

**Town of Hull  
School Building Committee Meeting  
Thursday, January 16, 2020**

In attendance:

David Clinton  
Michael Devine  
David DeGennaro  
Paul Dunphy  
Anthony Hrivnak  
Phil Lemnios  
Eric Hipp

Absent:

Lucas Patenaude  
Domenico Sestito

The School Building Committee meeting was held in the Louis Costa Room at Hull Town Hall, 253 Atlantic Avenue.

1. **Call to Order:** Phil Lemnios called the School Building Committee meeting to order at 5:01pm.

He explained this Committee has a focus on the Memorial Middle School. The Town has filed an application with the MSBA which assists cities and towns financially with renovation work and building projects. There is an intensive application process and we are through about one third of the process and they have invited us to do an assessment of the project they've deemed eligible. Now more information is needed of a higher, technical nature that wasn't included in the preliminary application.

This meeting is being video recorded and broadcast. If anyone else is recording this meeting, please identify yourself so that I may make an announcement.

2. **Approval of Agenda:** *Dave Clinton made a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Tony Hrivnak seconded the motion. All approved.*

3. **Approval of Minutes**

- 3.1. **November 21, 2019 Minutes**

- Paul Dunphy made a motion to approve the November 21, 2019 School Building Committee minutes. Tony Hrivnak seconded the motion. All approved.*

4. **New Business**

- 4.1. **Update on the schedule and the process.** Dave DeGennaro informed the Committee that we had a conversation with the MSBA in the beginning of January and they are suggesting we change our original schedule to one that would get us funding approval for the feasibility study at Town Meeting first and procure OPM services second. Phil Lemnios reminded the Committee this project has three main components, window replacement, rooftop HVAC and brick work addressing the exterior envelope of the building. We have already gone to town meeting this past May and had a \$46,000

allocation set aside to hire the necessary expertise to do the feasibility study. The MSBA has come back and said we need to have enough money in place for the feasibility study, the project manager and to bring it through bid specification in the event we qualify for the next round, including schematic design. They are estimating that cost to be about \$400,000.

Our staff has heard that number and are struggling with it because the estimated total project value is between \$1.4M and \$1.6M. We wonder why this portion is such a high percentage of the total project value and our experience tells us that's a very high ratio for professional services. We have made inquiries and the MSBA did not shed a lot of light on how they're coming up with that number. Dave DeGennaro noted the MSBA has given us a spreadsheet with four different district projects they consider comparable to ours but those total project costs themselves are much higher. As an example, Provincetown's project was \$7.3M and they spent \$229,000 on their feasibility study so we are still struggling with why we need the \$400,000 because some of these other towns are spending less.

Dave DeGennaro said the MSBA is asking us to go to Town Meeting to get a supplemental appropriation since we already received approval for \$46,000 and then after we have the funding in place that will help us get more responses to our RFS. Otherwise we would have to include a clause stating the award is contingent upon Town Meeting approval. Phil Lemnios said we did tell the MSBA we don't understand why there is such a big variance, and we also asked if it would be possible to put the bid out for services and then have it due a week or two before town meeting so we could plug the number into the motion. This way we would have bid it contingent upon funding, which is done fairly commonly on large projects. The MSBA did not like that idea and now redirected us to this process which is to get that approval to spend up to that amount and then do the bid process. Dave DeGennaro said in addition, the MSBA believes if we put that clause in the bid, it may limit the number of bidders. Phil Lemnios said it might but on the other end he's concerned if we put \$400,000 in there we will get a lot of bidders at \$400,000 for something that's not worth that amount. Eric Hipp noted it may also be difficult to get that appropriation at town meeting. Dave DeGennaro noted that when reviewing the bids, we are looking at qualifications first and we negotiate cost with the bidders of our choice later. Mike Devine added those bidders will know there is a \$400,000 appropriation. Phil Lemnios said the bidder selection process is driven by MGL, so if we put out the bid and get five bidders back they each have two packages -- one which is the non-price proposal and will describe their approach to the project, and the other will be a price proposal. We would assemble the selection sub-committee to look at the non-price proposals and determine which ones we want to interview -- one or all. Each firm would come in and make a presentation and based on that, the sub-committee would select the firm they feel would best serve the project. Then the price proposals would be opened and you would start a negotiation process with that firm. If you hit a road block and are not satisfied with the negotiated price, you can go to the second and proceed down the list in that fashion. The dilemma is you'll see a clustering.

Dave Clinton asked if there is any movement to go back to the MSBA and say this is very disparate. Phil Lemnios said we have done that a couple times but they seem to be pretty firm. We've had discussions with several people there and he suspects we will have another conversation with them. In addition, these are not particularly complex projects, we are replacing windows but not changing the window size and its all known stuff, there isn't an expansion to the HVAC system, it's replacing the mechanics, and we're not adding new runs or vents.

