

Whitman Middle School Building Committee

Meeting Minutes

Time: 4:30 PM

Place: Whitman Middle School

Date: Tuesday, July 22nd, 2025

Members Present:

Beth Stafford, *Chair*

Robert Curran

Jeffrey Szymaniak

Justin Evans

George Ferro

Brandon Frost

Mike Driscoll

Rich Pulkinen

Stephen Marshall

Crystal Regan

Kathleen Ottina

Steven Bois

Mary Beth Carter

Josh MacNeil.

Building Team Present: Mike Carroll, OPM – Colliers Project Leaders (CPL), Justin Ferdenzi, OPM – Colliers Project Leaders (CPL).

Absent:

Don Esson

Call to Order:

Beth Stafford opened the meeting by calling it to order.

Pledge of Allegiance

1. Public Comment

No Comments.

2. Meeting Minutes

Ms. Stafford made a motion to approve the June 01th meeting minutes as presented.

Motion seconded by Steven Bois.

Roll Call

Abstained by Don Esson.

Motion passed unanimously.

3. Funding Update

The Committee reviewed the funding documents provided by Stephen Marshall in the packet. Stephen noted that to date, MSBA has reimbursed \$5.3M, with the 15th submission currently in progress. Approximately \$4M in additional reimbursement is pending. A draft Excel summary of expenditures, revenues, Bond proceeds, and categories (advertising, architect, construction, etc.)

was provided, along with a summary chart showing \$19.6M available to date. He confirmed that \$30M has been borrowed and the \$8M BAN paid off, in addition to \$5.3M received from the MSBA, totaling approximately \$35M in current available funding, with \$40M expected once pending reimbursements are received. Expenditures in the last month totaled approximately \$6–7M (primarily Fontaine Brothers).

Kathleen Ottina inquired whether the project has approximately \$40M available at present and whether spending can remain under that threshold before additional borrowing is required. Stephen clarified that while \$30M was borrowed on a short-term basis, it will need to be refinanced with long-term borrowing. The Town anticipates going out to bond in February, ahead of the March expiration.

Jeffrey Szymaniak discussed the status of the FY22, FY23, and FY24 audits. He noted that the FY22 is complete, and FY23 is fully submitted with the final report pending from the auditor. The goal is to provide the FY23 report to the School Committee at its first September meeting. Work on the FY24 audit is planned for completion by Thanksgiving, allowing sufficient time for bond rating considerations and to prepare for borrowing in February/March. It was noted that these audits directly affect the Town's bond rating. The Committee emphasized that delays are on the auditors' side, as all documentation for FY23 is already submitted. FY24 is expected to be more straightforward given that records are fully digital. A follow-up discussion with Jennifer is planned in the coming weeks to review next steps.

4. MSBA PFA Bid Amendment

Justin Ferdenzi presented the Project Funding Agreement (PFA) bid amendment, noting a discrepancy in the construction value, as approximately \$800,000 in early packages had not been carried under construction. The amendment was returned to MSBA for correction.

He reviewed preliminary updated budget figures, explaining that the total project budget has adjusted from \$135M to approximately \$125M. With the correction for the early packages, the budget is expected to be approximately \$126.2M. The majority of the bid savings has been reallocated to contingency. Final figures will be shared once confirmed and incorporated into the project budget.

Jeffrey Szymaniak inquired whether tariffs and trade issues reported in the news might affect project costs in the upcoming fiscal year. Mike Carroll clarified that the project is generally locked in, though force majeure clauses could apply in rare and extreme circumstances (such as during the COVID-19 pandemic). Any such claims would be reviewed by the OPM and design team on a case-by-case basis, with recommendations brought forward to the Committee as needed. To mitigate potential risks, a portion of the bid savings has been retained within the construction contingency.

Kathleen Ottina asked a follow-up question regarding the Town's share under the updated PFA. It was confirmed that the Town's share is approximately \$66M, with the correction for the \$800,000 early packages expected to bring the total closer to \$67M. This represents a significant reduction from the \$89M originally projected in August 2020. Appreciation was expressed to Fontaine Brothers for contributing to the favorable bid results.

Justin Ferdenzi also briefly presented two questions submitted through the project website, along with proposed responses.

5. OPM Update

A. Construction Status

Justin Ferdenzi presented updated construction photos showing significant progress since June. Foundation work and utilities have been completed in several areas, with steel erection beginning last week and advancing rapidly. The photos highlighted the building footprint, steel framing, drainage installation, underground detention systems, and utility lines feeding into the main electrical room.

Justin noted that a shared photo folder will be made available for ongoing access to construction updates. The Committee also discussed the installation of a live camera on site. While currently in “sleep mode,” the camera is operational and capable of live streaming and time-lapse recording. Work is underway with the Town’s website administrator to ensure public access in the near future.

B. Financial Update

Justin Ferdenzi presented the project budget and cost summary, noting that the budget will be updated to reflect the revised PFA related to the Town’s share of \$66–67M. No new budget adjustments or commitments were required this month; all previously approved costs remain in place.

He then addressed invoicing, highlighting an issue with the retainage calculation on Fontaine Brothers’ Requisition #2. Retainage, a 5% holdback to ensure completion and quality of work, had not been correctly applied to the full value. Requisition #3 will not be acted on at this meeting; both requisitions will be corrected and reconciled before submission to MSBA.

Justin and Mike presented the change order log highlighting proposed change orders (PCOs) under review. Some early PCOs (e.g., 5, 7, 8, 14) were grayed out after team review, as they were determined not to require a change order, with agreement from the contractor. Justin explained that PCOs may not be sequential, as items are assigned numbers as they are submitted and reviewed. Mike noted that the log serves as an early warning system to manage potential cost impacts and mitigate project risk.

Finally, Justin presented the current cash flow, which is trending upward as anticipated. He explained that invoices are processed in a timely manner but are not reflected in the cash flow until formally acknowledged by the Committee, resulting in a slight reporting lag. Mike suggested including invoice submission dates going forward to provide a more accurate representation. The Committee was reminded that all invoices will continue to be formally acknowledged each month. It was confirmed that, aside from Requisition #3, the other four invoices are ready for acknowledgment.

Kathleen Ottina made a motion to acknowledge the Ai3 & Colliers invoices # 0035B-2203.00, # 0028E-2203.00 & # 1068933 totaling \$149,173.17.

Motion seconded by Steven Bois.

Roll Call

Motion passed unanimously.

C. Schedule Update

Justin Ferdenzi provided an update on the project schedule, noting revisions to reflect move-in dates. During the recent OAC meeting, it was confirmed that approval of FFE design and

furniture selection will be moved from spring to fall of this year. This adjustment allows staff additional time to acclimate in September and October before finalizing selections. It was noted that this schedule change will not impact the project's critical path or other key milestones; it primarily ensures adequate time for furniture selection and planning.

6. Next Steps / Next meeting

The Next School Building Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, August 26th, at 4:30 pm

7. Construction Progress and Site Update

Justin Ferdenzi provided an update on foundation work, utilities, and steel erection, noting rapid progress across multiple zones. Detention and drainage systems are being installed and will be backfilled before the school year, and electrical and communication utilities are in place. A live website feed allows remote viewing of the site. No neighbor complaints or safety incidents have been reported.

The topping-off ceremony is tentatively scheduled for August 27–29, with student and staff participation being coordinated. Key materials, including steel, have been secured, keeping the project on schedule.

8. Adjournment

Ms. Stafford entertained a motion to adjourn.

Motion made by Stephen Bois.

Motion seconded by Kathleen Ottina.

Roll Call

Motion passed Unanimously.