

Central Berkshire Regional School District
School Building Project Committee Meeting
Thursday, September 29, 2016

A regular meeting of the Central Berkshire Regional School District School Building Needs Committee, held at Wahconah Regional High School in Dalton, MA, on Thursday, September 29, 2016, was called to order by Co-Chair Armacost at 6:45 p.m.

Members Present:

Shawn Armacost (Co-Chair), Tom Callahan (Co-Chair)
John Bartels, Mike Case, Melinda Walton
Mike Daniels, Liz Daniels, Anna Duquette (Student Rep)
Andrew Garcia, Shawn Therrien, Amy Grallert
Kerry Mason, Laurie Casna, Melissa Falkowski
Jason Dion, Aaron Robb, Ed Clark, Mike Hagmaier
Jan Paxton, John McComish, Chuck Sturtevant
Wayne Cronnell, Bill Mulholland

Absent: Member Todd Emerson, Gary Campbell, Jr., and Student Representative Bob Archambault

Co-Chair Armacost opened the meeting

1. Welcome and Introductions

Co-Chair Shawn Armacost noted the committee has 26 members. Each member introduced themselves. Co-Chair then gave an overview of the process.

The Wahconah Building Project PowerPoint was reviewed. (Please refer to attachment A)

Co-Chair Tom Callahan thanked all for volunteering and spoke about why the project is important. He noted the district was fortunate to have leaders like Superintendent Laurie Casna, HS Principal Aaron Robb, Building & Grounds Manager Jason Dion and Assistant Superintendent, Melissa Falkowski. He then stated he was honored to be part of the committee.

HS Principal Aaron Robb noted the committee has a great collection of people with varying viewpoints.

2. WRHS Future

He described that the needs of our school community have changed and because of the age of the building it is becoming harder and harder to deliver the services needed by our students. The staff are experiencing more and more limitations and while they are squeezing as much potential out of the building it is becoming more difficult. The type of curriculum offered will hinge greatly on what sort of building Wahconah will be.

Co-Chair Armacost explained that the committee will also be discussing previous building projects that occurred at Wahconah.

3. Building Walkthrough

The committee toured the building with Principal Aaron Robb and Buildings & Grounds Manager Jason Dion leading. The tour began at 7:00 pm and was completed at 8:06pm

4. Committee Organization and Procedures, Open Meeting Law

Co-Chair Armacost talked about upcoming meetings and reviewed where information is listed and will be listed on the district's website. He explained that once the building committee list is approved, the Building Committee members will also be listed on the district's website.

Co-Chair Armacost went on to talk about topics for future meeting would be What a new school looks like; contemporary specs of a new school. Co-Chair Armacost stated it is important to realize that the High School is a community resource and the land for WRHS, NRMS are the schools and land owned by the district; all of the towns of the district.

5. Statement of Interest

Superintendent Casna discussed the major points of the Statement of Interest (SOI) submitted in 2015. Please refer to attachment B, Statement of Interest

The SOI was submitted in April of 2015 and the district was invited into the project in January of 2016.

Superintendent Casna went on to say it is important to note another component that plays a part in acceptance by the MSBA is how the school falls in relation to the other projects that applied that same year. It is all relative and it is Important for voters to understand. It's not as if we can say if it doesn't go through this year, we will get it next year – because that is not necessarily the case.

The Superintendent noted that Page 8 of the SOI has a full history of the modernization completed at Wahconah. She then clarified why the district kept submitting the SOI to the MSBA and stated it is because there are educational limitations currently and to provide strong 21st century learning – there are changes necessary.

Superintendent Casna went on to discuss that The SOI has detailed square footage and land etc. in it, which each member can review. Superintendent Casna then gave a brief history of the most recent process: In January of 2016, Diane Sullivan, Senior Capital Project manager with the MSBA, came out to the district and talked a lot to us to get a feel for what is going on in the district and the community. Present at this meeting were Superintendent Casna, Assistant Superintendent Falkowski, Principal Robb, Vice-Principal Messina, Building & Grounds Manger Dion, and Head custodian of Wahconah Michael Daniels. Ms. Sullivan stated after this meeting that she felt CBRSD and Wahconah's needs were rising to the top of the pool.

