

**Town of Watertown
School Building Committee
Three Elementary School Projects & High School Project
Wednesday, January 20, 2021 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, Lindsay Mosca, Heidi Perkins, Tom Tracy, Steve Magoon and Vincent Piccirilli

Committee Members Absent: Kelly Kurlbaum and Leo Patterson

Others Present: James Jordan, Daren Sawyer, Eric Figueredo, Andrew Cunneen, Michael Remondi and Julie Rahilly (Architectural Team, Ai3 Architects), Vivian Varbedian, Tom Finnegan and Alana Forbes (OPM, Hill International), Christy Murphy (Compass Project Management), Erin Moulton, Mena Ciarlone and Stacy Phelan,

1. Call to Order: Chairman Mark Sideris called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes – December 2, 2020 & December 16, 2020

Vincent Piccirilli made a motion to approve the 12/2/20 School Building Committee meeting minutes (high school) as written. Tom Tracy seconded; all were in favor on a roll call vote.

Vincent Piccirilli made a motion to approve 12/16/2020 School Building Committee meeting minutes (elementary schools) as written. Tom Tracy seconded; all were in favor on a roll call vote.

3. Review/Approval of Invoices

Vivian Varbedian presented the **Elementary School's project invoices** totaling \$4,911,197.75. The invoices read as follows:

- *Hill International - \$93,910.00*
- *Ai3 Architects - \$75,034.02, \$6,681.28 (Extra Services) and \$3,766.25 (Reimbursable Expenses)*
- *Brait Builders - \$4,689,654.19*
- *UTS (Testing Agency) – \$8,610.00, \$12,779.00, \$9,488.76, and \$11,304.25*

Vincent Piccirilli made a motion to approve the Elementary School projects monthly invoices. Tom Tracy seconded; all were in favor on a roll call vote.

Vivian Varbedian presented the **High School's project invoices** totaling \$72,997.94. The invoices read as follows:

- *Compass Project Management - \$12,937.00 and \$15,171.00*

- *Ai3 Architects - \$17,487.82, \$715.00, \$17,487.82, and \$9,199.30 (Extra Services)*

Mark Sideris made a motion to approve the High School projects monthly invoices. Tom Tracy seconded; all were in favor on a roll call vote.

4. FF&E Progress Update

Julie Rahilly of Ai3 Architects gave a progress update on FF&E (Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment) on both Hosmer and Cunniff Elementary School projects.

Julie presented a *Timeline of Activities* beginning from 2018 – 2022.

- **2018** – Presentation was given of the procurement of FF&E and Technology equipment. Discussed was the pre-design of conceptual options, Preliminary costs established for Add/Reno and New. A placeholder for FF&E budget was established for all (3) schools - \$2,450,000.00
- **2019** – Established were community forums, Preferred SD (add/reno/chosen, SD phase completed, Decision to pursue new construction instead, DD Phase completed (new construction), 60% CD phase completed and cost estimates
- **2020** – 90% CD phase completed, commissioning review, 100% CD phase completed, Estimates/Bidding, begin development of FF&E program based on specific needs per school, move management, demolition, begin construction and FF&E draft programs reviewed virtually with school staff
- **2021** - Value engineering of draft FF&E programs, School admin in-person review of furniture and finishes, Present final FF&E budget to School Board Committee, FF&E documents bid and analyzed (2 mo.), FF&E manufacturing (4 mo.), Cunniff substantial completion, Cunniff FF&E install and Cunniff move management
- **2022** – Hosmer substantial completion, Hosmer FF&E, Hosmer move management, site work, and begin construction at Lowell Elementary School

Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment (FF&E)

Budget & Program

A pie chart was presented by Julie Rahilly reflecting the FF&E distribution for the Watertown Elementary School projects. As shown, the actuals are higher than the average for several reasons. Each school has a limited pallet of custodial and maintenance equipment; new schools will add 58,000 sf more than existing. Dining/Food service transition from “bare bones” warming kitchens to fully outfitted prep kitchens for better nutritional offerings. Each school will have learning commons. New schools include additional collaborative and project-based learning spaces that will require furniture and equipment. Music in the new school will include dedicated music spaces to support WPS programs which also requires furniture and equipment.

Julie Rahilly stated that in February at the next several School Building Committee meetings, Ai3 will present the finalized budget for both Cunniff / Hosmer Elementary Schools and will request that the School Building Committee approves the budget as well as approval of release of the FF&E bid documents. This timeline will allow vendors to compile the sections and deliver on time by occupancy. All FF&E will be competitively bid to any company that can meet the quality, design and functionality defined in the specifications.

