

Concord Middle School Building Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 29, 2021
Revised June 3, 2021

PRESENT: Laurie Hunter, Dawn Guarriello, Court Booth, Pat Nelson, Matt Root, Charles Parker, Stephen Crane, Frank Cannon, Jared Stanton, Chris Popov, John Harris, Kate Hanley, Russ Hughes, Heather Bout, Justin Cameron, Peter Fischelis, Matt Johnson

PRESENT FROM HILL INTERNATIONAL: Peter Martini, Ian Parks, Duclinh Hoang

PRESENT FROM SMMA/EWING COLE: Kristen Olsen, Philip Poinelli, Matt Rice, William Smarzewski

MEETING ORGANIZER: Dawn Guarriello

Call to Order

Dawn Guarriello called the meeting to order at 7:30 A.M. via Zoom Virtual Conference call. A recording of the meeting will be made available at the Concord Public School's project page and Town of Concord's website.

Approval of Minutes

Dawn Guarriello asked the committee for edits or changes to the March 18, April 8 and April 15, 2021 meeting minutes. For March 18, 2021, Mr. Johnson noted bottom of page 1, last paragraph it states "Pat Nelson should would like SMMA" should be changed to "she" and on the last page, Tracey Marano, "39 Cartridge Lane" should be changed to "39 Partridge Lane" which also needs to be amended in the April 8, 2021 minutes. For April 8, 2021, Mr. Johnson noted the comment to invest in a larger gym or auditorium was made by a member of the public, not the select board members and provided clarification about net zero ready and special requirements, capabilities and quality of results if using the DBB approach. For April 15, 2021, Mr. Johnson suggested adding that Todd Benjamin expressed concern about holding CMSBC meetings during working hours. Mr. Booth made a comment for the April 15, 2021 minutes that the public comment did receive exchanges to be added and the various motions leading up to the votes be part of the narrative.

Matt Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 18 and April 8, 2021 meeting minutes as amended. Court Booth seconded. Unanimous decision. The meetings of April 15, 2021 will be approved at the next meeting.

Correspondence

Heather Bout provided an update on Correspondence. Ms. Bout noted there was a total of 11 emails sent to the committee. 5 emails were supporting the idea of a larger gym and auditorium, 1 was specifically about a larger gym, 1 was clarification on gym discussions, 3 were about concept of keeping the budget lower and making difficult decisions and a letter from the Finance Committee.

Finance Committee Meeting Discussion

Dawn Guarriello noted the co-chairs were invited to listen on to the Finance Committee's conversation regarding the Middle School with an update from Dean Banfield. The Finance Committee had sent a letter to the School Building Committee. Ms. Guarriello read the letter to the committee. Please see attached letter for reference.

Dean Banfield, 73 Walden Terrace and liaison member of the Finance Committee, presented a PowerPoint to the committee on the CMSBC budget discussion. Mr. Banfield noted the pandemic has created a delay that the committee did not meeting for several months and revisited previous topics. Mr. Banfield went over square foot unit cost (\$694/sqft total project cost with escalation included), scope (size of project in total gross sqft) and escalation (inflation of unit costs to build in the future) for the project. Mr. Banfield discussed the Feasibility report by Finegold and presented the current status of the project. Mr. Banfield noted the current cost and budget was not explained by escalation but rather scope changes.

Kristen Olsen of SMMA added currently the square foot unit cost for construction is \$559/sqft with a target of \$555/sqft cost. Note that these numbers are distinct from the square foot cost cited by Mr. Banfield. \$555/sqft construction cost equates to \$694/sqft total project cost using a multiplying factor of 1.25.

Jared Stanton noted the cost escalation of 6.93% came from the MSBA directly from 2010 to 2016 and could be low. Mr. Stanton noted when putting the RFP for OPM services together the Building Committee did decide at the time the range of \$80 to \$100M that was estimated but was not the budget amount. Mr. Stanton added the debt for elementary schools will be coming off the books in the next couple years in regards to taxes.

Lorraine Finnegan of SMMA noted for escalation, some factors are added but not for the constant increases and decreases in cost of materials. Currently escalation is 6-9% and rising based on today's economy.

Matt Johnson noted the new not to exceed amount was based on extrapolation of escalation estimates and current bid quantities and justify an increase in scope. Mr. Johnson noted this may not be the time to increase scope of the building.

Charlie Parker noted the \$555/sqft may be low based on today's market and the space for the building is high.

Ian Parks of Hill noted the current estimate shows 4% escalation per year.

Mary Hartman, 16 Concord Greene, noted escalation is uncontrollable but scope changes can be managed. Ms. Hartman expressed concern with the burden on taxpayers.

Matt Johnson noted on the FAQ, the incremental cost per million dollars to the taxpayer was understated by over 30%. The Finance Director had corrected it but a new document has not been issued yet on the FAQ. Dawn Guarriello asked to revised and update with the correct information on the FAQ page.

Court Booth noted a small majority of the School Committee expressed reconsidering the space summary should not be out of bounds.

Heather Bout agreed that a small majority of the School Committee would like to continue reviewing the space summary.

