

***CAPITAL PLANNING COMMITTEE***  
***Meeting Minutes Feb 28, 2024, 6:30***  
***PM***  
***Scituate Town Hall - Select Board***  
***Hearing Room***

- I. Invitees: Nancy Holt, Bill Burkhead, Tom Raab, Jon Lemieux, Chris Cataldo, Donald Walter  
a. Attendees, Paul Forrer, Michael Gibson, Chris Carchia, Richard Taft, Nicole Brandolini

II. Call to order

III. Approval of Agenda

IV. New Business

- a. Chris Carchia – Reviewed involvement in the construction budget process. Generally expressed positive review of the process and expertise by the various team members.
- b. School Construction Planning
  - i. Jon Lemieux – reviewed owner rep responsibilities as it relates to advising the town on the construction process.
  - ii. Bill Burkhead – Demolition of Cushing, not originally in the budget that added \$2.5M. Reviewed how input from select board was beneficial toward improving input from the community.
    - 1. Basic overview on need and program for new construction. MSBA has a limited number of schools that it awards grants for construction. In the first year of request for funds, the school was denied participation. Scituate was approved in the second year of application. MSBA is estimated to contribute \$36M toward the project.
    - 2. Details were provided explaining the need and benefits for a new elementary school.
      - a. Reasoning for consolidation of two schools into one and flexibility of new building design.
      - b. Improvements to Flannery Field will allow for community access.
      - c. More productive education space design will eliminate classrooms that are adjacent to gymnasium.
      - d. Educational flexible spaces that can accommodate different types of education requirements outside of the standard classroom. Hallways are designed with the capability of learning space. Two courtyards, unlike other buildings. Full Pre-K, with dedicated parking for safer egress for young children.
  - iii. Jon Lemieux – Reviewed overall project schedule with Gantt chart of milestones and progress to date.
    - 1. 23 potential designs were eventually narrowed down to current design. The potential designs included variations on renovation of existing buildings along with 4-5 different new construction designs. Retrofit plan design designs had estimated cost of \$62M. Practically, MSBA is

more stringent when approving retrofit / renovation projects. Construction escalation has been included in cost estimates with an average annual rate of 5% per year.

2. The current design development (DD) plans represent about a 30% complete set of construction documents. DD plans will be submitted on Feb 29 for state approval.
3. The construction team has met with every PTO group and has expressed its willingness to meet with more groups on an as needed basis.
4. Retrofit cost of both schools at \$62M is close to the cost new school expense, excluding site work. The biggest negative to retrofit is that it does not meet the educational needs as defined by the school administration.
5. Some discussion about the proposal that a retrofit project would increase future capital planning budget. There was a difference expressed on how capital planning budget would be affected by either a retrofit of existing schools or construction of a new school.
6. Landscape Plan – Project is intended to meet other community needs and not just a neighborhood education facility. Space for outdoor recreational areas are expected to be used by the wider community.
  - a. New building construction will coincide with operation of the existing Hatherly School. More clearing and sitework would have been required to locate the new school at the Cushing site. Those additional costs largely contributed to selecting the Hatherly site.
7. Reviewed site meeting with residents who abut the construction site to get input. Residents walked the proposed construction site with members of the School Construction Committee.
8. MSBA Formula and Enrollment
  - a. Total Cushing and Hatherly school enrollment is 618. Of the total approximately, 158 students would need to be redistricted to one of the other elementary schools.
  - b. MSBA originally had estimated that the need for school use was 350 and then increased its assessment to 460 students.
  - c. School Construction Committee investigate moving the entire Hatherly school population to reduce construction costs. The cost impact centered mostly on dirt movement and savings. One option for interim student location would be to transfer all Hatherly students into new school during construction which would result in higher student / teacher ratios.
  - d. Some future expansion is built into the school design. Should the school district grow, the school administration and committee have additional flexible by expanding the student to teacher ratio.
  - e. The project schedule has intermediate milestones for regular updates on cost estimates.
  - f. Some safety concerns of having library in the front main entrance. Security is structured so that the vestibule is an enclosed location that requires individuals to be buzzed in for access.
9. Project Budget Review
  - a. Original MSBA submission, \$ 120.1M, est MSBA - \$33.6M

- b. 30% Design Schematic is now at \$119.4, est MSBA - \$36M includes Cushing demo (\$2.8), Ann Vinal force main (\$360K), feasibility study (\$1.1), Construction Contingency (\$4.7M), Owners Contingency (\$1.9M)
        - i. Incentive points include 1% for opt-in energy efficiency design, 1% indoor air quality design, 1% maintenance programs, and others.
        - ii. MSBA reimbursement is regularly reviewed and will change based on a lot of factors. MSBA final grant value is determined prior to the Town Vote.
      - c. Town has estimated the total household cost and published it. Approx \$859 per year on a declining basis over 25 years. Bond rates will have a large impact the yearly debt expense. There is a chance the bond interest expense could be lower than the currently estimated 4.75%.
      - d. Reviewed vote process and “No” Vote policy.
        - i. No vote would result in a 5-year re-application process for access to the MSBA Grant process. 5 Year delay would increase construction by 20-25% for the same building design.
      - e. Current construction budgeting uses median estimate of cost increases. Increases the chances the actual bid results will come in below budget estimates.
- 10. The School Building Committee decided not to pursue geothermal HVAC system that had reimbursement risk from the Federal Government.
- 11. Building is somewhat unique to Scituate based on a combination of factors. Design chosen was not considered the most expensive option.
- 12. Courtyards were designed with an eye on safety. Courtyard will use a synthetic field design to mitigate long term maintenance requirements.
- 13. The construction group architect expressed a belief that the original 2020 cost estimate of \$85M was only intended for construction cost not other site costs. Using that line reasoning, the current building construction cost of \$82M is very close to the original budget.
- 14. The School Building Committee has included various cost reduction options to bring the project down to the current \$120M budget. Some of the items included less expensive construction materials, such as flooring materials, and some reduction in the size of the exterior glass and brick. Those cost reduction efforts were reported to have lowered overall construction costs by \$5-7M.

#### V. Old Business

#### VI. Approval of Minutes - Vote to approve - Dec 12 Meeting Minutes – approved 4-0-1.