

**ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
School Building Committee (SBC) Approved Minutes**

Superintendent's Conference Room 13  
Administration Building, 15 Charter Road, Acton, MA 01720

January 31, 2018  
7:00 p.m.

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**Members Present:** Mary Brolin, Amy Krishnamurthy, Dennis Bruce, Bill McAlduff, Marie Altieri, Peter Berry, Jason Cole, Bob Evans, JD Head, Adam Klein, Lynne Newman, Maria Neyland, Katie Raymond, Mac Reid, Damian Sugrue.

**Members Absent:** Rob Bukowski, Brian Griffin, Ted Kail, Steve Mielke, Chris Whitbeck.

**Other:** Dave Verdolino, Karen Coll.

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1. Mary Brolin called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.
2. **Minutes** - Maria Neyland moved, Mac Reid seconded, and the minutes of the December 13, 2017 Building Committee meeting were unanimously approved. Mary noted that Bill McAlduff had given a great explanation of the MSBA process, and referred members to page 2 of the 12/13 minutes.
3. **MSBA Update**

Members reviewed the study enrollment certification letter, which included the details behind the projections. Bill McAlduff and Marie Altieri summarized the progress to date. Enrollment information was submitted in July, along with information on housing, births, etc. The projections made by the MSBA were initially lower than ours. After reviewing additional information provided by the district, including maps of every room in the schools, they revised their 10-year average projections and building size. While the proposed building will be quite large, it will probably not be big enough to handle to highest peak in enrollment; additional space may have to be included in the next renovation/replacement project at Conant.

Bill commented that MSBA has refined its process over the years, becoming more user-friendly and accurate, and easier to work with.

Jason Cole asked what impact our space planning, including the preschool space, might have on the reimbursement rate. Bill said that MSBA has guidelines for allowable uses of space, such as size limits on cafeterias and gyms; if we want to exceed those guidelines, we would have to negotiate with MSBA and the additional space would not be included as a reimbursable cost. MSBA does not typically address preschools or have guidelines for them, but space has been included in the proposed building for eight pre-K classrooms plus support space.

Adam Klein said that there might be concerns raised about some of the potential space utilization changes outlined in the enrollment certification letter, particularly the conversion of the science lab at Blanchard to regular classroom use. Many Blanchard families have strong feelings about the science lab and might be opposed to giving it up. The enrollment letter has been posted in the School Committee packet and is a public document. We should recognize and be prepared to address their concerns. Bill noted that these are only planning items at this point, and that further discussion will be required, including the equity of having a science lab at only one of the elementary schools. Mac Reid said that, because we don't have neighborhood schools in the district and families choose and take pride in their schools for diverse reasons, 'equity' doesn't mean that all

schools have to have the same things, although Damian Sugrue pointed out that there are already concerns among some families about 'have' and 'have not' schools and programs. Marie said that Blanchard is already struggling with a lack of space; the tradeoff will be class sizes versus specialty spaces.

#### **4. Request for Services for Owner's Project Manager – Update and Input**

Members reviewed the Feasibility Study Agreement document. Bill explained how cost estimates for the OPM and designer listed in the agreement were derived, largely based on the experience at other similar projects. Typically, fees for the OPM are about 35%-45% of the total cost of the feasibility study; there are similar guidelines for designer fees and other costs, plus a small amount for contingencies. Designer fees usually also include some contingency or contracted services expenses. We will have to negotiate fees with prospective OPMs and designers. The feasibility agreement will also need legal review to be sure it agrees with the A-B regional agreement and other factors.

Exhibit C in the feasibility agreement spells out the reimbursement rate calculation, including potential incentive points. Some incentive point opportunities have been dropped over time, such as a 1% bonus for using a construction manager at risk. The two categories that could apply to our project are for maintenance and energy efficiency; both offer a maximum of two percentage points, but it is unlikely that we could get the full amounts. The reimbursement calculation will be revisited at the time we develop our project scope and sequence in about 18 months, and the factors could change by then. MSBA allows applicants to request a second look if they are dissatisfied with the rate.

Peter Berry asked for clarification of when the feasibility phase ended and the design phase began. Bill referred to Exhibit B in the feasibility agreement, which states that we have to look at the feasibility of all three possible options: a Douglas/Gates twin school, a Douglas/Conant twin school and a standalone Douglas school. Simply renovating Douglas will probably be ruled out fairly quickly, as renovations of 30% or more of the value of the building trigger a number of safety, accessibility and other code requirements that would greatly increase the project cost. Although we have identified our preferred plan, we also need to look at other options in case the Gates site doesn't work out.

Committee members were given a packet of information for later review about the process for selecting and hiring an OPM and designer. The timeline going forward will depend on how quickly MSBA can review and approve our RFS, at which point we can begin a search for an OPM. Once the district, typically through a Building Committee subcommittee, solicits applications from OPMs, candidates are brought in for interviews and the subcommittee will develop a ranking document. Using the ranking document, the district will select a preferred candidate and will negotiate a fee. A draft OPM contract will be prepared and submitted to an MSBA OPM review panel, which will need to approve the selection of the OPM. The OPM review panel often includes representatives of the school district in their meetings but there is no guarantee. The OPM review panel also often agrees with the district's preferred OPM but, again, that is not guaranteed.

Because the OPM selection process is qualifications-based, it is more flexible than a strictly price-based selection. Bill said that typically all proposals come from large firms that do this type of project on a regular basis, and they will be familiar with the MSBA process and how it works. Some firms do both OPM and design work.

#### **5. Additional Planning to Move Forward**

Mary said that, in addition to JD Head and Katie Raymond, the current committee membership could use more engineering and construction expertise, as well as more representation from the Boxborough Finance

Committee. Mary has emailed members who have not attended recent meetings to see if they plan to remain on the committee. She is also looking for recommendations of other people with those types of expertise. Bill added that the committee could also use an architect.

Katie raised the question of a possible extension of the town sewer system to the West Acton/Gates area. That could affect cost of construction and could also benefit West Acton businesses. JD is a member of a committee looking at this issue. The discussion is on hold for now, but the group would be interested in working with schools. The sewer is not a prerequisite for construction of a new school building; JD commented that sewers are probably the greenest option but there are other good solutions. Mary clarified by saying that the district would only pay what a separate wastewater disposal solutions would cost us, not more in an effort to support the sewer expansion. The sewer expansion committee would be happy to talk with the school building committee about our potential interest in the project.

Bill said that, as part of the feasibility study, the designer will ask us about sewers and will reach out to the engineer working on the sewer committee. JD said that people in Acton have strong opinions about sewer expansion, and that it could become a politically charged conversation.

6. Amy Krishnamurthy moved, Katie Raymond seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:04pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Karen H. Coll

Documents Used:

MSBA Study Enrollment Certification, 1-23-18

MSBA Feasibility Study Agreement Document, Douglas School (unexecuted)

Next Building Committee Meetings (all in RJ Grey Library unless otherwise noted):

March 14 (Note: Meeting will be in Superintendent's Conference Room)

April 11

May 9

June 13 (Note: Meeting will be in Superintendent's Conference Room)