5. Project Update - Executive Summary

Vivian Varbedian reviewed and presented January 2021 Executive Summary for both Cunniff and Hosmer Elementary school projects.

Regarding Cunniff Elementary school project accomplishments from last month is all roofing is substantially completed and roof top equipment is set. The exterior air vapor barrier is completed on the West and North elevations. Window installation and exterior finishes has started. The interior framing, rough mechanical, electrical, plumbing and fire protection is completed on level (3) moving towards level 2. The upcoming milestones for Cunniff Elementary school will be to complete metal trim at the roof perimeter and start exterior masonry. Also, complete air vapor barrier on East and South elevations. Ongoing work will be on the windows, curtain wall and exterior finishes scope of work.

Hosmer Elementary school project accomplishments from last month is area (1) second and third floor concrete have been placed. The underground plumbing and electrical is substantially completed in both areas (1), (2) and (3) is underway. The roofing and perimeter framing/sheathing is ongoing around area (3) and (1). The upcoming milestones for Hosmer Elementary school are concrete floors in area (1) Slab on Grade and Area (3) all three floors will be completed. The exterior framing, sheathing and air vapor barrier will be ongoing. The masonry elevator shafts, interior wall framing, and interior stairs will be ongoing.

The schedule summary is ongoing and is being reviewed. In February, an overview of the schedule will be presented. No change orders to present this month. A few potential change orders will be reviewed by Chairman Mark Sideris.

6. Elementary Schools Questions / Comments

- **Question 1** – Chairman Mark Sideris asked if the same furniture will be purchased for the schools even if Lowell Elementary school is not out to bid at this time.
Response – Julie Rahilly of Ai3 Architects stated that Ai3 have not included any Lowell staff in programming for Cunniff and Hosmer Elementary school. When Lowell Elementary school is at a point where there are also compiling an FF&E, they will start with what Cunniff and Hosmer Elementary school have and pull from the same vendors/product lines. Vivian Varbedian also stated that this is the intent going forward and Superintendent/Principals have been in the meetings with the Architect team to review the same furniture, materials, and samples. Since Cunniff and Hosmer Elementary school is under construction and will need furniture earlier, Lowell Elementary School furniture will be purchase at a later time, but furniture will remain consistent throughout the schools.
- **Question 2** – Steve Magoon asked what are the total estimate for all (3) schools combined will be?
Response – Julie Rahilly of Ai3 is vetting the final budget numbers but anticipate combined (3) schools to be below (3) million.
- **Question 3** – Attendee Maureen Foley asked if there is a different budget for FF&E for example, shrubbery, grounds keeping and playground equipment etc? Would money be saved by buying all the FF&E including lighting, fixtures etc? How long the loud construction noise will last?
Response – Julie Rahilly of Ai3 stated that anything outside the play structures, benches and

shrubbery has already been included in the overall construction budget. Also, Julie says anything that is fixed to the building like the utilities, electrical and lighting fixtures have been included in the construction budget as well. Vivian Varbedian replied to the question of the loud construction noise that all the exterior work that is contractual, Hosmer is not due until May 2022. Interior finishes will be less noise due to work being conducted inside of the building.

- **Question 4** – Attendee Ann-Marie Cloonan asked how many more Saturdays, late nights, holidays, and consistent noise level will continue.

Response – Vivian Varbedian replied that an abutters meeting will take place soon to keep all the abutters and neighborhood notified and up to date with the construction progress. Brait Builders will attend meeting to answer questions on how to mitigate this problem and answer all questions about late-night work.

- **Comment A** – Lori Kabel informed the School Building Committee that there are dispensers (FF&E) that is not included on the project that the school will have to fund.

