

BELMONT HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE
FINAL MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, June 29, 2016
Homer Building Gallery
7:30 AM

2016 SEP -2 AM 8:48

Meeting #4

Committee Members Attending:

Chair Lovallo; Members: Sami Baghdady, David Kale, Tom Caputo, Gerry Boyle, Pat Bruschi, Dan Richards, Bob McLaughlin, Joe DeStefano, Joel Mooney, Diane Miller, Chris Messer, Phil Ruggiero, and Jamie Shea

Members Absent: Phyllis Marshall, John Phelan, Dan Richards

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:36 a.m. by Chair Lovallo.

II. Minutes of Previous Meetings

Mr. McLaughlin moved: To approve the Minutes of 5/25/16.
The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Lovallo reported that there is no Treasurer's report, per se, however, the \$1.75M has been assigned to the committee. While money has not yet been spent, some expenses have been incurred.

III. Discussion: Belmont High School Tour

Chair Lovallo began by stating that the tour was helpful as it highlighted important building issues. Photos can now be taken as school is out of session. Every corner, he said, seems to be crammed with stuff and/or students. The tour helped highlight the previously submitted Statement of Interest (SOI).

Among the issues noted were that the storage rooms, the band room, and the music room were extremely crowded. Also, there seems to be a moisture problem throughout the high school.

Ms. Shea noted that the little theater floor is leaking. The concrete floor seems to be seeping and it smells. Also, many ceiling tiles are missing; dust is floating down from the ceiling. Faculty/staff, she added, are concerned about what the substance is that is floating around. Mr. Boyle stated that asbestos testing has occurred and the results are negative, indicating that they do not exceed health limitations. Chair Lovallo explained that, when the high school was built, fire-proof construction was installed, often using steel, which was insulated from exposure to extreme heat via an insulating cementitious coating containing asbestos.

Mr. McLaughlin said that he had wondered about a building renovation versus tear down. Renovation, he said, will involve gutting the building. Chair Lovallo agreed and added that the existing elevators do not fit motorized wheel chairs. The MSBA will not cover a new or renovated pool, but may help cover the cost of a renovated field house – the pool and field house will need to be fitted into the high school plan if maintained in their present form.

Concerning the auditorium, the MSBA only covers 750 capacity in a new auditorium, while the current one holds approximately 900 [note: Mr. Boyle has since noted that the number of upholstered seats has been identified as 844, so the capacity estimate may include standing room].

Chair Lovallo stated that the structure of the building does not appear to be under duress; the building itself appears to be well-supported on its foundation. However, the infrastructure is needy. The fire alarm system is currently being upgraded. The roof seems tight. Any upgrade will involve improvements to or replacement of the exterior walls to comply with current energy codes. The science rooms are clearly in dire need of an upgrade. Mr. Caputo added that the design of the existing science wing is not aligned with the way science is currently taught.

Mr. Mooney raised the issue of building security, noting that a new building will need locking doors. Mr. Boyle noted that some of the doors are receiving new locks.

Chair Lovallo noted that Belmont has great teachers and great results with a school that is severely challenged. He acknowledged the staff and students for excelling in a compromised building.

IV. Update: Maintenance and Capital Plan

Mr. Boyle stated that his staff is working on the Maintenance and Capital plan. They are in contact with Mr. Tony DiCologero.

Chair Lovallo said that the current phase is Modular One: Eligibility Period. The Enrollment Certification and Maintenance reports are both due on August 8. The Board of Selectmen will sign off on the Enrollment Certification. The enrollment work has relied heavily on input from the school administration.

V. Update: District Enrollment

Mr. Kale summarized the enrollment meeting with the MSBA (held on June 13). He referenced the MSBA enrollment memo dated June 24, 2016. The MSBA acknowledged that the Wellington projections did not pan out. This is helpful, he said, as it underscores that Belmont understands its enrollment trends. He explained the trending models, which are reflecting increased enrollment 10 as well as 20 years out. The impact of the international student growth factor and the SPED population (including LABBB) were also explored with the MSBA. He noted that, according to the MSBA, the “grade 8 configuration” needs to be based on an educational model, not an enrollment model.

Mr. Kale then reviewed some of the enrollment numbers.

He raised the Library project as it relates to the high school campus. The MSBA will respond to inquiries related to the combining of these facilities. It will be useful to have a factual answer to questions raised about combining the two facilities. Mr. Kale noted that he will follow up with the MSBA on this separate topic with specific questions.

Chair Lovallo added that the MSBA looks at a 10-year enrollment average across the state. Their numbers are purely mathematical, based on the 10-year trend. SPED numbers were not in their report. The MSBA designs for enrollment, not capacity. Design enrollment is targeted at 85% of design capacity.

