

Building Committee Meeting
February 23, 2022
6:00 - 7:00pm

Attendees: Stacy Maghakian, Chip McGee, Dave Mermelstein, Darlene Greenwood, Debbie Ryan, Pattie Lamontagne, Troy Bressette, Abigail King, Deb Mahoney, David Wholey, Billy Beauchesne, Jason Croteau, Kristen Corey, Brian Sands, Jennifer Grover, Tracy Collyer (guest)

Not in Attendance: Morgan Benson

Chip began the meeting by introducing Tracy Collyer who is a current Principal in Salem and shadowing Chip as a superintendent in training.

Chip stated that it was great to see everyone and that he has 5 agenda items that were sent out to everyone before the meeting. He also wants to address 2 big questions, both having to do with budget management.

Chip asked if anyone has any questions about the agenda?

No response.

Budget and Timeline Updates

- Chip shared that for those who have not been around the PMS site, enormous progress is being made. The steel has arrived on site and they have erected the steel in the kitchen, the hallway, and one of the new side entrances where parent drop off will be. All structural steel is on site and they have been very busy. The Project Management Team, BPNS, has received all the significant bids and are going back and forth with the bidders to see what ideas they have for value engineering/budget management – what we can do for less or where things were overdesigned.
- Chip continued stating that our big worry has been making sure we stay on budget, work the timeline, and make decisions about what the building is going to look like. In order to get us back in line with the budget we have looked at things that are zero-impact on program and never in the design to begin with.
- Chip stated that Holly Doe is looking at it as well, and a whole lot more drops are designed into the building than we need. They have 12 per class and 4 per class are sufficient for our needs. Holly will continue to look at things like that.
- Chip added that we have removed pavers and benches added by the design team, things that were never intended to be part of it. However, we still have a long way to go to get back on track.

Budget Management/Value Engineering

- Chip continued with looking at items that are interrelated - the connector, the hallway with classrooms, the front part with offices, and the hallway past the café and gym.
- Chip stated that by the gym is going to become a big wide entrance.
- Chip explained that the connector was to connect to the band room and loop back around to connect to the core building but he has the following issues:
 - Courtyards look great in architectural design but are rarely used.

- They are difficult to maintain and require extra maintenance and a larger opening to get lawn mowers through.
- They are noisy because it echos.
- It creates a fire hazard for the egress and the fire department does not like students in them.
- Chip asked that, because of these concerns, if we could entertain not building the connector. He stated that we don't need it resolved now but he wouldn't take it out without the committee saying it's ok.
- Chip went on to discuss lockers stating that with how kids use lockers, it's important that they have them. From what he sees, students use them intensely, but the lockers are huge and take up a lot of space.
- Chip continued that at PHS they don't use them. There are 650 in the building and there are 10-20 in use. The students zip around the building all day and it doesn't make sense for them to use the lockers.
- Chip proposed that we take 400 of the lockers from PHS (which he already ran past Dawn Mead) and move them from PHS to Memorial. They are doubles, one on top of the other, and 12 inches wide instead of 18. That would allow us to work hard to have lockers on one wall of the hallways instead of both walls. Chip stated that part of the reason for the connector was because the hallways get very crowded.
- Chip emphasized that FACS, Steam, Art, Music, Band, Gym and science rooms are not on the table. The renovations to each class to make sure they are up to date can't be on the table. And he wouldn't want to plan on this sort of change without the committee's input.
- Chip stated that the new kitchen, new café, new stage – all of the stuff originally specified - will be in there unless we talk about it. For trade-offs, he thinks the back corridor is worth a discussion.
- Chip said he would like to start by having the committee ask questions.
- Pattie asked if the lockers were going in the hall because she thought the lockers were going to be in side-rooms with benches.
- Chip responded that we will have some lockers in common areas in open spaces for each team but we won't be able to fit every locker in there without that space becoming too small.
- Pattie asked if the connector was the one we were having in the original plan?
- John Gould stated that in the original plan there was a potential of having 5th graders and that was a means of keeping them from 8th graders. But that is no longer the case.
- Chip stated that kids in the current Spanish room would have to walk downstairs and walk all around the building to get to Art/Phys Ed – like they do now.
- Billy asked if, for that open space, there would still be an open courtyard?
- Chip replied yes - 3 sides.
- Billy asked if, for recess, is there a place for recess and can that area be utilized for that?
- Chip responded that a lot of the paved area will be available, the softball field will be returned to a softball field, and the large septic field and field hockey field where the portables are will also be available.
- David Wholey asked if, with not having lockers on both sides, and he thinks pulling lockers from PHS is a great idea, what will be the additional cost to finish that area?

