

Whitman Middle School Building Committee

Meeting Minutes

Time: 4:30 PM

Place: Whitman-Hanson Regional High School

Date: Tuesday, February 13, 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 (Phone)

Building Team Present: Mike Carroll, OPM – Colliers Project Leaders (CPL), Shirley Ng, OPM - Colliers Project Leaders (CPL), Julie Rivera, Architect – (Ai3) (Phone), Troy Randall, Principal Architect – Ai3 Architects (Ai3) (Phone), 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 January 14th meeting minutes as presented, with 1 typo update.

Motion made by George Ferro.

Motion seconded by Brandon Frost.

Roll Call

Abstained by Crystal Regan

Motion passed unanimously.

3. Funding Update

Ms. Beth Stafford, the committee chair, provided an update on the audit status. She stated that the FY2022 audit would be voted on at the end of February during the school committee meeting. She also noted that the FY2023 audit needs to be completed and is expected to take place in the coming months. Additionally, she shared that the team met with the Municipal Finance Board and secured approval for state-qualifying bonds totaling \$76,125,000, which carry a double A+ rating. Mary Beth Carter confirmed that she had received the necessary information from the board.

4. OPM Update

A. Financial Update

Shirley Ng presented the project budget and cost summary. She highlighted that there were no new budget adjustments or commitments for the month. Next, she presented the list of invoices from CPL and Ai3 for the months of January.

Kathleen Ottina, made a motion to pay Ai3's invoices #0030B-2203 & #0024E-2203 for January totaling \$224,591.80

Motion seconded by Stephen Marshall

Roll Call

Motion passed unanimously.

Kathleen Ottina, made a motion to pay Colliers invoice #1023475 for January totaling \$59,957.75

Motion seconded by George Ferro

Roll Call

Motion passed unanimously.

Shirley presented a comparison of the project's cash flow against actual cash flow, highlighting a positive trend.

B. Schedule

Shirley provided a brief overview of the master schedule, indicating that the project is currently in the bidding phase and bids have been received from both filed subcontractors and general contractors. The next step is to approve the general contractor, execute the contract, and move into the construction phase.

C. Bid Updates

Shirley Ng presented the general contractor bid tabulation sheet and explained the various sections. Three qualified contractors submitted bids, with Fontaine Bros. being the apparent lowest bidder.

Beth Stafford asked if both Ai3 and CPL had previous experience working with Fontaine Bros. Mike Carroll confirmed that both firms have worked with Fontaine before. He further highlighted

that the filed sub-bids were lower than anticipated, resulting in approximately \$15 million in savings from the total project budget.

Stephen Marshall inquired about potential federal government tariff impacts after the contract is signed. Mike explained that the contractor could propose a change order and bid savings could be used as part of the contingency to address such issues.

Brendon Frost inquired whether the team was surprised by Fontaine's bid in comparison to the other two. Troy Randall suggested that market conditions might have influenced Fontaine's pricing strategy. Mike further noted that the heightened competitiveness of the overall market was evident in the filed sub-bids.

5. Designer Update

A. Review of Add-Alternates

Julie Rivera outlined the add-alternate options to assist the committee in making informed decisions. She explained the power savings potential of the Solar PV systems and reiterated that the project is net-zero ready.

Beth Stafford inquired about the building's solar readiness. Julie confirmed that the base bid includes the installation of necessary conduits, enabling the future addition of solar panels. Julie also outlined different ownership options for the solar system and provided a life cycle analysis on cost savings. She noted that with a 6% bond rating, it would take over 25 years to achieve a payback on installation costs, whereas a 3% bond rating and IRA funding would reduce this to approximately 20 years.

Beth Stafford asked if the IRA rating could be secured by selecting the add-alternate at this time. Julie explained that the IRA could only be applied one year after the solar installation is completed, which would be in 2030.

George Ferro asked whether there would be monthly savings, as the presentation only showed the total installation cost. Julie responded that with a 3% bond scenario, the annual payback could range from \$100,000 to \$200,000, depending on the selected add-alternate option.

Brandon Frost asked about the durability of PV systems over a 25-year period. Julie confirmed that solar panels typically last 25 years, and Troy Randall added that their degradation rate has historically ranged from 0.5% to 1% annually.

George Ferro asked if canopies are included in the design regardless of solar panel installation. Julie confirmed that canopies are not part of the design.

Stephen Marshall inquired about the roof material's life cycle and whether it would need replacement before cost savings could be realized, to which Julie and Troy confirmed.

Julie presented the LEED goal scorecard and clarified that the renewable energy decision would not impact the LEED certification. Troy suggested recalculating financial projections based on a 30-year loan with a 4.5% interest rate and presenting this to the committee in a few weeks. However, he advised proceeding with the general contractor selection vote today.

*Brandon frost, entertained a motion to vote for Fontaine Brothers as the general Contractor
Motion seconded by George Ferro.*

Roll Call

Motion passed unanimously.

B. Next Steps / Next meeting

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

C. Adjournment

Ms. Stafford entertained a motion to adjourn.

Motion seconded by Steven Bois.

Roll Call

Motion passed Unanimously.