



School Facilities Ad Hoc Committee

Committee Co-Chairpersons

Marnie Morrione, Chair, Portland Board of Education • Ethan K. Strimling, Mayor

David Brenerman, District 5 City Councilor

Justin Costa, District 4 City Councilor

Stephanie Hatzenbuehler, District 4 Board of Education

Nicholas M. Mavodones, At-Large City Councilor

Sarah J. Thompson, At-Large Board of Education

Anna Trevorrow, At-Large Board of Education

Monday, September 12, 2016

5:00pm – 8:00pm

City Hall – Council Chamber

Meeting Minutes & Notes

The meeting began at 5:03pm.

Attendance:

Mayor Strimling, School Board Chair Marnie Morrione (Committee Co-Chairs)

Superintendent Xavier Botana

Councilors: David Brenerman, Justin Costa, Nicholas Mavodones

School Board Members: Stephanie Hatzenbuehler, Sarah Thompson, Anna Trevorrow

Deputy City Manager Anita LaChance

Special Assistant to the Mayor Jason J. Shedlock

Mayor Strimling and Board Chair Morrione began the meeting by welcoming the Committee members and the public and letting the attendees know the purpose of the evening. This meeting would address the majority of the questions and answers asked by Councilors and Committee members and developed since the Buildings for Our Future proposal was forwarded to the City Council. Representatives from the School Department and Oak Point Associates would be available to address clarifying questions. Additional questions would be recorded and addressed at a later meeting. Specific questions about the financial impact and bonding strategies would also be addressed in depth at a future meeting.

The minutes of the August 30th meeting of the School Facilities Ad Hoc Committee were approved unanimously.

The following questions/concerns/statements were raised as the Committee walked through the Question & Answer document:

1. Can we receive grants for outdoor learning spaces?
 - While attempts are made to secure private funding for outdoor learning spaces, the grants are oftentimes very small (as in the case of the Ocean Avenue grant project).

2. Do outdoor learning spaces include playgrounds?
 - No
3. Why is Lyseth and Presumpscot slated to get middle school-sized gyms?
 - Factors involved in making decisions about gym size included equity (what other schools, including the new Hall School, have) as well as afterschool uses, community uses, needs of the neighborhood and proximity to other suitable facilities.
 - Recommendation to possibly rethink the gym size and the savings that might occur
4. What is the rationale used to renovate rather than close schools?
 - Answer as currently written focuses on one example rather than overarching approach.
5. We need final clarification on the standards used to design restrooms in elementary schools.
6. What other previous options were explored or studied, other than and before the three renovation scenarios that the School Board considered when they forwarded the current proposal?
7. What actual action was taken on the possibility of combining Lyman Moore? Based on what information?
 - The School Board did not take formal action
 - More information needed from the community charrette that touched on the issue
8. What specific items are needed and what are the costs to “maintain the character” of the Longfellow façade?
9. What does it mean that the Pre-K classroom was “temporarily shifted” at Presumpscot?
 - Current enrollment meant that a classroom could be used and the Pre-K classroom could be moved from a closet space. Future enrollment can lead to a need to utilize the classroom space for a grade level and result in displacing the Pre-K class.
10. Clarification is needed of current space usage that was not designed for educational purposes. (e.g. Using corridors for classrooms, education in hallways/closets, etc.).
11. Enrollment projections for the four schools in question need to be broken out, with prior years of data to compare trends.
12. What would the cost saving be to redesign the space and eliminate the proposed second floor at Presumpscot?
13. Questions were raised of equity vs capacity. Is there a way to even out school enrollments?
 - The Enrollment Management Plan has been in place and has shifted students based on geography, enrollment and capacity
 - Ability to have needed flexible educational space is important

- Impacts to families because of geography and siblings at schools is critical to any change in boundaries
14. What would a closing Presumpscot scenario really look like (including capacity and possible modifications at other schools, bussing students out of their neighborhoods, etc.)?
 15. When was the last time the School Board officially acted upon redistricting as well as enrollment management?
 16. What has been the official action on expanding Pre-K?
 - The board has endeavored to add a classroom per year until the need for universal Pre-K is met
 - Acting affirmatively on a policy would commit future budgets to add both money and classroom space
 - Suggestions that the School Board not rely on plans or goals, but a definitive policy on Pre-K
 17. If we redistrict, would there still be a need for modular classrooms?
 - Without renovation, and even contemplating redistricting, there would still be a need for modular classrooms
 18. A more detailed answer is needed on the closing and combining of smaller schools into larger ones, including enrollment numbers.
 19. How do we know how many Portland students transfer to other schools?
 - Records transfer requests and April enrollments are used to identify this data
 20. Why did we wait so long to address ADA issues at Longfellow?
 - Cost was a factor, as well the legal ability to transfer children in need to ADA-accessible buildings
 - Payson Park Title IX issue impacted budget
 21. Can we separate out ADA items in the proposed budgets?
 - At this point in the project design and budgeting phase, it would be difficult to separate out all ADA-compliance items
 22. Are the sprinklers currently at Reiche in any way in violation of code?
 - No
 23. Who makes the rules for developing a new State funding priority list?
 - The Commissioner for the Maine Department of Education develops them and the Legislature approves it
 24. Who decided to add two more schools to this round's state funding list?
 - The State Board of Education
 25. We must be careful at working any bond proposal so we do not disqualify ourselves for state funding. Are we sure we have that flexibility?

- Bond Counsel reports that we can work any proposal with the flexibility to adjust if state funding becomes available
 - Bond Counsel is requested to be present at the Committee's future finance-focused meeting
26. We need more complete information about prior school studies and costs. Have any of these four schools currently being studied come to the Council before?
27. Where does eating as well as holding Physical Education classes in the classrooms occur?
- Lunch is served in classrooms at Longfellow
 - Physical Education occurs in classrooms at all four schools in question
28. We need a listing of potential educational and community opportunities that present themselves if we renovate that is not currently possible.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50pm.

Submitted by Jason J. Shedlock, Special Assistant to the Mayor & Council