



Watertown Town Council

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ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Mark S. Sideris,
Council President

Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.,
Vice President

Michael F. Dattoli,
Councilor At Large

Aaron P. Dushku,
Councilor At Large

Susan G. Falkoff,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large

Angeline B. Kounelis,
District A Councilor

Lisa J. Feltner,
District B Councilor

Kenneth M. Woodland,
District D Councilor

SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL & SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING THURSDAY, JULY 27, 2017 AT 6:00 PM RICHARD E. MASTRANGELO COUNCIL CHAMBER ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

In accordance with the provisions of Rule 2.6 of the Rules of the Town Council, and pursuant to the Call of the Town Council President, a Special Meeting of the Town Council of the City known as the Town of Watertown met with the School Committee on Thursday, July 27, 2017 at 6:00 pm, in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber, Administration Building in order to have a presentation by Ai3 Architects LLC on their formal recommendations related to the Building for the Future initiative. Building for the Future is a comprehensive, forward-looking initiative to address learning, operational and capacity improvements for all school facilities.

MINUTES

1. ROLL CALL

Council President Sideris called to order a special joint meeting of the Town Council and the School Committee at 6:00 p.m. in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Chamber, Administration Building. Those Councilors present were Michael F. Dattoli, Aaron P. Dushku, Susan G. Falkoff, Lisa J. Feltner, Angeline B. Kounelis, Anthony Palomba, Vice President Vincent Piccirilli, Jr., and Council President Mark S. Sideris. Councilor Kenneth M. Woodland was absent. Those present for the School Committee included Kendra Foley, Guido Guidotti, Eileen Hsu-Balzer, Elizabeth Yusem, Candace Miller, and John Portz, Chair. Also present were Michael J. Driscoll, Town Manager, and Marilyn W. Pronovost, Town Council Clerk.

2. INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION

Informational Presentation by Ai3 Architects LLC on their Formal Recommendations Related to the [Building for the Future Initiative](#).

President Sideris provided background information on the meeting's purpose. Mr. Portz introduced Dr. Deanne Galdston, who remarked on her new

position. He then provided background on the issues related to the state of the school buildings and introduced Scott Dunlap, Principal at Ai3.

Mr. Dunlap provided background on his firm and its total involvement in education building and planning. He stated that his firm was selected because of its experience guiding towns with multiple projects for its schools being completed at the same time. The major points of the presentation were

PROJECT PRIORITY

1. The elementary schools and the high school have top priority and that the middle school is less crowded than any of these schools; therefore, it should be considered for renovation after the high school is completed.
2. The High School, being the single largest project, should continue to seek MSBA funding and that the Statement of Interest (SOI) should list the needs on a priority basis and identify them clearly. The revised SOI should help with obtaining the grant.
3. If the High School were accepted as an MSBA project, their timeline would not allow construction to begin until 2021.
4. If the Town were to fund the Elementary School project independently of the MSBA grant program, construction could be completed prior to the High School construction in 2021.

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

1. The schematic design phase should take about a year and should determine the specifics for the changes needed to resolve deficiencies. At this point, the budget would be determined and a funding mechanism would be established. The goal then would be to start construction in the fall of 2019 and complete it by 2020 - 2021.
2. The advantages of completing the changes in one project were that
 - a. Changes could be completed prior to the High School
 - b. Assurance would be given the community that all schools are being improved on a city-wide basis rather than by district
 - c. There is a greater synchronization of educational programming
 - d. By using the same contractor and subcontractors, there is a consistency in materials and labor methods
 - e. There are financial advantages in design and construction costs
 - f. All projects would have the same project manager, designer and contractor
 - g. A single contractor would allow for better coordination of the construction activities
 - h. There would be a single building committee for all projects
3. The ability to renovate, expand, and add are all viable options. The projects could be phase occupied construction, based on good planning.

DESIGN OPTIONS

1. Cunniff – The school needs to be expanded. An option would be to create a second floor so that green space is not used up. Modular classrooms could be used during construction. There is some concern that the 1997 wing could support a second floor and may need to be replaced.
2. Lowell – Some mild expansion and some renovation is needed. A possible option is creating a three-floor wing to the school.
3. Hosmer – Has many issues with classroom size and program adjacency. A new building is not necessary but renovation and expansion are suggested in order not to affect the available green space. In addition, a separate pre-school facility could be built on the site.
4. Middle School – Currently there is sufficient space to accommodate the school population but it does need to be addressed. It was suggested that the project be completed through MSBA after the High School project is completed.
5. Phillips Administration Building – The building should be retained as it could be used as a swing space during construction. It should continue to be available during the schematic design phase for the High School at which time its use could be determined.
6. High School – The needs of the school would be addressed when the schematic design phase for the high school takes place.

The meeting was opened for questions from the Council and the School Committee. Items discussed included the following.

COSTS AND FUNDING

Paying for this project independently has certain advantages rather than using the more stringent MSBA process. MSBA has capped the dollar amount per square foot of construction and is making more costs ineligible. All costs, such as design costs and related fees, for items such as the auditorium and the gym in the Hosmer School would be excluded from the grant. MSBA project costs can also be higher due to its requirements. Using the MSBA process is good for larger projects such as the High School and the Middle School.

Doing the three projects together provides savings because supply costs are reduced due to the magnitude of the size of the purchase.

It was estimated that the cost of completion increases by 5% annually due to inflation for each year that the project is delayed.

It was estimated that the cost of completing the schematic design phase would be \$500,000 for each school (\$1,500,000) plus another \$150,000 for the services of an Owner's Project Manager, for a total of \$1,650,000. The costs for completing the High School project would be similar due to the size of the project and the more stringent requirements of the MSBA.

