

Central Berkshire Regional School District  
School Building Project Committee Meeting  
Wednesday October 26, 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 Wednesday October 26, 2016, was called to order by Co-Chair Tom Callahan at 6:32 p.m.

Co-Chair Callahan opened the meeting

1. Response from Audience

None

2. Validation of Agenda

ROLL CALL

Present: Tom Callahan (Co-Chair) Robert Archambault (Student Rep), John Bartels, Gary Campbell Jr., Mike Case, Wayne Cronnell, Mike Daniels, Jason Dion, Anna Duquette (Student Rep), Todd Emerson, Andrew Garcia, Kerry Mason, Jan Paxton, Aaron Robb, Chuck Sturtevant, Shawn Therrien, Melinda Walton

Absent: Shawn Armacost (Co-Chair), Liz Daniels, Amy Grallert, Mike Hagmaier, John McComish, Roberta McCulloch Dews, Bill Mullholland,

Also Present: Superintendent Laurie Casna, Assistant Superintendent Melissa Falkowski, Recording Secretary and Members of the Audience

Co-Chair Callahan validated the agenda as required by the open meeting law.

3. Approval of minutes from September 29, 2016 meeting

MOVED BY MEMBER DION, SECONDED BY MEMBER CASE

*To approve the minutes of the School Building Committee minutes of September 29, 2016 as printed.*

Ayes: 17 members

Nays: None.

Abstentions: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of minutes from October 12, 2016 meeting

MOVED BY MEMBER STURTEVANT, SECONDED BY MEMBER CASE

*To approve the minutes of the School Building Committee minutes of October 12, 2016 as printed.*

Ayes: 17 members

Nays: None.

Abstentions: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. Determination of Press Briefing

Superintendent Casna stated that she spoke with The Office of Campaign and Political Finance regarding the Press Briefing, the briefing can be done as long as it is informative rather than persuasive. Assistant Superintendent

Falkowski also noted that she sent requests to other Berkshire County schools and hasn't heard back from anyone yet.

Superintendent Casna commented the committee will need to have phases of the press briefing because they do not currently have all of the information as to where and when the vote will take place.

Committee member input:

Jan Paxton stated the feasibility study needs to be discussed with the public- the idea that people know the first step is to vote on the feasibility study and what it entails.

Chuck Sturtevant stated we should mention to the public that every town is represented on the building committee. He also stated that it's important to put out one uniform release. Every town needs to know that they do have a representative on this committee, this is important as they try to bring everyone together on this.

The Website has to be informative. For example, if links are posted for letters to the editor- the links must be posted for both types of letters those in favor and those against.

Superintendent Casna stated we can include current visuals of Wahconah as well as what a model high school looks like. Ms. Casna noted that putting information out as an individual is allowed. For example, a committee member can post on social media as long as it is their own individual account. Factual information is also okay, even if it leads people in one direction or the other.

Superintendent Casna also stated that mass mailings are seen as invasive, but school tours are allowed, both physical and virtual tours. Shawn Therrien stated the press briefing should contain dates and times of tours. Kerry Mason suggested that National Honor Society students be available to babysit during the tours to ensure that parents of young children can attend the tour. If people want to know how to get involved, you can tell them it's ok to form private groups. Private groups advocating for the project are fine.

Superintendent Casna sent the survey to The Office of Campaign and Political Finance, they are looking it over for approval.

Gary Campbell asked if there is data out there that shows new schools affect positively on attendance, test scores, behavior. There was no known place that has that information.

Co-Chair Callahan asked if anyone has contacted any officials in the district. Mike Case stated that he has through the Berkshire County Educational Task Force- he commented that support for the project is mixed.

The group split into sub groups to develop action plans for about 40 minutes.

