

**School Building Committee (2020)**  
**Organizational Meeting via ZOOM App**  
**Tuesday August 18, 2020**  
**6:00 PM**

**Committee Members Present:** Alderwoman Stacy Gould, Alderman Mark Bettencourt, Alderman Joe DeLucia, Christine DiStastio, Heather Romanski, Gregory Ballasi, Bill Hull, Gerald Martin, Peter Gauthier and Kristen Talley.

**Committee Members Absent:** Gregory Carabine

**Ex-Officio Members Present:** Athena Nagle, Mayor Peter Nystrom, City Manager John Salomone, Josh Pothier and Kristen Stringfellow.  
Pat McLaughlin,

**Citizens Present:** None.

- I. Call to Order and Quorum:** Alderman Bettencourt called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM.
- II. Selection of Chairperson:** Heather Romanski made a motion to nominate Alderman Mark Bettencourt as Chairperson. Alderman DeLucia seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Bill Hull made a motion to close nominations. Alderman DeLucia seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- III. Selection of Vice-Chairperson:** Alderman Bettencourt made a motion to nominate Alderwoman Stacey Gould as Vice-Chairperson. Alderman DeLucia seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Bill Hull made a motion to close nominations. Alderman DeLucia seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- IV. Meeting Schedule:** Bill Hull made a motion to make the School Building Committee schedule for the third Tuesday of the month at 6:30PM. Alderwoman Gould seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- V. Discussion: Potential Outline of the path going forward including impact of recent state input:** Alderman Bettencourt stated that he was recently informed of some resistance on the state side with the enormity of the project and are looking for the project to be completed in phases. Alderman Bettencourt stated he was not sure if this would call for multiple referendums. Athena Nagle stated her assumption is that the state wants completely different applications over a series of years and it would be the Committee's choice on how many buildings per application, so long as the entire project does not have a single construction number. Alderman Bettencourt stated the Committee would need to speak to bond counsel regarding the issue and that he had already reached out to Senator Cathy Osten for her assistance. Athena Nagle continued

that the state definitely expressed concern that if the entire project was submitted at once it would likely not be approved as it would force them to deny all other projects within the state. Alderman Bettencourt stated while the Committee is not yet ready for Phase 1 their posture may change if three referendums are required opposed to one but it wasn't something that had to be dealt with immediately. Alderman DeLucia stated the Committee must submit it to the state the way requested to get the maximum reimbursement possible. Alderman Bettencourt Mark agreed and responded how the applications are laid out versus how the bond is laid out may be two separate issues. Josh Pothier stated the Committee would need to take into account tax payers tolerances and used the example of Kelly Middle School where one referendum was held for two projects; the asbestos abatement and renovation. Josh Pothier agreed on consulting bond counsel and state DAS but he was not certain that having a single referendum would preclude the Committee from having multiple applications over a series of years as requested. Alderwoman Gould asked Athena Nagle if the stated provided any idea of a dollar amount they felt was excessive or did they simply state that the overall project is too large and needed to be adjusted based on any parameters. Athena Nagle responded that they did not provide anything specific but had stated for example not to come forth with a 60 million dollar project. Alderwoman Gould stated the Committee should be mindful if the project is broken out into phases what the main goal would be as far as what immediate renovation needs are. Athena Nagle reported the City completed a partial roof replacement at Stanton and are desperately in need of replacing the remainder. Athena Nagle continued that the next critical need would be the Wequonnoc School renovations. Athena Nagle stated the Stanton roof project has been moving forward however the state advised if the City proceeds with the roof then it will not get approved for construction and alternatively if the City moves forward with the construction aspect instead then the roofs would need to remain a top priority. Athena Nagle noted elevators and boilers as a high priority but reiterated that the state would not agree to approve any roofs if the Committee puts forward a project. Alderwoman Gould asked if the Committee would not be able to receive state funding for the renovation as new if the City has an outstanding bond. Athena Nagle responded that was correct but she believed if the Committee can show the roofs are a safety hazard it may change the circumstance. Discussion ensued. Athena Nagle stated if the depreciation still existed on the roof and the City began another project then the state would send a bill. Kristen Stringfellow asked if the issue was that the City risked reimbursement on the partial roof to which Athena Nagle responded the situation would be that the City would have to pay back any reimbursement on the roof, or they would automatically deny the reimbursement up front. Gerald Martin stated the roof was a high priority so if the state would penalize the City then the Committee needs to weigh that against the mold damage and health issues. Athena Nagle explained that the issue at Stanton is caused by an existing roof that had an elevated roof installed on top of it which is now causing the initial

roof to fill with water so the weight load between first roof and second roof is causing a very critical situation that cannot be patched like the state believes.

**a. Request legal and state opinions regarding bonding referendums**

Continued to a future agenda.

**VI. Discussion / Potential Action: Professional services needing to be retained – Creation of RFP/Q**

Josh Pothier reported that the purchasing agent above him, Bob Castronova, was currently searching for quality examples of previous RFP's for architecture to give the Committee a good starting point. Kristen Stringfellow asked if they were seeking just an architect or if they were planning to have a vision committee or public relations for community input regarding the bond. Alderman Bettencourt responded that the matter would be up for debate. Discussion ensued.

Alderwoman Gould stated she felt it was too early for an RFP and that the committee needed to decide critical needs first. Bill Hull asked if a facilities study had been done to which Alderman Bettencourt responded one had been completed a few years prior so the information may be old but should still be accurate. Bill Hull suggested enacting a special legislature in order to get project approval. Heather Romanski suggested holding a tour to showcase the state of disrepair at the schools in question for committee members who are not as familiar. Peter Gauthier stated that updated maintenance reports would also be helpful as well any information from previous years to help gauge future decisions. Alderman Bettencourt stated an information package for the Committee would be put together. Gerald Martin asked if thermal imaging had been utilized when determining the status of the roofs. Kristen Stringfellow responded that a full report had been completed and was available as it was presented to the previous School Building Committee.

**VII. Additional Items: None.**

**VIII. Adjournment:** Bill Hull made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:52 PM. Alderwoman Gould seconded. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Katherine Rose*