

Whitman Middle School Building Committee

Meeting Minutes

Time: 4:30 PM

Place: Whitman-Hanson Regional High School

Date: Tuesday, March 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), Julie Rivera, Architect – (Ai3), Joel Kent (FBI), Harani Kumaresh, OPM – Collier Project Leaders (CPL) (Phone)

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

None.

2. Meeting Minutes

Ms. Stafford, entertained a motion to approve the February 13th meeting minutes as presented, with 1 update.

Motion made by Steven Bois.

Motion seconded by Kathleen Ottina.

Roll Call

Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Stafford, entertained a motion to approve the February 25th meeting minutes as presented.

Motion made by Steven Bois.

Motion seconded by Kathleen Ottina.

Roll Call

Motion passed unanimously

3. Introduction of GC

Mike Carroll introduced Joel Kent, the Project Executive for Fontaine Brothers. Joel introduced himself, expressed his excitement to be part of the project, and noted his prior experience working with both the CPL and Ai3 teams on various school projects. He then provided a high-level project outlook, stating that site work will begin in a couple of weeks with fencing and erosion control, and excavation is scheduled to start in April. Mike added that the team has begun the Owner-Architect-Contractor (OAC) weekly meetings, with George Ferro and Mike Driscoll representing the district. He also mentioned the team is coordinating the groundbreaking ceremony, tentatively planned for the end of the school year to allow for student participation, if desired.

4. Funding Update

Stephen Marshall noted that the district is on track to borrow the \$22M required to start the project and that funding is scheduled to begin on May 1st.

5. Bid Savings Usage

Mike Carroll mentioned that the base bid came in at \$91M, while the initial budget was \$106M, resulting in approximately \$15M in savings. He outlined two options:

- **1st option** – Reduce the project budget by the full \$15.6M and proceed with the existing contingency.
- **2nd option** – The MSBA will calculate their portion of the savings based on the reimbursable rate, reducing the total project cost accordingly. The district's portion can remain in the project within the contingency fund and could be used as a rainy-day fund.

George Ferro asked what would happen to any remaining funds at the end of the project if the district chooses option 2. Mike clarified that if the district has not borrowed the money because it was not needed, the funds can either:

- Be returned to the taxpayers, or
- Be reallocated through a Town Meeting after the MSBA closes out the project.

Justin Evans asked if remaining funds could be reallocated to another capital project, such as a school roof. Mike replied that this would require approval from a Town Meeting.

Steve Bois expressed support for the most cost-effective option for taxpayers. Beth Stafford clarified that only a portion of the \$15M savings would return to Whitman.

Stephen Marshall noted that debt assessments are issued to the town as borrowing occurs and emphasized that the \$91M is not borrowed all at once, but as needed. Mike noted that the project already has a contingency and there may still be unused funds at the end of the project.

Ms. Stafford, entertained a motion to approve the bid savings.

Motion made by Kathleen Ottina to approve the option 2

Motion seconded by Brandon Frost.

Justin Evans asked if the decision could be revisited before the second round of long-term borrowing. Mike noted that the District has already signed a Project Funding Agreement (PFA) with the MSBA, which is now awaiting direction on the bid savings to proceed with the PFA Bid Amendment.

Roll Call

Motion passed unanimously

6. OPM Update

A. Materials Testing Bid Results and recommendations

Mike Carroll stated that all construction projects typically include a third-party materials testing agent. Colliers solicited proposals from five companies and received four responses. Mike presented the cost evaluation and recommended Briggs Engineering as the lowest bidder and closest to the site. He further mentioned that there is a \$500,000 already budgeted in the project for the testing and inspection which will include other testing such as building envelop, blower door test etc, which is not part of this proposal. Stephen Marshall noted that he has reviewed all the proposal packages received from the agents and agrees to move forward with Briggs.

Ms. Stafford, entertained a motion to move forward with Briggs Engineering for materials testing and inspection.

Motion made by Steven Bois.

Motion seconded by Kathleen Ottina.

Roll Call

Motion passed unanimously.

B. Construction Status

Mike Carroll gave a brief update on construction activities, mentioning recent test borings in the field. The team is currently pursuing the building permit and coordinating with fire and police departments. He noted a request from the building inspector for a third-party code analysis, with more details to follow in the next building committee meeting.

