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TOWN OF SUFFIELD

MEETING MINUTES
PERMANENT BUILDING COMMISSION & BOARD OF EDUCATION
JOINT SPECIAL MEETING
September 17, 2026
6:00 p.m.

Locations: Town Hall
83 Mountain Road
Suffield, CT

Meeting Name: Permanent Building Commission & Board of Education Joint Special Meeting

By: Kristen Lambert - Recording Secretary

Type of Meeting: Joint Special Meeting

Permanent Building Commission Members Present: Kevin Goff – Chairman, Glenn Neilson - Vice Chairman, Joe Sangiovanni, Cathie Ellithorpe and Brian Baril (Via zoom)

Permanent Building Commission Members Absent: Henry Miga, Billy Gozzo and Marty Page

Board of Education Members Present: Maureen Sattan – BOE Chairman, Greg Sparzo, Melissa Finnigan, James Mol, Sam Toskin, Gianna Rossi, Brian Fry and Debra Dudack (via Zoom)

Board of Education Members Absent: Dustin Rose

Also Present: Lee Corbert – DPW Director, Eric Remington -Business Manager, Ken Smith – SMS Principal (via zoom), Laura Norbut – Assistant Superintendent, Tony DeLuzio – Colliers Project Leaders (Via Zoom), Chuck Warrington – Colliers Project Leaders, Jeff Wyszynski – Tecton Architects and Rebecca Hopkins – Tecton Architects

Chairman Goff called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and asked those in attendance to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Minutes:

a) Minutes of the Special Joint PBC and BOE Meeting held on August 13, 2026

Vice-Chairman Neilson MOTIONED and Commissioner Ellithorpe seconded to accept the Minutes of the Special Joint PBC and BOE Meeting held on August 13, 2026 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

b) Minutes of the Special Joint PBC and BOFC Meeting held on August 20, 2026

Vice-Chairman Neilson MOTIONED and Commissioner Ellithorpe seconded to accept the Minutes of the Special Joint PBC and BOFC Meeting held on August 20, 2026 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Works Update

DPW Director Lee Corbett reported that a mandatory contractor walkthrough had been conducted the prior week for the Police Station HVAC replacement project. Due to the complexity and detail of the project, an RFI was received requesting additional time to prepare bids, and the bid deadline was extended to September 24. Two contractors participated in the mandatory walkthrough. Director Corbett noted that the project is complex and that the Town will know more once bids are received. He will provide an update to the PBC following the bid opening.

School Facilities Projects Update

BOE Business Manager Eric Remington provided an update on several ongoing school projects in the absence of Larry Plano.

At A. Ward Spaulding Elementary School, the brick repointing and lintel repair project is nearing bidding, with Eagle Environmental working with Silver Petrucelli on final bid documents. The Spaulding bathroom renovation is anticipated to go out to bid in February, with design and environmental work underway. The building will be taken offline during the summer, requiring alternate arrangements for Parks and Recreation and summer pre-K programs. The Board of Education welcomed PBC review of the bid documents prior to issuance.

The High School roof replacement contract with Gold Seal Roofing has been finalized, with work expected to begin within 60 days. Despite potential winter weather concerns, the contractor anticipates completing the initial work and weatherproofing before winter conditions become problematic. A special inspector has been engaged to ensure compliance with manufacturer requirements.

The High School HVAC project is substantially complete, with commissioning and retro-commissioning underway. The system is providing heat and air conditioning, with a few remaining Carrier items and HVAC balancing still to be addressed. The High School first-floor flooring project is complete, with all planned flooring replaced.

Colliers/Tecton Presentation of Middle School Revised Site Update

Chairman Kevin Goff reviewed the Commission's charge and the work completed to date. He stated that the PBC believed the work had reached the point where a recommendation should be advanced to the Board of Selectmen, which would then work with the Board of Finance to determine the financial implications and potential referendum process.

Tecton presented the three Middle School alternatives. The capital improvement option was estimated at approximately $75 million, with a Town share of approximately $63 million, but would address only the most

critical deficiencies and would not resolve broader educational, programming, or building needs. Members also noted that much of the work could not be completed during summer recesses and could result in student displacement and additional unforeseen costs. The renovate-as-new option was estimated at approximately $127 million, with a Town share of approximately $73 million. Because State requirements generally require renovation to be more economical than new construction, its eligibility for renovate-as-new reimbursement remains uncertain.

