

**Town of Watertown  
School Building Committee  
Three Elementary School Projects & High School Project  
Wednesday, November 18, 2020 via ZOOM  
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

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

**Committee Members Absent:** Heidi Perkins

**Committee Members Late:** Deanne Galdston and Kelly Kurlbaum – 6:17p.m.

**Others Present:** Scott Dunlap, Daren Sawyer, James Jordan, Mike Remondi and Julie Rahilly (Architectural Team, Ai3 Architects) Vivian Varbedian, Tom Finnegan and Alana Forbes (OPM, Hill International), Christy Murphy and Tim Bonfatti (OPM, Compass Project Management) Erin Moulton, Mena Ciarlone and Stacy Phelan

**1. Call to Order:** Chairman Mark Sideris called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

**2. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Vincent Piccirilli made a motion to adopt October 21, 2020 meeting minutes as written. Tom Tracy seconded. All were in favor on a roll call vote.

**3. Review/Approval of Invoices & Change Orders**

Vivian Varbedian read the *Elementary School's Invoice project* summary totaling \$5,357,181.35. It is indicated as follows:

- *Hill International - \$93,910.00*
- *Ai3 Architects - \$152,565.81, \$25,516.00 (Extra Services) and \$1,100.00 (Reimbursable Expenses)*
- *Brait Builders - \$5,045,243.65*
- *UTS (Cunniff) - \$12,186.89*
- *UTS (Hosmer) - \$15,715.00*
- *UTS (Cunniff) - \$10,944.00*

Vincent Piccirilli made a motion to approve the Elementary school's invoice project summary totaling \$5,357,181.35. Tom Tracy seconded. All were in favor on a roll call vote.

Vivian Varbedian read the *High School's Invoice project* summary totaling \$36,242.31.

It is indicated as follows:

- Compass Project Management - \$ 16,517.00
- Ai3 Architects - \$17,487.82
- Ai3 Architects - \$2,237.49 (*Extra Services*)

Vincent Piccirilli made a motion to approve the High School's invoice project summary totaling \$36,242.31. Tom Tracy seconded. All were in favor on a roll call vote.

Vivian Varbedian read several of the Summary of Change Orders for the Elementary schools that reflected all change orders to date totaling \$553,783.99 with change order #3 totaling \$108,988.03. Tom Finnegan elaborated on Warren street per Chairman Mark Sideris request. Tom explained that change orders C-013 (R1) and C-014 (R1) reflects the cost of an added sewer structure and drainage pipe change. The sum of the (2) mentioned original change orders was up to fifty thousand dollars. This actual cost was reduced as this scope was performed by monitoring time and materials used.

Vincent Piccirilli made a motion to approve the Change Order #3 totaling \$108,988.03 while increasing the total contract to \$95,508,783.99. Steve Magoon seconded. All were in favor on a roll call vote.

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

Vivian Varbedian presented November 2020 executive summary which entailed a summary for both Hosmer and Cunniff Elementary school projects. The summary outlined the projected major task for November with structural steel erection scheduled to be completed at Hosmer Elementary school the week of November 30, 2020 for the topping off ceremony. In area 3 of Hosmer, both the placement of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor concrete and installation of underground plumbing/electric work will begin.

Cunniff Elementary school will begin placement of first floor concrete, completion of exterior framing, sheathing and air vapor barriers with completion of roof and window work at end of month. Both projects are on schedule and meeting all milestones.

Regarding budget, approval of invoices has been recognized. Change order #3 will be reviewed, approved and incorporated in Decembers Executive Summary.

