

**Town of Watertown**  
**School Building Committee**  
**Three Elementary School Projects**  
**Wednesday, February 16, 2022**  
**via ZOOM 6:00p.m. – 7:00p.m.**

M I N U T E S

**Committee Members Present:** Mark Sideris (chair), John Portz (vice-chair), Deanne Galdston, Lindsay Mosca, Kelly Kurlbaum, James Kane, Steve Magoon, Leo Patterson, Paul Anastasi, Tom Tracy, and Vincent Piccirilli

**Committee Members Absent:** Heidi Perkins

**Others Present:** Daren Sawyer, Andrew Cunneen and James Jordan (Ai3 Architects); Vivian Varbedian, Tom Finnegan and Alana Forbes (OPM, Hill International); Christy Murphy and Allyson Mahar; (Compass Project Management), Karen Feeney, Mena Ciarlone and Stacey Phelan

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Mark Sideris called the meeting to order at 6:14 p.m. John Portz took a roll call of Committee Members present.

2. **Approval of Meeting Minutes – January 5, 2022 and December 15, 2021**

Chairman Sideris made a motion to approve the Elementary meeting minutes for January 5, 2022. Vincent Piccirilli motions to adopt the Elementary school portion of the minutes as written; Paul Anastasi seconded. Chairman Sideris made a motion to approve the Elementary meeting minutes for December 15, 2021. Vincent Piccirilli motions to adopt the Elementary school portion of the minutes as written; Steve Magoon seconded. All were in favor on a roll call vote.

3. **Review and Approval of Elementary Schools Monthly Invoices and Proposed Change Order #11**

Vivian Varbedian presented and reviewed the Elementary school monthly invoices for both December 2021 and January 2022.

**December 2021 invoices are as follows w/total at \$3,294,285.95:**

- Hill International – Jan 2022 - \$90,210.00
- Ai3 Architects (Base Services) – Dec 31, 2021 - \$106,746.46
- Ai3 Architects (Extra Services) – Dec 31, 2021 - \$990.00
- Ai3 Architects – Reimbursables Services - \$16,444.94
- Brait Builders – Dec 31, 2021 - \$3,023,338.54
- UTS (Testing Agency) – Dec 10, 2021 - \$200.00
- UTS (Testing Agency) – Dec 10, 2021 - \$280.00
- Ridgeline Analytics – Jan 3, 2022 - \$1,572.50
- FF&E Invoices – Jan 9, 2022 - \$31,213.51
- A. Walecka & Sons Movers – Dec 30, 2021 - \$23,290.00

Chairman Mark Sideris made a motion to approve the Elementary School projects December 2021 invoices of \$3,294,285.95. Vincent Piccirilli motions to approve the Elementary school project December invoices. Tom Tracy seconded. All were in favor on a roll call vote.

**January 2022 invoices are as follows w/total at \$2,283,820.87:**

- Hill International – Feb 10, 2022 - \$90,210.00
- Ai3 Architects (Base Services) – Jan 31, 2022 - \$27,094.17
- Ai3 architects – (Extra Services) – Jan 31, 2022 - \$21,675.00
- Ai3 Architects – (Reimbursable Services) - Jan 31, 2022 - \$5,268.10
- Brait Builders – Jan 31, 2022 - \$1,681,930.44
- Ridgeline Analytics – Feb 1, 2022 - \$647.50
- FF&E Invoices – Feb 7, 2022 - \$28,460.32
- FF&E Invoices – Feb 7, 2022 - \$273,831.46
- FF&E Invoices – Feb 7, 2022 - \$134,398.06
- Colliers International – Dec 31, 2021 - \$10,546.15
- Colliers International – Nov 30, 2021 - \$9,759.67

Chairman Mark Sideris made a motion to approve the Elementary School projects January 2022 invoices of \$2,283,820.87. Vincent Piccirilli motions to approve the Elementary school project January invoices. Tom Tracy seconded. All were in favor on a roll call vote.

