

Central Berkshire Regional School District  
School Building Project Committee Meeting  
Wednesday April 12, 2017

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 April 12, 2017 was called to order by Co-Chair Armacost at 4:36 p.m.

Co-Chair Armacost opened the meeting

ROLL CALL

Present: Shawn Armacost (Co-Chair), Tom Callahan (Co-Chair), Anna Duquette (Student Rep), John Bartels, Gary Campbell Jr., Mike Case, Liz Daniels, Mike Daniels, Jason Dion, Bonny DiTomasso, Andrew Garcia, Kerry Mason, Bill Mullholland, Jan Paxton, Richard Peters, Aaron Robb, Chuck Sturtevant, Shawn Therrien, Melinda Walton, Superintendent Laurie Casna, Assistant Superintendent Melissa Falkowski

Absent: Robert Archambault (Student Rep), Wayne Cronnell, Todd Emerson, Mike Hagmaier, John McComish, Roberta McCulloch Dews

Also Present: Recording Secretary

2. Validation of Agenda

Co-Chair Armacost validated the agenda as required by the Open Meeting Law.

3. Response from Audience

No audience present

4. Approval of minutes from March 15, 2017 meeting

MOVED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO SECONDED BY MEMBER CASE

*To approve the minutes of the School Building Committee minutes of March 15, 2017 as printed.*

Ayes: 21 members

Nays: None.

Abstentions: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. Review of voting process

Co-Chair Armacost congratulated the committee on their hard work and the positive majority vote to move forward. Committee member John Bartels has received compliments with how transparent the committee has been regarding the information that was put out about the vote. The voters appreciated it.

It was observed that the vote seemed to bring out a lot of young families with kids who are not yet in Wahconah.

The committee discussed the need to make sure there is not a lull in the discussion of the project. It is important to make sure people are still being informed and getting community input on upcoming decisions. The committee needs to keep the momentum up and make sure to focus on the technical aspects of the project. The plan is to get more voters to vote during the next phase of the project.

In the future, the committee members need to be proactive in getting the word out about how much the project will cost and how much will be covered by the MSBA. There seemed to be some confusion during the feasibility study period by voters about how much the study was actually costing the tax payers.

Committee member Gary Campbell Jr. stated Windsor did a good job informing the voters of that town and feels the same needs to be done for Peru.

Committee member Bonny DiTomasso shared that over the weekend she received 12 phone calls from people in Peru that missed the vote. She believes the pamphlet helped with giving people the correct information however, not all that could vote made it to the polls.

The question was asked how many people currently school choice out from Cummington and Peru. It was noted that as of right now Cummington school choices out 34 students and Peru choices out 1 student. These numbers do not include vocational students; Smith Vocational is currently being attended by 8 students from Peru and 9 students from Cummington.

Committee member Rich Peters stated people are confused by what the Berkshire County Task Force is analyzing. This committee needs to make sure there is no confusion between what we are trying to do and what the task force is doing.

It was mentioned that at the Windsor meeting Doug McNally, who is on the Berkshire County Task Force, made a comment that his feeling was, there needs to be a modern viable high school within Central Berkshire. It was also noted that there is no current proposal from the Berkshire County Task Force that does not include a high school in Central Berkshire and that the task force's goal is quality education and what is needed to provide that quality education going forward.

The Berkshire County Task Force will be holding an informational meeting at Wahconah Country Club on Tuesday April 25<sup>th</sup> from 6-7:30.

## 6. Next Step Discussion

Superintendent Casna discussed the MSBA document sent by Jason to the committee and she explained what the different stages are. Our project will be put on the MSBA May 11th board meeting and move forward from there. It is not necessary for anyone from our School Building Committee to have a presence at the May 11th meeting. There will be future MSBA meetings that some people from this committee will have to attend. As of right now MSBA has everything they need from us except our enrollment certification. After we receive a Board invitation to feasibility study the next step is to select an OPM (Owner's Project Manager).

The projects currently ongoing by MSBA seem to be right on or a little ahead of schedule. Superintendent Casna noted that MSBA builds school that built at an 80% capacity. The biggest issue for our district is our large number school choice students, MSBA will not consider a district's predicted school choice. They are currently calculating our projected enrollment at Wahconah at 460. MSBA has been criticized in the past for erring on the side of anticipating higher enrollment and building too big. Therefore, they are now using strict guidelines for future projects. There is however, a lot of flexibility in how you can rearrange the school if something unusual happened with the population.

In response to a question from committee member Jan Paxton, Jason Dion stated that he would provide the engineering studies that were done years ago on the building to the MSBA

It was noted that committee members will receive an email from Vicki asking what aspect of the next steps they are interested in being a part of. Subcommittees will be organized at the next meeting.

It was decided to continue to have the Dalton Cable TV run the panel discussion through the summer with a new introduction. The committee feels the information discussed is important and keeping the discussion on the air will help keep it fresh in people's minds.

High School Principal Aaron Robb suggested getting out some “what now” information to the public to keep interest in the project and generate new interest. He would like to get this information out by Memorial Day. The committee should get together a new information press briefing or pamphlet that can be included in the town mailings and emails.

Assistant Superintendent Melissa Falkowski said we the town meetings are coming up next month and we’ll have a decent amount of information from MSBA by then to share with the towns.

The next meeting will be held after the May 11<sup>th</sup> MSBA meeting. Date to be determined.

7. Adjourn

Adjournment 5:35 p.m.