## 5. Review & Approval of Finish Selections

Scott Dunlap introduced Julie Rahilly, Project Architect of Ai3 for Hosmer Elementary school to discuss the interior finish selections to the School Building Committee. The Hosmer and Cunniff interior finished boards were provided to the Hill trailer for the leadership team of both Hosmer/Cunniff (Principals and Superintendents) to view the actual boards in person. Ai3 was able to make some adjustments to the finish selections and respond with some good recommendations. Julie explained the Interior Finishes of the Academic Corridors of Hosmer Elementary School. The theme throughout the academic corridors is natural textures, colors, soft tones such as grays and splash of color that would be emphasized something important in the building. The small group rooms are a bit of a destination point which will have a lot of glass into the small group room. Transparent film will be provided for a privacy barrier. The rigid sheet vinyl cladding would be the material utilized throughout the corridors. This material is a hard surface that a marker board would be that appears at the small group areas. A feature in the corridors is the exposed structure. In talks with Principal Moulton and Superintendent Galdston was excitement with exposing the structure, a warm orange tone was chosen anywhere the structure appears. This provides a compliment to the neutral finishes. Behind the structure is a plastic laminate that would provide a durable surface for the student storage in the blue tone that will set off the structure. Acoustic treatments such a baffles will provide texture and prevent unwarranted noise at the ceiling level. The geometric panels are reminiscent of nature. For paint, the walls will be a very light grey color to promote natural reflectivity of light. The structure will be warm orange providing accents of yellow and blue. Natural wood tones will be used with the maple shown as typical casework. Flooring will be neutral tones with accent colors leading to points of interest. Julie explained the rendering of the typical classroom and how it would be similar color pallet with the (3) of the (4) walls having a neutral grey white with a yellow accent color like the corridors. Within the classrooms, there will be reading nooks and additional storage space. Inside the reading nooks, there is soft textured acoustic panels. Tack surfaces will appear on all of the walls. The marker surfaces will be down low in order for the younger students to have the ability to interact with the lesson. Plastic laminate will appear in all the classrooms which will add color to the room. The paint pallet throughout the schools reappears often showing warm cotton white colors, accents, yellow and blues gives a warm tone. Music classrooms is also showing similar paint colors. The wood slant ceiling gives a warm and inviting feeling. Art classrooms is also of similar pallet. The structure shows beautiful white walls around the perimeter and the blue hub is in the center. Acoustic blades reflect another acoustic treatment where texture and depth can be added. A large gallery wall has been built so there will be lots of task surfaces available. Media center will have a warmer feel but similar color pallet. Acoustic panels will be in cadet blue which will provide calming and a natural atmosphere. A variety of workstations such as a genius bar has been proposed to accommodate the varying grade levels. Student dining will have light grays on the walls, the rigid sheet vinyl cladding Wainscot and custom signage will be at each recycling station with sustainability in focus.

Michael Remondi, Project Architect of Ai3 for Cunniff Elementary school presented the interior finishes selections to the School Building Committee. The presentation began with the Learning Commons & Media center. The Media centers top elevation was the most excited elevation to view. It was very green and bold. Due to collaborating with both Superintendent Galdston and Principal Mena, there was an opportunity to make the elevation look much nicer. Highlights of the elevation would be the painted steel/structure. The acoustic panels would be the green and grayish color. The acoustic blades would be in a light green and light gray color. Michael emphasized the color extent of the elevation stating that the green color is a loud elevation, but the majority of the walls are painted a pale white, off white and pale gray color. The (3) color schemes throughout the building is orange, green and blue. The typical classroom such as a kindergarten class will have the blue scheme. The task surfaces primary color would be on the teaching wall. The secondary color would be on the reading nook. Plastic laminates in back of the casework will add pops of color and fun to natural tone of the maple. Acoustic panels would be set up to help mitigate sound transmission to classroom to classroom. The academic corridors color schemes throughout the corridors relate to classroom clusters with overlapping color scheme at collaboration areas. The Art classroom showcases the acoustic felt panels which reflects the blue, green and gray previously seen. The field color is fluid throughout the building. There is abundant amount of glazing throughout the schools that would make the room feel airy and light. The fun acoustic panel textures and shapes gives a different pop of color. Lastly, student dining space shows the motif of nature such as the birds and trees as a vinyl graphic. The flooring shows the different color schemes into the collaboration areas. The paint remains the same with the nice dark blue to highlight the structure. The new paint color of pale blue would be specific cut out detail such as spoons and forks as a playful way to show opening of kitchen. Like Hosmer Elementary school, Cunniff Elementary school will have custom signage at each recycling station keeping sustainability focus.

