

**TOWN OF TRUMBULL  
CONNECTICUT**



**Hillcrest Middle School Building Committee  
October 28, 2025  
7:00 pm  
Council Chambers, Trumbull Town Hall**

Present: Joseph Costa, Andrew Lubin, Bill Mecca, John Morello, Fran Basbagill, J.C. Cinelli and Jeff Alterman (entered at 7:22 pm)

Absent: Ann Sather and Bob Gerbert

Also Present: John Butkus, Arcadis; Gregory Raucci, Bismark Construction; Town Attorney James Nugent; Michael Scott, TSKP; Ernest Lawas, Sustainable Engineering Solutions; Charlie Archer, Sustainable Engineering Solutions

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm followed by Roll Call and the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Past Minutes**

**Motion was made by Mr. Lubin to approve the minutes of October 14, 2025; seconded by Mr. Cinelli.** Mr. Mecca commented on the Committee's first opportunity to hear outside feedback. Thought it went well and they seemed to want to regularly participate. Mr. Cinelli suggested outside comments should be on the agenda and not given free range of speech as they are not on the Building Committee. One individual spoke during public comment; others were allowed to speak, through the Chair, on questions from the Committee members or design professionals. **Abstention from Mr. Costa. Motion passed.**

**Public Comment**

No public comment.

**Review and Approval of Invoices**

Mr. Butkus presented an invoice from TSKP Studio. This was reviewed and endorsed for payment to cover the final percentage for schematic design in the amount of \$164,000. **Motion was made by Mr. Cinelli to approve the TSKP invoice dated 10/2/25 to complete the schematic design for the period ending 9/30/25 in the amount of \$164,000. Seconded by Mr. Mecca and approved by unanimous consent.**

## **New Business**

Architect's Project Update – Mr. Scott discussed the following:

Floor plan updates were reviewed. The team has been working with the educators to develop specific spaces. Looking at furniture arrangement, etc. The staff has requested a seclusion room on every floor; working with engineering staff to determine the correct location and size for the mechanical and electrical rooms. Working to provide updated plans in totality to present to the educators for input.

Questions –

(Basbagill) – what are seclusion rooms. (Scott) - these are rooms for students in distress that need a place to calm down, be monitored and recentered for the remainder of the day.

(Cinelli) – does the Black Box have a fixed stage as discussed previously. (Scott) yes – can accommodate approximately 100 students.

(Costa) – besides the educators, are meetings being held with other stake holders in the Town. (Scott) – meetings were held initially; but have not since the conclusion of schematic design. The other stake holders included the Athletic Director, Parks and Rec and the Fire Marshall. The Civil and Engineering Landscape Team has reached out to Planning and Zoning for clarity on the permitting track. They will get updates on the final site plan and location of the school to present to Inland Wetlands via an initial pass through Planning and Zoning.

(Lubin) – was the structure location changed as discussed. (Scott) – structure will remain in the original location.

(Costa) – how is the process with OSTA proceeding. (Scott) – OSTA will not review anything until they file with the Town. On the day the application is submitted to IWWC, the information will be submitted to OSTA (approximately 3-4 months). P&Z will be cleared first and then to IWWC. It should be straight forward. The parcel does not have a certificate.

(Costa) – what is the local approval process. (Scott) – Inland Wetlands has to be cleared because they are within the 100 foot upland review area. A school building, in a residential area, is not expressly outlined in the zoning code. (Nugent) – The Town is exempt from its own zoning regulations so no Zoning approval is required; approval is required from Inland Wetlands

Exterior materials for the project were presented and discussed.

1. Concrete Masonry Unit – used for anything touching the ground and the administrative wing, very durable, weathers well.
2. Phenolic panels – accent pieces that look like wood, very durable, used as a rain screen.
3. Standing seam metal – painted material used on the roof (unseen); planetarium will be clad in it. Very durable.
4. Fiber cement panel – used in the transom of the large roof and the upper stories of the classroom wings. High density product.

Mr. Alterman entered at 7:22 pm.

Continuing work to finalize the site plan, reviewing a draft of the grading plan to eliminate some retaining walls. A final Geotech report will be presented at the next meeting. A flow test was completed that indicated they do not need a fire pump.

(Lubin) – did UI confirm the load with service to the building. (Scott) – UI will not do a formal study until design/development is completed. In conversations to date, it appears the way the current building is using power, the new structure should conform to that profile.

