



Project: Essex Elementary School
 Subject: School Building Committee Meeting
 Location: Remote (Zoom)
 Distribution: Attendees, Project File

Project No:
 Meeting Date: 4/14/26
 Time: 6:00 PM
 Prepared By: R. Rincon

Present	Name (* Voting Member)	Affiliation
✓	Michelle Cresta*	Director of Finance & Operations
✓	Pam Beaudoin*	Superintendent
✓	Kim Provost*	Principal
✓	Theresa Whitman*	SBC Co-Chair
✓	John Binieris*	SBC Co-Chair
✓	Andy Oldeman*	Manchester Finance Committee / Mechanical Engineer
✓	Charlie Hay*	Architect School Building Experience
✓	Gordon Brewster*	Engineer, Sr. Proj. Manager, Owner's PM, former Member of MERMHS & Memorial building
	Tyler Virden*	Project Executive -Wise Construction / Paren
✓	Annie Cameron*	Former SC Member and Memorial SBC Member
✓	Ariel Fernando Brain*	Architect - CBT
	Jen Hoberman*	Architect - Partner SV Design
✓	Michael Gerhardt*	Civil Engineer / Parent
	Timothy McDonald*	Architect - Onion Flats
✓	Henry Ottenger*	Manchester Conservation Committee / Education Background
	David Preen	Resident / Plumbing & Fire
✓	Lisa O'Donnell	Design & Construction / Essex Planning Board
	Steve Hunt*	Facilities Manager
	Emily Dwyer*	EES Teacher
✓	Kim Field	EES Teacher
✓	Rachelle Russo	EES Teacher
	Mike Burton	Project Director / Partner - DWMP
✓	Christina Dell Angelo	Project Executive - DWMP
✓	John Albright	Project Manager - DWMP
✓	Rachel Rincon	Assistant Project Manager - DWMP
	Jacob Greco	Assistant Project Manager - DWMP
✓	James LaPosta	Principal - JCJ Architecture
	Fawn Pellegrini	Senior Project Manager - JCJ Architecture
	Dustin Lombardi	Architect - JCJ Architecture
✓	Jeff Elliott	Project Architect - JCJ Architecture
	Emily Czarnecki	Principal (Interiors) – JCJ Architecture
	Mike Pirollo	Principal – MLP Integrated Design
	Eric Haggstrom	Sustainability Director – JCJ Architecture
	Kelley Tapia	Soden Sustainability



Item No.	Action Item	Ball in Court
1	Update presentation/matrix to reflect that code upgrade option is presumed non-reimbursable by MSBA and remove/revise green indicator for MSBA grant reimbursement on code upgrade option before Thursday's community meeting	JCJ
2	Send out list of working group members to all SBC members	DWMP
3	Respond to doodle polls for working group participation	SBC
4	Review schematic design schedule with Fawn and confirm approach for community meetings, then report back at 4/28 meeting	JCJ/DWMP
5	Schedule meeting to discuss community engagement events (Happy as a Clam 5K, ClamFest, Chamber of Commerce events) and determine appropriate timing/structure for June/September community meetings	All
6	Update cost estimate sheets to show CM at risk consistently across all options for Thursday's presentation	DWMP/JCJ

- Please click [here](#) for the presentation
 - o This will be referenced in the meeting minutes with slide numbers called out to refer to.
- Below is a summation of key points, please view the recording [here](#) for full transcript and chapter summaries.

