

The Facilities Subcommittee met on Monday, February 10, 2025, in a Virtual Zoom Meeting. Present were Jennifer Cullum, Andre King, Sara Ahern, Chris Dwelley, Doug Boulanger, members of CFAC (Barnstable Comprehensive Financial Advisory Committee), and Jen Kruczek.

Ms. Cullum called the meeting to order at 6:03PM.

Discuss the long-term Facilities Needs of the Schools with the Barnstable Comprehensive Financial Advisory Committee

- Ms. Cullum stated there have been new schools built on Cape for the past 5-7 years and a vision is needed for Barnstable to remain relevant and the best. The School Committee is developing a strategic plan. She wants facilities that do not bury us financially and give families a reason to come and stay in Barnstable. The thought is to consolidate schools that are costing the town more and more each year.
- Hector asked why not just renovate the schools as needed. Ms. Cullum stated the spaces are inadequate as teaching methods have changed and facilities are outdated. All our neighbors have new facilities and Barnstable is not competitive in that way. The CIP keeps getting bigger and bigger.
- Dr. Ahern stated the Core Program is for new construction or additions. Renovations are expensive considering the return on investment. If schools are consolidated, there is an economy of scales.
- Mr. Dwelley stated the two schools the district is looking to consolidate are Hyannis West and BCIS. From a financial standpoint, the cost for repairs was the highest at those facilities per square foot. They are the older buildings with repairs needed. There is currently \$22 million in repair costs. A new building would cost the Town \$43.5 million.
- Ms. Cullum stated this would be in the form of a debt exclusion and these things take a long time. Community outreach would need to be launched. She did not feel right about moving forward without CFAC being able to ask questions. Tax payer needs to weigh in on this.
- Hector spoke about a debt exclusion for the town's sewer project. Debt exclusion success in Barnstable is low with 1 of 5 having passed. One may come up for the sewer project. It's going to be an uphill climb.
- Ms. Cullum stated the amount being paid to maintain buildings and the fact that Barnstable is losing enrollment to other districts is a concern.
- Lillian Woo asked if there has been thoughtful consideration on the repairs of the facilities and the best way to prepare for the future. A new building could decrease operating costs and increase capacity. She does have a question about the timing and how school's debt exclusion could compete with the sewer one.
- Ms. Cullum stated for a decade she has been talking about this issue of a new school and the money that is spent to repair and maintain these old schools. Barnstable will be compelled one way or another to do it. The kids deserve a great education in Barnstable.
- Chuck McKenzie asked what the metric that will be used to show this worked. Is it the impact the kids only or attracting new students? Ms. Cullum stated success is using the tax payer's dollar in a more efficient way. Families leave the Cape due to lack of housing and there is a drop in school enrollment. The demographic study showed the new school would make sense in Hyannis. Neighboring towns have new facilities and Barnstable is losing its edge. Using the state's money is a prudent way to build a new facility. It would be \$105 per year for the debt exclusion.
- Jeremy Shea stated a new facility makes sense as a teacher and for the students. The old buildings are not designed for today's education. This is 40 acres of prime real estate.
- Ms. Cullum spoke about creating workforce housing with the school properties.
- Hector asked if there is a location picked out. Dr. Ahern stated the Facilities Subcommittee spoke about two locations. Once an application is submitted and accepted, there is more assessment. The potential locations are behind the current Hyannis West school and the other is near BHS/BIS.
- Dr. Ahern stated there is a 7-10 year timeline from when an application is submitted to the school build.
- James Sproul stated the community needs to be informed that the town is keeping up with the maintenance cost that can support the kids. Perhaps the town would consider changing the 60/40 split to 62/38 split and use the extra money for school repairs.
- Lillian Woo asked how CFAC can help in the deliberations of what the School Committee is trying to do.
- Ms. Cullum stated they are addressing repairs with the CIP. They are submitting for the Accelerated Repair Program for roofs at BHS and BIS.

- Dr. Ahern stated the MSBA is active in educating districts of examples of financial supports from grants and incentives. Barnstable has a seemingly overwhelming amount of repair needs. We are looking to set a long-term course with facilities, so we can prioritize the repairs to the other schools.
- Hector asked when the debt exclusion would be launched. Mr. Dwelley stated it would be right before breaking ground in 2033 or 2034.
- Mark Milne stated the Town Council's role in debt exclusion is to take a vote as to whether or not put it on a ballot.
- Andre King stated the Committee needs to help the community understand the importance of a new building. The investment is in the youth and the community.
- Betty Ludtke stated she does not have enough information. She would like to see how "our lunch is being eaten" as Ms. Cullum stated. The two locations are both in her district and taking away more green space in an already condensed area.
- Chris King stated in terms of maintenance v. a new school, it seems one can continue to kick the can down the road or put a master plan in place that can be sold to the community.
- Thomas Keane stated the number of school aged children in MA is going to decline by 4%. How does the 10-year plan take account of that? Ms. Cullum stated there are a lot of moving pieces and parts. Immigrants are coming to the Cape. The School Committee is working on a strategic plan. She thanked everyone for their time.
- Hector stated the CFAC would welcome back the Subcommittee when the plan is more fleshed out.

Motion by Mr. King, seconded by Dr. Ahern, and the Subcommittee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:03PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jen Kruczek
Executive Assistant