

## High School Building Committee Meeting Minutes

**Meeting date & place:** 6:30 pm, November 14, 2017, Pentucket High School Cafeteria

**Members Present:** Bill O’Neil, Glenn Kemper, Carol McLeod, Greg Labrecque, Denise Dembkoski, Michael Stevens, Jonathan Seymour, Emily Dwyer, Wayne Adams, Bill Daley, Kim Jackson, Greg Hadden, Jeff Mulqueen, Stephanie Seeley, Joseph Torrisi, Andy Murphy, Elisa Grammer. **Members not present:** Dena Trotta, Laura Costigan, Mark Tocci, Joel Breen.

**Owner’s Project Manager:** Steve Theran, Vertex.

**Designer:** Brad Dore, Jason Boone, Jon Richardson, Dore & Whittier.

**Public present:** Tom Flaherty, West Newbury Citizen.

### Minutes

Committee Chairman Seymour presented draft minutes of the School Building Committee’s October 10, 2017 meeting. Ms. Grammer proposed two corrections. *The Committee approved the revised draft minutes unanimously.*

### Working Group Update

Jon Richardson of Dore & Whittier reported that the Working Group has been primarily preparing for the visioning sessions and planning the tour of the Gates Middle School in Scituate. He noted that the team’s theatrical consultant, focusing on drama and music areas, had visited. Additionally, the Existing Conditions reports of various engineers and others have been written up and a report will be presented in the near future.

Mr. Richardson briefly reviewed where the Pentucket project is in the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) timeline, noting that we are on track. Dore & Whittier’s Jason Boone noted that in addition to the visioning sessions, there will be a couple of opportunities for public input sessions in the next months.

### Board of Selectmen Presentation Update

Mr. Dore of Dore & Whittier reported that meetings to make a presentation (described in the October meeting) had been held with the Boards of Selectmen in Groveland and then Merrimac. These went pretty well. A meeting with the West Newbury selectmen will occur in the next couple of weeks. The meeting in Merrimac was not well attended. In Groveland, an important question arose about phasing construction while nearby school is in session—how to minimize disruption to existing students? Mr. O’Neill of Groveland, present at that meeting, stated that the selectmen seemed enthusiastic and pleased with the proposed project.

### Visioning Sessions Update

Mr. Boone said that fifty-one participants were at the first visioning session and close to eighty have signed up for the one planned for November 15. The initial session addressed changes in the world and in education, with various workshop projects among small groups. Data from this session is being

synthesized into a short report. Additionally, the session was filmed (as is planned for all visioning sessions) and a short and longer edited versions will be made available for viewing.

In terms of impressions and feedback, Ms. Dwyer noted that those attending the session were very positive but concerns have been raised about getting more people involved. West Newbury was heavily represented; the other towns less so. She stressed that it is important to elicit more involvement, particularly from other towns and with voters who may not have schoolchildren themselves. It's important to spread the word to ensure an inclusive and transparent process.

Mr. Kemper observed that participants genuinely felt their views meant something: the consultants and others were really listening. He attributed increased attendance at the upcoming session to highly positive buzz on social media. Mr. Stevens concurred, and praised the student participants as highly articulate.

Mr. Boone replied that the upcoming session will be even more active. The plan is to put a pen in people's hands so they can help frame organizational and other concepts. Mr. Dore encouraged the School Building Committee members to participate in the visioning sessions.

### **Completed School Construction Project: Gates Middle School Scituate**

Mr. Richardson discussed a Pentucket contingent's November 9, 2017 visit to the Gates Middle School in Scituate, which Dore & Whittier design and which just opened. He explained that Scituate went through whole process Pentucket is embarking on; the new Gates Middle School is attached to the high school; the Gates school is using project based learning and thus flexibility, spillability and interdisciplinary use of space were priorities. He described the school as containing: full classrooms; openness, movable walls and interior windows for visibility; extensive connection for teams-based teaching organization; a [hellerup stair](#) for dining and presentation space; and several other presentation spaces that can seat a grade or two. It was also noted that after much community discussion the 6<sup>th</sup> grade was included in the Gates School. This made additional space free the elementary school to house music and other programs.

In reaction to the tour, Ms. Grammer observed that this was like no school she ever experienced. The library consisted of bookshelves against walls in common spaces with a librarian who was a sort of concierge—and circulation had spiked upward. Also, this was an LEED certified building that offered a vernal pool integrated with hands-on study as well as such things as windows that open and prevalent, well-managed natural light. Plus, it's gorgeous. Mr. Kemper agreed, noting that the children seemed happier with greater flexibility in space and operations, the library without walls appears very successful, and the contrast between the new middle school and the highly traditional high school was stark.

Mr. Dore continued that the adjacent Scituate middle and high schools (separated by locked doors) present two very different cultures. The middle school is highly flexible in its space and its utilization while the high school is very traditional. Several 6<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, he noted, helped run our tour. They prized the building's flexibility and the break out areas that allow them to work on projects in smaller groups. Mr. Boone added that in discussions with middle school students (who are at a stage of transition and finding their place) he learned that having the chance to use smaller breakout spaces with fewer students in a work group is less intimidating.

Mr. Seymour said it was rewarding, just having completed the first visioning session, to then see a school that was the product of Scituate's visioning process. Of particular interest was the flexibility of the space—and how that was actually used. Superintendent Mulqueen stressed the flexibility in the space and the way the administration, teachers, and students used it. The contrast between the old high school and the new middle school building was striking: the high school was a traditional one where students appeared to be controlled, contained or managed, whereas the new middle school spaces afforded students choice, flexibility, autonomy, self-management.

