

**Town of Watertown  
School Building Committee  
Three Elementary School Projects  
Wednesday, November 15,2023  
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), Vincent Piccirilli, Deanne Galdston, Lindsay Mosca, Kelly Kurlbaum, Denise Moroney, Steve Magoon, Leo Patterson and Paul Anastasi

**Committee Members Absent:** Thomas Tracy

**Others Present:** Daren Sawyer, James Jordan and Nathaniel Williams (Ai3 Architects), Vivian Varbedian and Alana Forbes (OPM, Hill International), Christy Murphy and Chase Terrio (Compass Project Management)

**1. Call to Order:** The meeting began at 6:04p.m. Vincent Piccirilli took a roll call of School Building Committee members present.

**2. Approval of Meeting Minutes –October 18, 2023**

Chairman Sideris asked for a motion on the Elementary school meeting minutes portion for October 18, 2023. Vincent Piccirilli made a motion to approve the meeting minutes with Steve Magoon seconded. All were in favor on a roll call vote.

**3. Review / Approval of Elementary Schools Project Monthly Invoices**

Vivian Varbedian presented the Elementary school work completed November invoices.

**August 2023 invoices are as follows w/total at \$1,347,033.44:**

- Hill International – \$23,300.00
- Ai3 Architects (Basic Services) - \$8,923.08
- Ai3 Architects (Integrated Contract Design) - \$ 17,600.00
- Brait Builders (Payment Req # 41) – \$97,836.13
- CTA Construction Managers (Payment Req #20) - \$999,134.73
- Colliers International- \$16,879.31
- Ridgeline Energy Analytics - \$414.00
- FF&E Invoices – (Varies) \$182,946.19

Chairman Sideris asked for a motion to approve the Elementary School projects invoices for \$1,347,033.44. Chairman stated that the Auditor has reviewed and approved the invoices.

Vincent Piccirilli moves for approval of invoices with Steve Magoon seconded. All were in favor on a roll call vote.

#### **Lowell Elementary School Project - Amendment No.14**

Vivian Varbedian presented and reviewed Amendment No.14. This is a request for approval for Ai3 Architects for additional design services associated with the Acoustical Engineer consulting services required to prepare a noise study in relation to the Lowell Elementary School chiller. This includes evaluation of the chiller sound and providing noise control recommendations as needed for compliance with state and local noise regulations. This is totaling NTE (not to exceed) Ai3 Architect contract by \$9,900.00.

Chairman Sideris asked for a motion to approve Amendment No.14. Vincent Piccirilli moves for approval of Amendment No.14 with Steve Magoon seconded. There is a discussion regarding Amendment No.14.

#### **Lowell Elementary School Project – Change Order No. 11**

Vivian Varbedian presented and reviewed CTA Construction Change Order No. 11. The change order totals \$45,310.17. Some change orders are smaller items that have been lingering in the change order log. We have been trying to clean up and make sure these are completed so we can close the financials for the project in a timely manner. Chairman Sideris asked if there is anticipation for additional smaller or larger change orders as the project closes? Vivian Varbedian stated Yes for CTA Construction we do anticipate potential change orders. We have been going back and forth negotiating with them. We also have been going through the evaluation process which has not been bought forth today. Chairman Sideris asked if there is a dollar scope of the change orders? Vivian Varbedian stated not at this moment.

Chairman Sideris asked for a motion to approve Change Order #11. Vincent Piccirilli moves for approval with John Portz seconded.

#### **Hosmer Elementary School Project – Change Order No. 17**

Vivian Varbedian presented and reviewed Brait Builders Change Order No. 17. This is the final change order for Brait Builders. It is the removal and partial replacement of the existing water line in Hancock Street at the Hosmer Elementary School totaling \$49,016.52. Chairman Sideris asked if this was a requirement from Public Works. Vivian Varbedian answered yes.

Chairman Sideris asked for a motion to approve Change Order No. 17. Vincent Piccirilli moves for approval with Steve Magoon seconded.

