

Draft Memorial School Building Minutes

5/12/2025

Mr. Meyler called the meeting to order at approximately 6:40 p.m.

Committee Members In
attendance:

James Hannigan
Kyla Meade
Alan Cloutier
Maria McMarran
Kat Monahan
Bruce Evans
Catherine Brunell
Stephen Meyler
Jamie Errickson
Bill Spratt
Matt Gillis
Melissa Spash

Non Voting Members:
Beth Heffler
Jillian Wilson Martin

Public Speak

No one came forward

	Position	Name
1	Superintendent	Melissa Spash
2	Assist Superintendent Business Office	Matthew Gillis
3	Chair	Stephen Meyler
4	Town Administrator	James Errickson
5	Select Board	Bruce Evans
6	Finance Committee (FinCom)	Kat Monahan
7	Planning Board	Alan Cloutier
8	Facilities Lead	Bill Spratt
9	School Committee Member Rep.	Catherine Brunnell
10	Member of the Public	Sam Soderholm
11	Member of the Public	Kyla Meade
12	Member of the Public	Maria McMorrان
13	Member of the Public	Doug Tierney
14	Member of the Public	James Hannigan
1	Natick Police Representative	Officer Beth Heffler
2	Sustainability Leader	Jillian Wilson-Martin
3	Natick Fire	TBD

Introductions and Welcome

The committee will meet on Monday evenings when the School Committee is NOT meeting. Mr. Meyler indicated that were a need for an emergency meeting to come up, outside of Mondays, he will make an effort to find a date where a quorum could be reached. If that is not possible, on the rare occasion, he would need to make a decision outside of the board as the chair of the committee. Were that to happen, he would then bring his rationale and decision to the committee at the next regularly scheduled meeting and ask for a vote of the full committee.

It was determined that the next meeting will be June 9, 2025 - at Memorial: Tour of the School and possible site. Mr. Meyler will confirm the location with committee members.

Mr. Meyler informed the committee that one member, Sam Soderholm, had to step down for personal reasons.

A quorum of the committee is 7 people.

Mr. Meyler showed the book, Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance by O. Garfield Jones to the committee as the tool he will use to run the meetings.

Mr. Meyler shared several ideas to help make the meetings efficient:

- Try not to repeat the previous comment in order to keep the conversation going.
- Decisions: Made by motions
- Communication: All communication with the public or news will happen by the chair or the Superintendent. All additional communications to the committee from within the committee members will go through the chair for consistency, capturing documents and to ensure open meeting law is followed and respected. No debate or discussion can occur in email with a quorum present.
- At times, when trying to move the conversation going forward, he may ask for a show of hands if we are going in the right direction. That is not a formal vote but a way to manage our meetings.
- When reporting back to your respective groups, please keep it factual.

Officer Heffler indicated that she will be in communication with both the Police and Fire Chief when needed about decisions.

Mr. Evans made a motion that for ease of minutes the Memorial Building School Committee will be called the MSBC. Mr. Gillis seconded the motion. The committee voted unanimously in favor of the motion 12 - 0 - 0.

Massachusetts School Building Authority/Town Meeting

Dr. Spash previewed the shared drive for the committee to use for the duration of the process.

Dr. Spash walked through the timeline of the following document:  Memorial MSBA Updates
Because of the timing of fall town meeting, Dr. Spash will be asking for a 30 day extension Feasibility Study Agreement from the MSBA. The committee will be updated on that when more information is available.

Ms. McMorran asked about the timing of hiring the Owner's Project Manager.

Mr. Meyler answered that the majority of the work on this committee can begin once we have funding. He thinks we will be asking for between \$2 and \$2.5 M from fall town meeting. He suggests that we go out for bid for the OPM around the end of September. That would provide time for responses and then for the committee to choose an OPM as Town Meeting comes to end.

Mr. Gillis then presented on enrollment:

- The differences from MSBA and Natick projections are significant at this point.
- The number grows off of your base number (cohort survival methodology)
- See [this](#) document for a memo about enrollment
- We are working now to come to agreement about enrollment projections

- The MSBA is trying to determine the size of school they will reimburse for
- Need to determine the size of the school
 - High School built for 1300 kids, 1600 kids currently enrolled - new school sometimes attracts more students
 - Modularity at Brown and Lilja
 - How do we get the right size of the school for Natick?

Mr. Meyler clarified that the MSBC looks at enrollment as information to understand so that we can deliver the size of the building needed.

Mr. Gillis referred the committee to the end of the memo and emphasized that the decisions begin and end with the voters.

Mr. Gillis also shared that the School Committee authorized an Enrollment Study in order to bring an outside perspective to the enrollment projections. If all goes well with the procurement process, those will be available in July.

Ms. McMorran asked if the MSBA ever reimbursed for the full amount.

Mr. Gillis answered: No.

Mr. Meyler remembered that the High School reimbursement was determined for the population at the time. Thus, when enrollment went up after that was determined, we were not able to adjust the physical size of the school without adding cost to the project. Unfortunately, this resulted in the building being undersized for the needs of the student body.