OPM's Project Update – Mr. Butkus discussed the following:

1. Conducting on-going meetings with administration and superintendent with positive discussions and results. Things are beginning to refine as some of the smaller details are falling into place.
2. The siting of the building has been reviewed after a question about the amount of fill required due to the topography. Worked with the design team and Bismark on two schemes to reduce the amount of fill. First was to take off the pool and do temporary construction to make the wall of the gym a temporary exterior wall. It was determined to be over a \$500,000 investment for what was temporary construction. The net savings was not worth the educational impact to how the building currently operates. The second scheme was to look at the volume and look at it as a void. Build a structure and have a cavity underneath. If that worked out as a benefit, they would go to the State for a waiver so as not to be penalized for the additional space. This scenario, because of the structural steel, sprinklers, climate control and fire alarm when added into the cost of the structure, was not a savings over bringing in fill.
3. Geotechnical report is being finalized. The report does indicate the need for removal and replacement of the soil within the footprint of the academic wings is less than expected. Footings will be dug but the balance for the slab on grade can be compacted and rolled, not removed. For the southwestern end, the report indicates it can be excavated, amended and returned as structural fill. This significantly reduces the amount of trucking, the timeline for removal and replacement. The price in the schematic estimate is now a smaller number when quantified in the design/development estimate.
4. Working continually with Bismark and the design team which is working well.

(Costa) – when is design/development due. (Scott) – pricing documents go out before the holiday and will estimate and reconcile during January. Report should be available the second meeting in January.

Sustainable Engineering Solutions (SES) –

Mr. Lawas gave a brief introduction of their company and their responsibilities as Commissioning Agent. Project Manager will be Brian Messerschmidt. Commissioning is a quality oversight process. As a third party advocate to the project, they verify the design, installation, construction, start up and placement of the buildings systems and equipment into a proper operational state per the design intent and the owner's project requirements. They also make sure the staff at the facility are properly trained to successfully operate this equipment and maintain it for long term. They will begin very shortly given the status of the project and will be working closely with Arcadis and the team to start their activities.

Questions -

(Lubin) – will you be starting the process with TSKP immediately in terms of dealing with the systems intended to be used in the building and providing input. (Lawas) – first document will be the Owners Project Requirements which is a living document throughout the design stage which collects information about the key priorities, wants and needs of the project to make sure that is captured in a formal document shared with the overall team to firm up the understanding of the overall needs of the project.

From there, they will have design phase meetings with the OPM, TSKP and the rest of the design team to review the OPR and provide input.

(Costa) – what is your role on exterior commission on the building. It is a net zero project and needs a successful façade enclosure. (Lawas) – having a well performing building envelope is key to leveraging a high performance HVAC system. They will make sure the process addresses this and will review installation of systems during construction as well as other components.

(Morello) – will the Maintenance barn on site be available during construction phase. (Scott) – to be determined. Looking at how to stage in the early phase which is the installation of the geothermal field and the subsequent construction of the building. After the project, the barn and storage containers will be on a paved surface because of the requirement of the Fire Marshall for access.

(Morello) – will the windows be fixed or able to be opened. (Scott) – prefers then to be fixed but can be worked out. Noted the air will be fresh, consistent, temperature controlled even with fixed windows.

(Nugent) – SES contract is with the Town, what type of reporting requirements will be followed. (Lawas) – everything will be sent through Arcadis and from there, will be distributed through a protocol as determined.

(Nugent) – Contract has been signed.

Bismark's Project Update – Mr. Raucci noted he is continuing to work with Arcadis and everything is going well.

#### **Next Meeting**

After discussion, the remaining meetings for November and December 2025 are as follows:

November 11 – cancelled (Veteran's Day)

**November 18 – Board of Education Auditorium**

November 25 – cancelled

**December 9 – Council Chambers**

December 23 – cancelled

Mr. Costa proposed meetings be held on the second and fourth Tuesday for 2026. January meetings will be **January 13 and January 28, location to be determined.**

Mr. Lubin requested the Committee be made aware of any potential scheduling changes or potential impacts to scheduling so they can work with the information and be prepared.

#### **Adjournment**

**There being no further business, motion was made by Ms. Basbagill to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 pm; seconded by Mr. Mecca and approved by unanimous consent.**

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Crandall  
Clerk