

**Auburn School District
School Improvement Committee
September 27, 2017
Approved**

Committee Members Present: Peter Miles, Chair; Alan Villeneuve, Dr. Phil Littlefield, Tom Goynea, Diane Proulx, Jennifer Anderson, Melissa Prunier, Lincoln Daley, Mike DiPietro, Jim Headd and Jess Edwards.

Also Present: Doug Proctor and Bill Hickey, The Turner Group; Janice Baker, Susan Goodhue, Russell Sullivan, Michael Rolfe, Heather Lockwood, and William Herman

Mr. Miles convened the meeting at 6:05 PM.

Meeting Minutes:

Mr. Miles asked if everyone had read the minutes. Mr. Goynea indicated he had not received them. Mr. DiPietro reported they had been circulated to everyone on September 15th. Mr. DiPietro moved to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2017 meeting as printed. Second by Mrs. Prunier. A vote was taken, seven were in favor and two abstained (Goynea and Headd), the motion carried.

Community Survey:

Heather Lockwood reported to the Committee she had taken an initiative to post a community survey on the Auburn Community Facebook page to gather information on the previous school building plans and issues & concerns individuals had with the project. She indicated the survey had been posted for only three days and already had 221 responses. She noted it was not a scientific process, but will yield information for the committee's benefit. Of the responses to date, she indicated the majority of responders are women between the ages of 35 and 45 who expressed concerns that prior proposals did not provide the voters options to choose from. They also indicated they felt there was a sense of a lack of information concerning the project. The two major issues of concern to the survey responders was elimination of the portable classrooms, and the tax impact of the project.

Ms. Lockwood agreed to return to the Committee's October 11th meeting with an updated report on the survey results. Some committee members felt it may make sense to publish the results of the survey as part of the Committee's efforts.

Review of New Options:

On behalf of the School Board, Mr. Villeneuve introduced Doug Proctor and Bill Hickey of The Turner Group. They went through a review of the current conceptual plans of

potential renovations and additions to the Auburn Village School that the Committee had received and reviewed at their September 13th meeting.

The floor was open to questions from the Committee. Mrs. Prunier indicated she was asked to inquire about the potential of having windows in the art room. It was agreed that was an issue to be dealt with, but it was likely not possible to have windows in that room due to its proposed location. It was more likely that skylights or something similar would be used to bring natural light into the room. Mrs. Prunier also noted there as a concern among teaching staff that if the four classrooms currently in the front of the Auburn Village School were removed, there would be a loss of bathrooms overall as several of those rooms have bathrooms. It was generally agreed if those classrooms were removed and relocated, the replacement classrooms would likely have bathrooms or, at a minimum, sinks.

Mr. Miles noted the Committee is interested in developing a proposal that will ultimately pass the voters' approval, which he felt was a bond issue of about \$12 million. He felt the current building items the majority of the Committee agreed were important to include totaled approximately \$10 million, and he wondered if the associated site work to support those construction items would be able to be done within the remaining \$2 million if \$12 million was the number. The response was yes.

Mrs. Anderson asked if the design in hand was done with an idea that there may be changes in how education is delivered in the future and not just the traditional classroom approach. Mr. Proctor indicated they try to design with some flexibility in mind such as pre-wiring walls to enable adding technology in the future to support the potential for more distant learning areas. He also noted there are added costs to do some of that type of work now, which the committee would have to consider.

Mr. Daley asked if the layout of the parking area and bus pick-up and drop-off zones are within the setbacks for the property and meet zoning requirements. Mr. Proctor indicated that parking is allowed within the setbacks, so the current layout meets zoning requirements. But he indicated any substantial change from that would require a variance from the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Mr. Proctor also confirmed Mr. Daley's second question that the increased square footage in the proposed building layout was based on current need with the allowance of some room to grow.

Mrs. Proulx asked if the building would need to change in the area of the cafeteria and support area if a future gymnasium was eventually added to the building. Mr. Villeneuve indicated that is being left open for the future, but as currently shown, the plan would not put a new gymnasium on in all of its glory. But he indicated the School Board wanted to allow for the potential of a new gymnasium at some point in the future.

With no further questions, Mr. Villeneuve indicated the design team from The Turner Group and representatives from BPS (construction management firm) will attend the

Committee's October 11th meeting to provide the best cost estimates for the potential project for the Committee's consideration.

Lines of Communications:

Mr. Miles wanted to focus discussion on the lines of communication the Committee might be able to use and develop to provide the community with information as things progress. He asked Mr. Villeneuve for a timeline by which the School Board is acting in order to have their project cost and warrant article ready.