- Chip replied that that was an excellent question. We're also thinking about the walls when taking the lockers out of PHS.
- David M added that the construction managers are looking at all costs and know there are costs to finishing, but overall there is a savings. Getting rid of the connector saves \$450K.
- Brian Sands added that this ends up being a cost savings measure even with finishing the walls at PMS and PHS. The effort is well worth the savings vs. purchasing new lockers.
- Chip asked Abby if we should keep the current lockers and paint them?
- Abby replied that that was not a bad idea. She does sports and needs to put a second bag in the locker. She is not sure if they would fit in the smaller PHS lockers.
- Chip asked Brian what the height of the PHS lockers is.
- Brian responded that they are 12" wide with the same depth but he wasn't 100% sure.
- Chip added that he is worried if the PMS lockers still work in terms of locks and mechanics.
- Billy asked that, since the current locker rooms we have will no longer be the locker room for PE, is there a way that the lockers from the hallway can be put in the downstairs for sports equipment?
- Chip replied that the downstairs space for a lot of reasons is going away. It needs to be accessible by someone with a disability and there is no way to make it that way without a big expense. The lockers in the gym are worth keeping in mind if we can do something there.
- Chip stated that this will change the picture of what was presented to town.
- David Wholey added that he thinks we presented this including the connecting hallway as a safety security upgrade to the building. He understands the upkeep but without having a loop from one side of the school to the other, instead of scattering them across the parking lot, it will allow them to go to one side and secure the other. We also talked about the courtyard being used for outdoor classrooms. Also, the Covid situation – PHS was made into a one-way to move around. PMS was not able to do that. It would allow the school to have that one way if needed. It was pitched as a security measure.
- Darlene added that her concern is that it was presented to the townspeople as that was what was going to be built. We will lose credibility and people will think we are trying to hide things. If we didn't build it, would there be a door at one end of both sides so they could go across?
- Chip responded yes, that could happen, but it would be a no passing area.
- John Gould stated that the difference between when this was approved and when we have to execute is \$4.5M. What we're not discussing is nearly a \$.5M cut has to come from somewhere else. For selling it to town, I understand safety components but the focus should remain on the programming. If we have to cut somewhere else, then we're losing a tower or classroom. From an operating perspective, safety is important but we fail as a group if we can't deliver the programming aspect. It's also going to come down to finances. It's going to be a different landscape than from when this was approved.
- Chip stated that we need to further consider what are the set of issues we need to address and feel confident in if we make this change. For the connector it's security and explaining the cost challenges we have.

- Chip said he doesn't know if instruction or the outdoor classroom needs to be addressed but asked if there are other issues the town would have expected and might be surprised by with this change?
- Chip said we don't need a decision now but we are going to need one. The good news from the BPNS and Trident aspect is that this does not have to be solved until the end because they are going to build it last. We have time but it will help us with the budget challenge.
- Dave Wholey asked if we have looked into alternative finishes for that hallway? Is there an option of reducing the finishes if the committee feels we need to maintain that connector?
- Chip replied yes, we would have to look at other places to get us back on budget. Chip asked Dave if he had begun looking at finishes.
- Dave M replied yes, interior, exterior, roofing types, and the option of building a canopy structure, but that doesn't help with security concerns.
- Chip stated that we have homework to do on this one.

Minutes

- Chip asked everyone please take a look at the minutes so we can get a motion to approve.
- Darlene Greenwood stated she can make a motion.
- Billy Beauchesne seconded the motion.
- Chip asked if there was any discussion?
- Chip asked all those in favor of approving the minutes to hold up your hand.
- The Minutes were unanimously approved.

Other Questions and Comments

- Darlene stated that she wanted to propose that we name the new library the Eleanor Burton because of her immeasurable involvement with the town.
- Pattie responded that she loved the idea and thinks it's wonderful.
- Troy added that it was a nice continuation of what this school is all about.
- Deb Ryan stated that she absolutely agrees as well. It's fitting to actually have another memorialization. But we just want to make sure it wasn't memorialized to anyone prior.
- Chip and Stacy both responded that it is not currently memorialized.
- Darlene said that she was a school board member for 8 years, chair, taught at PES, was a girl scout leader, worked with the congregational church, and a champion for children. Darlene said her initial thought was to rename PES but the cost was too much. This was a way to do it while we are already doing construction.
- Darlene continued that she came to all the senior projects and was very invested with all of the students in our town. She worked in Title 1 at PES - her daughter gave her a whole resume.
- Chip stated that there is clearly interest and support and for the next meeting let's work to put something more specific down. There's not a naming policy in Pelham so let's do it formally here and we can let the Board know of this direction.
- Darlene added that we can look at PES to see what that looks like.
- Chip asked if there were other questions.
- Darlene asked if we should do a dedication as part of re-opening?

- Pattie added that a lot of retired teachers would like to attend.
- Chip asked if there were other topics for tonight or for a future agenda?
- No response.
- Chip stated that we will come back to connector and Memorial at the next meeting and Don't forget to vote March 8th.

Meeting Adjourned 6:46pm