

DeValles School Building Committee (SBC) Meeting Minutes¹

Meeting Date: January 24, 2023, 3:00 – 5:00 PM

Location: Paul Rodrigues Administration Building, 455 County Street, Room 224, New Bedford, MA 02740

Also remote via New Bedford Public Schools website

Reported: Laura Neves, Executive Assistant for Finance & Operations, New Bedford Public Schools (NBPS)

Attendees:

Rebecca Kanter, Interim Purchasing Director
Bruce Oliveira, School Committee Member and Chair (remote)
Mario Pires, Principal of DeValles School
Justine Santos, Principal of Congdon School
Karen Treadup, Deputy Superintendent
Rebecca Gay Barnes, retired architect and New Bedford resident (remote)
Thomas Nickerson, NB Educators Assn. President (remote)
Kevin Mello, AFSCME Union President (remote)
Barry Rabinovitch, School Project Manager
Andrew O’Leary, Asst. Supt. of Finance & Operations
Ryan Pereira, City Council Member
Jennifer Carloni, Director of City Planning

Darcie Aungst, Elementary Curriculum, Data & Assessment Manager
Jonathan Carvalho, neighborhood resident
Emily Arpke, City Auditor on behalf of Michael Gagne, Chief Financial Officer
Janet Barbosa, Director of Special Projects & Programs on behalf of Mayor Mitchell
Daniel Pallotta, P-Three, Inc.
Peter Turowski, Turowski2 Architecture, Inc.
Elizabeth Turowski, Turowski2 Architecture, Inc.
Timothy Brennan, Turowski2 Architecture, Inc.
Alison Paiva, Turowski2 Architecture, Inc.
Teresa Poulin, Turowski2 Architecture, Inc. (remote)
Lee Jennings, unknown (remote)

Mr. Oliveira called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM and instructed Dr. Rabinovitch to lead the meeting as Mr. Oliveira was attending remotely. Minutes from the January 10, 2023 meeting were reviewed. Voted unanimously on a motion by Dr. Rabinovitch and seconded by Mr. Pereira to approve.

Dr. Rabinovitch indicated that Mr. Adelino Oliveira is no longer a New Bedford Public Schools employee and asked for a formal vote to remove Mr. Adelino from the School Building Committee Member List. Voted unanimously on a motion by Mr. Pereira and seconded by Mr. Bruce Oliveira to approve Mr. Adelino Oliveira’s removal via roll call vote.

Dr. Rabinovitch indicated that Ms. Kanter, Ms. Arpke, and Ms. Barbosa who are all acting on behalf of an official DeValles SBC member, are not on the official DeValles SBC Member List, but will be allowed to vote as designees and the New Bedford Solicitor’s office will be asked for clarification.

Mr. Turowski indicated that a Scheme Cost Summary was provided to the DeValles SBC to review prior to the meeting. He presented and discussed Turowski2 Architecture’s PowerPoint Presentation to review schemes. Mr. Turowski indicated that three DeValles SBC members responded to the school tours proposals, and Rochester, Fairhaven, and Newton were selected. Mr. Turowski will schedule the Newton school tours for February 8th or 9th at 3:30 PM, depending on the DeValles SBC members’ availability.

Mr. Turowski presented a brief review of the Space Summaries. In the 400 student Space Summary, Special Education space was adjusted by 50 square feet to change the net and gross square footage. For the 760 student Space Summary, World Language was added under the “other” category to increase the square footage. Mr. Turowski indicated that the presented estimated costs are based on these adjusted numbers. Approval of space summaries will be needed. Total Project Cost assumptions are calculated at a 1.2 multiplier of construction cost and include project (soft costs), such as Owner’s Project Manager and architect fees and construction (hard costs). The preliminary estimate for displacement is \$250,000 annually for a swing space, and a 125% assessed value for site acquisition. There are no monies assigned for business relocation. Mr. Turowski discussed CM at Risk vs. DBB (design whole project and go out to bid). Occupied construction options were assumed to be CM at Risk and carry that cost.

