

DeValles School Building Committee (SBC) Meeting Minutes¹

Meeting Date: January 10, 2023, 4:02 – 5:37 PM

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

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

Attendees:

Thomas Nickerson, NB Educators Assn. President
Kevin Mello, AFSCME Union President
Barry Rabinovitch, School Project Manager
Andrew O’Leary, Asst. Supt. of Finance & Operations
Ryan Pereira, City Council Member
Anne Louro, Asst. Director of City Planning on behalf of
Jennifer Carloni, Director of City Planning
Darcie Aungst, Elementary Curriculum, Data &
Assessment Manager
Rebecca Kanter, Interim Purchasing Director
Bruce Oliveira, School Committee Member and Chair
Mario Pires, Principal of DeValles School

Justine Santos, Principal of Congdon School
Karen Treadup, Deputy Superintendent
Michael Gagne, Chief Financial Officer
Rebecca Gay Barnes, retired architect and NB resident
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.

Mr. Oliveira called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM.

Minutes from the December 13, 2022 meeting were reviewed. Voted unanimously on a motion by Mr. Pereira and seconded by Mr. Oliveira to approve.

Mr. Turowski presented the meeting agenda. He discussed four possible school tours, including Cabot Elementary School in Newton, MA (addition/renovation completed in 2019 and is the best example); Center Elementary School in Hanover, MA (addition/renovation completed in 2018 but whose building type is irrelevant); Center Elementary School in Mattapoisett, MA (addition/renovation completed in 2003); and Fairhaven High School in Fairhaven, MA (addition/renovation completed in 2000 and which may be irrelevant as it is a high school). Mr. Turowski instructed the Committee to contact Finance & Operations Executive Assistant, Laura Neves, if they are interested in touring any of the four schools.

Mr. Turowski presented and discussed the Visioning Summary findings. He indicated that the third workshop was held on December 19, 2022, which focused on reviewing relationships between things in the building, including closed and open spaces, classroom neighborhoods, grade-level classroom clusters, and flexibility in corridors, library, outside, and Special Education areas.

Mr. Turowski presented and discussed the Space Summary for existing and proposed space in relation to Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) requirements. He indicated that space configuration is individualized for specific school needs. Ms. Kanter inquired if program numbers are definite or flexible and Mr. Turowski responded that they are flexible as the MSBA will collaborate.

Mr. Turowski indicated that for a 400-student building, the STEAM (STE) room is not calculated into the total number in the MSBA column. Other considerations include additional space for a teacher learning specialist and moving the staff lunchroom to combine teacher planning rooms. For a 760-student building, an STE room is also not populated into the space summary in the MSBA column. The cafetorium stage would be double as a second music room. There would be a dedicated health room. The cafeteria size would accommodate two lunchrooms. Ms. Aungst inquired as to the MSBA requirements regarding Special Education space. Mr. Turowski responded that the MSBA is flexible.

Mr. Pereira inquired if the new school will have a dedicated IT staff member for which space should be considered. Mr. O’Leary responded that it is unlikely for Tech Services staff to be assigned by school, as we currently employ a floating team. Mr. Mello inquired if the new school will have a dedicated plant engineer for which space should be considered, to which

¹ The **Open Meeting Law** requires public bodies to create and approve minutes in a timely manner. A “timely manner” is considered to be within the next three public body meetings or 30 days from the date of the meeting, whichever is later, unless the public body can show good cause for further delay.

Mr. O'Leary responded that it is possible, as our goal is to assign a designated plant engineer to newer school buildings. Mr. and Ms. Turowski indicated that the custodial space could be configured to have separate offices for the custodian and plant engineer.

Mr. Turowski inquired if the Committee would like to approve the Space Summaries. Mr. Oliveira inquired with the Committee. Ms. Barnes indicated that more time is needed to review prior to approval. Mr. Pereira inquired about the architect/designer's professional opinion for the MSBA's likelihood of submission acceptance to which Mr. Pallotta responded that a meeting would be held and MSBA would reject if they choose. Mr. Turowski responded that submission will include everything possible that is in the best interest of the school.

Mr. O'Leary inquired as to the submission process and deadlines. Mr. Turowski responded that at the next submission is the Preliminary Design Program (PDP). At the next SBC meeting scheduled for January 24, 2022, the Committee will need to select three to five designs (a minimum of three, which must include an addition/renovation) to submit to the MSBA. At this meeting, the Committee will vote to approve submitting the PDP and Space Summaries to the MSBA.

