



Susana Measelle Hubbs &lt;susana.hubbs@capeelizabeth.org&gt;

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**[CE SBAC] SBAC Survey - Round 2**

1 message

**'John Lewis' via SBAC (CE School Building Advisory Cmte)**

Sun, Apr 14, 2024 at 7:15 PM

&lt;cesbac@capeelizabethschools.org&gt;

Reply-To: John Lewis &lt;john\_w\_lewis@yahoo.com&gt;

To: cesbac@capeelizabethschools.org

Cc: Cape Elizabeth Town Council &lt;cetowncouncil@capeelizabeth.org&gt;, cesb@capeelizabethschools.org

Good evening Co-Chairs Jordan and Voltz, and the rest of the SBAC,

I see the new survey on the 3 remaining options is now out. Unfortunately, I'm getting the sense we are heading towards another failed school bond, while spending another \$1 million of taxpayer money to come up empty.

We have heard from the community... THREE TIMES! They spoke up when they rejected the \$116 million school bond. They gave you their feedback in the first survey. And they voted overwhelmingly for two town councilors that ran on renovations over "new schools or bust." (Each prior to the revaluation) Yet, here we are, considering 2 options that are over \$100 million, with higher than a 10% property tax increases attached.

This community has always been supportive of our schools. That fact remains true today. However, I've been in conversation after conversation with neighbors, listening to them share their frustration that you all don't seem to be listening. There is a consensus amongst the community that they want a budget to be established.

Co-Chair Jordan, you agreed (see below) that figure is ~\$70 million. However, the least expensive option is projected to be \$77.8 million, but does appear to limit a property tax increase to under 10%. Why do we - just six months before a potential bond in November - still have two options on the table that are over \$100 million? How much is this new survey costing the taxpayers, and how much did the first one cost?

Separately, I have been reviewing the SBAC meetings. I'm concerned that in the meetings and among the community outreach efforts, e.g. community forums, the 62% who voted against the \$116 million school bond are severely underrepresented. I can understand how this self-selection bias can be accounted for in a survey, but how does the SBAC account for this bias in forums, public meetings, or email communications from the public?

I appreciate the opportunity to share my feedback with you. I look forward to your reply.

John Lewis  
51 Murray Dr

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----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** Penny Jordan <penny.jordan@capeelizabeth.org>

**To:** John Lewis <john\_w\_lewis@yahoo.com>

**Cc:** "cetowncouncil@capeelizabeth.org" <cetowncouncil@capeelizabeth.org>

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 16, 2024 at 06:35:49 PM EST

**Subject:** Re: SBAC Forum on February 1, 2024

There contract is \$350,000 and included this options development

Sent from my iPad

On Jan 16, 2024, at 2:46 PM, John Lewis <[john\\_w\\_lewis@yahoo.com](mailto:john_w_lewis@yahoo.com)> wrote:

Thanks again, Penny.

One more question.... for now. What is Harriman charging us per hour?

John Lewis

On Tuesday, January 16, 2024 at 01:28:24 PM EST, Penny Jordan <[penny.jordan@capeelizabeth.org](mailto:penny.jordan@capeelizabeth.org)> wrote:

John, see answers below ... and thank you for reaching out.

Questions of clarity for me:

- Is Harriman currently working on the designs? We are working on requirements for design and the cost of those elements. The fact we do not know the solution set yet - it isn't time for detailed design. With any project there are concepts and ideas on what a hybrid option might consider. But if you are asking about schematics - we aren't there yet.
- It sounds like the max threshold is \$70 million. I agree with this
- Will all 7 options presented by Harriman be under that threshold? Not necessity.
  - If not, why are we asking Harriman to spend valuable hours on options that are non-starters? The fact that there is an that includes new construction for Pond Cove and one that includes a new construction for the Middle school says we will have the associated cost data. So the fact we will have each ... means we can see the whole picture so not a lot of extra work... unless I'm missing something.

Again, thank you and feel free to send along more questions.

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Penelope (Penny) Jordan  
21 Wells Road  
[penny.jordan@capeelizabeth.org](mailto:penny.jordan@capeelizabeth.org)  
207-671-5341

On Tue, Jan 16, 2024 at 1:02 PM John Lewis <[john\\_w\\_lewis@yahoo.com](mailto:john_w_lewis@yahoo.com)> wrote:

Hi Penny,

Thank you for your reply. My apologies for my delayed response.

I can certainly appreciate all the effort that is going into this and how the SBAC et al are trying to get it right this time around.

Questions of clarity for me:

- Is Harriman currently working on the designs?
- It sounds like the max threshold is \$70 million. Will all 7 options presented by Harriman be under that threshold?
  - If not, why are we asking Harriman to spend valuable hours on options that are non-starters?

Thanks again for your engagement!

John Lewis

On Wednesday, January 10, 2024 at 06:16:12 PM EST, Penny Jordan  
<[penny.jordan@capeelizabeth.org](mailto:penny.jordan@capeelizabeth.org)> wrote:

Thank you for your questions.

Mr Lewis to answer your question - the council has not set a budget. But as you stated the citizens of the town weighed in via the referendum and survey as to what their expectation would be relative to the cost of the project. I truly believe that the SBAC Committee members are well aware of the financial parameters that have been expressed by the citizens. And I believe the process that has been created allows for continued citizen input and that we are not traveling the same road.

Yes, Harriman will be presenting costs associated with 7 options and yes these will be presented at the public forum. And prior to that forum there will be discussions and public input at meetings.

Larry Benoit has done a great job working with the town's Financial advisors and demonstrating what a 10% tax increase could support (and we recognize this is the high %). On 1/18 our financial advisor will be presenting bond scenarios, tax implications, etc . And yes we are well aware of the implications associated with the reval and will be factoring this in as options are evaluated

I hope you will continue to provide input and insights as we work through the next several months. Public engagement will lead us to a solution that can work for our town.

Thank you for your thoughts!

Penelope (Penny) Jordan  
21 Wells Road  
[penny.jordan@capeelizabeth.org](mailto:penny.jordan@capeelizabeth.org)  
207-671-5341

On Wed, Jan 10, 2024 at 5:44 PM 'John Lewis' via Cape Elizabeth Town Council  
<[cetowncouncil@capeelizabeth.org](mailto:cetowncouncil@capeelizabeth.org)> wrote:

Good evening esteemed councilors,

I hope this message finds you well and rested. And I do sincerely hope you enjoyed the holiday season with your loved ones.

I am writing you with regard to the upcoming SBAC Forum being held on February 1st. It is my understanding Harriman will be presenting several preliminary options to the public. I would assume an estimated cost will also be included for each option.

Unless I have missed something, I am not aware the Town Council has provided the SBAC (or Harriman) with a budget for the school project? If that is the case, I'm afraid we are continuing to put the cart before the horse and we will see a similar fate as the previous school bond. If I'm wrong, I look forward to being corrected.

According to the SBAC survey results, the majority are willing to accept a 5% to less than 10% tax increase to address the needs of the school(s). Whatever that range is, that is what needs to

be presented to the SBAC and Harriman. If they are working outside of those parameters, then what was the point of the survey?

I would also like to emphasize the survey was conducted prior to the original revaluation figures coming out. Chances are the results of that particular question would be different, if asked today. And we still don't know what the actual revaluation results are going to be.

I appreciate the opportunity to share with you my thoughts. I look forward to your reply.

Best regards,

John Lewis  
51 Murray Drive

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