

SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting Minutes

Date: May 19, 2021

Via Public Online Video Conference (Zoom)

6:30 PM

**Minutes are not official until approved at the next regular meeting*

Member	Position	Present	Absent
Phil Stevens	Superintendent of Schools	X	
Erika Wiecenski	Board of Selectmen Representative	X	
Mike Makuch	Board of Finance Chairman	X	
Erica Bushior	Board of Education Staff	X	
Ann Grosjean	Board of Education Member	X	
Katherine Viveiros	Construction Industry Experience	X	
Gary Anderson	Member at large		X
Ralph Tulis	Member at large	X	
Peter Latincsics	Member at large	Arrived at 6:41	
Justin Niderno	Member at large	X	
Briana Ross	Member at large	X	

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Viveiros called the meeting to order at 6:37 PM.

CHAIRPERSON REPORT

Chairperson Viveiros welcomed Ralph Tulis to the committee.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

First Selectwoman Wiecenski MOVED to approve the minutes of April 7, 2021. Ann Grosjean SECONDED the motion.

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: 6 Yes, 0 No, 2 Abstained

MOTION CARRIED

Member	Vote
Erika Wiecenski	Y
Mike Makuch	Y
Erica Bushior	Y
Ann Grosjean	Y
Katherine Viveiros	Y
Gary Anderson	absent
Ralph Tulis	Abstained
Peter Latincsics	absent
Justin Niderno	Abstained
Briana Ross	Y

PRESENT TO SPEAK

None

COMMUNICATIONS

a. Request for school tour for School Building Committee members

Some committee members have asked to tour the schools to better understand the physical assets and challenges of each building. Superintendent Stevens will arrange a couple of evening tours for members who are interested. Groups of no more than 5 committee members will attend at a time.

OLD BUSINESS

a. Update on Office of School Construction Grants and Review data collection walkthrough

Last month the committee sent information and questions to the OSCGR. The Director for the OSCGR, Kosta Diamantis, accepted the committee’s invitation to come tour the Willington school buildings. He chose to see Hall Memorial School and Superintendent Stevens, First Selectwoman Wiecenski, and Chairperson Viveiros accompanied him. While touring, they discussed options including:

- Director Diamantis stated that the State would not support funding for renovating either building (Hall or Center) because of the age of the buildings, the condition of the buildings, and the total projected student enrollment. He added that the OSCGR would not support a renovation for school building projects with less than 400 students per

building. Currently both schools house approximately 200 students. Director Diamantis said that while Hall School's exterior is fine, the interior would require extensive work. He asked if it might be possible to demolish HMS and build on site. First Selectwoman Wiecenski told him she didn't expect the community to support that and that there would still be insufficient field space.

- Director Diamantis inquired about enrollment as it pertains directly to how much square footage is required. He confirmed that 19 usable acres are required for Willington to build a school, fields and parking.
- Director Diamantis offered to attend a future School Building Committee meeting to answer further questions. He recommended that committee members go see some of the newer buildings that have been recently built such as Birch Grove in Tolland. It was a two year project. He commented that if Willington chooses to build a new school, it could be completed by 2025.
- Director Diamantis stated that he would need to discuss the current roof projects with his OSCGR staff as he felt it was not fiscally responsible to approve funding if the town is considering a new school building.

Ann Grosjean said that the Board of Education initially recommended repairing the roofs and then the Board of Finance said they wanted to replace it instead. She asked if it would be possible to still get repair funding if we are not building new.

b. FAQ document

Superintendent Stevens, Ann Grosjean & Gary Anderson have worked on a FAQ document for the public. It provides factual information about funding and it explains the process. Factual information provided by Director Diamantis will be included. The FAQ document will be kept up to date and available to the public soon. There will also be an article in the Willington Wire coming soon pending approval of Chairperson Viveiros.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Schedule School Building Committee tour of Center and Hall Schools

Superintendent Stevens will organize this.

b. Request Office of School Construction Grants and Review attend School Building Committee meeting to review data collection walkthrough

The Director of the OSCGR welcomed the opportunity to attend a school building committee meeting. The committee is in the process of scheduling that for June.

c. Invite members of the Hall Foundation to a future meeting for an update on the progress of the committee

The goal is to give members of the Hall Foundation an update on the progress of our findings and to share information from the OSCGR with them.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski asked if a Hall Foundation member could come to the same meeting The Director of the OSCGR attends so that they receive the same information first hand.