Paul Dunphy asked if step 1 is getting the \$1.5M at Town Meeting. Also does the MSBA anticipate that \$1.5M amount will not get it done? Phil Lemnios said what will come out of this process, in part, is a finer tuned number. The feasibility study will take the information from Thompson and Lichtner and update those estimates to fine tune it to the point you can write a bid spec. Maybe the estimate is lower than the actual costs are going to be. Phil Lemnios said our estimate for all of it, the feasibility study, the project management and to bring it through to bid spec and project management on the back end is maybe a 15% number. The mechanical is straight forward, we are not changing anything or putting on additions so there is not a lot of architectural work with these three projects. Paul Dunphy asked if we are back at town meeting for the cost. Phil Lemnios responded yes, next May. This May we will have to get the supplemental appropriation. Once we have the results of the feasibility study we can then navigate the next step of the MSBA process which is when they accept the feasibility study and we go back to Town Meeting for a bond authorization to actually do the work.

**4.2 Update on Funding Strategies:** Phil Lemnios told the Committee right now our MSBA reimburse rate is 48%, which leads him to a second discussion. We have a project that is worth about \$1.6M, for the sake of discussion, that is three distinct projects. They do not have the same design element as a reconstruction project. If it were not for the MSBA, we would bid the three separately because they are three different, distinct types of work. We would realize about \$800,000 of value from the MSBA. The question he's raising is while waiting to go through this process, which is about another two more years, would it make more sense to just fund the projects and forego the MSBA process. The other advantage is it takes out of the equation, if we were to consolidate. We would remove that string from the building which the MSBA currently has in their contracts that the building remains a school for a period of time.

He said he had asked Mike Buckley to work up some numbers. Mike Buckley told the Committee the average debt service on \$1.6M is a little more than \$110,000 a year, the average debt service on \$900,000 would be about \$70,000. Phil Lemnios said for the \$40,000 differential in the first year, we could get the project done now and we could buy the flexibility of the building which does not diminish the School Committee's authority. We take the State out of it and it leaves the decision of building usage locally. He believes it is worth the premium, which will decrease each year.

Paul Dunphy said we could take the \$46,000 and hire a contractor and start now. His main goal would be to tighten the building and eliminate the water infiltration. Let's take what we've got and get a contractor to do that work and be on our way. Phil Lemnios said grant money is great but sometimes we have to consider the strings associated with grant money. You also have to look at the time element. We are still 24 to 30 months from getting an answer and although it is probable, there is no guarantee they will fund our project in the end. Meanwhile we will still be having water infiltration and other issues persisting for that much longer. He does not consider the differential an overwhelming amount to get the flexibility to get the work done earlier because in the next 24 to 30 months you could get more damage.

Eric Hipp said he just came into this recently, but obviously the \$400,000 for a \$1.6M project does not make any sense, so the town jumping in and moving forward makes a lot more sense. Phil Lemnios said one of the issues is the sealing of the bricks, which is not sufficient so water is getting behind the brick and into the wall system. There is also some lintel work around the windows. Eric Hipp asked if there is more that's required as far as planning that's needed. Phil Lemnios said he thinks for the brick work, we would need to reengage with Thompson and Lichtner and have them update their study and give us an order of cost. Their report is about 2 or 3 years old now. They would need to reinvestigate the areas of concern and determine if there are any new areas they're concerned about. We should get a good cost estimate and they could be the designer of record for that project, they are a nationally recognized firm for that type of work. The windows are relatively straight forward – there are only six windows which are not complex. The HVAC is a plug and play solution set and that is not an overwhelming design issue. Phil Lemnios said Paul is correct, you could start by taking a piece of the \$46,000 and freshen up that report and get a cost estimate for what it would cost for them to quarterback the project for us and then put a bond in place for whatever we need. He said he is looking at the time element and the flexibility due to where the community is on school buildings in general and keeping that a purely local decision. The premium is relatively small.

Eric Hipp agreed it makes a lot of sense to move forward this way. We've applied for the MSBA program three times so we've already been waiting a long time. He said the School Committee hired the (building usage) consultant and they are expecting a report next spring regarding the utilization of all the buildings. Phil Lemnios stated this is not designed to drive that discussion because no matter how the building is utilized, it is a town building and it needs to be maintained. Phil Lemnios said those who were here during the original project discussions will remember that one thing that came up was people believe cities and towns don't do enough to maintain their buildings. People would ask what we were going to do to maintain the buildings. We did say we would come to a point in the life cycle of the buildings that we'd have to do things outside of the typical maintenance. He noted he is impressed each time he goes to the high school, which is the school he has occasion to visit the most, with the day-to-day maintenance. The floors are always shining and we are upholding that pledge and we are doing what

we're supposed to do on a daily basis. By bringing this forward, we are upholding the other part of the pledge about when these other, larger systems needs attention, we are going to bring it to town meeting and see what people want to do and not just ignore it because we're afraid to have the discussion. We don't want to end up with crumbling buildings like we had before. Doing it this way puts us in better shape long term. Mike Devine noted the Memorial School interior, which was part of the renovation, is still in fantastic shape. It is just the exterior that was not taken care of years ago.