In addition, a replacement, a renovation or a modernization of the school as options were all included in the SOI. Superintendent Casna then stated that the district also receives recommendations from NEASC as an accredited High School.

Buildings & Grounds Manager Dion then reviewed infrastructure concerns. He explained that everything in school has a life cycle. For example: 50 – 60 years on coper piping is pretty good. Heating systems have a life cycle – 30 years is really good – and Wahconah are beyond that.

In addition, the windows are low e glass, so we lose a lot of heat out of them. The toilets, and water fixtures because they are older are using a lot of water – 3 gallons per flush; in relation, today a modern home uses 1.5 gal per flush. Mr. Dion went on to explain that the district will work hand in hand with Ever source, Berkshire Gas in order to get rebates etc. when implementing new fixtures, etc. He then noted that there are roof repairs done each year - about 2 -3 every season. Most classrooms only contain a convenience outlet and there is more electrical access needed in all classrooms.

Superintendent Casna remarked that it's important to know that costs assoc. with a lot of these things that would go away with a new building. For example: asbestos.

6. MSBA Process

Co-Chair Armacost talked about the MGL section that allows for the creation of the school building committee and that everything goes to the SC for final approval; However, CBRSD policy gives this group authority –in reviewing needs relative to requirements. He noted the group will take a look at previous building projects.

Once the group is through this phase and the towns vote in approval for feasibility study, the group will work with an OPM, architect etc. to get through the design phase. He emphasized that the committee will need to promote the

project and inform community of our endeavor. To do so, the committee needs to become informed as a committee – and needs to understand the whole district; because we are all part of the district.

Co-Chair Armacost said that the co-chairs will arrange to bring someone in to talk about tax levies and the town side of the equation. Committee Member John Bartels will work to get someone in to talk about debt exclusion as well. He then again stated that the high school is more than just a building – it is a community resource. Co-Chair Armacost went on to say to the group that the tax equation part of this must always be kept mind and the committee must always make prudent decisions.

Co-Chair Armacost then relayed that this committee is a special subcommittee to the School Committee and as such will follow parliamentary procedures when voting. The procedures must be compliant with Open Meeting Law Ch. 38 s 18-25. All meetings are open to the public and must be posted 48 hours in advance. The exception to this is emergencies and emergencies may happen in the construction phase. But typically this committee shouldn't have emergencies – so the 48 hours posting requirement will be met. The Co-Chair went on to ask that all members be careful with email – in that they should be informational only and not be used for deliberations. He also stated that all should feel free to speak up in the meetings and ended with: This is your committee – we are just going to facilitate it.

Superintendent Casna then reviewed the MSBA process and timeline. Please refer to attachment C. The Superintendent stated the goal of the district was to have all the requirements in by December 31st.

7. Discussion/Questions

Co-Chair Armacost stated that the next step is to try to inform the group about the different parts of this project; For example, the tax and debt discussion discussed earlier. He asked the group to please start to think about brainstorming and how the word can get out; perhaps fact sheets to PTO's, businesses, etc. and to please brainstorm and ideas will be discussed in the next meeting which will be in about 2 weeks.

8. Conclusion

Co-Chair Callahan remarked that he would like to discuss the possibility of 4pm meeting start times down the road and to please think about it. Co-Chair Armacost replied that members don't have to be at every meeting but to think about times that are best for your schedules and the meetings will be moved around to make it more convenient.

Bill Mulholland then stated that he appreciated how the maintainers have taken care of the building and the taxpayer's investment –noting that the building is worn but shiny.

Adjournment 8:44 PM

The following were given as handouts or used during the meeting & are filed with the official minutes

Attachment A: Wahconah Building Project PowerPoint

Attachment B: Statement of Interest (SOI)

Attachment C: MSBA Process and Timeline