

Facilities Optimization Committee
Approved Minutes
October 6, 2020 7:00 PM
Via Google Meets

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

Attendance: Rick Bertasi, Steve Ezzes, Rone Baldwin, Gayle Weinstein, Denise Harvey, Ken Edgar, Richard Wolf, Jonathan Luiz, Hilary Koyner, Ken Craw, Jonathan Luiz

Approval of minutes from the August 18th meeting: A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Harvey and seconded by Mr. Edgar. Motion carried unanimously.

Recap from the BoE Facilities Committee meeting: Mr. Bertasi and Ms. Weinstein attended the Board of Education's Facilities Committee meeting on Friday, Oct 2. Ms. Weinstein reviewed the attached document that was presented to the BoE Facilities Committee. She felt that the BoE was excited by our progress and our work was well received. Ms. Harvey also felt it went really well and was well received by all, including the Superintendent. Ms. Koyner agreed.

Mr. Edgar asked if the document was a living document. Mr. Bertasi said that at the moment it was just what was presented but it should be updated at some point. Mr. Edgar will send some additional points to Ms. Weinstein. Under facilities concerns, it should be stated that we have not definitively established that we have found a use for the Middle School. Mr. Edgar also wants to add under "Assumptions" that both sides of Weston Rd will be rezoned as commercial space. It raises the question of the proximity of Hurlbutt to this new commercial area.

Mr. Baldwin hopes that the consultant will address these concerns and provide a point a view. He still does not understand what is in the 10 year BoE Facilities Plan compared to what is in the Silver Petrucelli work. He would like this to see this better articulated. Ms. Weinstein said that the \$20 M in the BoE 10 year plan is what is needed to get the building in a state of good repair. Beyond that, there are projects that need bonding such as AC. And beyond that, there are desires to improve the facility for programmatic reasons. Ms. Koyner said that she thinks that sounds accurate.

Ms. Weinstein mentioned that all 5 consultants will be doing a walk through on Friday. BoE has really been on board and helpful with this.

Mr. Ezzes said that he is still confused as to what we are asking the consultants to do. Isn't this about the enrollment projections? We have the buildings, we have an estimate as to what the cost is to refurbish the MS, what we don't know is the enrollment. He says that is the basis of the conversation right now. Ms. Koyner agrees. Mr. Bertasi said that is partly why we slowed down. Mr. Ezzes said that the new data shows that enrollment numbers are

down, not up. Ms. Koyner said that enrollment this year is tricky. Many students have enrolled in private school because of our hybrid model. Mr. Ezzes said that in the last BoF meeting in September, they were told enrollment was up 60+ students. Mr. Bertasi would like to acknowledge that enrollment is a problem we need to solve but it can't be solved tonight. Mr. Ezzes feels that we might not know what enrollment will be for another year. Mr. Bertasi said we will not engage a consultant until after we get the new enrollment numbers, but we should continue forward in parallel.

Ms. Weinstein said that we can't budget so closely to a number. We need to build flexibility into the model. We have many facilities that we can't push off decisions on, such as the annex. Mr. Baldwin has not seen anything that says we need to replace the annex. He would like more clarity. Mr. Luiz said that an architect who specializes in roofing said the roof needs to be replaced in about 4 years. The HVAC system was also reviewed and has about 4 years maximum life as well. Additionally, the siding and the handrails need some work. Inside there are sagging ceiling tiles. But we are not aware of the structural condition of the building. Mr. Bertasi thinks we should have a consultant evaluate the building. Mr. Wolfe said it is a temporary building and has a limited lifespan. We also want to create synergies between departments as we go forward. Mr. Bertasi feels we need to table this discussion until we have some data about the building.

Review of the common questions to ask prospective consultants:

Mr. Bertasi asked if we should add any questions. Ms. Koyner asked if there were any budget questions, such as how close on budget have your projects been? Also, are there any changes on educational strategies they have seen?

The questions will be shared with the consultants in advance, but we will ask them to not respond in writing.