Mr. Turowski presented a brief review of the design plans which included the following options with their estimated grand total project costs and total number of subjective pros and cons: 1A Base Repair – 400 students, but will not ever be able to support 400 students (\$36,866,750) 4 pros/10 cons; 2A Renovation – 400 students (\$44,826,262) 7 pros/7 cons; 3A Addition/Renovation – 400 students (\$70,141,042) 9 pros/5 cons; 3B Addition/Renovation – 760 students (\$102,762,865)

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7 pros/7 cons; 4A New Construction – 760 students (\$70,609,698) 9 pros/5 cons; 4B New Construction – 760 students (\$104,766,025) 8 pros/6 cons; 5A Addition/Renovation – 400 students (\$72,201,606) 10 pros/4 cons; 5B Addition/Renovation – 760 students (\$105,746,918) 9 pros/5 cons; 6A.1 New Construction – 400 students (\$73,151,751) 9 pros/5 cons; 6B.1 New Construction – 760 students (\$107,490,203) 9 pros/5 cons; 6A.2 New Construction – 400 students (\$74,381,675) 11 pros/3 cons; 6B.2 New Construction – 760 students (\$110,406,076) 12 pros/2 cons; 7B Addition/Renovation – 760 students (\$104,451,725) 12 pros/2 cons; 8A New Construction – 400 students (\$70,969,775) 8 pros/6 cons; 8B New Construction – 760 students (\$105,696,874) 8 pros/6 cons; 9B New Construction – 760 students (\$100,311,543) 13 pros/1 con. Regarding Option 3B, Dr. Rabinovitch inquired as to whether the proposed roof outdoor classroom/play areas would be dependent on weather. Mr. Turowski responded that it could be, but protection could be added. Regarding Option 4B, Ms. Arpke inquired if Katherine Street would still be open to the public. Mr. Turowski responded that it could be, with speed bumps and signs added.

Mr. Turowski presented and discussed the difference between the 400 student and the 760 student options. Mr. Turowski suggested that if procuring an additional site is not an option then to keep at least one 400 student option to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA).

Mr. Turowski indicated that if a 400-student option is selected as the final option, it would require a second project for the Congdon School as a future 400-student option. Cost would escalate from \$70,609,698 to about \$88,968,220 in 2031 (the period of time from completion of the most recent Jacobs School and anticipated completion of the DeValles Project). The total combined cost for two schools would be about \$159,577,918 vs. the highest project cost for a 760-student new construction or renovation option now – about \$110,000,000. The estimated cost to do two 400-student schools would be about \$50 million more and take more time and delay improvement to other 100+ year old schools in the City. Mr. Turowski indicated that the cost comparison between the 400-student options ranges between about \$70.1 - \$74.4 million and the cost comparison between the 760 student options ranges between about \$100.3 - \$110.4 million.

Dr. Rabinovitch inquired as to how many design options must be submitted to move forward. Mr. Turowski responded that a minimum of 3 options, with one being an addition/renovation, must be submitted and the max number would be 5-6 options. He also indicated that the SBC is not required to bring forth any 400 student options. Dr. Rabinovitch asked for an informal vote regarding the 400 student options. Mr. Pallotta indicated that the New Bedford City (City) cost is 20% of the eligible cost, but capped at \$360 per square foot. Ms. Barbosa suggested that the SBC submit 5-6 options because of unknown variables. She recommended that the SBC submits at least an addition/renovation, an option with autobody shop, and a 400-student option.

Ms. Arpke expressed concern regarding acquiring the abutting autobody shop as they are not currently willing to sell. She indicated that it will most likely be costly and a lengthy process that could impede the project moving forward. Mr. Pallotta indicated that Mass General Law Chapter 21E would need to be addressed and as a result, would not recommend attempting to acquire. Ms. Aungst indicated that it is not prudent to abut classrooms alongside the autobody shop and suggested adjusting Option 5B. Mr. Turowski indicated that he could come up with an option to address the autobody shop. Dr. Rabinovitch inquired if the plaza to the North was available. Mr. Pereira responded that it could be if the owner was willing to sell, as they would be responsible for removal of the businesses they lease to, via eminent domain.

