

Facilities Optimization Committee  
DRAFT MINUTES  
June 2, 2020 via Google Meets

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm.

**Attendance:**

Committee Members: Rick Bertasi, Gayle Weinstein, Steve Ezzes, Chris Spaulding, Denise Harvey, Ken Edgar, Richard Wolf, Tony Pesco, Hillary Koyner

Guests: Town Administrator Jonathan Luiz, Assistant Superintendent Ken Craw, Members of the Public

**Approval of Minutes:**

A motion was made by Ms. Harvey to approve the minutes as amended from the May 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. Seconded by Ms. Koyner. Motion carried unanimously.

**Review of the Updated Timeline:**

-Mr. Bertasi reviewed the updated timeline with the committee. It includes compressing the schedule to complete our tasks within the original time frame. The next big thing is benchmarking and updating program requirements. We will need some capacity to assist with the analytics. Our aim is to arrive at preliminary recommendation by October. Enrollment analysis will extend later because of uncertainty of enrollment due to COVID. Mr. Bertasi said that we will work with a wider aperture to compensate for the volatility.

-Ms. Harvey asked how we anticipate the benchmark information in June or July but the consultant will not be coming on until August. Mr. Bertasi said that perhaps the committee may be able to do some benchmarking. Dr. Pesco said that it is not easy information to get at, in a way that is useful. Mr. Ezzes questioned the validity of the comparison. Are we talking strictly about classroom space? Dr. Pesco agrees. HES and WIS don't use space as efficiently, due to long and open hallways. Mr. Bertasi feels we should think about this in 3 categories: classroom, circulation, and amenities. Benchmarking does allow you to say that this is what good space utilization looks like if we do something new. Ms. Koyner asked if there are guidelines. Dr. Pesco said that there are no set guidelines for space utilization, but general parameters.

**Review of the FOCM 10 year plan:**

-Mr. Bertasi created this framework model that will tell us how we would roll up our baseline data to a Weston total number and its components. Against this, we would model our different scenarios.

-Dr. Pesco said that he thinks 10 years is right with respect to capital projects. Other information such as salaries and benefits will need a lot of input from administrators. Due to inflation rate for salaries and benefits, they will increase at percent of total over time. Therefore, the District doesn't have much money to spend on facilities. Depending on configuration of the campus, we need to look hard at staffing assumptions. A consultant can help us build out the data set.

-Mr. Wolf said he feels we're taking a bandaid approach. We can keep some buildings operational but they will not be best in class. Do we want more than that? Dr. Pesco asked if our baseline is just to make 4 buildings functional? Mr. Bertasi responded that we need to determine value for money for the town. Dr. Spaulding feels this is the crux of issue. There is a constituency that is concerned about cutting back on this investment. He would prefer to have 3 exceptional state of the art schools than 4 crumbling schools. Mr. Wolf cautioned that we don't know 3 is better than 4. Mr. Bertasi said the goal is to do better than nothing.

### **Scenario Status:**

-Ms. Weinstein explained the changes she made to the scenario matrix. The conversation with Silver Petrucelli highlighted how many costs are still unknown. She also clarified that additions of space needed for each scenario.

-Ms. Weinstein proposed eliminating Option 6 from the school option scenario matrix. She felt creating a new Kinderland in Central Office would increase costs dramatically, as new space would have to be found for school employees currently working in that facility.

-Ms. Weinstein also proposed eliminating Option B staffing options matrix, as the cost to renovate the Middle School for Senior Center and staff use would be excessive.

-Dr. Crow likes Options 2 and 5. When you take into account the needs of the Town, he prefers Option 5. Kindergarten is now full day, so if they were in a separate facility, they would need administrative oversight. Mr. Bertasi asked if there was a scenario where keeping pre-K and Kindergarten at Hurlbutt made sense. Dr. Crow responded that perhaps as a transition period, but not as a long-term solution. Ms. Harvey said that the District already ruled out Option 1 from the Phase 2 study as having too many students. Dr. Pesco said that the refinement of preK-4 is a viable option. With the added town piece, he feels it sways us closer to 5.

-Mr. Edgar cited earlier comments that there may be no reusability of the Middle School other than as a school. If that is the case and you adopt Option 2, you have a building without a use. Mr. Bertasi thinks we should keep Option 2 on the table for now, and that Options 2 and 5 make the most sense. Ms. Weinstein agreed, given the cost to renovate the Middle School.

-A motion was made by Dr. Pesco to eliminate Options 1 and 6 from the school options matrix, and to eliminate Option B from the staffing matrix. Seconded by Ms. Harvey. In favor: Mr. Bertasi, Mr. Ezzes, Dr. Pesco, Ms. Weinstein, Ms. Harvey, Mr. Edgar, Ms. Koyner. Against: none. Abstention: Mr. Wolf. Motion carried.

### **Discussion/Decision regarding hiring a consultant:**

-Mr. Luiz said that there are 2 ways to hire a consultant. The first is to prepare a scope of work (an RFP), advertise and reach out to consultants we know to give us bids with firm dollar numbers. The second way is to submit an RFQ where you give a general description of the work to be done and ask people to submit their qualifications. The second way allows you to get to know the consultants and get their thoughts prior to hiring. A supplemental appropriation would be needed.

-Dr. Spaulding asked for a comparison of the RFP vs RFQ process. Mr. Luiz said that an advantage to going with an RFQ is that it gives you an opportunity to review work that consultants have done in this space. This helps to narrow down who you really want to work with. The downside is that it takes more time. The timeline for an RFQ is at least 3 weeks on street with another week to review the scope. So, up to a month just to put it together. Then comes a review process. That means at least a 2-month process before you put out an RFP. An RFP can take 2 months before we get proposals in hands.

-Ms. Weinstein asked if the Town has a relationship with any architects who could give us some very preliminary estimates on the costs to renovate vs. rebuild. Mr. Wolf felt it was premature to worry about cost, and that we need to worry about proper space utilization first.

-Mr. Wolf likes the RFQ process better so we can pick and choose who meshes with us. The RFP is throwing the project out to general community. Dr. Pesco feels the quicker we can get another expert involved for space utilization for town and schools will help us in the long run. Mr. Edgar feels we need to take our time and do it right. We are planning for next 20 years. He prefers an RFQ, but we need to discipline ourselves to ask the right questions. Dr. Pesco said that we need to create a check in point with BoE. Mr. Edgar pointed out the need to keep community up to speed. Ms. Harvey likes an RFQ process because a benefit is that you can really question people on their ideas. They maybe come up

with some things we have not thought of. Mr. Bertasi concluded that the consensus is to go with an RFQ process. He asked Jonathan to put together a list for us to interview. Mr. Bertasi will work on a scope of services and email around.

**Any new items:**

None

**Adjournment:**

Mr. Ezzes made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Ms. Harvey. Motion carried.