

Cape Schools Open Minds
and Open Doors

Community • Academics • Passion • Ethics

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BUILDING COMMITTEE MEETING

CEMS LIBRARY

March 4, 2020

6:30 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Matthew Sturgis
Marcia Weeks
Tim Thompson
Phil Saucier
Valerie Adams
Nasir Shir
Del Peavey
Jenn Grymek
Andrew Patten
Erin Taylor
MaryAnn Lynch
Jeffrey Shedd
Jason Manjourides
Peter Esposito
Troy Eastman
Caitlin Ramsey
Hope Straw
Perry Schwarz
Kimberly Carr
Derek Converse
Tom Dunham
Jasmes Beasley
Donna Wolfrom

Superintendent Wolfrom welcomed everyone.

She read the Building Committee Charge.

Board Chair Heather Altenburg reviewed the Strategic Goals of 2020-2025.

Superintendent Wolfrom explained the packet, what each document is, and how it pertains to the agenda.

Perry Schwarz proceeded with an informal presentation, he thanked Marcy Weeks for the chart showing expenditure history. It shows the expenditures spike starting in 2016 from the repercussions of the wear and tear on the buildings. Mr. Schwarz indicates that the numbers are solely based on PCES and that particular building, as it seems like the committee is steering towards PCES being phase 1 of the projects.

Mr. Schwarz then gave a run-down of unexpected expenses that F&T has incurred this year in repairs totaling in \$80,401 in PC & the MS alone, while CEHS has had \$43,556 in repairs. These numbers put

into perspective the need of maintenance in PC & the MS. Some repairs have been in a lift at the MS stage, a compressor, roofing repairs, and a hot water coil in the MS kitchen.

Mr. Schwarz shows a document that gives the federally mandated requirements from the 1900's to the 2000's, that indicate the changes that need to be done at the schools. PCES and CEMS were built in the 1930's and 40's respectively. He emphasized the length of the document, which doesn't include those requirements that are at the state level.

Mr. Schwarz goes on to explain that the schools are running out of space. That they are removing lockers at this point to create needed spaces. He also said that the air quality is of concern in the buildings. He gives his professional opinion on the Options presented by the architects. Option #4, in his opinion doesn't address enough of the issues in the buildings to be viable. Option #3 would be so complicated, and disrupt student life, that he feels it would be detrimental to a learning environment. He believes that Option 1 or 2 are the only viable choices.

Heather Altenburg thanks Perry and touches on two points from his remarks. The mandated list that Perry showed has nothing to do with enrollment. It asks for very unique one-on-one, and other spaces with sizing. Even though enrollment at the schools is steady, or declining, those mandates are still in place. She then asks that the camera zoom in to the flowchart of expenditures (which is a [document](#) you can find on our [website](#)). It shows the steadiness before 2016 and then the sharp incline since due to unexpected large costs. It is not a sustainable trend.

Tim Thompson asks Perry directly about the roofs of the buildings, and the conditions, which have been replaced.

Perry answers that if you go on google maps and search an aerial view of the schools, anything that is black has not been replaced. (In response to this discussion, Perry emailed Superintendent Wolfrom a document showing roof repairs, you can access it [here](#)). Tim thought it would be helpful to educate people on the roof repairs, and which were at the minimum requirement.

Derek asks what the life expectancy is on the roofs.

Perry answers that 30 years before it starts deteriorating quickly.

Derek replies that it would indicate then that some of the schools' roofs would be two-thirds of the way into that?

Perry replies that some, yes are at that.

It is suggested by someone off-camera that we hire a company to come and maintain the roofs to prolong their longevity. Perry says that a company is already in place to do that.

There is discussion about breaking up into small groups. There are some who are opposed to this idea, so the discussion about how to proceed takes some time. The decision is made to stay in one large group for discussion.

Heather suggests how to proceed with the options. Jenn Grymek points out that in the presentation it was made clear to do the HS first, and then move onto PC & MS. Before discussion starts, she suggests that they agree on that. Heather responded with rhetoric of the engineer's initial suggestions a year and a half ago being heavily focused on the HS, but the shift lately is more towards PC & MS because of their steady decline. She also wanted to ask if there were any option the group felt could immediately be eliminated. Discussion around the bond, and how much was fiscally responsible for the town to incur was had, with reminder that this issue was complicated. The 27-35 million that Matt Sturgis had put on the table for discussion, was an amount that would allow the town to keep its outstanding credit rating. It did not mean that the town couldn't go for a higher amount.