7. High School Update - Project Costs and FAS Meeting Follow-up

Christy Murphy presented the preliminary comparative cost estimates that was shown to the Committee back in July 2020. At the time Option 3D project cost range was \$197M-\$213M. Ms. Murphy also presented the preliminary design pricing table that was presented to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Facilities Assessment Subcommittee (FAS) with Option 3D-4, the preferred schematic option that was voted on 12/2/20 and that cost estimates were received for. Option 3D-4 has an estimated construction cost of \$175.6M and estimated total project cost of \$217.8M. A summary of reconciled cost estimates from the Designer and OPM's cost estimators was also presented to show how the team arrived at these numbers. Included in this estimate breakdown are premiums for the type of constraints and the site restrictions that Watertown has as it relates to this option 3D-4. Premiums include the Phillips building, parking under the building, pedestrian bridge, and phasing. Ai3 and Compass have looked at the phasing in detail for this option and carried a 54 month schedule for the project. Swing space/temporary classrooms would be required for phase 2 of the project. Other premiums are associated with phasing and enabling. Cost for going with a CMR (Construction Manager at Risk) 149A delivery method has been included, although this is still to be determined by the School Building Committee, the complexity of the project may warrant CMR. The Council on Aging building is deducted from the estimate because it will need to be procured, designed and constructed as a separate project. The cost for Photovoltaic Panels to meet zero net energy goal is also included. This estimate does not include swing space for the Council on Aging, District Office, or Public Buildings. In summary, the preliminary estimate that was presented in July for Option 3D plus the cost for the photovoltaic panels and the cost for the premium for a CMR 149A delivery method minus the Council on Aging that gets you to the \$218M December estimate that was presented to the MSBA FAS.

Christy Murphy gave an update on the presentation made to the MSBA Facilities Assessment Subcommittee (FAS) and next steps with the MSBA. MSBA expressed real concern about the complexity of the project being on two sites with a bridge. They are concerned with how the building acts as a campus and if it meets the educational program. They are also concerned about the size of the building and the cost. This would be one of the higher priced high schools in the

state. The MSBA has sent initial comments to the team following the FAS meeting but we are expecting a detailed list of questions from the MSBA that the project team will be expected to respond to. Watertown will not be presented at the MSBA Board meeting in February. Over the next several weeks the project team will be going back to the school administration and staff to work on reducing the size of the building. Ms. Murphy noted to make the next MSBA Board Meeting in April, a resubmission to the MSBA will need to be made by the end of February.

Chairman Sideris opened the meeting up for questions:

- **Question 1** – Lindsay Mosca asked about the schedule, specifically if the project will make the April MSBA board meeting and the impacts the duration of construction will have on the students.
Response – Christy Murphy replied that without having the MSBA’s comments it is difficult to say for sure what direction the project is going and if we will be able to make the April board meeting. As mentioned, the MSBA has real concerns with what was presented. As for the duration of construction, the project team met to review the phasing in detail prior to the FAS meeting to be sure that 54 months was an appropriate duration for construction with the complexity of the project and work that needs to be accomplished in each phase.
- **Question 2** – John Portz asked about the cost difference of the Council on Aging building from July to December.
Response – Christy Murphy replied that the July estimate was conceptual and the December estimate was based on drawings.
- **Question 3** – John Portz asked about the parking and why that is considered a “premium”. If the garage was removed from the project, would that space become usable space for building program?
Response – Christy Murphy replied that the parking garage is considered a premium because a standard foundation system under the building would be much less than foundation required for a garage. The cost shown in the estimate is the cost for the garage, not the difference between a standard foundation and a garage. Chairman Sideris noted, if the garage is removed from the project, there is no other space for parking on the site. Jim Jordan added to make this space usable educational space it would be more expensive because it would be taller ceiling and a finished space and it is not ideal educational space because of the grading and it is embedded in a hill with limited daylight. The MSBA did mention the parking garage in their initial comments and will likely want these costs broken out separately.
- **Question 4** – John Portz asked about the space summary square footage and how 154,000 net square feet compares to 248,500 gross square feet shown in the table presented at the FAS meeting. Is the garage included in this number?
Response – Jim Jordan replied that net square feet is educational space and does not include hallways, MEP spaces, ramps, elevators, or any non-educational spaces. It is strictly the MSBA list of educational programs that they want to see within the building. When you add the grossing factor on top of that, typically X1.5, that brings you to the 228,500gsf. Christy Murphy noted that adding 15,000sf for District Admin, and 5,000sf for Public Buildings brings you to 248,500gsf. The garage is included in this number but it is not a cost/sf that is equal to educational space.
- **Question 5** – Steve Magoon asked about the swing space number that was included in the estimate and how much space that is for. Mr. Magoon noted the issue with some of the options seems to be the lack of swing space and the length of construction seems to be driven by lack of

swing space. Should the Committee think about potentially finding a better swing space that would open up some other options and reduce the length of construction?