Auditorium and Gymnasium Scope Considerations and Definition

Kristen Olsen of SMMA noted the goal would be to start on Schematic Design on May 10, 2021. Ms. Olsen presented a PowerPoint on the Communication Request for the gymnasium with 2 options and Auditorium with 3 options. Option 1 for the gym was full size MIAA main court and cross courts and Option 2 was for (1) full size MIAA court with cross courts of 46'x74' (not full size). Option 1 for the auditorium was capacity for 2 grade levels plus staff (550 seats), Option 2 with current capacity (350 seats) and Option 3 is based on MSBA standard for High School, 2/3 of enrollment (approx.. 467 seats based on 700 students). Ms. Olsen provided above budget scope analysis with two different combinations. Combination A showed 74'x46' cross court and 350 seats. Combination F showed 74'x46' and 467 seats.

Justin Cameron noted there is about 370 seats in the Sanborn Auditorium. The Occupancy Permit for the Sanborn auditorium is for 420 seats and typically for large assembles the school brings about 100 folded chairs to support two grades.

Frank Cannon expressed concern with parking with the increase auditorium seating. Ms. Olsen noted parking is not designed for max capacity.

Matt Johnson noted previously the minutes mentioned the school did not have any two grade events and questioned if the educational plan need to be revised to reflect this requirement. Also, to be mindful of utilization of the auditorium and basketball court. Dr. Laurie Hunter noted she and Mr. Cameron did review the educational plan and made adjustments based on usage and fiscal considerations.

Court Booth noted members of the school committee asked for a more organized assessment of the parking situation. Mr. Booth quoted a member of the school committee asking for more detail on the outdoor spaces, including restoration and consideration of a cross country course as the committee is already focusing on Community constituencies. Mr. Booth noted a concern that pushing this process later might squeeze it and thereby not representing the interest of another constituency, the outdoor users of the property.

Dawn Guarriello noted during Schematic Design is when the designer further develops the site details.

Charlie Parker asked when the committee will be having a more detailed discussion on the gymnasium and auditorium from the design point of view. Mr. Parker expressed a concern for waiting until Schematic Design to make the decisions. Mr. Parker noted sharpening pencils means saving significant amounts of money that hits the taxpayers. Mr. Parker would like the school to be adequate and meets the needs.

Pat Nelson noted the order of magnitude for the gym costs seems high. Pat Nelson asked what other members of the committee thinks about looking at the original approved space summary and taking space from that in order to accommodate additional gym and auditorium space.

Dawn Guarriello asked if SMMA had time to look at the difference between the 42' and 46' wide and put an order of magnitude on that so the committee may have it prior to next week's meeting. SMMA will look into the difference and provide an order of magnitude.

Court Booth noted the idea of reviewing the space summary in its entirety when looking at the gymnasium and auditorium.

Matt Root noted as part of due diligence after hearing from the community for a bigger gymnasium and auditorium and keeping the costs down, the committee should go back and look at what's driving the costs.

Heather Bout expressed concern with reducing educational needs to meet budget.

Peter Fischelis stated that the committee heard from the community input and noted what was originally designed was not acceptable and adequate in terms of the gym and auditorium.

Next Steps

Determine what the scope is beyond the plan scope that was already voted in March and at the next meeting to start Schematic Design on May 10, 2021. The next School Building Committee is May 6, 2021.

New Business

No New Business

Public Comment

Marc Caruso, 76 Hawthorne Ln, noted the driver for the larger gym is the overall lack of space in town.

Johanna Boynton, 72 Chestnut St, praised the committee members for being thoughtful and careful when considering the different the difference voices of the community.

Mary Hartman, 16 Concord Greene, noted at Town Meeting the \$108M was not presented. The only cost presented was \$90M with the caveat that it could change due to escalation. Ms. Hartman noted the demographics of the town shifted in that there is a decrease in student enrollment in the past few years.

Upcoming Meetings

The next School Building Committee is May 6, 2021 at 7:30 am.

Adjournment

Dawn Guarriello requested the meeting to be adjourned at 10:00 AM. Court Booth made the motion to adjourn, Heather Bout seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Details of this meeting can be found on the YouTube link below:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wv4HRnIbVRY&list=PL1TTzrWEKOOkQSCY4ADcNvk7hoJ9_IrH8&index=1



Town of Concord
Finance Committee
22 Monument Square
P.O. Box 535
Concord, Massachusetts 01742-0535

To: Members of Middle School Building Committee
cc: Select Board
Date: April 25, 2021

Re: Concord Middle School Building Budget

The Finance Committee urges the MSBC to revisit the vote for a \$108m “not to exceed” budget. We believe the rationale relied upon for that vote was inaccurate, making the portion of the incremental \$8m attributable to cost escalation unnecessary. Per SMMA, the current \$99.2m cost estimate assumes going out to bid in June 2023 and comfortably includes escalation costs through that date. We are happy to share our calculations with you.

To the extent that any portion of the incremental \$8m is attributable to design features beyond the approved scope (143k sq ft), we ask you to consider reallocating space from currently planned usages.

At \$100 million, the new middle school will be the largest capital project the town has undertaken. It results in a significant increase to our property tax and delays other pressing municipal capital projects. The average household will see an increase of >1,000/year for at least 20 years. We are concerned that increasing the middle school budget above \$100m only exacerbates an increase that, for some citizens, already poses an unsustainable burden.

We are recommending to the Select Board that they actively pursue other sources of funding which could mitigate this burden and hope you encourage these efforts.

The Finance Committee is fully committed to the construction of a new middle school and we recognize the tremendous effort you are all making. Our call for budget constraint in no way diminishes our gratitude to you, the committee members, to the school administration and to our teachers. We look forward to opening day of a beautiful, new middle school we can all feel good about.

Sincerely,

Mary Hartman, Chair
Concord Finance Committee