Discussion about spending responsibly and not "putting a band-aid" on a large problem.

Concerns about how to approach this to the town to get a referendum passed were voiced by many.

James Beasley talked about creating an environment that was healthy, not only in the obvious ways, but also in ways to reduce operating costs by installing renewable energies.

Valerie Adams suggested that once the committee got nearer to an option, we may look at the details, and not go all out with finishings. “Instead of going with the Mercedes-Benz, maybe go for the Lexus, or even the Toyota Corolla”.

Some committee members agreed that option 1 or 2 seemed like the viable candidates, while other members voiced concern over the expenses and thought that option 4 would be a better fit, mostly pointed towards the decline in enrollment as a reason. Talk then turned to doing another enrollment study to see whether the decline in numbers would be forecasted. Some discussion was had that the member thought most of the needs were “cosmetic”. One member brought up the past mismanagement of the maintenance and how that should not earn the right to tax citizens, while another member said that a 5-year-old shouldn’t be punished for past mistakes by an adult.

There was much talk about how the district is high performing, but the facilities do not match, that most people are underwhelmed when doing site visits. This brought up discussion about losing out on talent for employment, as well as new families to the area.

Catlin Ramsey spoke of her band room, how she has a bucket to catch a leak, and that the building is so cold that a colleague wears a wool hat and vest year-round, her students are packed in, her point being that the issues are not cosmetic.

Peter Esposito mirrored the implication that the schools (PC & MS) are way over capacity. There is not enough room in the cafeteria, that the feeling is like prison when they are all in there together. He iterates that it is tough, when year after year, more of the building maintenance budget gets cut.

It is suggested that projects be phased out.

Jeff Shedd says as a principal, phasing projects over a decade would make the renovations inadequate. Jeff read the entire Needs Assessment Report, line by line, and suggested that a small group from the committee do the same, then discuss what may take priority.

MaryAnn thinks this is a good suggestion, and also feels Tom’s suggestion of a population study is worthwhile.

Derek says that he is an estimator by trade and has done a little research and thrown some numbers together based on the enrollment projections that had already been done to 2025. In his opinion, based on those numbers, they could decrease the building square footage by 20% and offer a plan that allows for a phase two of expansion should the need arise. These are “rough back of the napkin” numbers, and in his opinion, Options 1 or 2 seem the smartest way to go.

Kimberly Carr interjects that when looking at any of the options, the HS has to be taken into consideration because it will be an issue down the road, and the goal is to have a good spread between projects. That’s a slight challenge with option 1.

Derek suggests that a phased approach is also nice because you’re not burdening another generation 60 years down the pike. Staggering helps the building curve.

Valerie Adams thinks the population question needs to be further researched.

Matt Sturgis says that they need to think about the buildings outlasting the debt. And the Town’s tipping point is, use a common-sense approach.

More discussion around the population study occurred.

Perry wants the group to stay focused on 20, 30, 40 years, and not so focused on today. He suggests that if the town allowed commercial businesses into the town, it may alleviate some of the burden on the residents, as a non-tax payer, it merely an observation.

Discussion around state funding being cut from the budget focused on how tough a decision where to make the actual cuts.

Discussion about whether to form a smaller group to go line by line on the assessment report.

Hope Straw wonders where this gets the town in 20-30 years, information regarding that would be helpful to make a fiscally responsible decision. She suggests that forward momentum needs to happen.

Tim says we need to not lose sight of the red projects from the Assessment Report.

More discussion around the immediate needs of the buildings is had. James suggests that whether the town addresses the entire project or piecemeals, it's a great piece to have when considering the design options, but it doesn't make the decision of "do you do the 70-million-dollar project or the 30 million?" Doing further study in the report is a great picture to have, but in the end, it doesn't change the total cost.

Discussion about the need for further research is had, and that seems to be the consensus of the group.

Heather thanks everyone for speaking up, that really valuable discussion was held tonight, and it seems we're still in the conversation. We're looking forward to continue the discussion on the 17th. We're not at a point to go forward with the smaller group discussion. Donna agrees, that we need to continue the discussion.

Meeting is adjourned 2 hours and 28 minutes after it began.