Response – Christy Murphy replied that the number included in the estimate for swing space is an allowance for swing space based on the idea of a couple of modulars for only a short time. It would be for some of the displaced program that would not be built yet when we start construction for phase 2. Jim Jordan noted, as mentioned previously, the project team did a deep dive into the phasing for the project which resulted in adding 6 months to the overall duration of the construction schedule for a total of 54 months. This meeting was to take a close look at every phase and all of the programs that are affected in the high school project and what programs will not have a home in phase 1, 2, & 3 and looking at spaces available in the Phillips building and came up with a shortfall of about 10,000sf. The number in the estimate is for the cost for modulars for programs based on this number. Jim Jordan noted if there was an opportunity to find a better swing space solution that would move all of the students out of the high school for the duration of construction and eliminate the need for phasing it would completely change the dynamic of option 3D-4 and it would be very beneficial to reducing the cost and duration of the project. This is where the MSBA concern is coming from due to the complexity of the project, developing 2 sites, dealing with demo and abatement in every phase of the project for 3 phases and the premiums associated are all adding to the cost of the project. A lot of this is due to lack of swing space and the inability to take those students off the campus during construction. Swing space would allow for cleaner construction, less complication, shorter duration and less impact to the community and abutters. Christy Murphy added that the MSBA made very clear that they are questioning if the programs that are being disrupted are driving the project to the option that was selected, the size of the building, the complexity of the phasing and needing to be on two sites.

- **Comment** – Dede Galdston noted it is more difficult to find swing space for a high school than it is for an elementary school because of the programming offered. This is a concern for the students and we would need to find a location that would work and fit the educational needs of high school students. Dr. Galdston also noted she feels the core academic building supports the educational program.

- **Question 6** – Sharon Shumack asked when plans for the new senior center will be addressed?

Response – Chairman Sideris noted that cannot be answered at this time because there are significant concerns raised with direction of the high school that need to be addressed before the senior center can be addressed.

- **Question 7** – Lindsay Mosca stated she is not interested in exploring basement level classrooms or partial basement level classrooms for a school. Ms. Mosca also noted she hopes that Watertown’s position of limited options is being well represented to the MSBA as well as the path that was taken to get to this option.

Response – Chairman Sideris noted part of the process going forward will be educating the MSBA on the constraints of the options in Watertown. Christy Murphy added all of the information was in the submission of the Preferred Schematic Report to the MSBA but because it is a complex project there is a lot to understand. The deep dives over the next couple weeks with the school staff are how we can educate the board members. The team will have to answer the questions from the MSBA and show them where we have reduced the size where we could and help them understand what the limitations are and go forward. Jim Jordan added the MSBA is a partner with Watertown in this process and they want the project to be successfully voted to

move forward by the Town. The MSBA's main concern is making sure Watertown is fully aware of the cost of this project, the complexity and the overages in the program that would not be reimbursable. The MSBA is asking for the team to do more investigation into a couple of components, one of which is what happens if you remove the 3 public elements (COA, Public Buildings, and District Admin), does that free up enough space for you to place the whole building on the Columbia Street campus? The other is what happens if there is swing space that can be used, does that allow the building to remain on one campus? If that answer is no and it is an even more complex project than the scheme that was presented, then that information would be provided to the MSBA to reinforce the preferred option. The MSBA just wants to make sure that all other options have been exhausted before moving forward.

- **Comment** – Vinny Piccirilli reiterated the limited options available in an urban town like Watertown, different than a lot of high schools in Massachusetts and the option presented was the best solution.
- **Question 8** – Elodia Thomas asked what are you defining as Public Buildings?
Response – Formerly calling district facilities, consistent with what the town is calling that function.
- **Question 9** – Elodia Thomas asked if we can have a comparison of school spaces by size as was done earlier?
Response – The updated space summary will be presented at an upcoming meeting and will also be discussed further with the MSBA.
- **Comment** – Ann Marie Cloonan noted it was shocking to hear this project would be one of the most expensive high schools built in Massachusetts (on a cost/sf basis). From a taxpayer perspective it scares me that we are going down a path that would put us in the ranks of the highest priced high school as our out of pocket expenses continue to increase and what that does to bringing new families into Watertown and being able to afford to live in the town.
- **Question 10** – John Portz asked what the next steps are as we move forward and what decisions need to be made to stay on schedule.
Response – Christy Murphy replied that we expect formal comments from the MSBA and that will help understand what is being asked of the project. The project team expects to provide an update to the Committee at the Feb 3rd meeting.

8. Adjournment

Chairman Mark Sideris asked for a motion to adjourn. Vinny Piccirilli made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Heidi Perkins. All were in favor on a roll call vote. Meeting adjourned at 7:30pm.