NEW CONSTRUCTION OF SCHOOLS

This is an option available that should be considered in the design phase. Analysis should be completed to determine its viability.

The Hosmer School has a gymnasium, auditorium, and dining area that would be costly to recreate in a new building; this factor should be considered when building options are under review.

If the Lowell school site were used as a new High School site, there are several issues that would need to be dealt with: the topography is difficult; the school may need to be preserved as a historical site; and the need to connect the school to a new high school would compromise the educational layout.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The hiring of an Owner's Project Manager is highly recommended and there are groups that specialize in public projects to help guide the community in the process.

Using one contractor for all projects is not an issue for the size of the project anticipated. Projects within the \$80-120 million range can draw on a large pool of capable contractors. When contracts are within the \$20-40 million range, the costs per square foot increases. The most problematic area is when a project is in the \$175-200 million dollar range because the number of contractors is limited.

REDISTRICTING

Some population adjustment should be considered for good educational environments: the Cunniff School should be increased; the Lowell remain about the same; and the Hosmer should be decreased. This is another advantage to planning the project for the schools simultaneously because this can be planned in during the design phase.

RENOVATIONS

Each of the schools is seeking comprehensive renovations. Space can be reconfigured and organized for 21st Century learning. To do the renovations on the lower end of the scale would not provide for the intended educational solutions. To complete that objective, the costs would probably be in the mid-range of the estimates.

The structural integrity of the buildings as it relates to demolition varies for each building. The Cunniff School is a steel framed building and walls could easily be removed. This not possible for the Lowell School; however, the classroom sizes are large and the layout is good. The 1967 wing of the Hosmer School would probably be replaced.

The Hosmer School has a gymnasium, auditorium, and dining area that would be costly to recreate. The middle connector is inefficient space that is not well used and it should probably be rebuilt. Although new construction should be considered, it may not be cost effective nor educationally and community appropriate.

It is anticipated that the Cunniff School would want to have a two-story building to accommodate the student population. To do so, it may be cost effective to remove the 1997 wing and then add on a two-story wing as the current wing may not easily support a second floor.

Heating and air conditioning can be added to the building. Climate controlled schools are done in most construction and the cost of installation and upkeep are relatively minor.

The Middle School has the ability to wait. It should be brought into the MSBA structure because the changes would be significant, the space is sufficient, and the educational needs for 21st Century learning are being accommodated. The costs of repairing the Middle School may be more than that of the High School because the previous construction has problems with floor alignment, ADA accessibility, connectivity, and other fundamental organizational problems.

SWING SPACE

It appears that there is no need for a lot of significant swing space for this project. Phased Occupied renovation, the breaking down of renovations into phases and safely locating educators and students away from the construction, seems to be an easier solution. In the Lowell School, the new space could be built, the students moved to that area, and construction could then start in the current building. In the Cunniff and the Hosmer School, modular classrooms might be needed during the first phases of construction due to the lack of current space in the buildings. To use other buildings might incur significant costs to accommodate students.

The renovations can be done by synchronizing the project with the educational needs. Ideally, construction should begin in the summer where construction and school boundaries can be set. If there is a construction activity that will cause a lot of noise, it can be scheduled for an appropriate time. In addition, construction activities can be worked into the educational experience.

President Sideris opened the meeting for public comment.

Peter Centola – Asked how the High School would be built and what the percentage was for renovation versus new construction

Response: The MSBA goal is to renovate and a good case must be made to demolish and replace. A school can retain its basic structure and still be streamlined to fit modern teaching needs.

In MA, the ratio of renovation to new construction is about 50-50.

Kate Quinn – Asked if the old Police Station was to be used by the School Administration and what the air quality would be in the school during construction?

Response: It was suggested that nothing be done with the old Police Station until the schematic design is completed for the High School. At that time, it would be determined if the Phillips building is being incorporated into the High School campus or not.

There are stringent requirements regarding air quality so that there should be good air quality.

Lindsey Mosca – Stated that new construction does not seem realistic and that the town needs to move forward with the suggested plans.

Christina Murphy – As a parent of two Hosmer children, would the children be moved around more than once in a school year

Response: Although it is difficult to say, it is likely that the renovation to the building would be completed while the children remain in the front portion of the building. When renovation is completed, children would be moved into the new interior, then the 1967 wing would be demolished.

Jim Carrens – As a Cunniff parent, will the Cunniff School be the only one with modular classrooms and will there be a need to vote on the renovations twice, once for the elementary schools and another for the high school.

Response: There will be a need for modular classrooms at the Cunniff but that does not mean it will be a substandard facility. Modulares have improved and are good working spaces. At the Lowell, the addition will become the swing space. Modular classrooms will be needed at the Hosmer for the pre-K students.

The voting process has not yet been determined.

Elodia Thomas – Thanked Mr. Dunlap for the quality of his presentation.

There being no other speakers, President Sideris closed the public forum.

Mr. Portz stated that the School Committee will meet on August 14, 2017 to hear more information from Mr. Dunlap; a motion will then be made to move forward with the hiring of an Owner's Project Manager and a designer's services. The motion will be forwarded to the Town Council to approve an appropriation for these services. A Building Committee will be created and approved by the Town Council.

Superintendent Galdston spoke on the need for the improvements to provide quality 21st Century education.

Mr. Portz and President Sideris spoke about the opportunities and challenges ahead.

3. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Piccirilli moved to adjourn the meeting; Councilor Dattoli seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

ADDENDUM

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the Town Council for which a quorum was present, the above minutes were adopted by a vote of 7 for, 0 against, 0 present on August 8, 2017.

Mark S. Sideris, Council President
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