



BERLIN-BOYLSTON REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Budget, Facilities, and Safety Subcommittee

Berlin-Boylston Regional School District Offices | 215 Main Street, Boylston, MA

Tuesday September 5th, 2023 | 10:30AM

Present:

School Committee Members: Ms. Meagan Grill, Vice Chair; Ms. Julie Lee

Administration: Ms. Carol Costello, Superintendent; Mr. Dan Ayala; Ms. Nicole Bilotta, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent; Ms. Nancy Konisky, Director of Finance & Operations; Mr. Paul Mara, Technology Coordinator

I. Call to Order –

Ms. Meagan Grill commenced the meeting at 10:46am

II. Continuing Business –

The overall goal is to prioritize items to tackle first within the BBRSD schools

A. Tahanto Cell Phone Service- follow up on proposal -

The proposal is to install units inside the building to help increase the signal within. The new 5G antennas being put up on the poles by Verizon outside may not help improve the signal in the building. The committee discussed if an alternative would be to make sure everyone has enabled WiFi calling while they are in the school. Clarification is needed on when the 5G antenna pole work will be completed. The committee proposed waiting to see how the 5G works before proceeding within interior measures. There are concerns from parents for students and the lack of communication currently available.

Right now, nothing can be done with the Tahanto radios since there is ongoing litigation with the town. Ms. Grill is going to reach out to the Boylston Select Board to discuss the status of the radio tower. The committee proposed to have an ad hoc committee of experts, which would also include someone who can talk to the safety of these items to get the perspective from both sides on how to proceed. It was suggested that Tahanto could poll the parents for additional input on how they feel.

Mr. Paul Mara joined the meeting and updated the group on the status of the poles and that there is no way to know how they will help until installation is complete. It should help with parent pickup service and at the fields. Boylston Light has helped with the poles themselves and Verizon is in charge of the equipment. Mr. Mara believes the police radio issue has been addressed, but will get confirmation.

Lastly, Mr. Mara spoke to concerns that not everyone will want to log on to the WiFi over potential network security and not everyone in the building owns a smartphone. The all-in cost is proposed to be at about \$160k on the capital plan, which is cost split with the two towns. A second tower could give around 95% coverage if it could be put up. The committee

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put forward the recommendation to hold off installation at the September school committee meeting. Mr. Mara will check on the potential completion date for the 5G installation.

III. New Business

A. BES Facility Study, Mold Report and Roof Report- where do we go from here? – Mr. Dan Ayala informed the group that the mold report came back normal and that nothing needed to be done. The Facility study concluded that BES is an older building that will need numerous upcoming repairs. The assessment was well done with laying out the priorities in the building. Mr. Ayala also received a different quote for the library roof that costs less than the initial quote. Roofing cost is needed in the budget for FY25.

B. Building and Grounds review

- a. BES HVAC – not discussed
- b. Landscaping/ grounds upkeep at all buildings –
There is currently no grounds keeper and volunteers are helping with the grounds. The towns do the grass and leaf work. The committee suggested meeting with the towns to discuss the responsibilities each area has in relation to the schools.

The committee also proposed to meet with the highway department, school committee members, Central Office administration, and key players from each school and town that would tour the outside of their appropriate schools. There is a need for a new landscape design plan and for addressing the condition of the athletic fields. The hope is to create a list of items to be addressed and to determine a budget. Overall, the biggest needs are at BES, followed by the Tahanto fields. Tours could be held on the September 19th PD day.

- c. Capital expense priorities for the upcoming budget -
Ms. Nancy Konisky will have an idea of the budget the week before the October school committee meeting. The district improvement plan for FY25 has been outlined. There is a potential for a teacher shift in coming years depending on incoming kindergarten class sizes. Only one is needed for next year, based on current sizes. The census could be a tool to look at for possible projection numbers of students.

IV. Comments / Future Agenda Items

A. FY 25 Budget schedule/ Subcommittee meeting schedule –
Budget subcommittee to meet on September 26th, at 10:30am. There may be a governance meeting for Sept 26th, as well.

B. Building Tours for town officials

C. Future Agenda Items

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V. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Ms. Grill, seconded by Ms. Lee. Meeting adjourned at Noon

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