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

- **Question 1** – Vincent Picirilli asked when will Lowell Elementary school go out to bid.  
**Response** – Vivian Varbedian stated the Lowell Elementary school will go out to bid 1<sup>st</sup> /2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2021. Correction is needed to state that Lowell Elementary school will go out to bid 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2021.
- **Question 2** – When will be the Topping Off ceremony of Hosmer Elementary school?  
**Response** – Vivian Varbedian specified that the week of November 30<sup>th</sup> and leading into the following's days of December, dates will be coordinated with Chairman Mark Sideris as to what date is best.
- **Question 3** – Lindsay Mosca needed clarification of if the budget expenditure graph includes the Lowell budget and why is the anticipated rate of change in budget expenditure rise.  
**Response** – Vivian Varbedian stated that the graph does include Lowell Elementary

school. As the projects progress and more workload/manpower increases, there will be an uptick with invoices causing a rise in cost.

- **Question 4** – Lindsay Mosca asked about the life of the marker boards as they can become very dirty over time.  
**Response** – Julie Rahilly said that the product has a better warranty than the other marker board materials. Scott Dunlap also mentioned that the corridor areas won't anticipate nearly as much use as you will see in a classroom.
- **Question 5** – Paul Anastasi asked if the privacy film will be top to bottom and will it be also in lieu of the active shooter shades that is seen in classrooms or is it just for distraction?  
**Response** – Julie answered that the film itself covers the entirety of the glass surface so it might be more transparent at the top but maybe more condense design in the middle to provide privacy.
- **Question 6** – Steve Magoon inquired about the Vinyl Cladding. How thick of a product is it and what is the life expectancy of it in high touch areas?  
**Response** – Julie stated that it is a (2) millimeter panel. It is thin but attached to a sub-board frame. It has (10) years warranty on the marker boards surface and (20) years on the Wainscot.
- **Question 7** – Kelly Kurlbaum asked with review of the finishes, will it be captured in the current budget specifically the acoustic panels?  
**Response** - Julie said "Yes" all have been included in the budget in the construction document set.
- **Question 8** - How will the orange diagonal post in front of the blue walls be protected at 3-6 feet height for those who are visually impaired?  
**Response** - Julie said that the bench that wraps around the bracing will be doubled as a cane detection in all those locations. Scott Dunlap added that the way the bench is designed that wraps around the post in a way that someone could not run into the post without first getting the cane detection of the bench that wraps around it. There is a bench wrapping around it for the visual impaired to know that an object is in that area.
- **Question 9** – Kelly Kurlbaum asked if Lori Kabel and Facilities team reviewed finishes, to make sure there was no concerns regarding cleaning, maintenance and access?  
**Response** – Julie informed committee that a review was not done with Lori Kabel specifically, but a review was done with Superintendent Galdston and Principal Moulton. Scott Dunlap also clarified that the color pallet was not reviewed with Lori but discussion took place about the kinds of finishes for the project. Discussions will be ongoing with Lori Kabel.
- **Question 10** – Steve Magoon asked how are the baffles hung from the ceiling?  
**Response** – Julie said that the baffles are on a track with invisible airplane wire that takes it up to the deck.
- **Comment A** – Kelly Kurlbaum commented that she liked the designs at both schools. She believes that there is an identity crisis between the nature theme and the

geographic shapes. Would like it to look more cohesive. She mentioned to Scott Dunlap to potentially use student/teacher artwork to make it more personal.

- **Comment B** – Lindsay Mosca appreciated and liked the pallets chosen. They are (2) different styles of schools which is important. It is a more exciting arrangement, color pallet, structure and design than what kids have now.

## 7. High School Update

### Design Update

Jim Jordan walked through the progress the design team has made on the design of the high school. Ai3 has attended several meetings with the school department, focusing on refinements to the special education program, critical adjacencies of programs including career technical education (CTE) programs such as early childhood education, robotics and engineering labs. The Council on Aging building was also discussed as it relates to access to the building and programs offered in the high school. Jim Jordan highlighted several key concepts that the design team will continue to focus on throughout the design as it is developed. These concepts included the Columbia Street residential response, the community bridge and the Council on Aging connections. Other diagrams showed the expressive program placement along the edge of Common Street on both sides of the street, building massing and site access. Since last meeting the building height of a portion of the building along Spring Street was reduced based on feedback received at the last meeting. A secondary entry to the academic building is being suggested on Marshall street as a service entry with possible connection to Common Street. There is a potential of two entries off of Spring Street for school function and after-hours function. More discussion to be had on entry points into the academic building. Jim Jordan presented a diagram of the floorplans of the academic core. The goal is to create an open environment that allows natural light to filter into the building. Over the next few weeks, the design team will be working on the massing of the two buildings and how the programs respond to each other across Common Street and flex field space. Jim Jordan walked through the developments made on the proposed floorplans based on feedback received from the school department and building committee.

