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[CE SBAC] Feedback to SBAC, Communications, Long Term Data, Accurate Tax Data

1 message

Chris Gorski <cbgorski@gmail.com>

Wed, May 1, 2024 at 4:39 PM

To: cesbac@capeelizabethschools.org, cetowncouncil@capeelizabeth.org

Hello,

I have some feedback and questions for the SBAC. After attending last week's meeting of the communication sub-committee many items were raised by members of the committee and the public. (I noticed some long term data was just posted to the meeting agenda for today's meeting.)

- There was a comment about business being conducted over email between committee members, and previously emails between Bruce Lockwood of Portland Research Group and various members of the committee, but when I review the published emails at <https://www.capeelizabeth.com/SBACCorrespondence>, these communications are not present. Should it not be expected to see all of this work or only some communications?
- Long term data must be published, this committee is asking the town to take on 30 year bonds without publishing data beyond 5 years. Harriman had provided when they anticipate additional spending for each project option, but this is not included when discussing what each option looks like. In contrast, this past week there were multiple questions on Option E around the 1934 building and accounting for those costs for its future use after turning it over to the town.. Why would the costs to maintain that building in option B or C, when it remains an active school building, not also be discussed? It feels as though we are missing the forest for the trees, We are thinking about the short term and not for the next decade and beyond. There has been much discussion about reducing the tax impact today and choosing a low dollar renovation, however what is not discussed is the bigger tax bill in the next decade when more repairs and unmet needs come due after being left out of scope. The renovation options will simply lock this town into a bad spot where we will have to raise more debt for the next project while still paying off for this one. This is why long term data is necessary.
- On the topic of taxes, a tax calculator has been discussed and was supported by many in the scope of this project. I however, agree with many members of SBAC, that this project's data should not be combined with the ongoing revaluation tax changes. The revaluation process is not complete, as many residents have meetings scheduled for the coming months to discuss this with the Tax Assessor, which will result in changes to the final bills of many residents. Further, this project is wholly independent of the tax revaluation. The town is rebalancing the allocation of taxes with revaluation, something we are years overdue for, causing the large swings in individual tax bills. To combine this project which is increasing the tax on the town, with a revaluation makes it appear the Town is collecting new tax revenue well beyond reality. Revaluation is simply rebalancing the tax bills.

This project is about the legacy of this town, The value that we all put into educating our community because we have benefitted from it ourselves, our children have, and so many of us that are blessed enough to live here owe that back to society, our neighbors and future generations. Thank you all for your time supporting this committee and effort.

Thanks,
Chris Gorski
28 Farm Hill Rd

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