arrived at 8:02am. Mrs. Cronin arrived at 8:04am. Mr. Coleman, Mrs. Ferreira, Mrs. Lewis, and Mr. Mullin all left the meeting prior to adjournment.

Tim Bonfatti and Chin Lin of Compass Project Management; and Don Walter and Rob Fitzgerald of Dore and Whittier, were in attendance.

John Cianciarulo recorded the minutes.

Mrs. Plotkin recognized the live stream of the meeting which was provided for real-time, public access to the activities of the School Building Committee. Members of the public were able to view a live stream of the meeting via the Internet at www.westwood.k12.ma.us/live. Westwood Media Center also recorded the meeting for later broadcast on their platforms.

Chair, Subcommittee, and Working Group Reports

Chair's Update

Mrs. Plotkin stated that she had no report and will cover updates in the discussion items.

Discussion Items

Town Meeting/Ballot Vote and Project Schedule Impact

Mrs. Plotkin presented.

Projected Project Schedule Options

The schedule options for the project were reviewed.

Option 1 (Current)

- Town Votes – May/June 2021
- Start Construction – July 2022
- Move-In – February 2024
- Completion – August 2024

Mrs. Plotkin stated that there are some disadvantages to this schedule. Town Meeting will have a lot of other business to conduct and if the project were on this spring's Warrant, it would likely become a two-night meeting which is not ideal for logistics or for public participation. Additionally, there remains a fair amount of economic uncertainty which Mrs. Plotkin would like to be sensitive toward. The pandemic has also made outreach difficult.

Moving the vote to the fall was discussed, which lead to option two.

Option 2

- Town Votes – October/November 2021
- Start Construction – December 2022

¹ Remote meeting held in accordance with Executive Order of Massachusetts Governor, March 12, 2020.

- Move In – July 2024
- Completion – November 2024

This option would allow for a Special Town Meeting exclusively for the project, providing the ability to address all feedback and answer all questions. Additionally, COVID restrictions may have eased by then, making more community participation possible.

However, this option does have some administrative concerns with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). The feasibility phase expires over the summer. With a fall Town Meeting, timing would be affected. Initial conversations on this scenario have taken place with the MSBA. They have indicated that they are working with other communities with changing timelines due to the pandemic and have suggested submitting a formal request to extend the feasibility period and adjusted voting timeline.

The project cost and schedule would be affected by moving the vote to the fall. Compass and Dore and Whittier would have to pause their work in May and not resume again until the fall. The architect's cost estimator has indicated that a delay would add an additional \$700k line item to the overall budget to account for cost escalation and stop/start costs.

The impact to the project schedule is another disadvantage. Beginning construction in December is not ideal and also leaves a tight timeline between the start of construction and taking occupancy, allowing little room for error.

Option 3

- Town Vote – May 2021 (Bridge funding of \$1.6M)
- Town Votes – October/November 2021
- Start Construction – July 2022
- Move In – February 2024
- Completion – August 2024

Funding of \$1.6M would be needed to bridge the project until the vote. This would not be in addition to the project's total cost, but simply asking the Town for a portion of the funding sooner. Additionally, under this scenario, there would be no \$700k escalation costs. As with all funds spent this far, there is a risk of a "no" vote at Town Meeting.

Mrs. Plotkin asked the Committee for their feedback and stated that she would like to take a vote on this today.

Mrs. Dukeman provided clarification on the additional funding, stating that the request would need to be a borrowing authorization, requiring a two-thirds vote. If it passes, it would be a short-term note. If the full project vote is approved in the fall, this portion would be rolled into the larger project when the bond is issued. She also cautioned on appropriating feasibility funding to design funding. She stated that the savings from one cannot be appropriated or rolled over into the next phase. The vote on the funding was very specific.

The Committee discussed and reached a consensus on the third option.

Mrs. Hyde asked if the School Committee would consider using remaining funds from University Station mitigation, if the Town Meeting vote failed, to pay for the bridge funding. Mrs. Lewis responded that she would advise against this and revert to option two. The mitigation funds need to be held for any unforeseeable issues with the existing Hanlon School and other buildings.

Mrs. Hyde also asked whether this decision should be under the purview of the School Committee and not the School Building Committee. Mrs. Plotkin stated that she discussed this with the MSBA. They recommended that the School Building Committee address this as all of the key people are part of the

Committee: all five School Committee members, a representative of the Select Board, and the Town Administrator.

Mrs. Dukeman indicated that, if the Committee approves an option, Bond Counsel will need to draft an article for the warrant. If the overall project is approved in the fall, these bridge funds would be eligible for MSBA reimbursement. If not, it would not be eligible.

MOTION made by Carol Lewis to vote on Option 3: a Town Meeting vote for bridge funding in May, a Town Meeting vote for the entire project in October 2021, and a shift in the schedule as shown. John Cummings seconded.

