

Common School Working Group Agenda

Thursday May 22, 2025 5:00PM – 6:30PM

Fairfield Town Office, Chester Arthur Room

Draft Minutes

Attendance: Bridget Howrigan, Sorel Chaput, Jeanne Hopkins, Julie Wolcott (via Zoom), Kate Blouin (via Zoom). Becky Cassell (for fundraising discussion)

1. Additions/Changes to Agenda. None.
2. Welcome and Introductions were made.
3. Municipal Planning Grant
 - Workplan Review (enclosed). Greta reviewed the MPG workplan with the working group. The group noted that the survey should have a paper option as well as digital.
 - Schedule discussion. The working group discussed the schedule. Greta explained that projects can easily take 8-12 months, but that we could aim to set the architects contract up for 6 months or less.
 - Procurement discussion. Greta explained the procurement process that will be required for the architect. It will be a formal RFP and depending on responses, the group may want to conduct interviews before making a recommendation to the Selectboard. It is likely that we will just need to get a few estimates for the septic feasibility.
4. **Fundraising**
 - Capital Campaign – need leadership! The group discussed the effort needed to carry out a capital campaign to raise funds to implement the common school restoration plans that will be developed. The group brainstormed people in the community that may have experience and time to help with this initiative.
 - o Potential capital campaign team members: Valdemar Garibay, Bill Roberts, Susan Bruce (chair of St. Albans library capital campaign), Becky Cassel.
 - o To Do: Greta will complete draft 1 page Project Pitch and send around before next meeting.
 - Village Trust initiative and other Grant Considerations. The Village Trust Initiative will be announced at the end of June or beginning of July. This group needs to decide to work with the Town and FCCA to submit a proposal. The initiative either supports the creation of a new non-profit or supports an existing non-profit with a compatible mission to complete the revitalization project. Technical assistance and funding is made available from Vermont Council of Rural Development and Preservation Trust of Vermont. Last year, the application was to support the existing Fairfield Community

Center non-profit to manage the Common School revitalization. Greta and Julie discussed the prospect of submitting an application this round with the Selectboard at the last Common School update and the Selectboard is supportive. They were also supportive of a long-term lease of some sort that would give the FCCA non-profit the site control needed that is required of the program. More to come on this.

5. Other Initiatives

- Inventory of Existing Community Spaces. Bridgett reviewed the list of public community spaces that exist in the Town of Fairfield.
 - Fairfield Community Center. Policy for use, small fee.
 - Library. Policy for use, no fee.
 - Town Office. \$25 fee.
 - Common School
 - Fairfield Center School
- It was noted that the library and town office are geared towards specific types of limited uses. Library is busy with programming and town office is used for municipal business. It will be important for the Common School to differentiate from the Community Center to add value to the community.

6. Other Business

- Greta will create google drive for team.
- Additional Team members. Jeanne will reach out to Chuck and Linda Verderber and invite them to participate. There should be regular postings on front porch forum with the groups business. Also updates on the Town website.
- Next meeting
 - Tuesday June 24 at 5:00
 - Then every 4th Thursday at 5:00
 - July 24th, August 28th, September 25th, October 23rd, November 27th