The meeting opened to questions/comments from the Committee.

- **Comment:** Lindsay Mosca clarified that the early childhood program in the high school is part of the CTE program, not the preschool or pre-k program which is at the Hosmer building.
- **Question 1:** Lindsay Mosca commented that the uniformity and openness of the academic building looks a little like a mall and misses some opportunity for different kinds of common area spaces that might be quieter.  
**Response:** Jim Jordan noted similar points were brought up by the school when this concept was introduced to them. As we move into schematic design, smaller spaces will occupy the open zones. The design team understands the need for acoustics in academic commons. Opportunity to have floor openings will provide a lot of natural light into space, which is what you want for a school environment.

- **Question 2:** Kelly Kurlbaum commented that the building masses look like they are responding to each other now. The Council on Aging still feels like it is an afterthought. Ms. Kurlbaum what the length of the bridge is?

**Response:** Jim Jordan noted main vertical stair towers are placed on either side of the bridge to try to break up the length of the bridge. The bridge is approximately 280 feet long, 15 feet wide. The design team is currently looking at ways to activate this space. It is a good opportunity to bring in history, possibly through a linear timeline.
- **Question 3:** John Portz commented the 3rd floor atrium in this environment seems big. He is concerned with bridge being long and narrow. Bridge looks like it moved and is now going over the field, seems like it should be more functional to get between the buildings. How does it connect to Columbia Street?

**Response:** Jim Jordan responded that once bridge enters the academic core it opens up, it was not necessarily intended to be one direct line through the two buildings. Mr. Portz touches on a lot of challenges the design team is facing with the bridge that will be further developed as we get into schematic design.
- **Comment:** Paul Anastasi reminded the design team that the building will be used day and night so there needs to be security measures in place to close off the academic building after school hours.
- **Question 4:** Tom Tracy asked if parking garage access on Common Street will be an entrance and exit onto Common Street.

**Response:** Jim Jordan replied the intent is for the parking garage to be exit only onto Common Street and possibly only a right turn only. Primary entry to parking garage is still proposed off Broadway.
- **Question 5:** Steve Magoon noted concern about entry drive between Marshall and Common and wants to be sure it is absolutely needed. Mr. Magoon also noted opportunities with interaction between COA and programs in the high school and asked if the design team has met with COA yet. He also asked if there are opportunities to create activity space within the COA building as well.

**Response:** Jim Jordan replied that the entrance off Marshall street is still up for discussion, but we do think there needs to be some kind of entry to the building on that side. It could possibly be used as a service entrance or for special education van drop off. It was also mentioned that there needs to be receiving area on academic building side for school supplies. Jim Jordan replied that the meeting with the COA is scheduled for December 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- **Question 6:** Leo Patterson asked where the front door for the high school is.

**Response:** Jim Jordan replied with a few potential locations but noted it is a point that should be discussed further.
- **Comment:** Leo Patterson noted concern that the design team continues to strive to activate Columbia Street. Mr. Patterson suggested the team be conscious of the way seniors are making

it into the building and suggested making the COA part of the primary building massing. He suggested moving senior center where facilities is located and shifting the auditorium massing more towards Common Street and shift the flex field over where COA is shown. He suggested making the distances for COA less, activate the corner of Columbia, and compress distance and widen of bridge.

- **Comment:** Vincent Piccirilli noted he is in favor of the direction the building design is going in. He noted the bridge doesn't necessarily need to be a straight line and some of the issues may be able to be resolved by moving the location slightly to reduce the length. Mr. Piccirilli does not believe the location of Facilities is appropriate and it should be moved.

The meeting was opened to questions/comments from the attendees.