The new construction option was estimated at approximately $128.8 million, with a projected Town share of approximately $65 million based on current State reimbursement assumptions, making it the more economical alternative. Site studies, including geotechnical testing, surveying, and wetlands and vernal pool identification, were completed to determine the most suitable location and reduce potential project risks. The preferred Option E would construct a new Middle School on the existing campus while retaining the auxiliary gym and adjacent former locker room areas for community, Central Office, or other uses. Recreation facilities would be relocated, and the plan would improve separation of school and community activities, traffic circulation, bus and parent drop-off areas, parking, and pedestrian access. Construction could occur while the existing school remains operational, with some anticipated disruption.

The project budget includes allowances for solar and geothermal systems, with the geothermal premium estimated at approximately $3.1 to $3.6 million. Potential State reimbursement enhancements, including a space waiver, specialized education space, and a possible 5% housing incentive, were discussed, although additional State guidance and work will be required. The Board also discussed the importance of pursuing potential legislative changes during the upcoming session and noted that the State grant process generally requires an application by June 30, followed by priority listing and legislative approval.

Members discussed designing the school as a long-term facility capable of accommodating future enrollment and potential additions. The proposed site preserves opportunities for future expansion while avoiding identified environmental constraints. The Board of Education expressed general support for new construction, citing the existing building's deficiencies, long-term flexibility, and financial advantages when State reimbursement is considered. Discussion also addressed the relationship between facility improvements and academic outcomes, with members noting that educational initiatives and facility improvements can be pursued concurrently.

Commissioner Ellithorpe MOTIONED and Commissioner Sangiovanni seconded to recommend the new construction option with an estimated total project cost of approximately $128.8 million, to the Board of Selection for consideration and subsequent review by the Board of Finance. Motion passed unanimously.

Colliers/Tecton presentation of Firehouse 1 Progress Update

Anthony DiLuzio of Colliers and Rebecca of Tecton presented an updated Firehouse design. Following additional program and site review, the proposed facility has been reduced to approximately 13,625 square feet, including a mezzanine and four apparatus bays. The team incorporated geotechnical information and reviewed the Bloomfield fire station as a comparable facility. The site and building plans will continue to be refined, with review by the Fire Department and Fire Commission expected the week of October 5 and PBC review of the complete package scheduled for October 15. The PBC anticipates then authorizing a detailed third-party cost estimate based on actual building systems and materials.

The proposed facility would include public and administrative areas, training and kitchen/dining spaces, four drive-through apparatus bays, decontamination and turnout gear areas, SCBA and hose storage, flexible bunk rooms, showers, fitness space, and support areas. The mezzanine would provide additional storage and training space. The site plan is being refined to address significant grade changes and provide appropriate emergency apparatus circulation.

Preliminary exterior concepts were also discussed. PBC members requested a stronger civic appearance, including consideration of additional masonry and a pitched roof or other architectural treatment for the apparatus bays. DPW Director Lee Corbert raised concerns regarding snow removal at the apparatus bays, and the team discussed a heated concrete apron as a potential alternate. The Firehouse working group will reconvene in October to address operational and design details, with the feasibility study, detailed cost estimate, and supporting information anticipated for presentation in November.

The Firehouse is not eligible for State reimbursement and would be funded entirely by the Town. Previously reviewed alternatives included approximately $3.8 million for capital improvements, $15.7 million for new construction, and approximately $17.92 million for the expanded program. The Fire Commission continues to support the expanded program, noting that the additional training/community space could also serve other Town organizations. Members discussed the potential to price one apparatus bay as an alternate to reduce costs, while recognizing the operational impact of eliminating a bay. The Fire Department emphasized that the current program has already been significantly reduced from the original proposal and provides needed long-term capacity. Members also noted that construction costs are unlikely to decrease and that delaying the project could result in higher future costs.

Vice-Chairman Neilson MOTIONED and Commissioner Baril seconded to recommend the new Firehouse construction project on the proposed new site at an estimated cost of approximately $17.9 million**,** including the expanded program, to the Board of Selectmen for consideration and subsequent review by the Board of Finance. Motion passed unanimously.

New Business

None.

Public Comment

Victoria Copes – 223 Hickory Street

Next Meeting

The next Regular meeting of the Permanent Building Commission will be held on October 15, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Ellithorpe MOTIONED and Commissioner Sangiovanni seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Lambert
Recording Secretary