#### **4. Executive Summary**

Vivian Varbedian presented and reviewed the Executive Summary highlights for November 2023. The Executive Summary shows a snapshot of the financial standing as well as what is remaining on a scheduled basis. The Lowell Elementary School is finishing with the GFRP which continues throughout November and hope to be completed by that time. The interior punch list is continuing through November and might be extended into the early weeks of December due to the holiday. We are close to 70% complete at the moment. Similarly, there is the exterior punch list which continues through November and potentially the first week of December due to the holiday. Soon we will be completed with punch list items for the Lowell Elementary school.

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

**Comment A** – Vincent Piccirilli was struggling with Ai3 Amendment No.14 noise study. He is voting no on it not because the work needs to be done but because there is clearly something wrong with the design. There seems to be a design problem and Ai3 Architects need to be addressing it to fix it. We should not be giving them a change order to do that. Vincent Piccirilli was at LES on October 5<sup>th</sup> when the chiller was running. Testing was being done for the AC system and it was loud. He was able to hear it from (3) houses away. The homeowner who lives next to the chiller at the corner end of Carlton Terrance called him in a panic because she was having her upstairs and downstairs apartments painted. She wanted him to hear

the noise coming from the chiller. The noise was so loud that in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor apartment with all the windows shut, you could hear it and it was loud inside. While at LES, he sat at the tables in the courtyard. He said it would be difficult for people sitting at those tables in the courtyard next to the cafeteria to talk to each other when the chiller is running. The City of Watertown, Section 95 of the Noise Ordinance cannot be more than 5DB above ambient measured at the property line. This is way over 5DB. This does not comply with the law. There is clearly a design mistake here. He is not sure why the taxpayers of Watertown should pay Ai3 Architects to fix a design flaw.

**Comment B** – Kelly Kurlbaum agreed with Vincent Piccirilli. Kelly Kurlbaum wants to understand what was carried in the design documents. Not sure if this was reviewed already because typically it would be on some type of isolator. There is usually some type of enclosure that has acoustical properties. That is standard from a design perspective. Trying to understand the history without having the drawings in my hands of what was included in the original scope. If there was anything of value engineered out. This would typically follow out of the MEP Engineers' scope of work. Just trying to understand what has been discussed and reviewed behind the scenes.

**Response** – Daren Sawyer stated that they included pre-strict regulations in the HVAC specifications for acoustical treatments within that unit to be assured that the noise coming from the chiller was within the regulations. The shop drawings were reviewed. The shop drawings included all the elements that were identified in the specifications. The Mechanical Contractor and manufacturer's representative came onsite to look at the chiller and confirm all has been installed. Now, it is a matter of going back and doing the noise studies to see if it is within the decimal limits. If not, we will have to go back to the contractor. If it is within those regulations, we will have to go back with the Acoustical Engineer and try to determine some additional acoustical treatment around the unit to bring the levels down to an acceptable living level for the neighbors. Kelly Kurlbaum asked if the Engineer recorded on site during the walk-thru with the Sub-Contractor? Daren Sawyer stated Yes that he has been onsite several times. Kelly Kurlbaum asked if it is \$10,000 to just have someone come out and take a reading of the existing sound? Daren Sawyer stated that it is not just a reading, but those additional services include writing the report then if still not satisfied with the noise levels, they will provide recommendations for additional treatments around, above and on top of that unit in order to bring the sound level down even further. Kelly Kurlbaum asked if Ai3 Architects are proposing a NTE (Not to Exceed) value. Daren Sawyer stated Yes, he believes that is how it is written. Kelly Kurlbaum recommended that the chiller needs to be assessed to know what the current chiller is running at to ensure that it is indeed over. She suggests this is NTE (Not to Exceed) and Ai3 Architects is only billing one step at a time. If we find that it is within certain levels, then we might not proceed with the other solutions. This is my input from a professional perspective.