Phil Lemnios said we can do it one of two ways. Prepare two articles -- one for \$355,000 or so for the MSBA, which is the difference between what was already approved (\$46,000) and the \$400,000 the MSBA says we need. The second article would be for the total project value without state assistance and we can have this discussion at town meeting. We need to come out of town meeting with one of these options approved. We can make them an A and B option in the same article, so we can have the discussion at the same time or link the two somehow. Phil Lemnios asked the Committee if they want them to prepare those two articles so the committee can continue the discussion and develop a strategy.

Dave Clinton asked what happens if we have two articles and they both pass. Phil Lemnios respond the committee then would have a decision to make but he doesn't think that is likely to happen. We need to tell people we want one outcome. The warrant is closing first week of February. Tonight he wanted to lay out these two roads and then give people an opportunity to think about it. He would recommend we at least put place holders on the warrant and dive into these strategies. Mike Devine said he agrees with that but noted the School Committee would need to have a discussion about it since they voted to join the MSBA process, as well as the Selectmen, so he believes it would take another vote of the School Committee to leave that process. If both boards make that decision prior to town meeting, you could just pull one. Phil Lemnios stated our original application was submitted in FY16 so the problem is going on five years now and the earliest it will be resolved with the MSBA track will be seven to eight years. If you had leaky windows in your house, would you wait seven years to fix it if you had an alternate route to address it?

Eric Hipp asked if we should go ahead and engage Thompson and Lichtner now to update the report and get a better number. Phil Lemnios said we should get a cost from them to do that and take it out of \$46,000 appropriation. Dave Clinton noted he likes the idea of preparing two articles because it gives us flexibility to make a decision between now and May.

Phil Lemnios suggested a motion, which is not an endorsement but is to develop strategies, to submit two articles, one to do the funding the MSBA is requesting to augment the funding already in place for the feasibility study and the second article is a bonding authorization on the full project amount. Paul Dunphy asked to clarify that we would have two motions and our recommendation on the first would be to decline and

support the second? Dave Clinton said the School Committee and Board of Selectmen will revisit the idea of engaging with the MSBA. In his mind that article gets pulled if they decide against continuing with the MSBA and we have the other article for the full project. If they want to keep them both on the table as options, we would have a heavy emphasis on one rather than the other. Phil Lemnios said the challenge is this group will ultimately have to take a position and report back to the School Committee and Board of Selectmen. Dave DeGennaro noted in the meantime we will still have to continue to be on track with the MSBA schedule which has an April 23 due date for the draft RFS at least until there has been a final determination. *Dave Clinton made a motion to submit two articles, one to do the funding the MSBA is requesting to augment the funding already in place for the feasibility study and the second article is a bonding authorization on the full project amount. Mike Devine seconded the motion. All approved.*

*Eric Hipp made a motion to give authority to Mike Devine and Phil Lemnios to approve, if it's a reasonable cost estimate, reengaging Thompson and Lichtner to refresh the report. Mike Devine seconded the motion. All approved.*

#### 4.3 Future meeting dates:

Phil Lemnios said he would like to set the next School Building Committee meeting date for February 13 beginning at 5:00pm. The deliverables for that meeting are:

- Update on the status of Thompson and Lichtner
  - They should be engaged by that time
  - When updated cost estimate will be ready
- A timeline that shows the MSBA milestones which includes
  - The process,
  - Town Meeting,
  - Anticipated bids,
  - How long the Feasibility Study would take,
  - Remaining MSBA modules
- Mike Buckley will prepare
  - Draft warrants articles
  - Financial runs
- Financial analysis that compares project cost (Phil, Dave, Mike Buckley)
  - w/ MSBA assistance on \$1.6M project + \$400k feasibility study = \$2M and 48% reimbursement
  - vs. w/o MSBA doing the projects individually
  - 20 year bond rate schedule

Phil Lemnios asked that this list of deliverables be sent to all the committee members before the minutes are done.

#### 5. Adjournment

*Mike Devine made a motion to adjourn the meeting Paul Dunphy seconded the motion. All approved.* The meeting adjourned at 5:43pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbe Bennett  
Recording Secretary

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**Documents**

The following documents were included in the members' packets or were presented during the meeting and are available upon request:

- Meeting Agenda
- Module 2 Revised Schedule