Peter Latincics recommended a full meeting with members of the Hall Foundation to discuss things like the possibility of flexibility within the deed.

d. Suggestions for future agenda items

i. Request for Proposals: Owner's Project Manager

The committee is gathering samples of how other districts went about securing funding for an Owner's Project Manager. Any expenditure will need to be voted on in a town meeting before hiring a consultant.

Peter Latincics asked if it is premature to get an OPM, but can we instead get a fiscal analyst to get some of the work going on things like birth rates and per pupil costs. Chairperson Viveiros said that the purpose of getting an OPM is to guide the committee through the process of filling out applications for the State. Peter Latincics suggested a subcommittee or someone from town to do some of the work. Superintendent Stevens said that an OPM can do pre referendum work and pull accurate, current data (ex: cost per square foot). They need to determine if the townspeople have a palette for this. The Superintendent in Mansfield put forth specs in a referendum but their architectural drawings are vastly different from what they ended up with. Mike Makuch stated that this is the benefit of finding out what other towns have experienced. Chairperson Viveiros said that it is important to know the scope of the work and the pre referendum work that is required. The committee will ask Mansfield for an outline of what they did. At this time it is too preliminary to move forward with the RFP (request for proposal) for an OPM.

Superintendent Stevens identified the Vice President of Construction Solutions Group, Chris Cykley, on the Zoom call and asked if Chairperson Viveiros wanted to invite him to share any insight. Mr. Cykley said that his company offers pre referendum services for their clients. They presently have 4 projects pending referendum this year. They help navigate the School Construction and Grants process. Mr. Cykley suggested some next steps as to how CSG could help such as asking the direction the committee is headed and then to potentially provide a presentation and feedback to answer some of the concerns the committee may have. He would also provide information about the benefits of using an OPM in this process. Chairperson Viveiros asked Mr. Cykley to highlight the key elements of the pre referendum services that the committee needs to get to the next step. He said that the three key elements include:

-determining the concept

-understanding the total budget and making sure all costs are allocated

-helping with public outreach through the use of surveys, mailers, and the formation of pack groups to get the word out to residents so they can make an informed decision

Grant applications support is also included in their services. Grant applications can be submitted before or after a referendum, but the deadline is always June 30th.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mike Makuch MOVED to enter into Executive session to discuss land and to clear the meeting of any nonmembers. First Selectwoman Wiecenski SECONDED the motion.

DISCUSSION: none

VOTE: 9 Yes, 0 No

MOTION CARRIED

Member	Vote
Erika Wiecenski	Y
Mike Makuch	Y
Erica Bushior	Y
Ann Grosjean	Y
Katherine Viveiros	Y
Gary Anderson	absent
Ralph Tulis	Y
Peter Latincsics	Y
Justin Niderno	Y
Briana Ross	Y

The committee exited the Executive session at 8:40 PM.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski MOVED to form a land acquisition committee to evaluate and review previously identified properties including town owned property consisting of Mike Makuch, Chairperson Viveiros and Ralph Tulis as members. Mike Makuch SECONDED the motion.

DISCUSSION:

First Selectwoman Wiecenski suggested we set a target date (perhaps August 18th) for a report to come back from the subcommittee.

Chairperson Viveiros clarified that the word acquisition does not imply that money is being spent, but that land is being evaluated. First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that a land acquisition committee had been formed in the past and no land was purchased.

The committee will invite Superintendent Stevens to the first meeting to determine how he will share his data.

VOTE: 9 yes, 1 No

MOTION CARRIED

Member	Vote
Erika Wiecenski	Y
Mike Makuch	Y
Erica Bushior	Y
Ann Grosjean	Y
Katherine Viveiros	Y
Gary Anderson	absent
Ralph Tulis	Y
Peter Latincsics	N
Justin Niderno	Y
Briana Ross	Y

ADJOURNMENT

First Selectwoman Wiecenski MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 PM. Mike Makuch SECONDED the motion.

DISCUSSION: none

VOTE: 9 Yes, 0 No,

MOTION CARRIED

Member	Vote
Erika Wiecenski	Y
Mike Makuch	Y
Erica Bushior	Y

Ann Grosjean	Y
Katherine Viveiros	Y
Gary Anderson	absent
Ralph Tulis	Y
Peter Latincsics	Y
Justin Niderno	Y
Briana Ross	Y

Respectfully Submitted,

Briana Ross

School Building Committee Member and Recording Secretary

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TOWN CLERK