6. Working Session: outline plan for outreach to identified constituent groups

Co-Chair Callahan spoke for the retirees group

1. This group determined the committee members need to begin with helping people understand the feasibility study.
2. People cannot be expected to go online and read all of the meeting notes to get their information.  
Voters would appreciate a half a dozen points in easy to understand terms.
3. Tom Callahan will contact the council on aging director to get himself on the agenda to talk to the board first and ask to get scheduled for times in Dalton to talk to the seniors.  
Mike Case will do the same for the town of Washington and Jan Paxton will do the same for the town of Cummington.
4. Tom will call Mt. Greylock to find someone who he can contact to talk about the phase we are in.
5. Tom is ready to give tours through the building as soon as possible.

Assistant Superintendent Falkowski spoke for the Town Officials group.

1. This group discussed creating links for town websites that list the MSBA information, they divided the towns between members and hope to have links up by November 4<sup>th</sup>.
2. They would like to have a press briefing or informational sheet available for the upcoming presidential election- which is prior to our next meeting.
3. Town halls do send mailings out. If the group can create a mailing that will go out through the town halls they need to make sure all of the info going out to each of the towns is the same. They would like to have something sent out by each town in their next mailing.
4. Dalton cable could film an informational show on the study and have it broadcasted. This group will get something together by the end of December. Committee member John Bartels will contact John Ostrech at the cable TV station about this.
5. A committee member should get on the schedule for the select board meetings and finance meetings of each town to talk to them in the next few months – to bring forth information to their towns.
6. There will be an agenda item on the Seven Town Meeting in November.

Andrew Garcia spoke for the parents of school age children group.

1. They need to take pictures right away- Andrew will create a google drive folder to show the pictures.
2. Committee member Shawn Therrien will email staff for contemporary ideas
3. The group will create a Facebook sub- page to share informational links
4. The group mentioned they should have committee members at school concerts, parent-teacher conferences, etc. to discuss and answer questions.
5. Kerry Mason will create CRA bulletin by November 8th
6. Todd Emerson will discuss the project with community members at soccer games, etc.
7. Committee members will attend PTO meetings at each of the schools to give information to them
8. Gary Campbell Jr. and Melinda Walton will make informative posters to hang for parent conferences

Liz Daniels was in charge of the alumni group and she was absent from the meeting so there was no new discussion from this group.

Ed Clark attended the meeting as an audience member and volunteered to talk for people that are not directly connected to the school.

1. Ed stated that relevant and basic information needs to get out to the public. He commented that particularly people that are not directly connected to the school do not know that Wahconah qualified to be a part of this study.
2. It is important to let town people know that the vote is required in order to approve the study. People need to be clear on what they are voting for, which is to move forward in the process, voters need to know what the feasibility study is to be informed about the vote.
3. Informational brochure in the mail or handed out at town places where people gather will be a good way to communicate to this group of people.

Tom Callahan mentioned that the majority of voters are older people and very likely they will vote against something they don't understand.

High School Principal Aaron Robb discussed getting building tours set up. The committee set the dates and times as follows:

Wednesday November 30<sup>th</sup> the evening tour will take place from 6-8pm.

Saturday December 3<sup>rd</sup> the afternoon tour will take place from 12-2 pm.

Aaron Robb and Tom Callahan can run the tours in tandem so that more than one tour can be done during the 2-hour time frame. The committee also decided it was a good idea to have staff members stationed at different parts of the building during the tours to talk about particular areas.

For Example:

1. Mike Daniels should talk about the boiler room
2. Andrew Garcia should discuss "G" Hall – the music room area and tell the people the differences from Nessacus to Wahconah.

3. Kerry Mason and Gary Campbell Jr. should discuss the Physical Education area
4. Shawn Therrien should discuss the science labs

The committee also would like to have a virtual tour for people that don't want to or cannot walk through the entire building. John Bartels would like to have a copy of the virtual tour to give to the Dalton Cable TV station so they can air it on TV.

The next meeting will be November 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 at Wahconah.

7. Adjourn

*Adjournment 8:34 PM*