Kathleen Ottina asked about construction vehicle arrival relative to middle school opening times. Mike confirmed that the any project team's vehicle and the construction vehicles will not arrive during the school pick-up and drop-off times.

C. Financial Review

Mike Carroll presented the project budget and cost summary, highlighting the \$91M construction budget shown in the committed costs. He stated that the MSBA may request a letter from the District for the PFA Bid Amendment and that the amended PFA will be shared with the Committee once received.

He reported no new budget adjustments and mentioned a new commitment to Fontaine Brothers, which now includes \$850K previously allocated to Tilton Electrical. He then presented February invoices from CPL, Ai3, and ProjectDog:

Kathleen Ottina, made a motion to pay Ai3's invoices #0031B-2203 & #0025E-2203 for February totaling \$32,393.74

Motion seconded by Steven Bois

Roll Call

Motion passed unanimously.

Kathleen Ottina, made a motion to pay Colliers invoice #1031790 for February totaling \$52,246.00

Motion seconded by Steven Bois

Roll Call

Motion passed unanimously.

Kathleen Ottina, made a motion to pay ProjectDog invoice #22256 for \$1,395.00

Motion seconded by Steven Bois

Roll Call

Motion passed unanimously.

Mike presented a comparison of projected cash flow vs. actual expenditures, showing a positive trend. He also presented BRR #1, noting budget transfers made prior to the PFA Bid Amendment. He explained that MSBA requires BRR #1 to be signed before the amended PFA is finalized.

Kathleen Ottina, made a motion to authorize the BRR#1 to be executed and signed by the appropriate personnel.

Motion seconded by Steven Bois

Roll Call

Motion passed unanimously.

D. Schedule Update

Mike provided a master schedule overview. The contractor has received the notice to proceed, and construction is expected to last about two years, with key milestones including substantial completion and temporary occupancy certification.

He added that Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment (FF&E) are not provided by the contractor. The FF&E kickoff is scheduled to begin soon. Julie Rivera briefly explained the FF&E timeline noting that the design team has already started the review process with the administrators and the staffs and aims to provide samples by the end of the school year.

Stephen Marshall reported that \$9.9M has been spent to date, with \$8.7M in eligible expenses submitted to the MSBA, and \$5.2M already reimbursed. The team is in good shape to borrow additional funds in May.

E. DCAMM Designer Evaluation

Mike explained that DCAMM requires a designer evaluation at the end of the Schematic Design (SD), full design, and construction phases. Similar evaluations are conducted for contractors and filed sub-bidders at 50% and project completion. He presented the evaluation of Ai3, noting their exceptional score and commending their team.

Beth Stafford asked if the form required a signature. Mike clarified that it has been reviewed by Jeff and George and is now with Ai3 for final submission.

7. FF&E Update

Mike presented the 3011 form and highlighted that the current furniture and technology budget for 675 students is \$1,800 per student. He noted that the MSBA's cap for eligible cost is \$1,200 per student and has not changed in over 15 years. He reiterated the discussion on the FF&E budget that took place nearly a year ago during the finalization of the total project budget. He recommended allocating \$2,300 per student for furniture and technology to support the educational program. He also clarified that increasing the FF&E budget does not authorize the team to spend

the entire amount automatically. Instead, the Ai3 team will continue to work with the committee, presenting various design and pricing options for consideration.

George Ferro noted that technology costs could impact the general budget if not accounted for in the project contingency fund. Julie Rivera clarified that the FF&E budget includes custodial and site maintenance equipment.

Brandon Frost asked what would happen if the \$2,300 per student cost increased during the project. Mike explained that this amount sets a planning threshold for Ai3, and any changes would be brought back to the committee for discussion.

Kathleen Ottina, made a motion to change the FFE amount to \$2300 per student

Motion seconded by Brandon Frost

Roll Call

Motion passed unanimously.

8. Next Steps / Next meeting

The Next School Building Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, April 29th, at 4:30 pm.

9. Adjournment

Ms. Stafford entertained a motion to adjourn.

Motion made by Kathleen Ottina.

Motion seconded by Steven Bois.

Roll Call

Motion passed Unanimously.