This, Dr. Mulqueen said, provided a very welcoming climate where teachers and students could rise to a new level with mutual respect. It was noted that one principal vision for the Gates school was “Respect.” This ultimately manifested with choices for educators and students among different learning environments.

### **Construction Delivery Method: Construction Manager vs. Design Bid, Build**

Mr. Dore explained that MSBA historically used a Design Bid, Build construction management approach, in which a General Contractor (GC) supervises subcontractors in various specialties, all of whom including the GC are selected by lowest bid. With a recent statutory change, a Construction Management at Risk (CMR) approach, which is prevalent in the private sector, is now allowed.

Mr. Dore identified a number of advantages to the CMR approach:

- Pentucket can choose its own Construction Manager (CM), as opposed to using the lowest bidder for GC. A smaller group selection committee comprising the Designer, Owner's Project Manager (OPM) and perhaps two representatives from the School Building Committee would use a process much like that applied to selection of the Designer. The CM selection process is such that candidates are chosen in good measure based on satisfaction of prior clients. So a premium is put on providing service satisfies those paying for the project.
- A CM offers improved collaboration and coordination among consultants and builders
- A CM is brought in early to provide Schematic Design cost estimates, so that those actually doing construction have skin in the game
- CMs are typically used on larger, more complex projects in part because construction bonding capacity demands will be high, requiring larger, more sophisticated firms
- Having a CM may reduce litigation risks associated with change orders, miscommunication, unexpected costs, and similar issues that are inevitable in large construction projects
- With a CM, opportunities arise to prepare and begin certain work (such as site work, steel packages, etc) earlier, allowing a more condensed schedule that saves time and money
- A CM, who is brought in earlier in the design process and is part of the team, may, with a greater understanding of the plans' intent, be able to reduce change orders
- A CM may provide improved phasing as the transition from the old school to new and construction while school is in session proceeds
- A CM may attract a higher level of contractor interest and the size of this project will demand use of larger contracting firms from a smaller pool of candidates
- A CM provides financial advantages. Among other things, with a CM costs and budgets are far more transparent so the owner and consultants can know exactly how funds are flowing.

Mr. Dore concluded that in his firm's experience using a CM provides a better overall product.

The disadvantage of using a CM is higher cost. In response to Mr. Torrissi's questions as to what that cost may be, Mr. Dore said that MSBA says it can be as much as 10%. It could cost no more, or be 3-4% more. Much depends on how a client uses the opportunity for greater flexibility in expenditures, including for such items as furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FFE). Mr. Torrissi noted that having a CM may pay for itself 5-10 years out, but the upfront cost is an important consideration.

Steve Theran of Vertex, Pentucket's OPM, said that Vertex sees this issue differently from Dore & Whittier. In Vertex' experience, there has been no significant difference between a GC and CM. Vertex had experience with a CM firm that failed midway through a job and with a GC who has provided great service. Vertex sees a delta in cost of about \$35/foot, which could come a \$4M cost difference.

As the discussion turned to change orders and related issues, it was clarified in response to Mr. Torrissi that MSBA does have a contingency fund to pay for change orders related to design issues. This would be partial cost coverage at the established MSBA percentage contribution. In reply to Mr. Labrecque, Mr. Theran explained that with the CM, MSBA has two contingency funds, one of which covers closeout. Also, it is not the case that the CM can hire its own trusted contractors so as to reduce risk of mistakes, miscommunication, etc. As with the GC, the specialized subcontractors (aside from those providing such things as site work and steel) are chosen based on lowest bid. It is, however, true that the GC has less time to review specs and plans and thus the CM may have a clearer understanding of the project going in.

Mr. Jackson, who is currently serving as OPM on a school building at the University of Massachusetts in Lowell cited several advantages to having a CM on that project. They were able to send out earlier packages for sewers, drainage, demolition, and steel. And the CM provides more control over the money. It's an open book so you can follow every nickel and dime.

Given that using a CM affords a potentially broader range of candidates from which to choose, the opportunity to start aspects of work earlier, and greater control over funds and spending, Superintendent Mulqueen moved that the School Building Committee approve use of CM. *The Committee voted unanimously to employ a CM.*

### **Thought Exchange**

Mr. Seymour made a plug for the online survey/interactive conversation "[Thought Exchange](#)" about the new school building. This provides educators, parents, and citizens an opportunity to participate without being at a 4-hour visioning meeting. The current Thought Exchange will run until the 26<sup>th</sup>. Currently a major topic of conversation is grade configuration. Perhaps in December another Thought Exchange will be a student-only event.

### **Building Site Location**

Mr. Richardson noted that interest had been expressed in the site location. Dore & Whittier's preliminary schematic when interviewing for the Designer position suggested that a new building might be located behind the current high school. Siting involves questions relating to avoiding wetlands, preserving playing

fields, etc. MSBA will require an examination of siting options other than the current school location, but practically, using another location would be costly and difficult.

The current 70-acre site is centrally located, familiar to students and parents, and already owned. MSBA will not help with a new site and acquiring land, if available is expensive and time-consuming. Mr. Murphy stressed the cost and disruption of relocating; Mr. Jackson noted Pentucket's recent large investment in tennis, track, and football facilities.

### **Adjournment**

7:58pm

### **Meeting Documents**

10/10/2017 Draft Meeting Minutes

Dore & Whittier Powerpoint Presentation

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer  
School Building Committee Secretary