Item No.	Description																																	
18.1	Call to Order & Intro: Called to order by T. Whitman at 6:06pm, please refer to the attendee list.	Record																																
18.2	<p>Approval of March 24, 2026, Meeting Minutes (Vote Expected):</p> <p>A motion to approve March 24, 2026, Meeting Minutes, was made by G. Brewster seconded by A. Cameron.</p> <p>Discussion: None.</p> <p>Roll Call Vote:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="396 1054 1036 1873"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="396 1054 695 1138">Name</th> <th data-bbox="695 1054 1036 1138">Yes/No/Abstain & Absent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td data-bbox="396 1138 695 1188">Michelle Cresta</td><td data-bbox="695 1138 1036 1188">Yes</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="396 1188 695 1239">Pam Beaudoin</td><td data-bbox="695 1188 1036 1239">Yes</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="396 1239 695 1289">Kim Provost</td><td data-bbox="695 1239 1036 1289">Yes</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="396 1289 695 1339">John Binieris</td><td data-bbox="695 1289 1036 1339">Yes</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="396 1339 695 1390">Theresa Whitman</td><td data-bbox="695 1339 1036 1390">Yes</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="396 1390 695 1440">Andy Oldeman</td><td data-bbox="695 1390 1036 1440">Yes</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="396 1440 695 1491">Charlie Hay</td><td data-bbox="695 1440 1036 1491">Abstain</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="396 1491 695 1541">Gordon Brewster</td><td data-bbox="695 1491 1036 1541">Yes</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="396 1541 695 1591">Tyler Virden</td><td data-bbox="695 1541 1036 1591">Absent</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="396 1591 695 1642">Annie Cameron</td><td data-bbox="695 1591 1036 1642">Yes</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="396 1642 695 1692">Ariel Fernando Brain</td><td data-bbox="695 1642 1036 1692">Yes</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="396 1692 695 1743">Jen Hocherman</td><td data-bbox="695 1692 1036 1743">Absent</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="396 1743 695 1793">Michael Gerhardt</td><td data-bbox="695 1743 1036 1793">Yes</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="396 1793 695 1843">Timothy McDonald</td><td data-bbox="695 1793 1036 1843">Absent</td></tr> <tr><td data-bbox="396 1843 695 1894">Henry Oettinger</td><td data-bbox="695 1843 1036 1894">Yes</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Name	Yes/No/Abstain & Absent	Michelle Cresta	Yes	Pam Beaudoin	Yes	Kim Provost	Yes	John Binieris	Yes	Theresa Whitman	Yes	Andy Oldeman	Yes	Charlie Hay	Abstain	Gordon Brewster	Yes	Tyler Virden	Absent	Annie Cameron	Yes	Ariel Fernando Brain	Yes	Jen Hocherman	Absent	Michael Gerhardt	Yes	Timothy McDonald	Absent	Henry Oettinger	Yes	Record
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18.3	<p data-bbox="326 688 1084 724">Invoices and Commitments for Approval (Vote Expected):</p> <p data-bbox="326 762 1235 831">A motion to approve the following invoices was made by A. Cameron and seconded by G. Brewster.</p> <p data-bbox="326 869 573 938">DWMP \$47,094.50 JCJ \$71,857.40</p> <p data-bbox="326 978 1263 1808">Discussion: M. Cresta recommended approval. C. Dell Angelo shared there will be an OPM contract amendment at the next SBC meeting. C. Dell Angelo stated that DWMP met with the district, including Pam and Michelle, approximately one month earlier to review cash flow projections for the OPM line item in the feasibility study agreement. She noted that funds under the current contract are nearly depleted and outlined the need for a contract amendment to extend funding through the feasibility study phase and schematic design. She added that the amendment was not presented at this meeting, but discussions with the district are ongoing to ensure adequate funding. M. Cresta explained that, compared to the Memorial Project, the feasibility study costs were previously much lower due to a fixed-fee structure. She noted that the Massachusetts School Building Authority now requires OPM services to be billed on a time-and-materials basis, increasing overall costs beyond initial expectations. She stated that \$1.5 million was originally appropriated by the two towns and the district for the feasibility study, excluding anticipated MSBA reimbursements. She added that MSBA reimbursement funding is expected to offset increased costs, with approximately \$300,000 in additional DWMP expenses and an estimated \$500,000 in additional MSBA reimbursement. She concluded that these additional funds will be incorporated into the project upon approval. P. Beaudoin clarified that the OPM and designer contracts differ in structure, noting that the OPM contract is time-and-materials, whereas the designer contract is a lump-sum agreement.</p> <p data-bbox="326 1845 500 1877">Roll Call Vote:</p>													

