

**CAPE ELIZABETH SCHOOL DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE**

January 9, 2019
6:30PM Cape Elizabeth High School

Committee Members Present:

Dr. Donna Wolfrom	Superintendent
Matt Sturgis	Town Manager
Jamie Garvin	Town Council Chair
Valerie Deveraux	Town Council
Catherine Messmer	Business Manager
Perry Schwarz	CESD Director of Facilities
Susana Measelle	Hubbs School Board Chair
Heather Altenburg	School Board Vice Chair
Kimberly Carr	School Board Vice Chair
Elizabeth Scifres	School Board
Jeffrey Shedd	CEHS Principal
Troy Eastman	CEMS Principal
Erin Taylor	PCES Nurse
Jill Abrahamsen	Community Member/Parent
Carla Bryant	Community Member/Parent
DJ Nelson	Community Member/Parent
Tim Thompson	Community Member
Maya Nelson	CEMS Student
Calen Colby	Colby Company Engineering
James Hebert	Colby Company Engineering
Austin Smith	Scott Simons Architects
Seth Wildschutz	Scott Simons Architects

Public Present:

Kurt Chapin
Lauren Glennon
Andy Patten
Terri Patterson
Janet Villiotte

Welcome and Introduction:

- Dr. Wolfrom welcomed attendees and reiterated that the charge of the committee is to determine whether or not a Needs Assessment should be recommended to the School Board for the FY20 school budget.

Approval of December 5, 2018 Minutes:

Tim Thompson made the motion to approve.
Troy Eastman seconded the motion.
The committee voted unanimously to approve.

Review of Third Meeting:

No comments were made.

Slide Show of Neighboring School Districts & Committee Discussion:

- Ms. Measelle Hubbs provided a 30 minute slide presentation comparing Cape Elizabeth schools with Falmouth, Freeport, Scarborough, South Portland, Westbrook, and Yarmouth. Historical information on bonding was provided where possible.

Link to slide presentation:

https://www.capeelizabeth.com/sb_minutes/sb_packets/School%20Board/2019/01-09-2019%20Facilities%20Needs%20Assessment/Comparisons%20of%20Neighboring%20Districts%20Slide%20Presentation1.pdf

- Mr. Garvin said that based on the info provided in the slides, Falmouth and Westbrook were the only two schools that received state funding. All the other districts had community support, highlighting the rarity of schools receiving state funding.
- Measelle Hubbs in review, shared that she was struck by how the pride of neighboring communities is reflected in their buildings. Numerous details like adequate signage, spaces for children, strongly demonstrate that their tax payers want their schools to be looking good and representative of their towns. “Like any homeowner, you have to maintain what you have and you should be proud of what you have.”
- Ms. Scifres commented that the overwhelming contrast apparent in the slides was the natural light and high ceilings emphasized in neighboring districts.
- Ms. Villiotte said that the slides were helpful and was glad to see that the neighboring districts lacked “an institutional vibe.” She also pointed out that unlike Cape Elizabeth, the tax base of the other towns is very different — which makes it more important to be creative in the approach taken to reach our schools’ goal by way of community buy-in.
- Ms. Nelson said that she has been to these other schools through sporting events and thinks that there are definitely some things that we could do better.

- Ms. Carr shared that one of her daughters commented on how much more beautiful and bright the other schools she has been too. She also shared that all her daughters noticed the improvement to the 5th grade exit door and it made them more prideful.
- Mr. Thompson commented on the time frame and said that there are some things that should have been done “yesterday” and need to get done really quick — and then there are other things that can be phased over time. He asked if the Needs Assessment (“NA”) would be done in phases so that higher concerns could be addressed first, e.g., PCES/CEMS entrances? He hopes it doesn’t take three years to get some things done. “The town is well run, we don’t owe money and we are in the position to get things done.” Likes the idea of including the community and seniors in any new renovation plans.