**Proposed Change Order #11**

Vivian Varbedian presented and reviewed Change Order # 11 for both Hosmer and Cunniff Elementary Schools which totals \$536,533.80. The largest amount of the change order scope is Hosmer's PV interconnection and battery storage system which is \$365,649.02. This does include all the site work from Concord Street to Mount Auburn Street as well as the warranty, battery storage and all necessary site work. This was required to have the rebate. This brings a total of Change Orders to Date to \$2,863,778.28 within only (3%) of Original Contract Sum.

Mark Sideris made a motion to approve Change Order # 11. Vincent Piccirilli motions to approve Change Order # 11 for the Elementary schools of \$536,533.80. Tom Tracy seconded; all were in favor on a roll call vote.

**4. Executive Summary**

Vivian Varbedian reviewed and presented February 2022 Executive Summary for Cunniff, Hosmer and Lowell Elementary school projects.

Hosmer Elementary school ribbon cutting, and open house went very well. Teachers will begin moving in this Friday 2/18/22. Also, all the students have had numerous events where they had opportunities to visit the school and learn about the lunch protocols among other various protocols about New Hosmer Elementary school. Anticipation with all the invoices being approved has been captured within the projected cost. The change order was not pending approval tonight which will be incorporated for next month's review. Cunniff Elementary school task this month is completing building and site punch list during February school vacation week (weather permitting). Hosmer task this month is substantial completion of the construction work, FF&E and Technology. Move management from Phillips's building and Hosmer Z section to New Hosmer Elementary school. Lowell Elementary school task this month is move management to St. Jude (Lowell West) and the Phillips Building from the Lowell Elementary school.

## **5. Elementary School Project Updates**

### ***Hosmer O'Connell Field: Added Recreational Amenities***

Daren Sawyer of Ai3 Architects reviewed the Hosmer O'Connell field amenities presentation. Few changes have been made since last seen but adjustments were made to the bleacher pad areas in response to a DPW request. The bleacher pads were made a little bigger to adjust the bleachers for viewing purpose. If a softball or soccer game was happening, it can be slid around as they are portable bleachers.

The added amenities that were presented highlighted in yellow numbers were indicated as follows:

1. Prefabricated restroom
2. Portable Bleachers
3. Enclosed dugout with storage (power and data included for wifi access; *broadcasting by WCA-TV if possible*)
4. Softball batting cage (power included)
5. Flag with illumination
6. Scoreboard (pavement increase since CD's = 5,361 sf)

Vivian Varbedian showed the O'Connell Field Scoreboard views in relation to the flagpole and fence netting as she stated that last November 2022, a visual rendering was requested to see how intrusive or if any the scoreboard would be from Mount Auburn Street. Daren Sawyer reflected that the rendering gives a sense of scale. The grade drops down a bit with the scoreboard and is shielded by the trees as you drive pass. The views are shown at different angles.

Daren Sawyer showed generic rendering of the restroom facility. It prefabricated structure that will be placed on a concrete pad. There is still the ability to pick out the materials, colors and finishes but will come as one complete unit that will drop to the pad and connect to the utilities when delivered to the site.

### ***Hosmer Elementary School Solar Canopies***

Vivian Varbedian navigated the presentation with Daren Sawyer of Ai3 Architects discussing the drawings of the Solar Canopies shown per contract documents. The potential opportunity to move the two canopies to the east side of the property without compromising any of the expected annual electricity production. Daren explained that the drawing of the orange highlighted depicts the solar canopy areas. The area where work will be done next will be (2) large ones over the parking lot and (2) smaller ones along the street. The (2) in the upper left have been already installed with contractor currently installing the PV panels presently. The renderings of the solar canopies on Hancock Street show the smaller canopies as well as the background over the parking area. The (2) to the left are the ones over the walking area as well as the drive coming in. Also, when approached with the concern about the (2) smaller PV canopies along the street, the consultant was called to see what the possibilities of relocating the PV canopy. There is a possibility of relocating the PVs to the play area and still maintain the PV output per the original design. It will take some rework/redesign work to get those there but again it is new, so it wasn't fully investigated of the extent of the rework. A relocation confirmation was given if changes are desired. Chairman Sideris also stated that this an opportunity for the neighbors to look at this. The School Building Committee must have a sense of this if this is the route that will take place. Due to incurring change orders, and not sure what it will be because it has already been designed and bid. Chairman Sideris is willing to take the chance because he believes this may solve some of the problems of the solar arrays and keep the goal of Net-Zero

Chairman Sideris asked for a sense/motion of the School Building Committee to move forward with continuing to explore this option. Vincent Piccirilli made a motion that it is the sense of the School Building Committee that we move forward to examine moving these solar canopies from Hancock Street to center of the field. Steve Magoon seconded; all were in favor on a roll call vote.