To be noted in the minutes: Discussions regarding enrollment projections and the useful life of the annex will happen at a later date, after we have more information on these subjects.

Any new items: None

Adjournment: A motion was made by Mr. Edgar to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 pm. Seconded by Ms. Harvey. Motion carried unanimously.

Town of Weston
Facility Optimization Committee

Mission:

1. The goal is to find a long-term solution that works for all school and town facilities, is educationally sound, minimizes costs and is acceptable to the citizens of Weston.
2. If the BoE determines it is educationally appropriate, maintains a safe and secure learning environment, and does not adversely impact the quality of education we deliver to our students, the goal is to determine if it is possible to reduce the footprint of school and town facilities to optimize lifetime costs (capital, facilities, operating expenses, other BOE staffing and expenses), improve the learning environment, create appropriate synergies for town staff and school staff, and ensure consistency with the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development.

Facility Concerns:

1. The annex is nearing the end of its useful life, and there is a need to find a permanent home for the employees who work in that facility.
2. According to the BoE's 2019 ten-year facility plan, there is approximately \$20M in repairs and upgrades needed to maintain the four school buildings in a state of good repair. Additional funding, such as bonding, would be needed to add air conditioning to the Middle School and Hurlbutt Elementary School.
3. The above-mentioned number does not include desired programmatic upgrades, such as new science labs, orchestra rooms, etc. While our purview does not necessarily cover this, we need to work closely with the BoE so that these renovations can potentially happen concurrently or at a future date.
4. Utilizing the Jarvis building for 3 employees is an inefficient use of space.
5. Should the Senior Activities Center remain at HES?
6. Is there a better location for the bus garage?

Underlying assumptions (Based on 2019 enrollment projections for 2025 and beyond):[fix numbers below]

1. Decline in enrollment may allow the District to reduce its footprint.
1. Assuming an average of 7 general classes per grade in Grades K-8, the available classroom space in each of the four schools will be able to accommodate four grades.
2. Various levels of renovation and potential additions may be required to accommodate the educational needs resulting from a redistribution of grades in each building.
3. None of the schools can accommodate a fifth grade without an addition.
7. Must allow for moderate growth so that portables will not be necessary in the future.
8. Minimize educational disruption during construction.
9. Decisions will be based on Milone and MacBroom's medium enrollment scenario. This may change as more information is gathered.
10. The annex is near the end of its useful life without some major renovations.

11. Jarvis should be taken offline as a home for town employees, as it is an ineffective use of space. [10 and 11 are repetitive of 1 and 3 under facility concerns]

Potential Options for School Configuration:

1. No change
2. Eliminate Hurlbutt Elementary School
 - A. WIS: Grades pre-K-4
 - B. WMS: Grades 5-8
 - C. WHS: Grades 9-12
3. Eliminate Weston Middle School
 - A. HES: Grades pre-K-4
 - B. WIS: Grades 5-8
 - C. WHS: Grades 9-12

Potential Staffing Options:

1. Relocate all annex staff to a wing of HES
2. Relocate all BoE staff to a wing of HES. Relocate Senior Center to Central Office.
3. Build additions onto Central Office to house BoE annex staff and onto Town Hall to house Town annex staff
4. Some combination of the [2 - there are 3 above] options cited above

Bus Garage Options:

1. No change
2. Keep the garage in place. Relocate busses [buses?] to Bisceglie or a location on the school campus.
3. Build a new bus garage on the school campus, perhaps in the current location of the annex. Utilize the current bus garage for Town staffing.

Unknowns/ Consultant Need:

1. Does future school enrollment allow for a long-term reduction in school buildings?
If so:
 - A. What would be the capital and operating savings over time?
 - B. What would be the cost to add classrooms and other space needs to make a 3-school solution work?
 - C. Is there a use for an unused building or wing of a building?
2. Given the volatility of school enrollment, does it make sense to uncouple staffing needs from educational space? (i.e. build additions onto existing buildings or limit the amount of school building use for non-school related functions).