Name	Yes/No/Abstain & Absent
Michelle Cresta	Yes
Pam Beaudoin	Yes
Kim Provost	Yes
John Binieris	Yes
Theresa Whitman	Yes
Andy Oldeman	Yes
Charlie Hay	Yes
Gordon Brewster	Yes
Tyler Virden	Absent
Annie Cameron	Yes
Ariel Fernando Brain	Yes
Jen Hocherman	Absent
Michael Gerhardt	Yes
Timonthy McDonald	Absent
Henry Oettinger	Yes
Emily Dwyer	Absent
Steve Hunt	Advisor – No Vote
Kim Field	Advisor – No Vote
Rachelle Rousseau	Advisor – No Vote
David Pereen	Advisor – No Vote
Lisa O'Donnell	Advisor – No Vote

• **Yes: 12 | No: 0 | Absent/Abstain: 4**

18.4	<p>Community Meeting Feedback:</p> <p>J. Elliot noted that seven options were originally considered, including enrollment scenarios of 165, 250, and 515 students, and that pricing had been completed through the PDP phase.</p> <p>He stated that the 165 and 515 enrollment options were then eliminated, leaving the 250-enrollment scenario as the focus. He explained that five alternatives were evaluated within this enrollment, including site</p>	Record
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	<p>considerations such as traffic flow, wetlands, parking, emergency access, and playfields, as well as building layout and organization. He added that the options included code upgrade, addition/renovation, and new construction approaches.</p> <p>J. Elliot noted that on March 24th, a gallery walk was held to present the five options, and the matrix was updated to reflect the removal of the two eliminated enrollment scenarios. He further stated that the feedback collected from the community, the SBC, and staff was compiled for review.</p> <p>K. Provost stated that during a faculty meeting, all design options were presented to staff. She noted that staff were then asked to complete the same feedback forms used in the community process, providing an opportunity for staff input on all design alternatives and ensuring they were included in the review process.</p> <p>J. Elliot stated that all feedback was consolidated and color-coded based on the sticky notes, with positive comments identified in green and negative comments in red. (refer to presentation, slides 9-13)</p> <p><u>Discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M. Gerhardt inquired about feedback related to Pre-K and Kindergarten students potentially needing to use stairs to access special programs, referencing concerns about adjacency between early childhood spaces and other areas such as specials and the cafeteria. He specifically asked for staff input on this issue in relation to option A2.2F, noting that the Pre-K space in that layout is located at a distance from key destinations, requiring use of stairs to move through the building. K. Provost responded that students would adapt to the layout and become accustomed to navigating the building, including the use of stairs as needed. 	
18.5	<p>Design Alternatives – PDP Review Comments from MSBA:</p> <p>Preliminary Design Program (PDP) Review Comments received from the MSBA.</p> <p>Space Templates for all three Enrollment scenarios (165, 250 and 515 students) were reviewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All newly constructed Special Education Classrooms shall be a minimum of 900 nsf. ACE rooms increased from 600 nsf to 900 nsf. • School Psychologist recategorized from 'Special Education' to 'Administration and Guidance.' 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage areas in RISE, Physical Therapy and Pre-K totaling 800 nsf recategorized to 'Non-Programmed Spaces.' Results in a reduction of building gross floor area due to how the grossing factor is applied. • Approximate reduction to each design alternative is a reduction of approximately 500 gfa. (Code Upgrade remains unchanged.) • Space templates, design diagrams and cost estimates have all been aligned with these revised building gross floor areas for the upcoming PSR submission. 	
18.6	<p>Design Alternatives – Preliminary Costs:</p> <p>PSR Preliminary Costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Lombardi shared what the cost estimators consider... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Site layouts and features ○ Architectural floor plan layout and square footage ○ An outline specification that describes intent for civil, landscape, architectural materials, interior finishes, structural systems, MEP/FP/FA systems, IT/AV and sustainability goals ○ Estimated construction duration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Phasing for new construction and phasing for the abatement & demolition ▪ Modularity if assumed necessary ○ Escalation based upon estimated construction duration <p>PSR Pricing Exercise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The costs shown for the various PSR options are intended for comparative analysis only and do not represent the final project costs for any individual option. • Major variables including geotechnical conditions, site grading, structural systems, and final MEP design – are still under development. As these elements are refined, costs may vary significantly from the current benchmark estimates. • Accordingly, the figures presented in this report should not be interpreted as the final construction budget. • This PSR Design Submission cost estimate was produced from narratives and outline drawings dated, prepared by JCJ Architecture and their design team. The estimation package was issued on March 11th. <p>C. Dell Angelo explained that the slide is similar to one previously presented during cost estimate discussions and is sourced from the MSBA construction cost analysis on their website. She highlighted comparable elementary school projects, including Essex Elementary School, to show the</p>	

