

Mount Greylock Regional School District Building Committee Meeting Minutes

7:00 p.m. – S103 Mt. Greylock Meeting Room

April 3, 2014

Attendees: M. Schiek, P. Consolini, C. Greene, R. Ellis, J. Goerlach, D. Backus, R. Turbin, J. Wirtes, M. MacDonald, L. Moors, T. Bartels, W. Stevens, J. Benzinger

Absent: A. Jezouit, C. Taylor, L. Bassett, C. Dodig, D. Vogel

1) Call to Order

M. Schiek called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

2) Approval of Minutes from 1/30/13 and 2/27/14 (see attached)

I. 1/30/13 Building Committee Open Minutes

Motion: R. Turbin. **Second:** C. Greene.

Due to confusion over which set of minutes needed approval, **the motion was tabled** until the following meeting.

II. 2/27/14 Building Committee Open Minutes

Motion: D. Backus. **Second:** C. Greene.

VOTE: All in favor, motion passes. **Abstentions:** T. Bartels, R. Turbin, J. Wirtes, M. MacDonald, J. Benzinger and L. Moors.

3) Public Comment

I. No public comments.

4) Fire Curtain Update: Funding – M. Schiek

I. Having looked into abatement and received quotes from three separate companies, a fire curtain abatement process would cost between \$75,750 and \$85,600. No money in the Mt. Greylock budget for the project at this time. J. Wirtes said that they could consider putting out another bid for a lower amount that would look at only replacing the fire curtain and refurbishing the stage curtains.

5) Lanesborough Selectmen Meeting – March 27, 2014 Discussion

I. **Overview:** Discussion around enrollment projections for Mt. Greylock, a presented study anticipated a significant drop in county population over next 10-20 years, differences of opinion were expressed by selectmen and audience.

II. **Discussion:**

- i. Warrant article that Hancock would pull students from Mt. Greylock – C. Greene said this article was put forward by selectman without knowledge of Hancock School Committee.
- ii. In a meeting on April 2nd with the Chair of the Hancock School Committee, the Chair of the New Ashford School Committee, and the Superintendent of Union 71, C. Greene reported that they had come to a tentative agreement on a five year contract to raise tuition 5% each year, for a total of 25% increase over five years which would close the gap between the tuition currently being paid and the actual cost of education for a student from a non-member town.

- iii. Choice students – Discussion around choice students and the role they play at Mt. Greylock. Percentage of students that are choice (11%), actual number of choice and tuition students (16 from New Ashford, 22 from Hancock). Amount of savings presented at Selectmen Meeting if choice/tuition students were cut was identified as being “grossly overestimated,” due to beginning with average PPC rather than real cost of educating student from non-member town.

6) Enrollment Discussions

I. Cost changes based on enrollment number changes

- i. R. Ellis: Based on a conservative number presented by an architect (\$330 per square foot as opposed to MSBA cap of \$275 per square foot), the total cost difference of building for 450 students versus 535 students would be \$3.8 million. After MSBA reimbursement, this number would drop to \$2 million, which would be divided between the towns and distributed over a payment plan that would result in \$34K a year to Williamstown and \$23K a year to Lanesborough.
- ii. T. Bartels proposed that the actual difference in cost would be 40% less than this, based on the fact that what would be cut would be classrooms, which are “cheap square footage.”
- iii. Audience comment from David Langston: The programmatic consequences of reducing the student body below a certain number of students would damage the school. The amount of money that would be saved on a smaller building is insignificant compared to the negative impact on education.

II. Program changes based on lower enrollment

- i. R. Ellis: results of study showed that there would be a significant impact on both staffing and course offerings. Outlined the current variety of course offerings, programs, extra-curriculars available at Mt. Greylock, many of which would have to go. Maynard, a school of 410 students, grades 8 through 12, had “homogenous programming.” Alternative academic choices were limited. Some sports and programs such as music options would need to be cut.
- ii. Audience comment from Lanesborough Town Administrator Paul Sieloff: Lanesborough has the second or third highest tax rate in Berkshire County and we are trying to bring that down. People are angry at New Ashford and Hancock for getting away with paying less. Lanesborough community will be unhappy if taxes are raised, less likely to pass vote for feasibility study. If Maynard can build small then we can, too.

III. Study enrollment option for MSBA

- i. This option would allow School Committee to move forward on feasibility study using two different numbers, providing full comparison. This comparison would stop short of the schematic assessment. Costs more and takes more time. Would have to decide on one or the other number to move forward in feasibility study, building project.

IV. VOTE on a number to recommend that the Mt. Greylock School Committee submit to MSBA to use in a feasibility study.

MOTION made by J. Benzinger to do a Study Enrollment. **SECOND:** C. Greene.

Discussion: While this option would delay a decision, it would not result in a new number that would be different from the two proposed. It would just explore the ramifications of building a school that excluded tuition/choice students or one that included them.

MOTION WITHDRAWN by J. Benzinger. [*J. Benzinger left the meeting.*]

MOTION made by T. Bartels to recommend the number of 535 students to the School Committee to use in a feasibility study. **SECOND:** R. Turbin.

VOTE: *Aye*—11. *Naye*—1. **Motion passes.**

7) Maintenance Plan Update – J. Wirtes

- I. J. Wirtes reported that the maintenance plan was close to complete. L. Bassett was submitting important info to the MSBA, and J. Wirtes was working through preventative maintenance. The plan was due to be submitted on April 14.

8) Community Outreach Update – P. Consolini

- I. Upcoming dates to note:

- i. **April 11: Mt. Greylock.**

- Building tour at 7:00 p.m. prior to the Honey Honey Concert (by Mt. Greylock alum) at 8:00 p.m.

- ii. **April 5: Williamstown Youth Center.**

- Outreach representatives would be at the Childcare Event Fundraiser.

- iii. **April 6: First Congregational Church.**

- C. Greene would present at 11:15 a.m.

Commented [DF1]: Double-check location. Wasn't totally clear.

9) Discussion on path forward if feasibility study vote fails

- I. Discussion postponed until the following meeting.

10) Next Meeting

May 1, 2014 in the Mt. Greylock Meeting Room at 7:00 p.m.

11) Adjourn

Motion to adjourn: P. Consolini. Second: T. Bartels. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dalena Frost, Minutes Recorder