Mr. Turowski presented sixteen potential sites and options, including site acquisition, demolition, and temporary space where relevant. Mr. Turowski had provided electronic copies of the design options to the Committee prior to this meeting. He indicated that current costs are not accurate as we do not have enough information; They will be order of magnitude costs for comparison of schemes and will include costs for demolition, temporary space, acquisition. Turowski2 Architecture, Inc. created a list of things that need to be fixed and sent it to an estimator as the Base Repair option, however, it does not change the allocation of space, except for building systems. He indicated that Turowski 2 Architecture, Inc. is working with district leadership on educational programming to meet school needs. Mr. Turowski suggested that 400-student building will be presented to the MSBA for informational purposes.

Mr. Pereira inquired if a designated parent drop-off area would function properly. Ms. Aungst responded that in her experience as former Principal at DeValles School, a parent drop-off area would be beneficial. Mr. Pereira indicated that land acquisition and relocation costs can become costly and inquired if this is a consideration. Mr. Pallotta responded that such estimates have been taken into account. Ms. Barnes inquired as to the main entrance relationship to the parent drop off and play areas. Ms. Aungst responded that it is more prudent for students to enter through other secured entrances aside from the main entrance so as to prevent converging with the public, staff, and vendors. Mr. Turowski responded that there are other secured entrances for students.

Ms. Barbosa inquired if a vote was required at this meeting or the next meeting on a 760-student or 400-student building. Mr. Turowski responded that a vote would be required at the next meeting and that it is not required to bring both options forward.

Mr. Pereira indicated that Camara Soccer Field is certified as a public park and inquired if it can be considered. Mr. Gagne responded that under the Article 97 provision, a petition would have to be presented to the legislature house for the Governor's permission, and that it is a timely process, with a vote requirement. Mr. Oliveira inquired if the petition would be necessary for utilizing the park for school purposes or acquiring the land and relocating the park. Mr. Gagne indicated that it may be an issue if public access is restricted during school hours even if the present purposes of what the field is used for are maintained and the area is improved. Ms. Turowski indicated that the field is underutilized.

Mr. Oliveira asked the Committee if they should vote on rejecting the 400-student building options. He indicated that DeValles and Congdon Elementary Schools should be combined for the 760-student options, as there are no available funds to improve Congdon Elementary School separately. Mr. Pereira agreed but expressed concern about the cost of acquiring land. Ms. Barnes indicated that she would like to look at the cost estimates first. Mr. Turowski indicated they would provide more information at the next meeting. Mr. Gagne inquired if a 760-student school on a small lot would be an issue. Mr. Pereira responded that Irwin M. Jacobs School is comparable.

Dr. Rabinovitch indicated that neglecting one school building would be detrimental for the children, as the process for school building projects on a school-by-school basis is exceptionally extensive and that it would cost significantly more in the long-term. Ms. Turowski indicated that building two 400-student buildings would be exponentially more expensive and this should be weighed against the costs of acquiring more property. Ms. Barbosa indicated that she would need to discuss the options with the Mayor. Mr. Oliveira asked the Committee for an unofficial count of those in favor of rejecting the 400-student option and the majority were in favor. Ms. Barbosa indicated that she would relay the Committee's account to the Mayor. Ms. Barnes inquired as to why there are both the 400-student and 760-student options. Dr. Rabinovitch responded that he submitted the Statement of Interest with the district's best interest to request combining DeValles and Congdon Elementary Schools, as directed by the MSBA. Mr. Turowski indicated that the MSBA typically approves one project at a time.

Ms. Kanter inquired as to the MSBA and political timeline for the project. Mr. Turowski responded that the MSBA will need the Committee's choice by the end of June 2023. The project is aggressive to save money; If another year is spent planning, it would cost approximately an additional \$10 million. Ms. Barnes inquired as to a pros and cons chart. Mr. Turowski responded these are usually done in the next phase via a matrix, however, a preliminary chart may be created in the interim for the next meeting.

Mr. Turowski presented and discussed the Geotechnical Update. He indicated that the analysis findings concluded that the site is entirely urban filled. Dr. Rabinovitch inquired if there would be an added cost. Mr. Turowski responded there could potentially be an added cost. He expounded that the geotechnical analysis recommends foundations.

Mr. Turowski presented and discussed the upcoming Schedule. The next DeValles School Building Committee meeting is scheduled for both in-person and remote on January 24, 2023. A vote will be required at the meeting. The PDP will be submitted to the MSBA on January 27, 2023.

Mr. Rabinovitch moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:37 PM, seconded by Mr. Oliveira, and approved unanimously by voice vote.



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