

# Whitman Middle School Building Committee

## Meeting Minutes

Time: 4:30 PM

Place: Whitman-Hanson Regional High School

Date: Tuesday, September 19, 2023

### **Members Present:**

Frederick Small, *Chair* (on phone)

Kathleen Ottina, *Vice Chair*

Beth Stafford

Robert Curran

George Ferro

Brandon Frost

Crystal Regan

Rich Pulkinen

John Stanbrook

Jeffrey Szymaniak

Mary Beth Carter

Christopher Scriven (on phone)

Don Esson

**Absent:** Josh MacNeil, Justin Evans

**Building Team Present:** Mike Carroll, OPM – Colliers Project Leaders (CPL), Alisa Santos, OPM – Colliers Project Leaders (CPL), Troy Randall, Principal Architect – Ai3 Architects (Ai3), Julie Rahilly, Architect – (Ai3)

### **Call to Order:**

Kathleen Ottina, The Committee Vice Chair opened the meeting by calling it to order.

### *Pledge of Allegiance*

#### **I. OPM Report**

##### **A.) MSBA Report**

Mr. Carroll explained this is the typical monthly report that is filed with the MSBA every month. The numbers shown are dated as of August 31<sup>st</sup>. There was an invoice of \$7,000 for the OPM in Feasibility, and an invoice for the Designer for \$40,000. Both invoices were in the month of August.

##### **B.) Schedule**

Mr. Carroll reviewed the project schedule with the Committee. Mr. Carroll explained we've got the SD Estimates completed, and the project scope and budget was submitted to the MSBA. OPM informational email has been sent to MSBA, as well as the SD Report Submission including the DESE submittal. Now the team is working on the MSBA Board of Approval of SD. After that, the next module, which is funding, which the team will be working on appropriations, town meeting, the vote, and things of that nature is the next major milestone. The team will be meeting with the MSBA on Thursday, September 21<sup>st</sup> to review funding agreements with the draft 3011 form that includes all the budget numbers that have been discussed. The MSBA will answer any questions at the end of that meeting. Mr. Carroll explained that MSBA has 2 teams. One being a pre-

construction team (or design team) that works with us until about this point, and they will have different project managers from different project coordinates coming on for the construction phase of it. It's a bit of a handoff meeting, and a bit of a finance meeting.

The Vice Chair shared that the Chair and the Vice Chair herself, have been invited to the next meeting as well as Mary Beth and Carl Kowalski as Chairman of Board of Selectman. The meeting will be held as a Teams meeting from 1:30pm-3:00pm. The Vice Chair shared that she will be in attendance of the Thursday meeting.

### **C.) Update on Community Forums/Public Outreach**

Mr. Carroll shared a document the was presented previously. Mr. Frost jumped in and explained that the outreach team is working to get back on track with the outreach plan. Mr. Frost thanked Mr. Pulkinen for going back and doing voiceovers again, so the outreach team can get videos out to the public. Mr. Frost explained the biggest change that needs to be made right now is the Selectman. The next meeting is Tuesday, September 26<sup>th</sup>, and Mr. Frost did not want it to be on the same night and run in with the Selectman, so the meeting will be switched to Thursday, September 28<sup>th</sup> for the next Community Forum.

Mr. Carroll explained that the sheet being presented will be updated based on the current discussions and will be sent to everyone.

Mr. Carroll then presented the Community Forum slideshow. Mr. Randall had assembled the slideshow to present to the Committee on behalf of everybody and the PR Subcommittee as well, who had input on collecting the information in the slides for the presentation on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

The slideshow included the following information:

- New Construction for Grades 5-8 w/ an Auditorium -  
Total Project Cost: \$135,289,672  
MSBA Max Grant: \$45,605,539  
Total Taxpayer Contribution: \$89,684,133
- WMS Project History:  
2019 SOI  
2022 Feasibility Study  
2023 Schematic Design, Cost Estimates
- Overview of Reports and Documentation
- Evolution of Building Codes and Regulations  
Mr. Ferro asked if a building is constructed before a code is established, then must make building upgrades, would you have to bring it up to 2023 codes?  
Mr. Randall explained any new work needs to be compliant with the most current code.  
Mr. Ferro asked if the amount of money that's put toward just base repair (60.4 million), with all new requirements, would be more than that?  
Mr. Randall confirmed due to the number of variables, timeline, phasing, housing of students to try and perform the major work related to base repair. Also working within an existing building there are unknowns related to that.

The Vice Chair asked what dollar figure triggers compliance with the ADA and NFPA the fire protection codes. The information that Mr. Randall included was the Middle school building being evaluated at \$9.8 million, with a recent evaluation at \$11.2 million including the land. With an evaluation at an assessed value of \$9.8 million dollars, the accessibility code gets triggered at 30%, so if the town were to spend \$2.9 million dollars to start to fix the school, the town triggers the accessibility code and 33% is the trigger for fire protection code, or \$3.2 million. That alone is less than what it would cost to repair the roof and replace the HVAC. For some of the equipment that is in the Middle School to replace parts that are no longer available, the two projects alone were about \$13 million dollars. Repairing the roof and replacing the HVAC in a base repair is 13 million dollars, more than triggers the codes for ADA and the fire protection.

- Snapshot of Existing WMS Building Deficiencies
- The Whitman Middle School Overview:  
(Since May 2022)
  - 4 Visioning sessions with a diversity of groups.
  - 48 Student participants in visioning sessions.
  - 50+ staff participants in visioning sessions.
  - 3 rounds of educational programming with staff.
  - 16 School Building Committee meetings.
  - 18 SBC Sub-Committee meetings.
  - 2 School Committee meetings.
  - 6 Public/community forums.
- Code Upgrade/Base Repair Option 1:  
\$60.4 million, 100% town funded.

