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**Contact:**

Steven C. Sharek

[ssharek@minuteman.org](mailto:ssharek@minuteman.org)

Phone: 781-861-6500, ext. 7360

Cell: 508-965-7757

**Minuteman School Committee Endorses Construction of New School  
*Official Calls New Building "An Investment in Our Economy"***

LEXINGTON – A long-planned building project at Minuteman High School has just taken another big step forward.

The Minuteman School Committee tonight endorsed construction of a new school as its “preferred option” for addressing current facilities issues; creating an educational environment that best meets the needs of students, teachers, and employers; and ensuring continued accreditation. The committee also authorized Skanska USA, its project manager, to submit supporting documentation to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) by June 11.

The Committee’s vote follows a recommendation to build a new school from the Minuteman School Building Committee on May 11.

“Overall, I’m very pleased,” said Ford Spalding, a member of the Minuteman School Committee and chairman of the School Building Committee. “No matter where we travel in the district, we hear strong support for Minuteman and its programs. And we also hear strong support for the idea of building a new school. People understand that this is an investment in our future and in our economy.”

Mr. Spalding said he is hopeful that the district’s 16 member towns will unite in their support for the project.

“Minuteman offers high-quality programs that meet the needs of our students and our labor market,” said Mr. Spalding. “The problem is not with our programs. It’s with the building.”

Over the past two months, the Minuteman School Building Committee conducted public presentations throughout the Minuteman district, gathering input on five (5) possible options: renovation of the existing building, renovation of the building with an addition, construction of a new school, repairs to the existing building, and repairs to the existing building with a modernized array of programs.

During its presentations, the committee stressed three reasons to take action. Members said current problems with the building's condition must be addressed, the school's educational programming could be enhanced in a better physical plant, and the school's accreditation is in jeopardy solely because of the condition of the building.

Of those who offered written or electronic feedback, 89.1% preferred construction of a new building, 4.9% preferred repairs only, 3% preferred renovation only, and 3% preferred a renovation and addition.

New construction was the least expensive of the options. A minimum of 40% of the estimated \$144.9 million project cost would be borne by the state. The maximum estimated district share would be \$86.9 million. The annual property tax impact on a median homeowner in the 16-community district would range from \$6.08 to \$78.03, depending on the town.

The new school would have a design enrollment of 628 students and 16 career and technical education programs. Those programs would be grouped into two Career Academies: a Life Sciences and Services Academy and an Engineering, Construction, and Trades Academy. The school would be designed to foster communication and collaboration between academic subjects and career and technical studies.

Mr. Spalding said the MSBA is expected to review Minuteman's proposal at its board of directors meeting on July 29. At that time, he said he expects MSBA to authorize Minuteman to proceed with the schematic design for a new building based on the proposed educational program plan.

Minuteman High School was built in the 1970s. The building has a host of problems, including a leaking roof; problems with the exterior shell; issues with the electrical and plumbing systems; ventilation issues; and handicapped accessibility issues.

In December of 2012, the New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEASC) placed the school on "warning" status solely because of issues with the building.

Minuteman entered into a feasibility study with the MSBA in 2009.

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