Roll-call vote:

Mrs. Plotkin: Yes
Mr. Aries: Yes
Mr. Bayer: Yes
Ms. Borchers: Yes
Mr. Coleman: Yes
Mrs. Cronin: Yes
Mr. Cummings: Yes
Mr. Donahue: Yes
Mrs. Dukeman: Yes
Mrs. Ferreira: Yes
Mrs. Flanders: Yes
Mrs. Hanscom: Yes
Mrs. Hyde: Yes
Mrs. Jn-baptiste: Yes
Mrs. Jowdy: Yes
Mrs. Lewis: Yes
Mrs. Miller: Yes
Mr. Mullin: Yes
Ms. Parks: Yes
Mrs. Phillips: Yes

Result: 20-0-0 – Approved

Presentation of Value Engineering Working Group Recommendations and Discussion
Construction cost estimates came in \$504,791 above target.

The Preferred Schematic Report, voted by the Committee in June for submission to the MSBA, states the district's maximum amount for the project is \$88.1M. There is a potential savings of \$2.4M which was divided into working groups for discussion.

Site Working Group

Four project components were identified for the Site Working Group to review:

1. Phased Landscaping
2. Provide sloped grassed landscape in lieu of precast units at amphitheater
3. Modify planter beds and curbs at entry plaza
4. Modifications to curbing and sidewalks:
 - a. Replace portion of concrete sidewalks with asphalt
 - b. Reduce amount of curbing
 - c. Consider replacing granite curbing with precast concrete or wood guardrails

The site group reported back:

1. Phased Landscaping – Recommended to accept, with continued discussion. Phase two was deducted from the base and included as an additional alternate. This resulted in a proposed credit of \$224k.
2. Provide sloped grassed landscape in lieu of precast units at amphitheater, resulting in a proposed credit of \$166,686.
3. With regards to eliminating planter beds and curbs at entry plaza, Dore and Whittier will identify an alternative /modified approach or smaller elements and stay within the revised budget. This resulted in a proposed credit of \$40k.
4. Modifications to curbing and sidewalks:
 - a. Reduce quantity of granite curbing
 - b. Replace a portion of concrete sidewalks with asphalt
 - c. Reducing curbing and replace with wood guardrails.

Recommendation to accept with revisions proposed by Dore and Whittier. After a second review with cost estimator, granite is less than wood guardrail due to extra stone, so the granite will remain. This all resulted in a proposed credit of \$156,236.

The Site Working Group’s recommendations totaled a proposed credit of \$586,922.

The Committee also discussed the use of asphalt and concrete. It was decided to use asphalt.

Aesthetic Design Working Group

The Aesthetics Design Working Group reviewed the following project components:

1. Reduce the size of, or consider as an alternate, the canopy outside of the library (This was also reviewed by the Educators’ working group.)
2. Eliminate roof screens
3. Change rainscreen system to Terracotta shingles
4. Simplify, or reduce in size, the entry walkway canopy
5. Remove or modify sunshades /horizontal element on east and west facades, library, and southern classroom facades
6. Change fieldstone to brick
7. Change curtainwall to storefront system
8. Delete wood trim at storefront systems and use aluminum finish instead (media center and cafeteria)
9. Use painted concrete block at stairways in lieu of polished ground-faced block

The group reported back:

1. Retain the canopy outside of the library
2. Eliminate roof screen, resulting in a proposed credit of \$106,100
3. Change rainscreen system to Terracotta shingles, resulting in a proposed credit of \$326,400
4. Retain the entry walkway canopy
5. Modify sunshades /horizontal element on east, west, and south facades, resulting in a proposed credit of \$298k
6. Discuss fieldstone /brick choice with the full Committee
7. Retain curtainwall
8. Use aluminum finish instead of wood (media center and cafeteria), resulting in a proposed credit of \$42k
9. Use painted concrete block at stairways in lieu of polished ground-faced block, resulting in a proposed credit of \$38,846

The consensus among the Committee was to retain the fieldstone.

The Aesthetics Design Working Group’s recommendations totaled a proposed credit of \$811,346.

Ms. Parks presented on the four components that were identified for the Educators’ Working Group to review:

1. Eliminate precast units of amphitheater (Credit included in Site Working Group)
2. Reduce or eliminate the STEAM canopy – Recommended to retain as it is important to the curriculum. The Educators do believe a reduction in size would be acceptable, but ample shade is desired.
3. Sliding glass doors in the extended learning areas – Recommended to retain, as easy access is important to the educational function
4. Changing from full air conditioning to partial air conditioning and dehumidification was not recommended. Educators expressed the need for summer programming as a deciding factor, in addition to community needs and flexibility for future space use.

The components that Dore and Whittier reviewed were presented:

1. Eliminate exterior grease traps – Recommended to retain and make a determination during the design phase
2. Eliminate lightning protection – Recommended to retain. Insurance does not require it, but it is recommended to minimize damage to equipment and systems.

