Project: Essex Elementary School	Project No:
Subject: School Building Committee Meeting	Meeting Date: 10/13/2026
Location: In Person / Hybrid	Time: 7:36 PM
Distribution: Attendees, Project File	Prepared By: O. Matela

Present	Name (* Voting Member)	Affiliation
	Michelle Cresta*	Director of Finance & Operations
✓	Pam Beaudoin*	Superintendent
✓	Kim Provost*	Principal
✓	Theresa Whitman*	SBC Co Chair
✓	Sarah Stone	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
✓	Tyler Virden*	Project Executive, Wise Construction / Parent
	Annie Cameron*	Former SC Member and Memorial SBC Member
	Ariel Fernando Brain*	Architect, CBT
	Jen Hocherman*	Architect, Partner SV Design
✓	Michael Gerhardt*	Civil Engineer / Parent
	Timothy McDonald*	Architect, Onion Flats
	Henry Oettinger*	Manchester Conservation Committee / Education Background
✓	David Pereen	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 Executive / Partner, DWMP
✓	Christina Dell Angelo	Project Director, DWMP
✓	Olivia Matela	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
	Kelly	Sustainability Consultant, Soden
	Shira Davis	Landscape Architect, Studio 2112
	Peter Marotta	Landscape Architect, Studio 2112
✓	Jody Staruk	Director, Project Executive, Consigli Construction
✓	Mari Creatini	Pre Construction Manager, Consigli Construction
✓	Tim Erickson	Director of Estimating, Consigli Construction
	Ryan Magical	Estimator, Consigli Construction

32.1	**Call to Order & Attendance**	**Record**
The meeting was called to order by T. Whitman at 7:36 PM. Attendance was taken by roll call, both online and in person, and it was confirmed that the Committee was at quorum. Please refer to the attendee list above.		Record

32.2	**Approval of September 22, 2026 and September 29, 2026 Meeting Minutes (Vote Expected)**	**Record**
T. Whitman asked whether there were any clarifying questions on the September 22, 2026 and September 29, 2026 meeting minutes; none were raised. A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by G. Brewster and seconded by P. Beaudoin. Roll Call Vote:		Record

• Yes: 9 | No: 0 | Absent: 7 (A. Cameron, M. Cresta, A. Fernando Brain, J. Hocherman, S. Hunt, T. McDonald, H. Oettinger) Motion carries. Minutes approved.	

32.3	MSBA Schematic Design Submittal Package: Discussion & Vote (Vote Expected)	Record
The Committee considered approval of the Schematic Design submittal package for submission to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). The package was provided to the Committee on October 7 and runs to roughly 2,670 pages. T. Whitman thanked the Committee for taking the time to review it and asked C. Dell Angelo whether she had anything to share before the vote. **Discussion:** • **Status of the package (C. Dell Angelo):** C. Dell Angelo noted that a small number of forms in the package were still in draft form while the final numbers were being completed. The team is finalizing all remaining information with JCJ on October 13 and 14 and will then submit the package to MSBA. She noted that the project budget is now locked in and that the team is looking forward to the upcoming Town Meetings and debt exclusion votes. • **Clarifying questions (T. Whitman):** T. Whitman asked whether there were any clarifying questions on the Schematic Design from members in the room or online; none were raised. A motion to approve the Schematic Design Report and its submittal package for the Essex Elementary School project, with a total project cost of $95,351,985, and to authorize the Owner's Project Manager (OPM) and architect to submit the documentation to MSBA for review and approval, was made by T. Whitman and seconded by G. Brewster. Roll Call Vote: • Yes: 9 | No: 0 | Absent: 7 (A. Cameron, M. Cresta, A. Fernando Brain, J. Hocherman, S. Hunt, T. McDonald, H. Oettinger) Motion carries unanimously. Schematic Design submittal package approved. The Committee thanked the JCJ design team and the project team for the extensive work that went into the submittal and for the work that continues. T. Whitman noted that this concluded the votes for the meeting and that members with other commitments were free to leave.		Record

32.4	Schedule Update	Record
C. Dell Angelo reviewed the upcoming schedule following the two community meetings held back to back, the most recent of which took place earlier this evening: • Tuesday, October 27: next SBC meeting. • Wednesday, November 4: final community meeting. • Tuesday, November 10: SBC meeting. • Monday, November 16: Town Meetings in Essex and Manchester. • Tuesday, November 24: SBC meeting. • Tuesday, December 8: SBC meeting. • Thursday, December 10: Debt exclusion votes. **Discussion:**		Record