- **Comment:** Harvey Steiner, resident of Marshall Street, noted it appears the building has been pushed towards the homes on Marshall Street and asked that the homes on Marshall Street would be considered in design.
- **Question 7:** Jackie Dobson asked what the dimensions of the atrium were and if there is a means to go from one side of the atrium to the other without walking all the way around.  
**Response:** Jim Jordan replied there would be connecting elements through the atrium and the atrium is about 120ft long.
- **Question 8:** Franklin, Marshall Street resident, asked if option 3D-4 is the only option being considered. He is concerned about the effect of the new structure on sunlight, as well as privacy and noise. Are there any other options that would have the academic building more recessed from Marshall Street?  
**Response:** Scott Dunlap highlighted option presented previously showed the building much closer to Marshall Street and also as a 4-story building. Building Committee asked design team to move it back from Marshall Street and reduce the height to 3 stories and scale portions of the building to 2 stories, so it was the same size as the abutting houses all which have been done. 3D-4 was the option selected by the Building Committee because it was the option that accommodated all the necessary high school program at the same time maintained the most distance from Marshall Street, Spring Street and off of Columbia Street.
- **Question 9:** Follow up question from Franklin - What type of evaluations have been to access impact of the new building to abutting homes?  
**Response:** Scott Dunlap replied in the analysis of all the different options that the building committee was considering we did human eye level perspectives of a person walking down all of the streets surrounding the building to understand the visual impact of the building on each particular street. All images were presented in prior presentations and allowed the building committee to decide the best option. Mr. Dunlap clarified that the project is in Preferred Schematic Design. Any detailed analysis would take place in Schematic Design.



- **Question 10:** Are there stair towers at each end of bridge as well as elevators?  
**Response:** Jim Jordan replied yes, there are vertical circulation towers at each end of the bridge.
- **Question 6:** Sharon Shumack, resident of Barnard Avenue, also a board member of Watertown for All Ages asked what is the square footage allocated for the senior center and how does it compare to size of the current senior center? Has the amount of sharing of the spaces within the high school been discussed with the school? Ms. Shumack also noted concerns about circulation, parking and traffic around the COA building.  
**Response:** Scott Dunlap replied we are just beginning discussions with COA on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, everything shown in plan is very conceptual at this point. There is 15,000 sf shown for COA currently which is double space they have now. The purpose and goal in starting discussions with the COA is to talk about programs and space they will need as well as the integration with the high school.
- **Comment:** Jackie Dobson noted a benefit to moving the senior center to Columbia Street is the ability to have a shared intergenerational use of the flex field.

Chairman Sideris noted this discussion will be continued at the Community Forum on November 30<sup>th</sup> and the High School Building Committee Meeting on December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Chairman Sideris noted initial planning meetings will be held with the Council on Aging to plan for this space and place it in the appropriate location but it is not part of the high school project under the current contract with Ai3, and will be bid separately.

### **Announcements/General Updates**

Christy Murphy noted the team has been focusing on responding to abutters and neighbors that feel they are not getting notified about meetings. Outreach has been done the past couple of weeks and we have been collecting email addresses to send an email notification to people who are having trouble receiving notifications so that every time a meeting agenda is posted an email will go out to that group. Please reach out to the team if you are having issues. You can visit “Watertown Building For the Future” and click on the link for the high school site, and Go to “Contact Us” and a message will go directly to Christy.

Christy Murphy noted an informal meeting was held with the Watertown Historic Commission Meeting November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Community Forum is scheduled Monday, November 30<sup>th</sup> @ 6PM via Zoom.

The next High School Building Committee meeting is scheduled Wednesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> @6PM. A vote for the preferred schematic option will be taken at this meeting. To stay on track with deadline to submit December 29<sup>th</sup>, to make February board meeting

A presentation to the School Committee is scheduled December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Chairman Sideris thanked Christy Murphy, Compass and Alex Sieving, Ai3 who met with some of the abutters and are continuing conversations to keep the community engaged.

Lindsay noted appreciation of the efforts made to have additional meetings to give everyone the information and still meet the MSBA deadlines.

## **8. Adjournment**

Chairman Mark Sideris asked for a motion to adjourn. Vinny Piccirilli made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Lindsay Mosca. All were in favor on a roll call vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:37pm.