

School Building Committee
Monday, November 14, 2022, from 2:30 - 3:30 p.m.
Central Office, School Committee Meeting Room, and Via Zoom

Members: Mark Barrett; Michael Cronin, Vice-Chair; Charles Favazzo Jr.; Julie Hackett; Jonathan A. Himmel; Carolyn Kosnoff; Charles W. Lamb; Kathleen M. Lenihan, Chair; Alan Mayer Levine; James Malloy; Hsing Min Sha; Joseph N. Pato; Kseniya Slavsky; Andrew Stephens; and Dan Voss

The minutes were taken by Sara Jorge, Administrative Assistant for the Lexington Superintendent.

The School Building Committee Chair, Kathleen Lenihan began the meeting at 2:35 p.m.

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the [September 28, 2022 meeting](#). Mr. Levine requested a few edits. Mr. Stephens made a motion to approve the minutes from September 28, 2022, as amended. Ms. Slavsky seconded the motion. Ms. Lenihan took a roll call vote, passed 11-0.

Mike Cronin updated the Committee on where we are at with the [Eligibility Period Milestones](#) with the submission of the Maintenance and Capital Planning Questionnaire. It is a fairly heavy volume document but we are on track and moving right along.

Mr. Levine: has the initial compliance certification been completed and submitted?

Dr. Hackett responded that it was done with Town Council and submitted.

Ms. Lenihan: could you remind people who are watching, how long the eligibility period is and what are our deadlines?

Dr. Hackett explained that the [Eligibility Period Milestone](#) is 270 days from start to finish, essentially a 9-month process. This milestone document shows you what key documents and actions need to be completed throughout the process. The eligibility period should end in March of 2023.

Ms. Slavsky: who is the team responsible for submitting all this paperwork and completing it, and will this team have to be a part of that process?

Dr. Hackett explained that these types of documents are administrative. We have a tiny team, Maureen, Mike, and myself. Maureen submitted the enrollment information, the Town Manager submitted the initial compliance certificate, and I submitted the Ed. profile. Mike will be submitting the maintenance documents by the end of the month. These documents are specific to each person's department. There are teams behind the teams - Dr. Stephens worked with his departments as well to gather information about the type of high school that they wanted and that information was pulled into the Ed profile.

Mr. Cronin: if you look at the eligibility period there really are only a few things that are left to do - the enrollment certification and the maintenance and capital plan and then the last document is the final feasibility study agreement.

Dr. Hackett: we have submitted the details for the enrolment certification - we are just waiting on our final meeting with the MSBA at the end of this month.

Ms. Lenihan: can you explain the significance of the enrollments?

Dr. Hackett: we do our best to make the case for higher numbers because we don't want to be flat-footed with our planning procedures. For example, the MSBA asks for a 10-year projection even if those will not be very accurate. The MSBA came in initially around a number that we would not necessarily see being adequate to meet our needs. Ms. Kavanaugh followed up with more data including information regarding how many children attend the LABBB Program and how many children we educate in the METCO Program. After the MSBA reviews our submissions, we will work with them to figure out what the number is and they will probably adjust up a little bit based on my other experiences but not significantly.

Mr. Pato explained that the biggest issue for us is that the MBTA Communities Act, our increase in housing is likely to lead to an increase in population, and that was part of the discussion that we had with the MSBA regarding growing the projections.

Mr. Stephens: to what extent are transfer students factored in? Last year, for instance, we had 102 transfer students for the entire year and we are already at 121 so far for this year.

Ms. Kavanaugh: all of that is built into the methodology, both theirs and ours.

Ms. Lenihan: for anyone who is wondering why the MSBA does not want to go for a bigger than currently needed school, the MSBA is paying a very large percentage of the construction, on a very expensive project. The bigger your enrollment, the bigger the building, which costs the MSBA more money. There is a limited amount of money, so the more they give to one project limits the funds they will have for another project.

Ms. Slavsky explained that the MSBA is looking to determine the size of the project like the theoretical school building against what they will pay. They have an important interest in making sure their money is spent wisely. The MSBA assesses what is eligible and what is ineligible for reimbursement. They pay a percentage of what is eligible. What is ineligible could be a too-large atrium, too large, as defined by them, or too large of a building in general, meaning too much academic space as defined by them. But our idea might be based on our occupancy projections.

Dr. Hackett: that is exactly right and a really helpful clarification because we can go bigger but they won't fund it.

Mr. Favazzo: how big is the delta between our enrollment projections and the MSBA projections?

Ms. Kavanaugh: there wasn't a big difference at all but it was more of a philosophical approach about some of the historical patterns going way back to the seventies. At one point, we had 2,800 students enrolled, and not that we expect that to happen anytime soon, but these projections do not factor in the possible zoning change with the MBTA. Their response was we do not look back, we only look forward, so the historical number was not necessarily of interest to them.