### ***Hosmer Traffic Plan***

Thomas Finnegan presented and discussed Hosmer Elementary school traffic plan. The plan was put in place to go into action after February vacation. Due to the Pre-S/Pre-K early move and based on traffic flow, Sargent Sampson moved the schedule up a few weeks as of last Friday all the drop off/pick up is on Concord Road and not on Chauncey Street anymore. The construction fence was moved over by Pre-S/Pre-K area back to open some areas for the students to walk from the buses up to the school. The feedback is that it has improved a lot from earlier in the week with poor traffic conditions. Thomas wanted to thank Sargent Sampson for expediated the plan to get it started right away. He really stepped up and enacted changes from the very beginning. Chairman Sideris thanked Superintendent Deanne Gladston as she immediately got things out with social media and to all the parents with the new traffic plan. Superintendent also echoed thanks to all involved and Sargent Sampson including staff at the Preschool who shifted there start time by 10 minutes to help move the traffic along. It has gotten better and better with the dramatic shift on Friday made all the difference in the world. A thank you again to Sargent Sampson who jumped right in to figure out the best solution and a thank you to everybody and especially Tom for helping us out along the way.

### ***Lowell Elementary School:***

#### ***Approval of General Contractor & Alternate #1***

Vivian Varbedian presented and discussed the General Contractor and Alternate #1. There were (4) General Contractors submits their bids. There base bids are identified accordingly in order of lowest to greatest. As well as the Alternate #1 for the PV for the building. The Alternate #1 is to furnish and install a complete Photovoltaic (PV) system with estimated annual production of slightly under 200 kWh. Furnished under section 26 00 00 for the Electrical Sub-Contractor. Includes labor, materials, equipment, transportation, and all items necessary to install and have the PVs come fully usable at the time of completion. With the acceptance of Alternate #1, the base bid are the totals that are listed as follows:

- CTA Construction Managers, LLC as lowest bidder – Total Bid w/Alternates - \$37,974,750.00
- Brait Builders Corporation as second lowest bidder – Total Bid w/Alternates - \$38,449,000.00
- Agostini Construction – Total Bid w/Alternates - \$39,465,600.00
- J&J Contractors, Inc – Total Bid w/Alternates - \$39,847,000.00

Vivian Varbedian was prepared to make a recommendation however considering some new developments and new information received, we are seeking an extension of (2) weeks in order to make a full recommendation for the General Contractor for the Lowell Elementary School project. At this moment, we are not necessarily prepared to make an award. Chairman Sideris noted that we have some new additional information.

Chairman Sideris asked for a motion to allow Hill International an additional (2) weeks to make a recommendation on a bid. Steve Magoon moved, and Tom Tracy seconded.

## **6. Elementary School Questions / Comments**

**Question 1** – John Portz asked about Change Order #11 regarding the PV interconnection & battery storage system for \$365,649.02. He asked if it was not anticipated?

**Response** – Vivian Varbedian stated that it was not anticipated at the time of the original design. There were modifications that were made that had to be addressed for the site work and battery storage to qualify for the NSTAR rebate. Chairman Sideris also commented that the battery storage was a regulation that was added after the bid.

**Question 2** – John Portz asked a general question pertaining to people asking the cost for Hosmer ES and the cost for the Cunniff ES. The reporting puts them together in terms of the bottom line. Is it possible to get information to compare the (2) schools or have the (2) schools separated?

**Response** – Vivian Varbedian stated that there can be a breakout of the two schools. It won't be an extreme detail one since it was bid as one project. It won't be a fair representation of a total project cost since there is one architectural team that is working on all three Elementary schools as well as an OPM team that is working to manage all three Elementary schools. The only cost that can be separated with a little bit of work would be the construction related line.

