



**Hillcrest Middle School Building Committee  
Virtual Meeting  
September 2, 2025  
7:00 pm**

Present: Chairman Joseph Costa, Bill Mecca, John Morello, Andrew Lubin, Bob Gerbert, Fran Basbagill, and Jeff Alterman

Absent: J.C. Cinelli and Ann Sather

Also Present: Michael Scott, Program Manager, TSKP; Jeff Brown, TSKP; John Butkus, Arcadis; Robert Tencza, Arcadis; Gregory M. Raucci Sr., Bismark Construction; Gregory M. Raucci Jr., Construction Manager, Bismark Construction; Kevin Bova, Purchasing Director; Kevin Dion, Director of Operations, Board of Education and Town Attorney James Nugent

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm followed by Roll Call and the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Past Minutes**

**Motion was made by Mr. Lubin to approve the minutes of August 19, 2025. Seconded by Mr. Gerbert.** Mr. Costa had one correction – Page 2, #2 should read "...they will formulate an opinion of probable cost for the abatement...". **Approved as amended with an abstention from Mr. Morello.**

**Public Comment**

No public comment.

**Review and Approval of Invoices**

None at this time.

**New Business**

Architect's Project Update – TSKP

Mr. Scott discussed the following:

1. Preliminary pricing will be received from Bismark and the third party estimator on the package this week.

2. Working with Bismark, the Town and professional staff in putting together a more clear sense of how to build the building on an occupied site.
3. The current Hillcrest traffic design was reviewed. They are considering capturing the field between the bus oval and Daniels Farm Road and an area in the rear parking lot to provide a potential construction entrance off Daniels Farm Road. There is additional discussion to take possession of the service yard in the back to use for site offices and contractor storage plus an additional area for staging. Geothermal well location was reviewed.
4. School activities will continue with busses continuing to have access on the paved oval with cars using the Easterly parking lot. There would be no beneficial use of the pit and Southern-most fields for either Hillcrest or the high school.
5. Once the school is complete, all students, faculty and staff will move. The existing building will then have a fence placed around it.
6. New traffic plans were reviewed. Timing of traffic transition will be discussed. The free standing canopy in front of the existing school would be kept and used as a car-based student drop off/pick up location with a pedestrian crossing to the new facility.
7. This is the hardest part of the project. As the building is demolished, they will work with Bismark to see what areas can be returned to beneficial use of the schools.
8. The final completion design was reviewed and will continue to be refined.
9. This plan needs to be tracked as a cost to minimize the amount of money spent on temporary measures that could be used towards the new building. It will be included in the estimate provided at the next meeting.

#### Questions and Comments

1. (Costa) – traffic pattern for busses. *Would continue to enter as they do now. Busses may take the outer lane and incoming cars the inner lane.*
2. (Costa) – the arrow from Daniels Farm Road – is that the contractors entrance. *Yes, this would be the main staging/parking area for trades. Will it be paved. It will not be paved because it will eventually be turn back into grass. Suggested this area be a temporary bus entrance. Would keep busses and parents separate. Would need to look at the topography.*
3. (Costa) - will demolition start at the Southern end and work North. (Raucci) *Correct. Need to determine dates.*
4. (Costa) – is there a plan to bring services to the new building (gas, sanitary sewer, power) – *current sewer line comes from the high school to Harvest Hill and the existing building is a lateral connection that would be the carried over to the new building; same with water; electric will come in from Daniels Farm or the common access road – to be determined; gas is coming from the middle of the campus.*
5. (Alterman) – is there still discussion of taking the pool down to give more space; does that help with bus flow. *Would prefer to avoid doing demolition because there is a portion of the area actively used by the school and it would create a disruption of an occupied school. Could be helpful to take it down early because it would allow the pushing of the building north to help with cut and fill issues with the current scheme. Through the pricing effort, they can put a dollar cost to the inconvenience to taking the area down early and then come to the Committee with a valued decision as to whether this makes sense.*

6. (Lubin) – what estimate will be presented at the next meeting – *it will be the cost of the entire project as worked out by Bismark and a third party estimator for the construction. Draft numbers should be received tomorrow and will work with the teams to achieve a reconciled number that can be cast into an overall budget.* How close is the estimate considering no final plans of the building – *That number will be the final number. You will see contingencies for unknowns. (Butkus) – design and estimating contingencies vary based on the level of development of the documents.*
7. (Mecca) – at what point is it impactful to adjust the start/end times of the middle school so there is less congestion on Daniels Farm Road and less managing of parents and students arriving at the same time at the middle and high school. *By the time you get to completion, you will have a lot more cueing space all around. Actively tracking with Hillcrest administration bus and car counts. There has been some discussion district wide about reworking the busing schedule during the life of the project.* (Dion) – changing start times would impact the elementary schools, field trips, etc. It may be too complicated. This has been presented to the Board in the past.

