

Memorial School Building Committee Meeting Minutes

Draft Minutes 9/15/2025

Agenda

Mr. Meyler called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

OPEN SESSION

Committee Members In attendance:

James Hannigan
Maria McMorran
Kat Monahan
Catherine Brunell
Bill Spratt
Doug Tierney
James Errickson

Melissa Spash
Stephen Meyler
Kyla Meade
Bruce Evans

Also in attendance:

Jillian Martin Wilson
Deborah Schatz

Mr. Meyler asked if anyone was here for public speak. No one came forward.

1. Review of School Tours -

- Mr. Meyler reminded the committee about the tour next Monday, September 22nd to see the Lexington Hastings School 10 - 11 a.m.
- Dr. Spash went over her memo to the committee about the guidelines for the tour.

Members in attendance who are planning on attending are:

- James Hannigan
 - Maria McMorran
 - Kat Monahan
 - Bill Spratt
 - Melissa Spash
 - Doug Tierney
 - Jillian Martin Wilson
 - Stephen Meyler
 - Kyla Meade
 - Bruce Evans
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- Mr. Evans asked if we could get documents that they submitted to the MSBA - for example, SOI, Website, presentation of the final designs.
 - Mr. Meyler encouraged the committee to focus on the hardscapes of the building design and functional use
 - Mr. Errickson asked if anyone will be available on the tour to answer questions about what they submitted for the RFA?

- Dr. Spash suggested that after we know who's on the tour, we can gather questions after if someone wasn't there and follow up.
- Mr. Meyler said he'd like to see a breakeven analysis about the cost structure for some of the options so that we are able to present the analysis Town Meeting
 - A member shared that geothermal was not impacted in the most recent federal changes
 - With geothermal you can design a building so that you can drill the wells in the future if need be.
 - Lower cost of ongoing operation, lower cost of utilities and fees
 - Ms. Martin Wilson referenced the last meeting we heard in the last presentation about the breakeven cost analysis.
 - Mr. Meyler would like to review the presentation again to ensure we are ready for the good questions that will come.
- Two more tours are in process to be scheduled

2. MSBA Updates -

a. Status Update on MSBA Enrollment Projections

- Waiting on written confirmation from MSBA about enrollment projections.
- Natick gave the MSBA:
 - K numbers for this year - 363 was a higher number than they had
 - 12 mods were added in after asked for classroom space update
 - A list of housing permits that have recently been pulled to account for the flip of houses that are happening. For example:
 - 104 - Single Family, Tear down
 - 17 - Multi Family Tear down
- Mr. Meyler received an email from a member of the public requesting that Johnson be on the list of sites that are considered. Mr Meyler gave his opinion about the site being too small but qualified that Johnson has not been ruled out and that nothing has been decided. The site selection, were we to move on with the MSBA into the enrollment period, would be decided next fall.

b. Extension Request Update

- Technically the eligibility phase from the MSBA stops on 10/31
- Our Town Meeting warrant will not be certified by then so we requested an extension
- We have been given every indication this will happen but nothing official has been approved.

c. Start of OPM Bidding process Update/Feedback

- MSBA stated that the OPM procurement process cannot happen "prior to the District's Town Meeting vote, execution of the Feasibility Study Agreement, or the MSBA Board of Directors Meeting approves the district to enter into the feasibility study."
- The board of directors meeting will be in the winter/spring
- Mr. Gillis and Mr. Meyler will draft the RFP for the OPM- They would like to word the RFS with language that encourages companies to apply and do not eliminate themselves

from the process. Instead, the goal is to have a big pool applicants that we pair down to three. At that point, we interview three with a presentation and decide.

- Ms. Brunell asked if we have to accept the company if they are the lowest bidder. Mr. Meyler answered that were we to choose one that was not the lowest, we have to have justification.
- Ms. McMorran stressed that our committee should not put ourselves in a place to compare apples to bananas because the RFS is too generic. Our criteria needs to be specific enough to
- Ms. Brunell asked if we could do a RFQ instead of an RFP to allow for more freedom in the choice of the eventual OPM. Mr. Errickson thought that the MSBA will not allow for an RFQ. He has not seen those done very often in the public process.
- A rank/grading/weighting matrix are used to decide between the applicants.
- Brinley Vickers, a town meeting member spoke and asked that there be input from the beginning from the whole committee about the draft RFS for the OPM. She worries that if it is not "in it" you will "not get it."
 - Mr. Meyler responded that there is a template from the MSBA.
 - Ms. McMorran wondered if the whole committee could look to be part of a bigger picture conversation first to get a sense of what people are thinking about. What kind of ideas do we want to consider that we haven't thought of. She also agreed that if you hire a good architectural team, they will facilitate a conversation about the details and mediate some of the differences on the committee.
 - Mr. Meyler agreed to the idea and suggested that in that discussion it will be helpful to detail the role of the OPM vs. the architect. Mr. Evans agreed.
 - After the bid, we will write a contract and can add things to that document that are our requirements.
- Mr. Tierney asked when is the earliest the RFS could go out? Mr. Meyler indicated that it will be after the first of the year.
- Dr. Spash will share the OPM Template and guidelines for the committee from the MSBA. She noted that the template was revised in August of 2025.