**Question 3** - Chairman Sideris asked that as we continue forward to his understanding, we will be back with further design updates at a future meeting? Do we still have an opportunity to look at finishes on the restrooms as you stated earlier?

**Response** - Daren Sawyer of Ai3 Architects stated that the amenities design is complete. A couple meetings were had with Department of Public Works, and they had comments that we are currently responding too. Previous comments have been responded too with questions/concerns with utilities. Yes, you still have an opportunity to look at the finishes as of now it is currently out with Brait Builders for pricing.

**Question 4** – Recreation Director, Peter Centola thanked all about the upgrades. He also wanted to gauge if there is an updated timeframe as to when the field will be available? Would it be in the fall 2023 or do you have a season that you are gauging?

**Response** - Daren Sawyer stated that typically there should be (2) growing seasons on a newly planted field. This work is slated to take place later this summer. It would be completed to get sod installed then be able to watch the sod and grass take for (2) growing seasons while the contractor maintains it. Subsequently, it will be reviewed with the Landscape Architect prior to turn over. It will be the Fall of 2023.

**Question 5** – Attendee AnnMarie Cloonan ask if the perimeter structures take up a lot of green space? What is the footage lost? Are there repairs plan for the playgrounds specifically the pool of water eroding the dirt?

**Response** - Daren Sawyer responded that he does not know the exact square footage of the dug outs but will get information. Steve Magoon noted that on Added Recreational Amenities slide shows the pavement increase since CDs = 5,361 sf. Vivian said it has increased since the CDs but Daren states that this is only the highlighted yellow asphalt paving that is shown. Daren Sawyer stated regarding the repair plans for the playground that this area has been reviewed with the Landscape Architect who has generated the punch list and will be working with the Contractor to address any of the issues in the Spring when the ground thaws out.

**Question 6** – Lindsay Mosca appreciates the design team flexibility of the Solar panels so late in the game, but the question is by moving the panels off the perimeter of this new made greenspace that we are recreating and placing in the middle does it impact the useability of the greenspace?

**Response** – Daren Sawyer stated that yes it would. The structures that are holding up the PV canopies would be out in that area so it may have to be redesign in the play area to keep kids away from possibly falling, hitting, or running into those to provide protection. It hasn't been looked at this in great depths yet.

**Question 7** – Steve Magoon asked about rendering in new location of the Solar Canopies, what is below or what in the schematic will be in the mover or next too?

**Response** – Daren Sawyer stated that on slide of the School Solar Canopies, the PVs will be either side of the play area. This needs to be explored more. Chairman Sideris also said that you must give something to get something. We will take some of the play space but will have additional green space where the canopies were going to go. We will have to look at the design and see what fits, so I suggest that we have examine it.

**Question 8** - Attendee Ji Chong asked if there will be landscaping on the Boylston Street side of the solar canopies and parking lot?

**Response** – Daren Sawyer stated Yes that it will all be landscaped.

**Question 9** – Attendee Pat Rathbone asked where are the houses in the drawing?

**Response** – Vivian Varbedian stated that the renderings was not a fair representation that the houses where not identified where the green area was in Solar Canopies Hancock Street rendering.

**Question 10** – Attendee asked how does moving the Solar Canopies in this way help the Hancock Street neighbors? It is not clear to me.

**Response** – Chairman Sideris stated that the canopies are now 30 feet away from the houses which with the move would be significantly further away from the house in that neighborhood.

**Question 11** – Attendee suggested getting some more renderings that show more realistic views of what these panels look like in scale and distance to the houses. Also, comparing them to how the panels would be in comparison to the existing school buildings in terms of its proximity to the houses.

**Response** – Vivian Varbedian stated that we will work on the future renderings will hopefully try to address these concerns. Daren Sawyer also stated once we dig into the detail of this propose location, we will zoom in and show the reconfiguration of the play area. Renderings can be done in different views from Hancock Street and all around to show you what it would look like.