For Kennedy, the committee considered that and asked, what flexibility could be built into the projections that would account for the future needs of the district. This was done with what is reimbursable in terms of enrollment and with space.

The Key: We are trying to build the right school for the next 50 years.

Ms. Meade, asked if there was an argument in town about not building a school that is too big?

The committee then discussed what a debt exclusion override is and how what is not reimbursed will go in front of the voters.

Dr. Spash addressed the size of the school question. There are 520 current students that need to be at the future school between the current enrollment and the preschool sections at the East School. Also at Brown and Lilja, there are classrooms that are

mostly 24 students. We need to understand the needs of the size of the school to be built in the context of the whole district.

Site Selection

Mr. Meyler showed four maps (from the Natick GIS system) of the Memorial Site and discussed the wetlands that have been identified.

Mr. Errickson added that if building at the Memorial site results in losing field space, that needs to be considered when thinking about the town needs as a whole. Recreation and parks are already cramped for field space for example and reducing the fields at memorial would result in costs in other ways for the town.

There is also one road in and out of the current building. Police and fire would most likely desire a road around a future building

Mr. Meyler suggested that we use the summer to discuss other sites that could be in the town.

Ms. Wilson Martin asked when the site selection decision needs to be made according to the MSBA. Mr. Gillis answered that it happens once we are in the Feasibility Phase.

Mr. Meyler asked the committee to consider other sites and bring ideas to the next meeting. He suggested areas that are 10-15 acres of buildable land. For example, the Cole center.

A member of the public asked if there were records of other sites considered in previous projects. Mr. Meyler thought those would be difficult to access but would be willing to share those that have been considered in the past. For example, we considered the old Windy Lo property for the new Kennedy. At one point, we also looked at the Mathworks building but we did not choose it because the traffic was too fast and all students would need to be bussed.

He stated that we do have an obligation to look at other sites.

Mr. Hannigan asked if it was a different site, would that impact the enrollment that at that point would have been previously decided? While that would be the case, Dr. Spash suggested that concern be balanced with finding the right place for the school is important.

Proposed Tours of Example Elementary Schools

Mr. Meyler suggested the committee meet on June 9th at Memorial.

Mr. Meyler explained what Model Schools were and suggested that we consider starting from a model school design and then modify.

He showed the committee a list of model schools in the state that are close in size to the Memorial School we are considering. Eventually, we would tour a few of the schools on the list.

Ms. Meade asked if there were building plans that could be seen. For safety reasons, generally, school plans are not available.

Ms. Wilson Martin asked if we could use any school built with MSBA funding as a "model school."

Mr. Meyler asked if we want to consider Geo Thermal as part of the school?

Mr. Gillis expressed support because of the efficiency found in running pumps from air closest to the temperature desired in the building.

Ms. McMorran agreed especially because of the desired longevity of the project. The downside can be the upfront costs and space.

Mr. Spratt suggested we make decisions with life cycle costs in mind. For example, the building of a project usually is about 12% of the total cost of a building's life.

Mr. Evans indicated that we, as a town, have decided to be a net zero ready town. He also referenced that there are MSBA extra monies available when a school meets a green school distinction.

Mr. Meyler suggested that we do some geothermal education and tours of those schools this summer. He suggested that for the June 9th meeting, we nominate which schools we go visit.

Mr. Errickson suggested we ready questions for the communities that we go visit about lessons learned; questions about geo-thermal and the full project of the school. Several members echoed this suggestion.

Additional Discussion

Website:

- We will have more information and pictures than what was available at Kennedy.
- Single email - when someone responds, it will go to all of us. Mr. Meyler or Dr. Spash will respond in order to streamline the communication.

Ms. Brunell clarified what Mr. Meyler was asking for the next meeting:

- Committee members to suggest 2 elementary schools to tour. Mr. Meyler prefers they be model schools and that at least 1 geothermal school be included.
- Committee members to suggest other possible sites for the project. 10 -15 Buildable acres

Ms. Monahan asked how many vacancies we have on the committee. We have one.

Mr. Meyler's opinion that we will not typically fill them because it would be hard to fill the space. He believes that were we to add a member it would need to be fair and at this point, he is unsure how to reopen the application process to the people who had already applied.

Ms. Brunell suggested that the School Committee consider adding Mr. Patel to the committee because the argument, to not include two members, was to ensure the MSBC had an uneven number. At the time, the School Committee was told that 2 members from the School Committee could create an even number and possibly tied votes.

It was clarified tonight that the MSBC was a committee of 14, but with the loss of one member, at this time, the makeup is 13.

Ms. Monahan asked that the Director of the Organic Farm be invited to the next meeting. Mr. Meyler indicated that he has met with the Farm leadership team already and is uncertain if it would be helpful to them at this point in the process.

A member of the public inquired how many members of the public are on the current board. There are four members. 13 total members.

At 8:41 p.m. Mr. Errickson motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Evans seconded. The committee voted unanimously to adjourn. 12-0-0.