	<p>project's position relative to others in various phases—some slightly behind, ahead, or at a similar stage. She noted that construction costs per square foot are generally consistent across projects, ranging from approximately \$877 per square foot for projects in the schematic design phase to the project's current estimate in the feasibility phase. She concluded that the project is tracking in line with other elementary school projects within the MSBA process.</p> <p>C. Dell Angelo reviewed the estimated costs for each of the options. (refer to presentation, slide 36)</p> <p>C. Dell Angelo noted that there are two construction delivery methods—Design-Bid-Build and Construction Manager at Risk—and that the SBC will need to vote on a preferred method after an option is selected. There is a premium for CM at Risk.</p> <p><u>Discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• T. Whitman stated a preference to hold the vote on a preferred option on Thursday, allowing SBC members time to consider input and to take the official vote following the community meeting feedback. C. Dell Angelo agreed to hold the vote on Thursday but emphasized that a final selection must be made at the next SBC meeting.• C. Hay recommended only comparing the CM at Risk total project costs.• P. Beaudoin explained that, for those not in the field, a simple way to understand the distinction is that more complex projects are more likely to use the Construction Manager at Risk method, as it involves assuming greater responsibility for delivering the project on time and within budget while managing complexities. She noted that simpler, more straightforward projects may be better suited to the Design-Bid-Build method, where, despite some risk, the relative simplicity makes the project easier to deliver.• T. Virden stated that he was concerned about the \$51 million estimate for the code upgrade, noting it is significantly lower than the other options. He questioned whether that level of investment would meet the educational program and asked if all soft costs, particularly those related to phasing and implementation, have been fully accounted for. He also asked how the option could be presented differently to better reflect its value. T. Whitman asked whether the option should be considered viable if it does not meet the educational program. C. Dell Angelo responded that the MSBA will only reimburse a code upgrade project if it meets the educational program and noted that this option does not.	
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- C. Hay shared concern that the code upgrade project would be disruptive for students and educators, noting that it would require the use of modular classrooms, take four classrooms offline at a time, and involve up to ten construction phases. Also, it is a non-reimbursable project.
- P. Beaudoin reminded the SBC that the code upgrade is strictly an upgrade and would maintain the existing building configuration. J. Elliot confirmed that there would be no educational program enhancements under this option.
- A. Oldeman stated that he was curious about the cost of the code upgrade, noting it is relatively lower than the Memorial project. He referenced that Memorial included significant cost impacts from structural seismic upgrades and a different building architecture and construction type. He added that while those factors may explain the difference, he had expected the code upgrade cost to be more closely aligned with the other options. D. Lombardi responded that the Manchester project had a very difficult layout, noting that it was highly sprawling with many single-loaded corridors, which resulted in a larger amount of exterior wall, additional windows, and increased building envelope due to its configuration. He contrasted this with Essex, explaining that its courtyard design results in a much more compact building footprint.
- T. Virden stated that Options A and B presented several complications. He expressed a preference for Option F, citing site constraints and grade changes as key considerations.
- SBC members stated that Option A2.2F provided strong value to the community and also reduced paving and building setback impacts on the property, helping to address abutter concerns. They further noted that the option avoids impacts to wetlands, provides improved supervision and safety for students with the playspace located behind the building, and offers the best adjacencies for programs.
- The formal vote will be taken at the 4/16/26 SBC Meeting.