Mr. Scott also noted they have been in discussion with UI to confirm the existing infrastructure to Hillcrest. The information received is a little different than they thought although they still feel they are in the range for the PV array they are considering. Coordinating how the project will move forward. At the end of DD, an interconnection application will be submitted with more refined numbers. This will result in a desk top study with varying lengths of time and prices depending on what UI requires. This is normal operation. UI wants to push this later in the process than anticipated. Have contact information for the various incentive programs.

#### OPM's Project Update - Arcadis

Mr. Butkus discussed the following:

1. Met with Bismark and TSKP. Looked through the schematic set. The design narrative is consistent with discussions held with the Committee.
2. The cut and fill analysis in the area of the North wing of the building has been reviewed. Depending on the numbers for cuts and fill, there may be measurable cost impact. Several scenarios are being discussed.
3. Gas supplies for science labs are no longer eligible for reimbursement by the State. Need to discuss with staff how much they use gas in the classroom. Many schools are using small cylinders instead of piping in a gas supply line with some middle schools are not using gas at all; it is only found in the high schools. Need to discuss with the administration. Running the service line into the building for little use is a large expense.
4. One of the aspects presented in the schematics for estimating is the adjustment to the access of the site requested by the Fire Marshall. The FM requested three-sided access with access/egress paths away from the collapse zone. This impacts exit sidewalks in the event of evacuation. Need to verify the adjustment made is compliant with expectations.
5. Waiting for the estimates and looking forward to reconciling the estimates. The total guaranteed maximum price budget, including the design and estimating contingencies and Construction Manager contingency, is \$118,000,000. Could be less once all numbers are received.

## Questions and Comments

1. (Costa) – the date of the first look at the estimate is September 16. When does the Committee need to make a decision to move into the next phase. *Understands there needs to be time to discuss and decide on the systems. To maintain the design schedule, they would hope to have a decision by the end of September.*
2. (Costa) – the base building needs to be the base building. Need to identify any scope creep and put that as an alternate or optional item. *TSKP did confirm the square footage of the building in the schematic design is below the square footage of the Ed Spec.* (Costa) – can eligible and ineligible costs be identified. *It is early to determine this but they will try to capture what they can. It is anticipated the vast majority of the dollars will be eligible for reimbursement.*

## CM's Project Update – Bismark Construction

Mr. Raucci discussed the following:

1. Met with TSKP to review logistics for the site working towards keeping disruptions at a minimum with costs in mind.
2. Started to look at how they will be coming onto the site with the least amount of disruption. Cost will be captured.

## Questions and Comments

1. (Gerber) – what have you seen in the marketplace with regard to tariffs. *They see it as a great bid market with projects being bid lower than anticipated and competitive. Put in an escalation for tariffs but have not seen the numbers affected over the last six months. They will continue to monitor.*
2. (Costa) – when looking at the estimates, watch for early enabling work as options to speed up the work. *Options are being considered.*

## **Next Meeting**

September 16, 2025 by ZOOM. It was agreed by the Committee members to continue virtual meetings through the month of September.

## **Actions/Approvals of Building Committee**

Mr. Bova noted the RFP for the Commissioning Agent is out with a due date of September 23. Questions due by September 16. Do not have to interview three but Mr. Bova put it in as an option in the event the Committee would like to do interviews. The Committee could decide on the most qualified, best proposal qualification and move forward with recommendation by Arcadis and the Committee. Mr. Costa suggested the RFP's be available on September 23 to the Committee for review at the September 30 meeting. They can then make a decision and select, do interviews or make a short list. Mr. Bova indicated a bid extension should not be required.

**Adjournment**

**There being no further business, motion was made by Mr. Lubin to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 pm.  
Seconded by Mr. Mecca and approved by unanimous consent.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Barbara Crandall  
Clerk