• **Final community meeting (T. Whitman):** It was noted that the November 4 community meeting overlaps with a Planning Board meeting, which will affect L. O'Donnell and A. Fernando Brain, and that there may be ways to work through the conflict. T. Whitman asked that SBC members attend the November 4 meeting in person where possible, as it is the final community meeting and the last opportunity for residents to share remaining comments and questions and to hear from both the professional teams and their community peers. She will send follow-up emails. • **Additional community meeting (Committee discussion):** A question that had come up earlier was raised as to whether to add another community meeting. It was noted that the number of meetings held and the level of engagement represent a fair offering to the community, and no member requested an additional meeting. • **Communications Working Group (C. Dell Angelo):** It was confirmed that another Communications Working Group meeting is scheduled for this Friday, October 16. FAQs and the handouts going out in both towns remain to be finalized, and much of that work can continue between meetings. • **Town Meeting timing and order of articles (Committee discussion):** Essex Town Meeting begins at 6:45 PM and Manchester Town Meeting at 6:00 PM. The order of articles on each warrant is set by the respective Select Board, and it was noted that the order can be adjusted at Town Meeting by a vote of the body. • **Town Meeting coverage (Committee discussion):** The Committee agreed to discuss in an upcoming meeting who will serve as the go-to speakers in each town and how coverage will be handled, so the Committee is prepared in either case. It was noted that members attending in Manchester may be able to travel to Essex, and that having members who can speak to the whole project would be helpful. • **Town Meeting procedure (Committee discussion):** A brief overview of Town Meeting procedure was provided, including the process for a motion to reconsider an article. It was noted that only one opportunity to reconsider an article is available per meeting and that, once a motion to reconsider has been voted down, the vote is final. • **Childcare at Town Meetings (P. Beaudoin; T. Whitman):** The Committee will begin organizing childcare and related arrangements for Town Meetings. It was reported that the National Honor Society has approved taking on coordination of childcare for Essex, giving the effort an official group going forward as the student who has handled it will be graduating this year.	

32.5	**Phasing & Logistics**	**Record**
Phasing and logistics were discussed briefly. It was noted that the topic has been covered extensively in recent meetings. The presentation will be posted with the other project presentations, and members were invited to send any questions to the project team. As J. Staruk and M. Creatini have noted, the plan presented is a first iteration that will continue to evolve into a more detailed phasing and logistics plan, and this was the first opportunity to walk through it fully with the Committee. Hearing no objections, the Committee agreed not to review the full presentation again.		Record

32.6	**Communications & Outreach Update**	**Record**
The Committee shared reflections on the two community meetings held back to back, with general agreement that tonight's meeting went well. The following topics were discussed. **Discussion:** • **Forum for member input (C. Hay question):** C. Hay asked whether there is a forum for members to share comments before the next community meeting without taking the full Committee's time this evening, and then offered several comments of his own, summarized in the next three bullets.		Record

- **Focus of the final community meeting (C. Hay):** C. Hay shared that, as with the prior community meeting, he would suggest less emphasis on project design and logistics and more on cost, since residents' questions continue to center on why the project costs more than Manchester's and whether it is larger. He suggested considering a summary of the Manchester and Essex building programs side by side, even without square footage, since the programs are similar, with gym, cafeteria, and library in both, and the difference is largely two classrooms versus three per grade, as P. Beaudoin had described.
- **Rising cost graphic (C. Hay; C. Dell Angelo response):** C. Hay noted that MSBA previously published a cost data page with a line graph showing rising costs over time, and suggested a graphically simplified version, since the bar chart presented reflects only current projects. C. Dell Angelo confirmed she has that graphic as a backup slide and can use it in the FAQ comparing similar projects.
- **Costs already incurred (C. Hay):** C. Hay noted that discussion of what happens if the project is voted down had not included the funds the towns have already spent on feasibility and schematic design, which would be unrecoverable, and suggested residents be made aware of this. It was confirmed that MSBA does not reimburse those costs if the project does not proceed.
- **Response on member input (Committee response):** In response to the question about a forum, it was noted that another Communications Working Group meeting is scheduled for this Friday, following a small outreach working session earlier in the day. Members were asked to email comments they would like considered in the messaging to P. Beaudoin and C. Dell Angelo, with T. Whitman and S. Stone copied if desired. Comments will be shared with the rest of the Committee in a manner consistent with the Open Meeting Law and built into the communications discussion going forward.
- **Reimbursement rate questions (M. Gerhardt):** M. Gerhardt thanked the team for its work and noted he has been receiving questions about the state reimbursement percentage, including an expectation that roughly one third of project cost should be reimbursable and questions about why the estimated reimbursement rate is in the 20s. He asked that the Committee have a communications strategy and more detail on how reimbursement is calculated and what is included or excluded, so members can answer these questions accurately.
- **Response and follow-up (C. Dell Angelo):** C. Dell Angelo noted she must focus tomorrow on finalizing the Schematic Design submission, and suggested that she and P. Beaudoin meet to go through the FAQs and backup slides so the information can be finalized and sent to the Committee as a packet.
- **Explanation of included spaces (A. Oldeman; Committee discussion):** A. Oldeman and other members commended P. Beaudoin's explanation at tonight's community meeting of which spaces are included and not included in the project and why, describing it as a model for answering that question, and suggested timestamping the recording so people can find that portion.
- **FAQ development (P. Beaudoin):** P. Beaudoin is working on a narrative and a chart aligning the spaces and hopes to pull the rest together tomorrow. She also reported that the FAQs from the district and the project team have been merged into one set and asked members to review them and share feedback on whether they are hitting the mark. It was noted that some answers are lengthy but may need to be, since shortening them risks giving only a general answer.
- **Reimbursement materials (C. Dell Angelo; P. Beaudoin):** C. Dell Angelo noted that, following last week's Select Board and community meeting in Essex, feedback requested specific information such as the total project budget sheet and slides showing the reimbursement rate, the effective rate, the MSBA caps, and the costs associated with the caps. P. Beaudoin will send these materials to the Committee so that everyone has the same information already shared with the Select Board, along with supporting documents to help members answer questions and a way to let the team know what else is needed.
- **MSBA cost support (A. Oldeman):** It was noted that the way the state defines the average cost it is willing to support, and the types of projects it supports up to that level, reflects MSBA's effort to make its funds go further and is not a view that the Essex project should cost $605 per square foot; it reflects the amount the state is willing to support.
- **Special programs (A. Oldeman question; P. Beaudoin response):** A. Oldeman asked whether programs such as the PT and RISE programs were adopted by the school to avoid the cost of sending

