

**Auburn School District  
School Improvement Committee  
September 6, 2017**

**Committee Members Present:** Keith Leclair, Dr. Phil Littlefield, Tom Goynea, Diane Proulx, Doug Blay, Jennifer Anderson, Peter Miles, Jason Tyburski, Melissa Prunier, Lincoln Daley, Lori Collins, Mike DiPietro, Jim Headd and Jess Edwards.

**Also Present:** Janice Baker, Terry Coll, Joanne Linxweiler, Michael Rolfe, Alan Villeneuve and William Herman

Mr. Leclair convened the meeting at 6 PM, and thanked everyone for volunteering to serve on the School Improvement Committee. He reported the establishment of the committee was done by the Auburn School Board as one of the outcomes from a facilitated meeting of town and school officials held in June. He indicated the School Board intended to form a committee with the best possible cross section of the community who are interested in working with the Auburn School Board in advancing a plan for the improvement of the school facility.

Time was taken to go around the room for all individuals to introduce themselves.

Mr. Leclair suggested this was an organizational session for the committee and felt the most important actions to take tonight was to elect a chair for the committee, set a meeting schedule moving forward, and define the tasks the committee will undertake. He also felt the members of the School Board and school administration present should answer any and all questions the committee members might have.

**Election of Chair and Vice Chair:**

Mr. Leclair indicated he felt it would be best if a member of the public serve as Chair of the committee as opposed to a member of the School Board. Discussion ensued as to overall responsibilities and time commitment were discussed.

Peter Miles agreed to serve as Committee Chair. He noted he felt it was important to have a Vice Chair to ensure continuity for the committee. Jason Tyburski agreed to serve as Vice Chair.

**General Discussion:**

Mr. Edwards asked if the intent was to advance a building plan of some sort to the voters in March 2018 or to work for a year and advance a project in March 2019. Mr. Leclair indicated it was the sense of the School Board to recommend a project of some scale in March 2018.

Mr. Leclair noted the Committee's main work will be on communications to the public concerning the project. He noted the School Board was currently working with project architects and construction managers to develop a core design based on the past proposals, which are based on the limitations of the current school property. He indicated the School Board is not starting from scratch, but is working from the past plans. However, they were identifying the minimum essential needs in a renovation and addition, and then identifying additional individual pieces (i.e. – gymnasium, cafeteria, etc.) that could be added and at what cost. He indicated the School Board will be looking for input from the School Improvement Committee as to what the totality of the project should be based on the information to come. He also noted the Committee was not selecting the plan, but making recommendations to the School Board who will make the ultimate decision.

Mr. Daley observed the December decision time frame only left three months for a public education effort on the chosen plan, and he wondered if three months was adequate for the task. Mr. Leclair noted unfortunately the timing of the budget and annual meeting process establishes that schedule and December, January and February is the time available for the communications effort and process.

In response to a question, Mr. Leclair noted the School Board had already made one decision, and that was there was no chance the School Board would present the full former plan again to the voters in 2018. Mrs. Baker and Mr. Villeneuve agreed with that sentiment. However, they all indicated it is possible the totality of that plan may well be phased in over time. Mr. Leclair also noted the School Board has asked the architects and construction managers to look at this potential of a core project and then additional phases.

Mr. Leclair reported there was a work group meeting with the architects and construction managers on September 11<sup>th</sup> that would produce potential sketches and initial pricing. That information would be reviewed by the School Board on Tuesday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, so it could be available to this committee for a meeting on Wednesday, September 13<sup>th</sup>.

### **Meeting Schedule:**

To help determine a potential meeting schedule, Dr. Littlefield indicated the School Board would need to make final project decisions for a warrant article by a School Board meeting date in December in order to finalize the warrant articles and budget.

The Committee members felt they should likely plan to meet twice a month if they were going to meet the December deadline. Various meeting scheduling conflicts were noted to try and work around. The initial four meetings were scheduled for:

Wednesday, September 13<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM  
Wednesday, September 27<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM

Wednesday, October 11<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM  
Wednesday, October 25<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM

### **General Discussion:**

Mr. Daley asked if the “Primex Report” on the facilitated meeting could be shared with the Committee. Mr. Leclair said it could. There was a minor tweaking to be made, which he had not gotten to yet. But would make sure the report was circulated to the committee members. He noted the adjustment was in the area of capital improvement planning and whether the school should have a CIP that is separate from the Town Capital Improvement Plan, or if they should all be one document. The School Board members had wanted to clarify the intent of that effort to avoid any misunderstandings.