The enrollment number submitted by Belmont (via Superintendent Phelan) was 1501 for grades 9-12; the MSBA enrollment number is currently 1475.

Enrollment projections were discussed and explored.

Chair Lovallo noted that the enrollment number, once confirmed, will be used to set the programs and spaces required for the high school design for the next 24 to 30 months, during the feasibility and schematic design phases. Mr. Mooney added that the enrollment number should hold for longer than the first 18-months that the new building is open.

Mr. Caputo reviewed his analysis of the enrollment data, including enrollment projections from the McKibben data as well as the MSBA/DESE data. He compared and contrasted the projections. He looked at grades 9-12 and at a 10-year average. He discussed capacity adjustments.

Selectman Baghdady asked about the MSBA funding a vocational component. Ms. Bruschi stated that MSBA's response to this is very challenging and complex. Mr. Kale noted that the state has not made a policy decision concerning voc tech educational programming. The MSBA may not fund a voc tech expansion. The program offerings would be highly scrutinized.

Chair Lovallo stated that the BHSBC has been advised to sign the MSBA enrollment documents only after they have been thoroughly reviewed and Belmont accepts the numbers. Once the enrollment documents are signed, the enrollment projections cannot be changed.

The 10- versus 20-year enrollment projection were further discussed. Mr. Caputo noted that the 1501 number was submitted (in May) before the Town received the McKibben analysis.

Ms. Bruschi added that the McKibben data may need to be revisited as the international population influx may not be accurately reflected. There is a trend for international families to move to Belmont so that their children can attend BHS. She noted that Minuteman is building a new school that is 300 students larger than the current enrollment reflects (for member towns), which the MSBA has sanctioned. This point should be noted to the MSBA. Belmont, she said, needs to present a very strong case (concerning enrollment) to the MSBA and now is the time to do that.

VI. Discussion: Open Meeting Law (OML) & Conflict of Interest

Chair Lovallo noted that both he and Mr. McLaughlin met with the Town Clerk concerning the OML guidelines.

Mr. McLaughlin began with the town employee status of BHSBC members. He explained the "*special municipal employee status*", which the Board of Selectmen approved recently.

Regarding OML, he noted that the BHSBC has received documentation concerning OML and ethics. He reminded the committee to take the ethics certification test, which is good for two years.

Mr. McLaughlin reviewed the definition of what constitutes a public record. Personal notes are not considered a public record, but can be used for litigation purposes. He advised the committee to be careful with emails as they are considered public records. Bids are private until they are made open.

He summarized the main points of the OML. BHSBC and its designated subcommittees are considered public bodies under this statute. He noted that “working groups” fall into a grey area, depending on if the group *advises the committee* or merely *reports* back to the BHSBC.

He discussed how OML impacts emails, phone calls, draft documents, quorums, quorum in series, etc. He noted what is considered a deliberation. (Emails that pertain to scheduling issues are not considered a deliberation.) He reviewed site meetings/inspections.

Concerning Joint Meetings, the committee can talk, but not deliberate – unless the joint meeting is posted. The Town Clerk’s Office has a list of written rules concerning the posting of meetings (in a public space, accessible, with an agenda, etc.). He reviewed the reasons to hold an Executive Session (ES) and the process by which an ES is conducted.

Concerning Minutes, a draft is considered public. There is a need to list the documents that are referred to during the meeting.

He reviewed the Violation process, which is initiated by a complaint. The process is fairly arduous, but it has occurred.

Finally, he reviewed what constitutes an Ethics violation, e.g., bribes, gifts, and the *appearance* of impropriety. He instructed members to send potential conflict of interest concerns (in dealing with outside businesses who may be dealing with the committee) to the Town Moderator, Mr. Mike Widmer, with a copy to the Town Clerk. There is a form that can be filled out pertaining to conflict of interest.

VII. Continuing Discussion: Public Relations (Committee Messages, Web Page, Other Media Outlets, etc.)

Chair Lovallo deferred this agenda item.

The BHSBC will meet again on Wednesday, July 27 at 7:30 a.m. Agenda items will include an update on enrollment, maintenance, and a discussion of public relations.

VIII. Related Meeting Documents:

1. MSBA Enrollment Projections May 2016
2. McKibben Demographic Study June 2016
3. MSBA Enrollment Projection Letter dated June 24, 2016
4. Mr. Caputo’s Enrollment Analysis

XI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:32 a.m. by Mr. McLaughlin.

Respectfully submitted by:

Lisa Gibalerio