those students to other, more expensive programs, and P. Beaudoin confirmed that they were. She noted that students are entitled to be educated here if the district can accommodate them, and if it cannot, the district must pay for them to attend elsewhere, which is considerably more expensive. • **Keeping the vision in focus (S. Stone):** S. Stone, who noted she was new to the group and attending in person for the first time, expressed appreciation for the work to date and encouraged the Committee not to lose sight of the broader vision amid the many details when messaging in both communities. She highlighted T. Whitman's framing of the project's pillars and schools at tonight's meeting as essential to why the project is being done, and encouraged consistent use of the word investment, since the school is an investment in both communities and in their children. • **Communicating the educational program (S. Stone; P. Beaudoin):** S. Stone noted that she often hears questions about additional or "extra" spaces in the project and observed that the spaces in question are typical of a school building. P. Beaudoin noted that the educational plan can be difficult to communicate because it does not resonate with residents unless they are familiar with current educational practice, and that residents may have difficulty envisioning what spaces such as a dedicated music room look like. S. Stone added that, beyond saving the district money, the special programming also supports an inclusive community with a space for all children, and that this message should be shared. • **Message focus and preparedness (T. Whitman):** T. Whitman noted that where to keep the focus was part of the conversation held earlier today. Most residents are expected to respond to the message that the Committee has been working on this for a long time and has been responsible with costs, and that although costs have risen sharply, here is why the Committee supports the package. A smaller number of residents will want detail on specific topics, and members should be prepared to answer those questions. She cited the Committee's range of backgrounds as a strength, with members able to speak to the decisions and process, the mechanical systems, or the educational program. • **Planning for future enrollment (P. Beaudoin):** P. Beaudoin observed that the economy will turn and homes will turn over, and recalled L. Crosby's explanation that past enrollment surges came largely from empty nesters leaving and new families moving into the community rather than from a demographic spike, so the Committee will be prepared with the space when enrollment rises again.	

32.7	Other Topics not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours Prior to the Meeting	Record
No other topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours prior to the meeting were raised.		Record

32.8	Public Comment	Record
None. No members of the public requested to speak, online or in the room.		Record

32.9	Reflections & Action Items	Record
The Committee agreed that the discussion under Communications & Outreach Update served as its reflections for the meeting. Action items: • C. Dell Angelo and P. Beaudoin to finalize the FAQs and backup slides, including the reimbursement rate, MSBA caps, and the side-by-side comparison of spaces, and send a packet to the full Committee. • Members to email additional comments on messaging to P. Beaudoin and C. Dell Angelo, with T. Whitman and S. Stone copied if desired, ahead of Friday's Communications Working Group meeting. • Members to let the team know if any link in the FAQs or related materials is not working or requires permission to access, since much of this content is going live now and can be fixed.		Record

• Committee to discuss Town Meeting speaker assignments and coverage at an upcoming meeting. • SBC members to attend the November 4 community meeting in person where possible; T. Whitman to send follow-up emails.	

32.10	Adjourn	Record
A motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 PM was made by A. Oldeman and seconded by K. Provost. Roll Call Vote: • Yes: 8 | No: 0 | Absent: 8 (A. Cameron, G. Brewster, M. Cresta, A. Fernando Brain, J. Hocherman, S. Hunt, T. McDonald, H. Oettinger) Motion carries.		Record

Sincerely,
DORE + WHITTIER
Olivia Matela
Assistant Project Manager

Olivia Matela

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.