Dr. Hackett: we mentioned that we want something around 2900 in the Ed Questionnaire. They came back and said these are what your numbers look like for the next 10 years or so and this is what we based it on and here's how we adjusted our methodology to take into account the pandemic, and basically that is where you are at is where you should be in terms of the total size.

Dr. Kavanaugh: we are projecting flat for 3-4 years, followed by a decline.

Mr. Lamb: what is the historical reimbursement rate we receive from MSBA? I want to say it's around 26%.

Mr. Cronin: The all-in numbers is about 25% of the total cost.

Mr. Levine: if the enrollment numbers are flat and go down, I assume the next few years will determine the size of the building?

Dr. Hackett: I believe they will lock us in from the next meeting with the enrollment number, so we will operate with that number.

Mr. Levine: if the peak is in the next few years, then it goes down, then we have built a building that has some growth, which is good. If the MBTA communities' rezoning results in new housing being built, which isn't really expected to be built right away, but over 20 or 30 years, it is really difficult to make any projection from that.

Ms. Lenihan: at the next School Building Committee Meeting, we will be able to update everyone on the locked-in enrollment number that was decided upon.

Ms. Slavsky: going into the Hastings and Estabrook projects, was the MSBA enrollment numbers similar to ours?

Ms. Kavanaugh: we were actively using the housing demographic model at that point, and our projections were coming in substantially higher than the MSBAs and they accepted it.

Mr. Cronin reviewed and discussed the [Integrated Design Policy](#). If you look at the scope of the work, and then the policy, the first item up there prior to initiating the building design activities or selection of the design team, the project stakeholders shall establish specific targets for the project to consider, each of the integrated building design construction goals checklist in attachment A. We need to discuss each part of this policy and determine what we want the building to look like when it is done. The integrated building policy is up for an edit that is due at the end of this year, so there might be some options to change some of the specifications and requirements for new buildings or renovated buildings. The group that is going to be assigned to this task needs to have conversations about what this building should look like for the next 50-75 years. That could be anything from we want it to be net 0, we want to include timber as part of the construction, we want it to be common neutral, etc. There are a whole host of things that we can do for this building that we're going to have to assign a requirement on, and then have the design teams select them as part of the design. We should probably break down the attachment into little sections, and then have little conversations about each one of those sections, so that we understand what the implication of that section is, for instance, net 0, if we need a 1,000 kW of energy we would like to produce on-site, and that's the keyword there the on-site equivalent of 1,000 kW, so that there is basically net 0 of energy used and consumed on the site. There are a lot of ways to go about that, so it could be solar panels on the roof, or windmills, there are a bunch of different ways for us to look at this.

Dr. Hackett: I think part of what this body needs to consider are some of those very things. The way that I read the policy puts the onus on me and the Town Manager to carry out what is identified in the policy in terms of sustainability. I think part of the challenge before Mike was that there was a feeling that the work was going to happen outside of the bodies who make the decisions, and that's partly why Dan and others are here in this group so I think it might be useful, at least to have kickoff conversations in the School Building Committee so that we can begin to think about how to instruct the working groups?

Mr. Voss: the stakeholder group in the policy is pretty well represented within this group, the School Building Committee. What is also important regarding this group's role in that Integrated Design Policy is the way we interact with and consider the role of state funding and our relationship with the MSBA we need to take into account the outcomes we are looking at for the building so that we don't have 2 groups in Town or different bodies thinking about the project in different ways. To the extent, there are outcomes from this stakeholder group that we would want out of the building that might not necessarily be funded by the State. The reason that is no sustainability in the title of the document is that the policy is really focused on thinking about the future

and it is really about health outcomes, learning outcomes, and it is energy outcomes. The outcomes we want from the building structure and from the grounds. We need to look at the outcomes upfront so that we do not need to address it deeper into the process where cost becomes an issue as stated in the policy.

Mr. Malloy: Mike Cronin and I spoke briefly last week about the current existing solar on the high school. I am wondering if Mike could just speak briefly about whether or not there is a potential to move that solar from the existing building to the new one once it is constructed.

Mr. Cronin: we currently have solar panels at Lexington High School, and the panels are about 8 years old which are the 200-watt panels instead of some of the newer 500-watt panels that are out now. We could move those to the new building and build a structure that can support them. We would need to do a cost-benefit analysis to see if that makes sense, or part ways with the old and settle up the contract we have with Ameresco and build something new and different. I am not really comfortable with saying we will be able to move the panels from one site to another but there will be a financial cost either way whether we abandon them or move them.

Mr. Voss: a number of members on this call were involved in the negotiations of the solar panels on the schools and would recall that we anticipated this in the contract, so there are mechanisms within the contract that fully anticipate the need to remove or move the solar panels because we knew we would be building a new high school at some point.