Colby Company Proposal Presentation:

- Mr. Colby walked the committee through their proposal and the relationship with Cape Elizabeth schools since the fall of 2017. Colby, the company’s President, (who is also resident of Cape Elizabeth) said that the company has 42 employees who provide full service architectural and engineering services in Portland.
- Mr. Smith, from Scott Simons Architects, shared that the firm of 13 employees has been practicing since 1994 in Portland. They have worked on 29 public libraries and an equal number of school spaces throughout Maine and New England.

He stated that schools have evolved over the last 25 years. For example, libraries are now less about books and more about media centers and learning commons, embracing a much broader mission rather than books. Daylight is also kept in mind during design work to eliminate the use of artificial light because it is cheaper and better for learning. Building spaces now need to allow for a greater flexibility of use.

- Mr. Colby showed a slide of a graph of the average building maintenance scope over the period of 60 years — which is pretty much the maximum of any building’s life. The goal is to maintain just enough to last 60 years without over spending or under spending. Investing in infrastructure more than you need is wasting money. Spending less than you should, shortens the life of a building. The U.S. government spends about \$6 - \$6.50 per square foot on their infrastructure. The Cape Elizabeth schools are on average about 25 years into their lifespan. The importance is to right-size at this point.

Mr. Colby also reflected that there seems to be a short-term need on safety and security, and a longterm need to right-size the school. Based on an overwhelming concern for safety, he put out the option of coming up with a separate safety and security short-term bond by the end of January 2019. And then focus on a larger bond afterwards.

The Scope of the Needs Assessment:

- *Field investigations* — which includes looking at all the details seen and unseen, as well as areas of use and/or mis-use.
- *User Interviews with Teachers, Staff, and Students* — to gather information and provide alternatives. Ask how can things be better?

- *Scoping of Projects* — which would be an analysis of field investigations by providing one-page project reports for every identified need. Then include recommendations of priorities based on critical, intermediate, and low priorities to the committee to use in their determining the direction and priorities.
- *Stakeholder Meetings* — sharing with the community what is being discovered and gleaned.
- *Full report of Needs Assessment in the amount of \$189,060* — a synopsis of all the work and future steps, with some light schematic designs and cost estimates.

Committee Questions:

- Ms. Measelle Hubbs added that if the timespan of a NA is approximately three months, then in order to have teachers involved in the process, the NA process would have to wait until the end of summer.
- Ms. Bryant liked the idea of moving quickly with the security.
- Ms. Scifres said that she is in support of taking care of things as soon as possible, but would be concerned that if a smaller bond was approved to take care of security issue that the larger bond wouldn't ever happen and constantly be placed "on the back burner."
- Mr. Smith added that they are also looking for efficiencies, e.g., making buildings more fuel efficient would help recover some money spent.
- Mr. Thompson thinks we that the community would support phases, but realizes the risk of staging.
- Mr. Sturgis offered that not everything (i.e., passing a smaller bond) has to be determined by a June vote. A smaller bond could be proposed in November as well. Also you need to consider current bond rates, right now they are 3 1/2% to 4% for a 20 year bond ... but you don't know what the future might hold. Also a smaller bond, might be approached with a shorter bond.
- Mr. Garvin mentioned that Yarmouth creatively broke up bonds by making the passing of one bond dependent whether or not the first bond passed. He also mentioned that if we don't take action now to repair buildings, we would eventually be looking at the need for brand new buildings down the road.
- Mr. Wildschutz said that they are also trying to help find redundancies. Perhaps some areas need attention sooner than anticipated. Also, cost of construction will definitely go up over time.

