

WEST STREET SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: February 11, 2016

Location: 10-B West State Street, Senior Center

Members Present: Joe Rokowski, Vice Chair, West Street Building Committee
Deborah Barthelette, Principal, West Street Elementary School
Jennifer Fraser-Champagne, Principal East Meadow School
Emre Evren, Granby School Committee Member
Judith Houle, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Andrea Kennedy, West Street Building Committee Member
John Libera, Chair of the Granby Finance Committee
Chris Martin, Town Administrator
Jim Morrissey, West Street Building Committee Member
Jim Pietras, Granby School Committee Member
Lynn Snopek-Mercier, West Street Building Committee Member

Absent: Mark Bail, Chair of the West Street School Building Committee

Also in attendance: Alan Minkus, Colliers International
Kristian Whitsett, Jones Whitsett Architects (JWA)
Helen Fantini, Jones Whitsett Architects (JWA)

Mr. Rokowski called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm.

1. Old Business – none
2. Approval of Minutes: January 28, 2016

MOTION: Ms. Mercier moved, seconded by Mr. Libera, to approve the minutes as presented.

VOTE: All in favor (11-0-0)

3. Colliers/JWA: Public Outreach Preparation & Content

DISCUSSION: Mr. Rokowski thanked everyone for the great job that was done at the Special Town Meeting.

Mr. Minkus presented a new schedule that shows dates from March 1, 2016 and forward. Highlights included a 9-month period where design documents would be generated. Mid-August shows bids going out for contractors/subs. Awards would be done around the end of January. The construction phase would follow and then everything would be finalized with the MSBA for final payment.

Mr. Evren asked about the timeline past the opening of school. Mr. Minkus clarified that this would be a period of dealing with punch list items and getting all paperwork finalized for the submission to the MSBA.

Mr. Martin stated that he had found the information on the construction of a new well that was done for the prior project and that he had given it to the architects to use as a starting point for that portion of the project.

Mr. Whitsett and Ms. Fantini asked about a new postcard for the March 1st vote. Changes were discussed. It was agreed that 2,500 was a sufficient number and that the cards would need to be ready by the end of the next week. Ms. Kennedy offered up a group of volunteers to get the cards out over that weekend. Mr. Morrissey stated that he would provide labels to the town clerk for printing. It was agreed that these items would be brought over to the Superintendent's office so Ms. Kennedy could pick them up.

Mr. Libera asked if there would be any effort to reach out to the Hampshire Gazette to correct the percent tax increase that was reported in the article about the Special Town Meeting. He wondered if Mr. Bail could write a press release. Dr. Houle offered her assistance, if needed, as she has a good relationship with the reporter who covers Granby.

4. Public Outreach Update and Schedule

DISCUSSION: Mr. Rokowski asked the group if there should be another public hearing regarding the project. It was agreed by consensus that there should be one. After checking calendars, it was decided to hold this hearing on Wednesday, February 24th at 7:00 pm in the East Meadow School Cafeteria with a snow date of Thursday, February 25th. Mr. Martin asked if the Committee would meet at 6:30 pm and the group agreed that it would be wise.

Mr. Whitsett reviewed a draft PowerPoint presentation for a public outreach session. There was discussion regarding the tax impact slide and the impact of the amended motion that took \$2,000,000.00 from stabilization funds, lowering the amount to be borrowed to \$15,000,000.00. Noting that the percentage increase on the tax rate of 7.65% was stated at Special Town Meeting, the group discussed what this would mean for borrowing terms and length of the bond. It was agreed that the 7.65% figure put out at the STM would need to remain consistent. There was discussion and clarification of how the sequence of events would work. First would be the use of cash on hand as voted at STM, then a borrowing program of 90% of the remaining \$15,000,000.00 up front while interest rates are still low and then waiting until the project nears completion to see how much, if any, of the remaining 10% would still need to be borrowed. Mr. Rokowski suggested that Mr. Libera and Mr. Martin have further conversation at a later time with regard to the financials.

There was discussion about whether or not the financial information should be included on the postcard. Mr. Rokowski polled the group and the general consensus was that it should not be included.

The group then discussed how the public hearing might be advertised. Dr. Houle stated that she would advertise it on her blog, put it on the district web site, and suggested that a press release might be helpful. Ms. Kennedy stated she would put the information out on Facebook.

Another discussion item was how to answer questions that surfaced at the STM during the meeting on February 24th. The following topics came to mind as the group thought through them:

- Clarify the reimbursement rate and eligible v. ineligible costs
- Financing of the project
- Future plans for West Street School
- Capital plan for the school district
- Educational space and whether or not the structure is too big
- Air conditioning and its need for medically fragile children
- Energy efficiency
- Taxes and tax base
- School choice numbers.

There was also discussion about the use of the Code Red system to notify townspeople of the meeting. Mr. Martin stated that the Select Board would have to authorize it and that he would ask them.

Ms. Fantini asked if the handout that was used at the original session should be updated. The group agreed by consensus that it should so attendees would have something to take with them and that it could also be posted electronically and in hard copies before the election.

5. Any other business to come before the Committee – there was none.
6. Next meeting date: February 24, 2016 at 6:30 pm at East Meadow School
7. Adjournment:

MOTION: Mr. Morrissey moved, seconded by Mr. Evren, to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 pm.
VOTE: All in favor (11-0-0)

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Judith Houle, Secretary ProTem