

Minutes

PRESENT:

Mr. Peter Fischelis
Mr. Fabian Fondriest
Ms. Jan McGinn
Ms. Rebecca Shannon
Mr. Jerry Wedge

PRESENT FROM ADMINISTRATION:

Dr. Brenda Finn, Superintendent
Mr. John Flaherty
Ms. Diana Rigby

I CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Concord School Committee was called to order by Mr. Fischelis at 6:34 p.m.

II MINUTES

V REPORTS AND ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

B. Willard

Mr. Fischelis stated he wanted an open dialogue on the Willard project. He would like to articulate to the community “why we need” to replace the school. He stated the school has outgrown its useful life. Significant expenses would have to be incurred in order to maintain the building.

Mr. Flaherty stated the roof and substructure will cost in the range of \$1.325-1.6 M. Mr. Fischelis stated he is concerned about an emergency roof repair disrupting school. He is also concerned that it cannot be completed over the summer when the school is empty.

Ms. Shannon stated there are conversations in town about if Willard doesn’t go through in November, bring it back to the voters in April. The issue the community needs to know is that it needs to pass in November because construction will begin in April. We will lose a whole year if we put off until April Town Meeting.

Mr. Fischelis stated there is also the issue of replacing the systems with what’s there, which is expensive and not efficient. Mr. Anderson stated the heating system was installed in 1964. To replace it would cause a domino effect in the building. Mr. Fischelis stated the electrical system is the original one dating back to 1957.

Mr. Fischelis stated \$10M have been identified in systems repair and we still have a 50-year-old building that doesn't meet our needs.

Ms. McGinn stated there are people who say wait and find out what MSBA will do. We stand to gain about \$12M from MSBA. If we wait, put \$10M in repairs into Willard, inflation increases the price of a new school by \$10M, we will end up spending \$20M to save \$12M. Dr. Finn stated it is a question of paying now and paying later if we choose to wait.

Mr. Fischelis stated the high school is also a subject at hand. The Willard School is proceeding down its own path. The high school also has a tremendous need. If we begin Willard now, we will be paying the highest amount of the loan back years before we begin to have to pay back the high school.

Mr. Wedge stated the new building project is great, it is a beautiful building. Educators are getting a great building. It is an efficient building with a lot of access to outdoors. There is a park-like atmosphere. The number of fields has been increased. The green team is excited. They are making smart choices and not being frivolous. There is a lot of sunlight, natural ventilation, and the insulation has been upped so the building performs 40% better than code. All that is needed is support from the town. Dr. Finn stated this is a teaching tool for students, the impact of construction on their environment. Mr. Wedge excused himself at 7:25 pm to attend the Planning Ed meeting regarding the Willard Project.

Ms. Shannon asked Walter Birge, Finance Committee, if tonight's discussion was a good one. Mr. Birge stated the Finance Committee was aware that the issue of waiting until we heard from MSBA didn't make financial sense. He stated the discussion tonight was helpful.

Mr. Fondriest stated this school is not meeting educational needs. We need a Willard School, and the condition of the school doesn't make sense to throw \$10M at in repairs.

C. October 1 Enrollment Report

Dr. Finn stated the official enrollment report was distributed. There was not a significant decline in enrollment. It's mainly stable and only decreased by 7 students. Mr. Fischelis stated at the joint workshop the School Committee looked at enrollment numbers. We are looking at increasing METCO numbers at the high school. Mr. Flaherty stated there are a lot of variables with enrollment projections.

A. Preliminary Report for FinCom Guidelines Meeting

Dr. Finn stated she will have a report to respond to questions for the Finance Committee guidelines to School Committee members by Thursday morning. This will identify challenges in CPS and CCRSD, completed capital projects, future capital projects and long-term school initiatives (new school and renovations). They will then return in three weeks to answer questions.

IV RECOGNITION

A. CMS

Dr. Finn stated Mr. Unobskey would like to recognize sixth grade teachers who chaperoned students on the camping trip.

Ms. Shannon recognized the middle school in beginning a CCTV training program at the middle school as an after school program.

B. Willard

Dr. Finn stated Ms. Fernandes recognized the Willard staff in the time they've invested in meetings about the new school. She also recognized Gene Warfel and Sue Howard in the discussion for OMR on technology in the new building.

V REPORTS AND ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

D. Staff request to enroll student

Dr. Finn stated she received a letter from a teacher and has reviewed space needs and recommends this request be approved.

VI ACTION ITEMS

A. Vote regarding staff request to enroll two students at CPS

A MOTION was made by Ms. McGinn and seconded by Mr. Fondriest for CSC to approve Ms. Luby's request to enroll her children in the Concord Public Schools and that tuition be waived.

Ms. McGinn stated this is a great feature of the system. It is a benefit to faculty and the school community. Ms. Shannon stated other associations in the district have asked for this privilege and don't have it.

The MOTION was voted and unanimously approved.

B. Vote to approve language of New Willard School Article

A MOTION was made by Ms. McGinn and seconded by Mr. Fondriest for CSC to approve the language of the new Willard School Article for the Special Town Meeting of November 5, 2007 as:

To appropriate the sum of \$29,400,000 for the purpose of financing in part costs of capital construction, reconstruction, and equipping all or portions of the new Willard School building; and further that of said amount, \$1,215,000 shall be reserved as a construction bid contingency fund to be used solely for the purposes of funding construction bids that exceed the construction cost estimates amounting to \$24,300,000; and further, that to meet this appropriation the treasurer with the approval of the Board of Selectmen be authorized to borrow \$29,400,000 under G.L. Chapter 44, or Chapter 70B, or any other enabling authorities hereinbefore or hereinafter enacted, provided that the amounts required to pay for the bond issued are voted by the Town to be exempt from the limitation on total taxes imposed by G.L. Chapter 56, S21C (Proposition 2 ½), in accordance with clause (k) of said section.

The MOTION was unanimously approved.

VII OLD BUSINESS

VIII SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Concord Finance Committee Dates: 10/11, 11/1
FYI

B. November 5, 2007: Special Town Meeting
FYI

C. November 14-17: MASC/MASS Joint Conference at Four Points Sheraton, Hyannis
FYI

IX CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Walter Birge stated the Thursday meeting will start with the Joint meeting with Carlisle FinCom and then will go to the CPS meeting. It will not be televised.

Susanna Reid asked if there were plans for addressing the needs of academically advanced children. Ms. Shannon stated it is a goal of the School Committee this year to address this issue.

Terry Hackerman of the Finance Committee found the commend persuasive that two people on the School Committee wanted to renovate Willard initially but have been convinced that rebuilding is the right thing to do. She thinks that would be helpful for the people at Town Meeting.

X ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no other business, a MOTION was made by Ms. McGinn and seconded by Mr. Fondriest to adjourn the meeting of the Concord School Committee at 8:00 p.m. The MOTION was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura O'Sullivan
APPROVED: 10/23/07