- Mr. Thompson stated that we need to communicate and educate the town that we are in a good position to get things done. “The town doesn’t owe a lot of money right now and people need to know this. We need to be proactive.”
- Mr. Garvin pointed out that Cape Elizabeth is not an outlier — all the examples of renovations included in the slides are ten years old or less. “Every other town is running into the same situation.”
- Ms. Carr asked Colby Company if they would also determine whether or not our buildings were actually already at a state of needing new buildings?
- Ms. Deveraux wanted to also clarify that the NA would inform whether a certain building is too old to renovate or most cost effective to renovate.
- Mr. Colby answered that this information would come out of the NA and that the “bones seem good,” but that they might find that certain spaces should not be renovated. The cost of renovating might not warrant repair over building an entirely new space.
- Mr. Schwarz shared that recently the high school had a pinhole-sized leak outside of the cafeteria just prior to the holiday break. Had it occurred when the building was empty, it could have caused great damage. Fortunately, they were able to patch it for the nearterm, but will have to address the condition of the pipes over the summer break. The worry is that the pipes, which are original to the building, may be in worse condition than realized. This underscores the importance of doing a complete Needs Assessment in order to properly allocate how funds might be spent.

Engineering and Architects Depart Meeting; Committee Discussion & Vote:

- Mr. Shedd shared an example of the risks of old infrastructure by explaining that during the 2007 updates to the high school a new gym floor was installed. However, since then, two more brand new gym floors have been re-installed due to mechanical failures.
- Ms. Measelle Hubbs acknowledged that she is intrigued by the idea of having a smaller bond to address security issues in the near term.
- Mr. Thompson said that community members are most concerned about security issues, but also the cafeteria situation with the service doors in the middle of the building. Could this also be included?
- Mr. Garvin mentioned that the proposed NA is about \$45K less than year the Feasibility Study from last year, but wanted to know what is not included this time around.
- Ms. Scifres pointed out that this time around, the study would not include various things that were originally quoted in last year’s proposal, for example, conceptual renderings and PE/RA stamped construction drawings.

- Ms. Taylor asked how long it would take to begin construction once the bond is approved?
- Mr. Sturgis answered that it would take about 4 to 6 months at best. Locating contractors may also be a challenge as they are in high demand.
- Mr. Nelson said that he is very concerned that “we only have one shot to have this put in front of the town.” Also, the issue with a NA is needs vs. wants — What happens if a greater emergency comes out of the NA that requires greater immediate need? The goal of the NA is to uncover all issues and therefore a proper organization of priorities can only be created with one full NA.
- Ms. Measelle Hubbs asked what temporary measures might be available to us to address the security issues if bonding is not possible in the near term?
- Ms. Carr asked if perhaps we should consider bringing back the drawings into the new NA project in order to make things more quickly upon passing a bond ... even if that means increasing the price of the NA?
- Dr. Wolfrom said that she would address this possibility with Colby Co.
- Mr. Garvin commented that he hasn't heard anyone say that they don't feel the NA is the proper way to go.
- Ms. Bryant asked what would we do without a NA? Would we go straight to construction?
- Dr. Wolfrom answered, “no,” — that we would just make do with what we have.
- Mr. Thompso suggested that a community person should make a recommendation to the School Board, rather than a committee member who is connected to the school.
- Mr. Nelson, therefore, strongly recommended that the \$189,000 cost for a complete Needs Assessment be recommended to the School Board to include in their FY20 budget.

Vote:

- All, but two* committee members voted in favor of making the recommendation of a Needs Assessment to the School Board.
- Zero opposed.
- * Mr. Sturgis and Dr. Wolfrom were the two members who abstained from voting due to their employment roles within the district.
- Mr. Sturgis qualified that he thinks that this is the “right step and process to take.”

Next Steps:

- Mr. Nelson and others will be invited to make the recommendation to the School Board at the next Regular School Board Business Meeting on Tuesday, February 12th 2019 at 6:30PM.
- Dr. Wolfrom said that she will talk with Colby Company to see about how to speed up security issues by considering two bonds.
- Ms. Measelle Hubbs mentioned that a new committee will need to be formed (assuming the NA is approved by the School Board at the February 12th meeting) to market the NA for community buy-in.
- Mr. Thompson reminded that communication is what is needed. Perhaps an article for the Cape Courier.
- Ms. Measelle Hubbs will provide a summary report of the committee's process.
- Mr. Patten added that it's important to keep the police department involved in any security aspects of potential renovations.

Adjourn:

8:38PM