**Comment C** - Paul Anastasi is particularly concerned with the GFRP and knows that there are concerns other than workmanship. We need to ensure it is complete to our satisfaction as the Project Manager. This is a big concern. We should not live with this GFRP for the next (50) years if we are not happy with it. Vivian Varbedian stated that even if we want to complete it, we will never look at it that way. She knows that Ai3 Architects has reviewed as well, and nobody has taken acceptance of it in its current condition. Daren Sawyer echoed Paul's sentiments. He is expressive in the meetings about the concern with the installation's quality. We have not even punch list the GFRP as we consider that incomplete work. Until they finish the work, get to where they feel they are ready for us to look at, we will not punch list it. We will continue to hold their money until they get it right.

**Comment D** – Leo Patterson stated that the panel has already mentioned the (2) points he was going to mention – it is the GFRP, the inconsistency of the soffit and the coloring. Ai3 should look at the shop drawings and the seaming specifically at the Lowell signage band across the main front entrance. It seems like the seaming was either a miss on the shop drawings or the coordination side. There are quality control issues and installation issues with the GFRP. Daren Sawyer stated that they will go back and look at the

shop drawings and see what those show. Also, we will look at the contract drawings on how we detailed it to make sure we get the product that we paid for.

**Comment E** – Chairman Sideris thanked Paul Anastasi on behalf of the Committee for going to every single one of the project meetings every week. Feel free if you are unhappy to make sure the Committee is aware, and we will address it. Paul Anastasi says he tries to voice most of his concerns in the trailer and bring it to the committee as he thinks he needs it too. It is not the equipment itself, but it is the design of how it is encapsulated.

**Response** – Daren Sawyer stated that it is yet to be determined. He can send the written specifications and tell them they must meet certain levels. There were certain add-ons and accessories that you can get with chillers in order to sound dead the noise when it is operating. He is not pointing the finger until the report comes in. James Jordan agreed with Daren but stated we need to find out where the fault lies. Whether it is the bases of design, faulty equipment or a sound package that was specified and was not installed, then something else was. The initiative was taken to arrange for this Acoustical Engineer to come out and take some baseline readings. This work seems like it has already been done. If it is in fact an issue with the basis of the design, he assures the SBC Committee that you will not be billed for this if it is something that Ai3 Architects did. A baseline needs to be done to see what is wrong and what the readings are to ensure it meets the requirements for Watertown's sound ordinance. We are happy to take this off the table for now and come back when we have the completed report, and we can assign a solution if you will. Either way, we needed this done and knew it was a sensitive issue. It was brought to our attention last month by Vincent Piccirilli. Chairman Sideris stated that the way that it is written says that we need to do this to be in compliance with state and local noise regulations. If we are not in compliance, how did we get a Certificate of Occupancy if this did not meet our local requirements for noise? Steve Magoon chimed in and stated that if the chiller is running now and creating a noise ordinance violation, that would be an issue that we would address. In terms of why we would get a Certificate of Occupancy, he suspects the chiller was not running as it wasn't warm weather where we would be running a chiller as you probably were not aware of any potential problem. Chairman Sideris then stated that Vincent Piccirilli had a conversation as Vincent was there on October 5<sup>th</sup> and it was running at that time. This was before they occupied the school before they received the Certificate of Occupancy, and it was a warm October.

**Question 2** – Leo Patterson wanted to second what Kelly Kurlbaum stated. He believes that the mechanical system needs to be understood and it is operating at a higher decimal level as expected. As far as Architects and this sort of design service, there is a limited amount that Ai3 Architects has control over except to organize, assess and manage the assessment. As far as a redesign or an adjustment to what has already been done, it sounds like they have acoustical treatments. We expect this so certain measures have been taken and executed. The assessment really is something that if that falls in the realm of additional services for acoustical engineer to do that assessment then it is a valid change order to make that consideration to at least understand who should take responsibility for this. Chairman Sideris stated that since Ai3 Architect James Jordan has allowed to put this off, he suggests that we take it off for a vote this evening and work on it for the next month.