Straw Poll (Include Non-voting members):

Option	Votes
Option A.02	
Option A1.2-B	
Option A2.2-A	
Option A2.2-B	
Option A2.2-F	T. Virden, H. Oettinger, M. Gerhardt, A. Oldeman, L. O'Donnell, P. Beaudoin, K. Provost,

	A. Brain, K. Field, R. Russo, C. Hay, G. Brewster, M. Cresta, T. Whitman, A. Cameron, J. Binieris							
18.7	<p>Schedule Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4/16/26 Community Meeting – Cost Review • 4/16/26 SBC Meeting – Select Preferred Option • 4/28/26 SBC Meeting - Approve PSR Submission to MSBA • 5/12/26 SBC Meeting • 5/26/26 SBC Meeting • 6/4/26 Community Meeting #6 • 6/9/26 SBC Meeting • 6/23/26 SBC Meeting • 7/14/26 SBC Meeting • 7/28/26 SBC Meeting • 8/11/26 SBC Meeting • 8/25/26 Community Meeting #7 • 8/25/26 SBC Meeting • 9/8/26 SBC Meeting • 9/22/26 SBC Meeting • 10/13/26 SBC Meeting • 10/27/26 SBC Meeting • 10/29/26 Community Meeting #8 • 11/10/26 SBC Meeting • 11/24/26 SBC Meeting <p>Numerous working group meetings will be scheduled over the next couple of months. R. Rincon will distribute the working group member list to the SBC for review. R. Rincon will also schedule the next Communications Working Group meeting.</p>	Record						
18.8	Other Topics not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours Prior to the Meeting: None.	Record						
18.9	Public Comment: None.	Record						
18.10	Reflections & Action Items: None.	Record						
18.11	<p>Adjourn: A motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 8:00 pm by G. Brewster and seconded by A. Cameron.</p> <p>Roll Call Vote:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="329 1709 972 1896"> <thead> <tr> <th>Name</th> <th>Yes/No/Abstain & Absent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Michelle Cresta</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pam Beaudoin</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Name	Yes/No/Abstain & Absent	Michelle Cresta	Yes	Pam Beaudoin	Yes	Record
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Kim Provost	Yes
John Binieris	Yes
Theresa Whitman	Yes
Andy Oldeman	Yes
Charlie Hay	Yes
Gordon Brewster	Yes
Tyler Virden	Yes
Annie Cameron	Yes
Ariel Fernando Brian	Yes
Jen Hocherman	Absent
Michael Gerhardt	Yes
Timonthy McDonald	Absent
Henry Oettinger	Yes
Emily Dwyer	Absent
Steve Hunt	Advisor – No Vote
Kim Field	Advisor – No Vote
Rachelle Rousseau	Advisor – No Vote
David Pereen	Advisor – No Vote
Lisa O'Donnell	Advisor – No Vote

• **Yes: 13 | No: 0 | Absent/Abstain: 3**

Sincerely,
DORE + WHITTIER
 Rachel Rincon
 Assistant Project Manager

Rachel L. Rincon

Cc: Attendees, File
 The above is my summation of our meeting. If you have any additions and/or corrections, please contact me for incorporation into these minutes.