Mr. Pallotta indicated that he understands that the general feeling of the SBC is a 760 student school, however, it will not fit on a single site with parking. He advised that the SBC needs to actively work on site acquisition now, as the SBC will need to choose schemes in April to submit the Preferred Schematic Design Report (PSR) in May. Mr. Pallotta recommended that a 400-student option should be considered, as there is no guarantee in acquiring land. Mr. Pereira concurred, although he indicated that it appears we are currently leaning toward the 760-student option.

Mr. Oliveira indicated that his first choice is Option 9B, a new building on the former Goodyear site. Ms. Arpke inquired if the Committee would like to do an informal hand vote on all the options and then narrow it down. Dr. Rabinovitch took the votes for all of the options, and the following options received the most votes: 3B, 4B, 5B, 6B.2., and 9B. Before voting on Option 9B, Mr. Pereira recused himself by leaving the room; Due to a conflict of interest, he was unable to vote.

Mr. O’Leary noted the DeValles project timeline. He indicated that the project was set out in 2019 when the City Council voted on the DeValles/Congdon School Statement of Interest (SOI). He indicated that it is the Committee’s job to put the best recommendation forward, with taking the state of both schools, the Educational Visioning Workshops, etc. into consideration. He indicated that a 760-student option should be the Committee’s focus. Ms. Aungst indicated that if a 400-student school was submitted, the least expensive option tends to be pursued, and as such, she does not recommend putting it forward. She also expressed that Congdon School currently has no room on site for parking, which should be considered when exploring the idea of a later renovation project at Congdon School.

Mr. Turowski indicated that the SBC makes the final recommendation to the Mayor and City Council. Mr. Pallotta indicated that a specific design is chosen and presented to the MSBA when the PSR is submitted. He advised that a 760-student option with no land acquisition should be submitted as part of the Preliminary Design Program (PDP submission, which the 3B option satisfies).

Ms. Arpke indicated that the estimates are not truly accurate and that the SBC should submit the 400-student option to be on the safe side. Ms. Arpke indicated that the Committee should look at what can be afforded now. Mr. O’Leary indicated that the model shows it is more prudent to select a 760-student school. The City always acquires debt and needs to address the schools, and arrange its debt structure, and financially both DeValles and Congdon need to be addressed first.

Dr. Rabinovitch indicated that school building projects take significant time. He explained that the funding was available for both school core projects on the Capital Needs Assessment, and that the City’s share was already planned for. Mr. Pereira expressed that he shared the design option plans with City Council and that the majority wanted a 760-student school, but he is concerned about it failing in the final hour. Mr. O’Leary indicated that the SBC should fill its remit to speak with one voice on what should be submitted, as confusion caused a lost City Council vote in the past. Mr. Pires indicated that both current school buildings are unacceptable to house students and staff and that the better scenario would be the 760-student option. Ms. Turowski indicated that Turowski2 Architecture would work on a four story building option to try to reduce the building footprint.

Dr. Rabinovitch asked for a formal hand vote to submit a 400-student option. Voted 3 for and 12 opposed.

Dr. Rabinovitch asked for a roll call vote for the 5 options to submit the PDP and the following options received the most votes: 3B, 4B, 5B, 6B.2, and 9B. Before voting on Option 9B, Mr. Pereira again recused himself by leaving the room.

Dr. Rabinovitch asked for a formal roll call vote for the SBC to authorize P-Three, Inc. and Turowski2 Architecture to submit the PDP with the chosen options to the MSBA. Voted unanimously on a motion by roll vote of 16 members.

Mr. Turowski presented and discussed the upcoming project schedule. The PDP submission to the MSBA is due January 27, 2023. The Preferred Schematic Report (PSR) Phase is from January 28, 2023 through May 16, 2023. The Schematic Design Phase is from May 17, 2023 through October 27, 2023. The next DeValles School Building Committee meeting is on February 28, 2023 at 3:00 PM. Mr. Pallotta indicated he would send a Local Action Letter to Mr. O’Leary for the Superintendent and Mayor’s signatures which will be needed by January 26, 2023. The draft minutes of today’s meeting are needed by January 25, 2023.

Mr. Rabinovitch moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:00 PM, seconded by Mr. Oliveira, and approved unanimously by roll call vote.



Andrew B. O’Leary,
Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations

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