

# **Whitman Middle School Building Committee**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**Time: 4:30 PM**

**Place: Virtual Via Google Meet**

**Date: Tuesday, February 25, 2025**

### **Members Present:**

Beth Stafford, *Chair*

Robert Curran

Jeffrey Szymaniak

Justin Evans

George Ferro

Brandon Frost

Mike Driscoll

Mary Beth Carter

Rich Pulkinen

Josh MacNeil

Stephen Marshall

Steven Bois

Crystal Regan

Kathleen Ottina

**Building Team Present:** Mike Carroll, OPM – Colliers Project Leaders (CPL), Shirley Ng, OPM - Colliers Project Leaders (CPL), Julie Rivera, Architect – (Ai3), Troy Randall, Principal Architect – Ai3 Architects (Ai3), Harani Kumares, OPM – Collier Project Leaders (CPL)

### **Absent:**

Don Esson.

### **Call to Order:**

Beth Stafford, The Committee Chair, opened the meeting by calling it to order.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

#### **1. Public Comment**

John Galvin congratulated the committee on the \$15M base bid savings. He noted that either of the add-alternates are not cost-effective for taxpayers and urged the Whitman School Building Committee to decline both alternatives.

#### **2. Designer Update**

##### **A. Review of Add-Alternates**

Julie Rivera presented the updated PV system life cycle assessment, summarizing the cost breakdown for Add-Alternate 1a and Add-Alternate 1a plus 1b. She noted that with a 4.5% bond rating and IRA funding, it would take over 30 years to achieve a payback on installation costs.

Brendon Frost inquired whether the baseline electrical cost over 25 years is \$4.8M and if selecting Add-Alternate 1a would reduce the electrical cost to \$2.4M, or \$1M with IRA funding.

Julie clarified that while the upfront cost would be higher, but closer to the system's lifetime, the savings would be realized, with a difference of about \$1M with IRA funding.

Kathleen Ottina asked about the cost associated with a power purchase agreement (PPA). Julie explained that while some companies provide PPAs, the exact cost would vary based on the agreement's specific terms. Troy Randall further elaborated, noting that a PPA typically involves minimal upfront expenses. Under such an arrangement, the school would lease its roof to an entity for the duration of the agreement, reap benefits over time, and ultimately gain ownership under specific terms.

George Ferro inquired about the readiness of the wiring and roof for a future solar system. Troy Randall clarified that conduits and pathways would be provided from the roof to the electrical circuit rooms, but the company installing the PV system would handle the physical wiring. Justin Evans added that PPAs were popular in the pre-COVID, low-interest-rate environment, before IRA funding allowed municipal entities to receive tax credits directly. Due to higher interest rates today, PPAs may not be as viable, they are still being considered by other districts as an option.

***Justin Evans then entertained a motion to decline both add-alternates and proceed with the base bid.***

***Motion seconded by Steven Bois***

Mike Carroll noted that if the add-alternates are not accepted now, they cannot be added to the project later. George Ferro clarified that a "yes" vote signified the rejection of the add-alternates, and Beth Stafford confirmed this understanding.

***Roll Call***

***The motion passed with a majority vote, with one "no" vote.***

### **3. Next Steps / Next meeting**

***The Next School Building Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, March 25th, at 4:30 pm.***

### **4. Adjournment**

***Ms. Stafford entertained a motion to adjourn.***

***Motion made by George Ferro.***

***Motion seconded by Steven Bois.***

***Roll Call***

***Motion passed Unanimously.***