Mr. Villeneuve indicated the School Board will need to vote on a project number at the meeting on the second Tuesday in November in order to then meet warrant article, budget and bond hearing deadlines moving forward. He felt that would mean the School Improvement Committee would need to act on its recommendation for a project number they would recommend at their October 11th meeting, or at their October 25th meeting at the latest.

Mr. Miles indicated he intended to personally take the proposal in condensed form and meet with individuals on a one-on-one basis to inform them of the project and answers questions they have, and then to encourage them with talk with other people they know to help spread information. He believes talking on a personal level will be one of the most effective means of communication.

The School Board will do a formal public presentation on the chosen project in December, and most likely a couple of more times in January and February. Mr. Villeneuve indicated that he or Keith Leclair are more than willing to go to any group or meeting to provide a presentation as well.

Mr. Daley asked what segments of the community should be focused on to provide information? He wondered if there is a sense of who hasn't supported the project in the past and how best can the Committee members reach these individuals. He felt the personal approach described by Mr. Miles is always the best approach if possible, but it is time consuming.

Mr. Miles indicated from all previous conversations he has had, he felt the cost of the project in terms of tax impact and the term of the bond were the main issues of concern with the previous proposals.

Mr. Daley indicated he can develop a snapshot of trends occurring in Auburn's demographics that might help to provide an overall profile of the community.

Jess Edwards arrived at the meeting at 6:55 PM.

Responding to a question about forming sub-committees, Mr. Miles felt the Committee chose at the last meeting not to have sub-committees, but to work as a committee of the

whole. He noted the decision on the building itself have to be made quickly, which will then lead to decisions concerning financing. Both of those need to be known items before active communication efforts can move forward.

As to vehicles of communication, some of the outlets noted included:

- Auburn Village Crier
- Hooksett Banner
- The Union Leader
- School Website
- Social Media

The Auburn Seniors Group was one club that actively meets and should be contacted. Mr. Villeneuve noted various notices will be sent home with school report cards and through the School newsletter. Mrs. Anderson asked is a notice could be included in the mailing of property tax bills, and Mr. Herman indicated state statute would not allow something to be included with tax bills.

It was suggests the project should have a presence at various existing events such as the Longmeadow Breakfast, Spaghetti Supper, St. Peter's Bulletin, Deliberative Sessions and elections, meetings with various Town boards (i.e. – Selectmen, Planning Board and Budget Committee), the 'Trunk or Treat' event in October and other similar events. A couple of committee members were concerned about trying to be everywhere and potentially wearing out the welcome for the project.

Mrs. Prunier indicated the teachers would be willing to assist in offering tours of the current facility to help show the need for improvements.

Mrs. Anderson asked if there had been anything new to come from the September 26th School Board meeting. Mr. Villeneuve said no, the School Board was mainly concerned about sharing the plan and wanted to be sure information was given to the School Improvement Committee. It what lead to representatives of The Turner Group being present at this meeting.

Mr. Daley asked when the final determination of specific classroom designations get settled. Mr. Villeneuve indicated that would occur once a determination is made as to what total space is included in the plan.

Mrs. Anderson asked if the School Board would want to have the School Improvement Committee make a recommendation to encourage the School Board to include some amount of money in the operating budgets moving forward to address the approximate \$5 million dollars of improvements to the existing facility, mainly in the area of mechanical systems. Mr. Villeneuve indicated there is no harm in that, but it is not necessary because the School Board is already moving in that direction.

Mr. Rolfe indicated he agreed with Mr. Miles about the need for the project to be in the \$12 million range. His impression is that would be an acceptable amount to the voters overall and would enable the School District to get somethings done.

Mrs. Baker encouraged the Committee to give some thought to developing a communications process to ensure there is some sort of internal control / approval process for the mediums used and the distribution of information to be certain accurate information is given to the public. She stressed you can't un-ring a bell once it has been rung.

Mr. Villeneuve indicated he would be interested in having an item from the Committee in the November Crier that at their October 11th meeting the Committee endorsed an X square-foot addition to the Auburn Village School and outline the need for the space.

Mr. Edwards felt the Committee truly needs to focus on how much information to put out and when to put it out. He felt the sense in the past from folks he had heard from is that there wasn't an open process or other alternatives considered than the plan put forward by the School Board. He felt there is a value to continuing to provide information to the public as the process progresses. He felt people want to be confident there is a deliberative process that has been undertaken and that the community was involved in the process. He indicated he wasn't saying that had not happened previously, but that was a sense he had of what some members of the public felt.

Mr. Miles felt it might be advisable for the Committee or School Board to invite more folks in to participate in a communications effort moving forward.

Future Meetings:

The Committee had previously set October 11th and October 25th as meeting dates.

The Committee also set November 8th and November 29th as additional meeting dates.

Adjourn:

Mr. Gonyea moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 PM, seconded by Mr. DiPietro. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the vote was passed unanimously.