**Question 12** – Attendee Armond Muslin who owns the houses on 54<sup>th</sup> and 56<sup>th</sup> Hancock Street with owners Ed and Jack wants to know why we need these solar panels. He is an electrician and an inspector. Solar panel technology has gone so fast that Tesla just came out with Solar panels that is 5x stronger than anything else on the market. Considering this and technology that is coming out especially batteries that is coming out that is supposed to be 2x or 3x stronger, within 5 years this will be obsolete. What numbers are we using to get to Net-Zero? What solar panels are we using to get to Net-Zero? Are we doing technology that is 4-5 years old because it is kind of obsolete now? Within the next 5 years we won't need this structure. We can solve this problem if maybe we wait a couple years. We may be at 92% not 100% for the next 3-5 years. New technology is beyond on its way as Elon Musk is in the solar panel game. He will push it very fast. New technology comes out every couple of years. Can we place the Solar panels in a non-populated area? A place where people are not affected?

**Response** – Chairman Sideris thanked Armond for the comment and will take into consideration as we move forward with this.

**Question 13** – Attendee AnnMarie Cloonan thanked Sargent Sampson and all the police presence that were involved with the traffic plan because without the police intervention we would have never survived the week. We are concerned without the police presence here we will have a continued negative impact on the traffic flow. We have seen parents would leave their cars in the middle of the street with the doors open. Without the police presence coming up and down the street, there is parents that block driveways, park at angels that are not supposed to happen in the neighborhood. There are still concerns about when the school or the police are not watching. Also, the signs are not aligned with the times when people are coming in and out of the street which changes will happen with the signage as Sargent Sampson has

delivered. Thanking Steve Magoon for entertaining the conversations and keeping abreast about managing the traffic plans.

**Question 14** – As a School Building Committee member, Kelly Kurlbaum would like to know what the additional information is so that it is understood? Also, how has the experience been with Brait Builders on the other projects? Is there any hesitation or concerns on that end if they were to get the Lowell school?

**Response** – Vivian Varbedian informed her that a package has been prepared that will be shared and sent to the Chairman for distribution. Also, Vivian reported that there have been some challenges along the way for the project but it to be expected given the fact that we operated in a pandemic. Brait Builders has delivered the project and has continued to do a very good job for the Town of Watertown as well as to work with. No hesitation or concerns if Brait Builders were to get the Lowell school.

**Question 15** – John Portz asked when responding to a bid and the Alternate #1, assuming we are within those time limits? Are we at risk at losing some component of this?

**Response** – Chairman Sideris stated that we will just be outside the time limits but unfortunately the city attorney will advise us if there are additional issues on that. Vivian Varbedian also stated that from our first initial receiving of the bids, we had (30) days and we seek an extension sending us to the end of this month. We are asking for a second extension. Chairman Sideris explained that we are not a risk at losing some component. Hill International wants to make sure that all due diligence has been done since new information came in.

**Question 16** – Kelly Kurlbaum asked if there is any impact to the overall target schedule and planned kick-off of construction?

**Response** – Vivian Varbedian stated that there is a slight modification for the schedule since we anticipated start of construction to be in the very beginning of March, but we feel confident that we will be able to work with the awarded contractor in making up the time loss.

**Comment A** – Vincent Piccirilli commented that the public should know that the PV interconnection amount is a big number being it over a half a million dollars. This is a requirement of Eversource to participate in the Photo Voltaic rebate program. This was not because of defective plans to spec but a regulation after the contract was awarded. Photo Voltaic system of this size helps to balance the load and it would serve the town well over the next 20+ years.

**Comment B** – Steve Magoon stated that he has had conversations with the abutters that this is becoming too much of an athletic complex and not enough greenspace. He believes that the visuals help demonstrate that as you go down Mount Auburn Street it still will be visually a large grass playing field. The improvements are important amenities to make part of the complex in that would help and be a good addition.

**Comment C** - An attendee commented that they appreciated the renderings which showed more into perspective of the size and scaling of the scoreboard.

**Comment D** – Chairman Sideris made a brief statement regarding that many people in the neighborhood have reached out to several people throughout the community about the Solar Arrays. The team (Ai3 Architects & Hill International) was asked to investigate the situation of the Solar Arrays with a slide that wasn't a part of the presentation. The team may have found an opportunity to move the two sections of the solar panels and still maintain the electricity that would be produced from them.