Dr. Littlefield noted the SAU and school administration was given a charge by the School Board to develop a CIP for the school district. They then met with Mr. Herman to discuss the Town CIP and process to determine the best approach forward. The school administration will be preparing a school CIP for the School Board by April 2018. The School District CIP will be done in such a fashion that it could then also be added to the overall Town Capital Improvement Plan in order to show the entire financial picture to the taxpayers.

Mr. Herman noted that now the Planning Board has adopted a Capital Improvement Plan, the Town will focus on updating the plan on an annual basis. The ideal process will be that in April or May, the Planning Board should examine the current CIP and look at what was approved by the voters in March of that year. Items that were approved and funded would be eliminated from the plan, while items not approved or funded may result in a shuffling of the remaining projects in the plan, in addition to the Planning Board adding a new out year at the end to ensure the plan remains a six year planning document. The updating of the CIP should be completed by September of each year so it can be provided to the Board of Selectmen, School Board and Budget Committee for the budgeting process of that year.

Mr. Edwards asked if part of the communications effort for the committee would be to show the long-term impact of the project and all of the other Town and School District items in order for the taxpayers to see the full impact of their decisions. There was consensus this was part of the overall communication. But it was also noted that both the Town and the School District now try to provide the cost impact information to the voters of all the proposals on the annual meeting warrants. Mr. Edwards indicated he felt it was important for the voters to know and see the town and school officials are working together in the big picture and not at cross purposes.

Mr. Herman noted the School Board and the Board of Selectmen have agreed to hold a quarterly meeting between the two boards for the purpose of sharing information between them. The first two meetings have been scheduled for November 2017 and

February 2018, at which he expected the school project and overall town and school district budgets and warrant articles will be the base conversation.

Mr. Leclair and Mr. Villeneuve stressed they were very excited as things have progressed as this is the most collaborative effort they have experienced between the Town and the School District. Mr. Villeneuve noted when Primex facilitated the meeting in June, they indicated they have never experienced this level of collaboration between town and school district officials before.

Mrs. Anderson asked if the School Board had a plan should the project fail a third time in 2018. She was interested to know whether there would be funds available to make needed improvements in the existing facility. Mr. Villeneuve outlined the overall budget process and schedule, and indicated those are discussions the School Board would be having. But that there would likely be funds in the operating budget to handle some improvements as needed. Mr. Leclair also noted the School Board had requested the Building Maintenance Director to develop a five year Maintenance Plan for the Auburn Village School, and the School Board would be referring to that plan as part of their budgeting process.

Mr. Edwards asked if the fundamental planning assumptions such as student enrollment projections and a teaching model the School Board has used could be provided to the Committee. Mr. Leclair indicated most of that was included in the Goal Setting document and project presentation, which is available online. Mr. Leclair agreed to provide links to those reports to the committee members.

Mr. Leclair suggested the Committee consider potentially establishing sub-committees to focus on different areas. The three sub-committees suggested were Communications, Building and Finance. Mr. Miles suggested Committee members give consideration to what sub-committee they might be interested in and could be assigned at the next meeting.

Mrs. Baker also suggested a calendar of key dates be established through the Deliberative Session so everyone can be aware of key milestones for decisions to be made.

Mr. Villeneuve stressed communications is going to be the biggest undertaking of the committee. He felt the School Board and the Committee need to provide all of the information the voters need in order for them to make whatever decisions they need to make on a proposed project.

In summarizing, Mr. Leclair noted potential agenda items for the next meeting were:

- Review of the previous plan and assumptions
- Review of new options
- Sub Committee Development
- Set Milestones

**Next Meeting:**

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, September 13th at 6:00 PM at the Auburn Village School.

**Adjourn:**

Mr. Miles thanked the participants and adjourned the meeting at 7:05 PM.