3. Update of Town Meeting Warrant Article and Funding Source - Dr. Spash and Mr. Errickson

- Mr. Errickson briefed the committee on a change to the funding source and the rationale.
- He stated that we have \$4.89M remaining from KMS Project
- When we borrow, we have to put useful life towards the borrowing - 20 years for example for a building, 5 years for a car.
- Initially, the Town Administrator, responsible for naming the source of the funding, thought using the remaining KMS borrowed funds would be like for like. Our legal counsel recently spoke to DLS and is waiting for guidance. While they were waiting, they found a white paper guidance that seemed to point to KMS funds being available for this project.
- Then Mr. Errickson reviewed the materials about the source of the KMS feasibility along with a reference from MGL. While we had money left over from other building borrowings at the time of the KMS feasibility Town Meeting vote, we did not use them for KMS. He got curious and found that there is a specific provision that feasibility studies only have a

useful life of 5 years which would make the left over funds from KMS unavailable because of the stipulations around useful life borrowing being "like for like."

- Mr. Errickson acknowledged that timing is a constraint right now
- He stated that he would like to get written opinion from legal and bond committee
- If the lawyers respond with the like for like borrowing situation, his recommendation is that at Town Meeting the warrant article be presented and paid for with bans.
- Then, if we get approval from the MSBA and eventually Natick taxpayers, we will wrap the short term borrowing into the long term borrowing.
- Ms. McMorran asked if the 4.89 M will eventually go into the KMS?
 - Mr. Errickson said not necessarily but that it would be used for a building project.
- Ms. Brunell acknowledged that the warrant article for the KMS Feasibility project is sponsored by the School Committee and asked for clarity on who decided on the source of the funding. Mr. Errickson noted that he was responsible for that decision after a positive vote for the article by Town Meeting.
- He continued that at that point, budget adjustments would be made in the shared services budget, specifically the debt service budget. He emphasized that right now our budget is balanced so this would need to be adjusted in FY26 budget and would likely happen using updated new growth projections.
- Mr. Meyler asked if free cash could cover this?
 - Mr. Errickson responded that in order to use it, free cash has to be certified. When asked about the timeline, Mr. Errickson noted that free cash is certified sometime usually in the fall.
 - He stated that from our perspective, the borrowing approach will allow the funds for the feasibility phase to be brought into the full cost of the project.
 - Borrowing would also allow Free cash to be retained so that we can fund our capital budget.
 - Mr. Meyler suggested that Town Meeting is going to need to be assured that borrowing for the feasibility is advantageous and that the 4.89 will be spent on other capital needs.
- Ms. Brunell encouraged letters from legal to help explain the change in rationale to Town Meeting, Fin Com and the public at large.
- Ms. Vickers, Town Meeting Member, encouraged the committee to communicate that whatever the source of the funding is, that the money will be part of the reimbursement from the MSBA.
- Mr. Meyler asked Mr. Errickson if there is a fully integrated - town and school - capital plan. Mr. Errickson and Dr. Spash acknowledged that there is one due now, a more recent change, on January 1st. Ms. Brunell shared that the School Committee has the School's Capital needs on its agenda this fall.

4. Regular MSBC Meeting Days: Mondays and Thursdays quick discussion - Mr. Meyler

- There was a discussion about future meetings

- Ms. Monahan requested that meetings be on nights other than Fin Com meetings whenever possible and that an on-line option made the meetings more accessible and more likely to reach quorum.
- Mr. Meyler will send out the dates for the future meetings - for the coming months, we will meet 1x a month then followed by 2x a month with additional meetings as critically needed.
- We agreed that the committee meetings should be online

A member of the public encouraged us to remember how important our elementary schools are and working with the parents and community members throughout this process will benefit everyone in the long run.

Ms. Monahan detailed why she was not able to make the last meeting. She was not receiving the emails from the Memorial Building Committee so had no idea that the meeting was scheduled. She feels strongly that the Finance Committee should be represented at every meeting so wants to ensure that this issue has been fixed. Mr. Meyler indicated that Mr. Roche, Chief Technology officer for the Town and Schools, will confirm that the email list is correct and that messages are getting out.

Bruce Evans motioned to end the meeting at 8:08. Bill Spratt seconded. The motion passed 11-0-0.