Ms. Lenihan: I attended the MASC conference last week, along with some of my School Committee colleagues. I chose to attend a workshop on building a new school. Prior to the pandemic, the goal was always to make schools very tight and super energy efficient. Now we have learned that we need to bring fresh air into the building, especially during winter months. The Integrated Policy was developed before the pandemic and I recall when we built Hastings, we really wanted to make the building tight and energy efficient, I think it is going to be a little bit different with the high school as I think the indoor air quality will be a more of a focus then it was before.

Dr. Hackett: I think there is a larger question here about who is the stakeholder group when we are talking about the Integrated Policy. I know that there are different opinions on that, and I know that there are different hopes, and wishes for that, what do we as the School Building Committee, think about that questions?

Hsing Min Sha: why wouldn't it be this entire Committee? There is nothing in the mandate of the Committee that says there should be a subgroup that contributes to the decision-making.

Ms. Slavsky: it makes sense to have a subgroup do the research and present the boiled-down version of that.

Mr. Cronin read the definition of the Integrated Design Policy Stakeholder group.

Mr. Levine: this is going to be a very expensive project that has to go to a debt exclusion referendum, so it has to have broad community support. So for all features, whether it is sustainability or health, we will need input from the wider community prior to a decision being made. We cannot limit it to a couple of committees, people in Town Meetings, and other people in the community of voters should at least be in the know, there should be public hearings or equivalent in order to make sure that this gets out. The good news is that sustainability has had a lot of support in Lexington.

Dr. Hackett agrees with Mr. Levine that we should take this to a small working group and not have it at this public body that is recorded with minutes.

Mr. Himmel: we are talking about a policy that is something similar to what the design team sees in every

project they do. I think these things need to be done early on, in order for the integrated design to work properly, it needs to be front-end loaded. Otherwise, you end up with a typical project and that's not what Lexington is looking for. For the Police Station, we actually involved the designer to achieve the required results. For the high school, we need to make sure that the entire ability to generate power is represented by the team that we hire, and that is not something that we append in the middle or on the end.

Ms. Lenihan: do we want to have some people take a deeper dive into this and report to the full School Building Committee obviously the authority ultimately rests on all of us and not an individual working group.

Dr. Hackett: I think it would be beneficial to have a presentation in depth around the policy and what are the implications. This could be the focus for the entire next meeting. We then could get some censuses ideally to how the decision-making happens and how this information gets out to other groups.

Ms. Slavsky: I would also like to hear the lessons learned from prior projects on sustainability, both trying to implement this policy and prior to this policy in Lexington. I love that we are talking about potentially several sustainability rating systems that might be in play, so with the policy being built around LEED but the MSBA may want us to look at CHIPS, which is a Massachusetts reading system, and then they might be additional requirements. There is also the notion that all of these decisions are going to have a cost component to them and we are not going to find out about the cost implications of some of this until later in the project, so I hear a point about setting a program and a goal early on but building in some flexibility into that as we see what will be reimbursed and what will not.

Mr. Cronin: at the last PBC Meeting, we just had the architect that is doing the Police Station gives us lessons learned meeting so we could piece that together for the next meeting. As far as the piece about all the integrated design and attachment A, we can send that out to everybody for some reading

Hsing Min Sha: I am interested in the scientific evidence about the environmental benefits of local offset projects, and local generation of power to offset consumption or admissions.

Mr. Levine: from a Finance Committee in a Town, most sustainability aspects of buildings have ended up lowering costs in the long run over the life cycle because energy costs have gone up faster than other kinds of costs.

Mr. Pato: the Integrated Building Design Policy included an economic analysis and emissions analysis as part of the process, so I believe that is already embodied in the policy.

Mr. Voss: there are as many health focus outcomes as there are energy focus outcomes in the Integrated Building Design Policy. The majority of the discussion we have had on the other facilities that have gone through this policy was on issues like toxics, ventilation, and solar energy was not discussed until the very end. This is not a sustainability nice-to-have document, it looks forward and says, what do we want for our teachers, students, and our environment? The policy is looking for a small group that works with this committee to generate alternative solutions, and the cost method analysis that demonstrates the economic impact.

Ms. Lenihan: we obviously want to be as fiscally responsible as possible but we have had more than one vote about our commitment to sustainability in Town Meeting. We overwhelmingly say this is important to us as a community.

Dr. Hackett will send out the FAQs document for the new LHS Project Website for School Building Committee members to make changes or add questions to.

Dr. Hackett, Kathleen Lenihan, and Mike Cronin will meet prior to the next meeting to discuss the next steps.

Kathleen Lenihan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:33 p.m. Andrew seconded the meeting.