After reviewing slides from other town's MSBA school projects, Mr. Esson commented on how to include data in slides on median incomes of Whitman and those shown within the slides.

- Benefits of a new Whitman Middle School:
  - Support instruction
  - Foster safety and security
  - Enhance community
  - Promote sustainability

Mr. Ferro asked for each slide to include "Community Resources etc."  
Mr. Esson asked to expand on reduced operating costs. Would like to show a break-even duration whether it's 10 years and X amount of dollars that the town saves will help sell the project.

- New Construction for Grades 5-8 with an Auditorium:
  - Total Project Cost \$135,289,672
  - MSBA Maximum Grant \$45,605,539
  - Total Taxpayer Contribution \$89,684,133
  - Average Increase per household \$1,017.53/yr

- Upcoming Critical Milestones:  
Town Meeting October 30, 2023, Vote #1  
Debt Exclusion November 4, 2023, Vote #2

Ms. Carter explained the difference over the life of the debt scheduled over 30 years is costing the town taxpayers 19 million dollars more in interest to go with a level debt over a level principal.

Mr. Randall explained in the scenario that the vote yes in both events, the project will move forward to the next phase which is the project's budget agreement, signing with MSBA, move into the next phase of construction documents and design, go to bid, start construction, and in the Fall of 2027, the new building will open and demolition of the existing building and reconstruction of the play fields and parking areas target completion in 2028.

Mr. Randall then explained in the scenario that is the town votes no. If either Town Meeting votes no or the debt exclusion or the debt exclusion votes no, the town has to engage the MSBA with what their action plan is within 120 days of the Board of Directors meeting, with the direction of either going back out for a second vote or to modify the project substantially, then the MSBA will pull back and indicate that the project is pulled to the back of the line, and then go through and resubmit an SOI with a new project. Town will forfeit \$45.6-million-dollar reimbursement from the state. If the district is then accepted, the second feasibility study is not reimbursed by the MSBA.

The Vice Chair asked if there was a date for when the next videos will be released? Mr. Frost answered within the next couple of days.

***Mr. Frost made a motion to have the Vice Chair write an article for the newspaper.***

***Mrs. Stafford seconded the motion.***

The Vice Chair will come up with a rough draft within the next week, send it to the Chair to be disseminated to the full committee and provide any feedback.

***Mr. Frost and Mrs. Stafford rescinded their motion and second.***

Mr. Szymaniak emphasized when the Chair does share the draft with the committee, to only just reply and not reply all.

The Vice Chair asked to take Agenda Item VI. Public Comments/Questions, out of order.

## **II. Invoices/Warrant**

Mr. Carroll hadn't gotten the invoices over to Mr. Stanbrook but will be sending them within the week. Invoices will be addressed at the next meeting.

## **III. Meeting Minutes July 18, 2023**

***The Vice Chair entertained a motion to accept the July 18<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes.***

***Mr. Szymaniak made the motion, seconded by Mrs. Stafford.***

***Roll call vote to accept the minutes was 11-0-2, with two abstentions - Mr. Esson and Mr. Small.***

#### **IV. Next Steps**

Mr. Carroll summarized what was already discussed:

Community Forums  
Building Site Walks  
Public Outreach

The Vice Chair asked for all important dates to be posted on the project website and the Facebook page.

#### **V. Next Meeting Time**

Tuesday, October 17<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm.

#### **VI. Public Comments/Questions**

Ms. Elizabeth Dagnal of 316 School Street introduced herself. Ms. Dagnal asked the committee what the plan is regarding building tours. Whether these are in conjunction with the community forums and or if they will be offered at a separate time and date? Ms. Dagnal expressed her thoughts on the importance on giving the community an opportunity to plan in advance to attend the forums. Ms. Dagnal requested that when the committee starts to advertise the September forum, committee should also advertise the October forum. Explained to get dates and times in front of the taxpayer's eyes on a much larger scale than social media, like the town hall marquis and the library marquis.

Mr. Frost explained that the Chair had asked to wait until October to conduct tours. Dates will be provided soon. There will be a couple of Saturdays and maybe a Sunday.

Mr. Frost also mentioned on having to move the October Community Forum.

The Vice Chair asked Ms. Carter to speak with the board if information could be posted on the town hall marquis.

Mr. Galvin of 41 High Street introduced himself. Mr. Galvin wanted to share an article about South Shore Vo-Tech, from the Whitman-Hanson Express. He shared the timeline for their project. Currently still in the PDP stage, which will be approved with the next week or so. Mr. Galvin noted that by next July. He shared the information he obtained on the project website, including the projected costs, expanded enrollment and his calculations for what Whitman's share would be. He shared the list of Capital projects - the DPW, the Middle School and the South Shore Vo-Tech, that Whitman taxpayers will be facing in the next two years.

Committee member and Whitman Town Administrator Ms. Carter asked if the School Committee had voted the language for the article and ballot question, as she had not received it yet. She was informed it had been sent to her earlier in the day.

#### **VII. Adjournment**

*The Vice Chair entertained a motion to adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made and seconded, a roll call vote was taken. The motion to adjourn was approved by unanimous vote.*

To view the full recording of this meeting please visit: <https://youtu.be/GnKq8yYtuDo?si=-Q6MCmrPH2za1Hlz>