

Madison Public Schools
Board of Education – Facilities Committee
Tuesday, April 20, 2021
6:30 PM
Via Zoom

MEETING MINUTES

Emily Rosenthal called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm

Members present:

Emily Rosenthal, Chair, Happy Marino, Katie Stein

Also present:

Dr. Cooke, Galen Cawley, Bill McMinn

Recorder: Emily Rosenthal

I. Building Project Discussion

Dr. Cooke reported on the receipt of the educational specs and enrollment report, which has been sent to the State for review. The new construction will be slightly larger per square foot than a standard design, as we are planning for a large gym, and preschool classes are bigger than other classrooms. We are still awaiting updates on any potential land acquisition. Dr. Cooke reported that we will hold a public forum on the building project at the May 25th public board meeting. We also discussed possible energy efficiencies, including the use of solar panels and geothermals. Dr. Cooke and Mr. McMinn recently met with Mansfield Public Schools - they are building the first net zero school in CT, something exciting to consider and explore as a long-term investment. Dr. Cooke and Mr. McMinn continue to meet regularly with Colliers and others to move things along. We are still on pace with a timeline for a November 2021 referendum; however, if needed, we could do a March 2022 referendum. Either referendum date would still result in a September 2025 opening. A decision will need to be made in May on when the referendum will be held. Committee members raised concerns that the timeframe could be tight between May and November for public outreach and education, in particular because the “quiet period” for a November referendum is longer, starting in September. A March referendum would have a shorter quiet period, allowing us more time to communicate with the community. We also discussed beginning communications with the community earlier, but a challenge is people have specific questions that cannot be answered until we have details on the land. A March referendum would allow more time for public communication; however, there is concern that other items may also be on the ballot at that time.

II. Summer Projects

Mr. McMinn gave an update on summer facilities projects, noting he just bid out for carpet and paint. Carport plans are complete. Priority is to continue maintaining the schools and have them ready and clean for the fall. In particular, Mr. McMinn will focus on planning and how that would work around the new construction projects, looking ahead to the summer of 2022. We need to maintain the schools for safety and daily operations, but also not be wasteful as we anticipate major renovations and construction. Dr. Cooke noted that any Fall 2021 reopening plans related to COVID will certainly not be as extensive and time-consuming as they were last summer. The Governor’s May 18th update announced the removal of many restrictions, but schools will continue mask policy this year, and we will look to CDC guidance for fall re-opening.

III. School Security Grants

Dr. Cooke reported on our plans to apply for CT School Security Grants. There are 2 phases of grants with \$4.5 million set aside for CT public schools - one is for hardware (door locks, fobbing systems)

and the other is for camera systems that would connect with the town. We have not applied recently, and we have some projects in the hopper, so Dr. Cooke thinks it is worthwhile to apply this round. Many schools may choose not to apply, hopefully increasing our chances. We will apply for additional cameras, hardware and fobbing systems. The grants are due in June, and the Board will be updated as details are finalized. Mr. Sickle is taking the lead on the grants, working closely with the town for their support and ensuring that we have up to date safety plans in place with the state. In addition, we do have funding in the CIP that we plan on spending for security measures.

IV. Update on Town Facilities Study including Shelter Locations

Mr. McMinn presented an update on the Town Facilities Study, which includes the recommendation of shelter locations. The town's facilities group is working on a recommendation for a shelter location, and the town study indicated that Polson would be the best place, while Hand is good for a secondary/overflow shelter. There are significant costs associated with a school being a town shelter - estimated costs for generators were about \$700,000 at Brown and \$1.5 million at Polson. At this point, we are waiting for the working group to come up with a plan, which would then be presented to the BoE for their input. The BoS or BoF would ideally come up with a plan to fund this. Mr. McMinn will keep us posted.

V. Public Comment - None

Meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

The Facilities Committee meets again on May 18.

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