**Comment E** – Vincent Piccirilli commented on the solar canopies stating that he agrees on everything that has been said. It is worth examining more and see what will work. In terms of losing green space, we are

not adding anything just moving things around so there isn't net loss of green space. Looking at the other renderings, you see that the hard-court surface is right up against the edge of the Hancock PV arrays. If this was an acceptable design putting the play area this close to the edge of the PV array, doing the same thing in the center, maybe moving the playground around may not be directly underneath it. It seems like there is enough room to shuffle things around without losing greenspace just slightly reconfigured. I would support doing further study.

**Comment F** – Paul Anastasia likes the idea of moving the solar canopies back. If a play area can be shaded for the kids not having to be in the sun and pleasing the neighbors at the same time. Also, very interesting to see what the pricing would be and look forward to a continued conversation of moving the panels.

**Comment G** – Superintendent Deanne Galdston thinks of the different options of the solar canopies. The impact on the students and having lots of students at the New Hosmer on the field, looking to see how this would end with looking at the designs and rendering a bit more. Hoping the impact to the students is favorable but certainly minimal.

**Comment H** – Councilor Nicole Gardner thanked the School Building Committee for considering alternative for the panels originally planned for Hancock Street while maintaining our commitment to Net-Zero. I look forward to what the consultants will come back with.

**Comment I** – Peter Centola added to Superintendent Galdston with the solar canopies. We need to be careful with horizontal obstruction, make sure it is safe, aesthetically pleasing, and functional. This conversation needs to be continued and appreciate everyone comments on this.

**Comment J** – Attendee Jack Dargon wanted to thank everyone to listening to the community on Hancock and Winthrop Street regarding the solar arrays. It seems like a much more equitable situation than what we had with the solar arrays in front of our doors. The top of the solar arrays would have come up to our roof lines as they were measured off precisely. He is very grateful, excited, and thankful.

**Comment K** – Attendee Molly Tager stated that the Hosmer ES is an incredible school which is a Net-Zero energy school. Keeping the rays producing the same efficiency is vital. Moving the solar arrays, if it can be accomplished while keeping the same efficiency is good, we can't wait for 3-5 years. For a building to be Net-Zero energy, it must be understood that the panels must be onsite. They cannot be across town in some field.

**Comment L** – City Councilor John Gannon said thank you to the School Building Committee for considering more neighborhood friendly options for the placement of the solar array field. I look forward to more discussion on this matter.

**Comment M** – An attendee mentioned that the School Building Committee has been so responsive to the neighbor's concerns.

**Comment N** – Attendee AnnMarie Cloonan echoed Attendee Arround's point that she understands but doesn't understand why the panels can't be moved off site but his point with technology is a very valid point. In the solar world with so many things changing, it can drastically reduce the size on what needs to go onto the field and hopes that this is something that is under consideration to address that.

**Comment O** - Attendee stated that solar panels are not 5x more efficient than a few years ago. They typically get a few percent more efficient each year. In defense of Ai3 Architects, this design was done for current efficiency of panels not from 4 years ago.

**Comment P** - Chairman Sideris read an email from Maureen Foley stating that she is unable to attend this evening meeting due to a prior commitment. I have been in contact with Dave Sampson of the Watertown Police Department and Steve Magoon, the Acting Deputy City Manager about the congestion and lack of access to Winthrop Street from my driveway in the morning and afternoon. Since those emails, Winthrop



Street traffic has cleared up. I and my tenants have complete access to and from my home. I am very concerned for my neighborhood regarding the possibility of making these streets one way with extreme limited access for the residents during several hours during the school days. I have been an active resident and participant during this whole building process. Hosmer ES has always been a large presence and a positive one for many decades. I want to keep it that way and not make the neighborhood and residents to be detrimentally affected in the future.

**Comment Q** – Attendee Jimmy Mello was able to be at the ribbon cutting and wanted to thank everybody for a job well done.

**7. End of Elementary School Project Business Meeting**

Chairman Sideris ended the Elementary School Project Business meeting at 7:21pm.