The recommendations were summarized:

1. Phased landscaping (phase one in base, phase two as alternate) – (\$224,000)
2. Eliminate precast units at amphitheater – (\$166,686)
3. Modify planter beds and curbs at entry plaza – (\$40,000)
4. Reduce curbing and concrete sidewalk – (\$156,236)
5. Eliminate roof screens – (\$106,100)
6. Change rainscreen system to Terracotta shingles – (\$326,400)
7. Modify sunshades on east, south, and west facades – (\$298,000)
8. Retain fieldstone at a value of \$173,148
9. Delete wood trim at storefront systems (media center and cafeteria) – (\$42,000)
10. Use painted concrete block at stairways in lieu of polished ground-faced block – (\$38,846)

Total credits: (\$1,398,268)

MOTION made by Nancy Hyde to accept proposed credits in credit column as presented. Brian Bayer seconded.

Roll-call vote:

Mrs. Plotkin: **Yes**
 Mr. Aries: **Yes**
 Mr. Bayer: **Yes**
 Ms. Borchers: **Yes**
 Mr. Coleman: Absent
 Mrs. Cronin: **Yes**
 Mr. Cummings: **Yes**
 Mr. Donahue: **Yes**
 Mrs. Dukeman: **Yes**
 Mrs. Ferreira: Absent
 Mrs. Flanders: **Yes**
 Mrs. Hanscom: **Yes**
 Mrs. Hyde: **Yes**
 Mrs. Jn-baptiste: **Yes**
 Mrs. Jowdy: **Yes**
 Mrs. Lewis: **Yes**
 Mrs. Miller: **Yes**
 Mr. Mullin: Absent
 Ms. Parks: **Yes**
 Mrs. Phillips: **Yes**

Result: 17-0-0 – Approved

The team from Compass Project Management will complete the appropriate forms that are submitted to the MSBA. Prior to submission, the School Building Committee will review and approve the forms.

An additional meeting was scheduled for February 12 at 8am.

Action Items

Vote on Town Meeting/Ballot Vote Schedule

This vote took place earlier in the meeting.

Vote to Accept Value Engineering List

This vote took place earlier in the meeting.

Vote to Approve Payment of Invoices

MOTION made by Amanda Phillips to approve payment of invoices totaling \$74,737.10 for the period ending December 31, 2020, as recommended by Compass Project Management. John Cummings seconded.

Roll-call vote:

Mrs. Plotkin: **Yes**
Mr. Aries: **Yes**
Mr. Bayer: **Yes**
Ms. Borchers: **Yes**
Mr. Coleman: Absent
Mrs. Cronin: **Yes**
Mr. Cummings: **Yes**
Mr. Donahue: **Yes**
Mrs. Dukeman: **Yes**
Mrs. Ferreira: Absent
Mrs. Flanders: **Yes**
Mrs. Hanscom: **Yes**
Mrs. Hyde: **Yes**
Mrs. Jn-baptiste: **Yes**
Mrs. Jowdy: **Yes**
Mrs. Lewis: Absent
Mrs. Miller: **Yes**
Mr. Mullin: Absent
Ms. Parks: **Yes**
Mrs. Phillips: **Yes**

Result: 16-0-0 – Approved

Vote to Approve School Building Committee Meeting Minutes

MOTION made by Nancy Hyde to approve the School Building Committee meeting minutes of December 11, 2020. Ken Aries seconded.

Roll-call vote:

Mrs. Plotkin: **Yes**
Mr. Aries: **Yes**
Mr. Bayer: **Yes**
Ms. Borchers: **Yes**
Mr. Coleman: Absent
Mrs. Cronin: **Yes**
Mr. Cummings: **Yes**

Mr. Donahue: Yes
Mrs. Dukeman: Yes
Mrs. Ferreira: Absent
Mrs. Flanders: Yes
Mrs. Hanscom: Yes
Mrs. Hyde: Yes
Mrs. Jn-baptiste: Yes
Mrs. Jowdy: Yes
Mrs. Lewis: Absent
Mrs. Miller: Yes
Mr. Mullin: Absent
Ms. Parks: Yes
Mrs. Phillips: Yes

Result: 16-0-0 – Approved

New Business

Mrs. Plotkin agreed to schedule a meeting with appropriate Town representatives to discuss grass fields versus upgrading to turf.

Adjournment

MOTION made by Nancy Hyde to adjourn the meeting. John Cummings seconded.

Roll-call vote:

Mrs. Plotkin: Yes
Mr. Aries: Yes
Mr. Bayer: Yes
Ms. Borchers: Yes
Mr. Coleman: Absent
Mrs. Cronin: Yes
Mr. Cummings: Yes
Mr. Donahue: Yes
Mrs. Dukeman: Yes
Mrs. Ferreira: Absent
Mrs. Flanders: Yes
Mrs. Hanscom: Yes
Mrs. Hyde: Yes
Mrs. Jn-baptiste: Yes
Mrs. Jowdy: Yes
Mrs. Lewis: Absent
Mrs. Miller: Yes
Mr. Mullin: Absent
Ms. Parks: Yes
Mrs. Phillips: Yes

Result: 16-0-0 – Approved

The meeting adjourned at 9:44am.

List of Documents and Exhibits Used at Meeting:

- Draft meeting minutes of December 11, 2020 for the Committee's review and approval
- Slideshow presentation drafted by Dore and Whittier, dated January 22, 2021
- Vendor Invoice Package for period ending December 31, 2020