**Question 3** – Kelly Kurlbaum asked about PCO# 312 - CE #361 – Griffin – AHJ additional time -\$10,641.09 – What are the additional items? Also, PCO# 314 – CE #364 – General – Combustion Air Changes \$15,822,68 Was their Owner's request to change what was specified for air changes?

**Response** – Daren Sawyer stated that AHJ involved additional exit signs, some existing left behind electrical, some miscellaneous items including some patching that needed to take place. The AHJ prior to signing off on the building, there are some locations where they feel that you may need an additional exit sign for something under construction, for example, a soffit was built but it is blocking view of one or two exit signs. Exit signs were added and it may have been some existing wires that needed to be capped off. Daren does not have the exact specifics of everything that was done but it is probably in the back-up that

can be provided. With the combustion air changes, we did not change the design or anything but if you recall, these were the existing boilers that we left dormant during construction. When the boilers were fired back up, there were some issues trying to get them to fire, the gas pressure and getting them to work properly in the end. We had to remove some of the combustion air duct work that was feeding these because of the lengths of runs. We ended up using a louver over the door to bring in the combustion air. These changes had to be made to get these existing boilers to function properly. It includes the damper actuator that is tied into the BMS System, and several small components that add up to that \$15,000.00 that you see. Kelly Kurlbaum asked Vivian Varbedian if it were in the budget, we did not have any money for the start-up of the boilers that would cover some of those costs. Vivian Varbedian stated that we did not have it separated in that way.

**Question 4** – Vincent Piccirilli asked if both these change order as well as the Brait Builders change order, the links on the agenda bring you to the webpage and the (2) change orders are not on the webpage. They were not emailed to us as other ones have been in the past. Can you please email the complete change order with the back-up and add it to the webpage.

**Response** – Vivian Varbedian answered yes.

**Question 5** – Kelly Kurlbaum asks for a reminder if change order No.17 was in the confines of the area of work? If you look at the original civil drawings, is it within the dashed area of work from the original set?

**Response** – Daren Sawyer said yes and explained that it is on Hancock Street. This is where the water main from Hancock Street came into the existing Z building portion of the existing Hosmer school. Yes, it is but the extent of the water lines. It was a mess when they got out there because the contractor had to cut and cap all utilities to the building. When looked at, it was not representative of what we showed in the survey or any existing conditions for the water lines in Hancock Street. The laterals were out there crisscrossing with the water main. In order to clean things up, we had the contractor cut and cap the water main but remove the laterals and reconnect the water line in Hancock Street and clean everything up because it was not shown that way originally. Kelly Kurlbaum asked if this would be an unforeseen condition? Daren Sawyer answered yes.

**Question 6** - Vincent Piccirilli asked when all Lowell items would be complete.

**Response** – Vivian Varbedian stated that we are working towards getting them all done by the end of November and/or first week of December.

**Question 7** – Kelly Kurlbaum asked if it is possible to get the current list of the open punch list items? Also, as we get near to 100% completion clearly these are punch list which we own already but wondering where we stand with any remaining contingencies or final budget? Can we find some funds to bring the existing to bring the older kids' playground up to the same standard as the other schools?

**Response** – Vivian Varbedian stated yes, we can give you a current list. Daren Sawyer asked if she has access to Procure but we can easily sort it and give you the running list. Chairman Sideris stated that the older kids' playground is on the City Capital Improvement program to be done. Kelly Kurlbaum stated that this is years delayed and have no faith that it would get done. Chairman Sideris states that he can get a timeline when he speaks to the Manager. He can get a list from the Manager with updates announced to the Council on Tuesday. Kelly Kurlbaum stated that hopefully there will be some accountability for it being completed on time.

## **6. End of Elementary School Project Business Meeting**

Chairman Sideris ended the Elementary School Project Business meeting at 6:25pm.