

**Amherst School Committee Meeting  
Monday, May 1, 2017  
Library, Amherst Regional High School**

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Phoebe Hazzard, Chair  
Peter Demling  
Anastasia Ordonez  
Eric Nakajima  
Vira Douangmany-Cage

Mike Morris, Interim Superintendent  
Debbie Westmoreland, Recorder  
Public and Press

**1. Call to Order and Approve Minutes 6:00 p.m.**

Ms. Hazzard called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**2. Public Comment 6:00 p.m.**

There were no public comments.

**3. New and Continuing Business 6:01 p.m.**

**A. Update from 4/28/17 Joint Capital Planning Committee (JCPC) Meeting**

***DOCUMENT: Feasibility Process/Schematic Design Process Outline***

As the new Chair, Ms. Hazzard reviewed the School Committee guidelines for deliberation. She then outlined the plan for discussing the update from the JCPC meeting last week. The update began with a discussion of the feasibility study with Dr. Morris distributing and reviewing an outline of the feasibility/schematic design process. He reviewed the steps in the feasibility process, outlined on the left side of the document, which covers a period of 16-20 months at a cost of approximately \$250,000. The schematic design process would last between 8 to 12 months at a cost of roughly \$475,000. Dr. Morris then shared his recommendation based on discussion at the JCPC meeting. He noted that he recommends moving forward with the feasibility process, which would yield three options for moving forward that the Town can consider. Ms. Hazzard noted that her sense from JCPC was that they felt comfortable supporting the feasibility process since it will provide a road map with a clear path moving forward. She also supports the idea of going to Town Meeting with a request for the \$250,000 to fund the feasibility process. Mr. Nakajima agreed, noting that the process outlined will provide a strong community engagement opportunity and a clear set of deliverables. Ms. Ordonez noted that the process outlined better reflects concerns raised by the community. She asked if it is expected that the feasibility process will take a year and a half or if there are ways to speed up the process. Dr. Morris noted that the projected length was an estimate, and it is conceivable that we may be able to move a little more quickly. He said the community engagement will need to be re-energized from the previous process. Mr. Demling stated that he likes that there is a natural point at which the town can vote to move forward or not at the end of the feasibility process and the potential beginning of the schematic design process. Ms. Douangmany Cage noted that this seems to be something JCPC is comfortable supporting, and she appreciates that the process outline includes "significant staff and community input" in the schematic design process. She expressed her desire to ensure that renovation is considered as a possibility along with new buildings. Mr. Demling noted that he sees this process as being completely de-coupled from the previous process and the School Committee will be looking at it with fresh eyes. He said that renovation will absolutely be considered and no predetermined outcome is set by the School Committee. Mr. Nakajima noted that what Mr. Demling's said cannot be stated too often as the process moves forward. Vince O'Connor, community member, spoke about what the owner's project manager would contribute to the School Committee as far as information about a potential project. He encouraged the School Committee to consider non-technical issues with the OPM and Superintendent such as whether there should be a preschool program or an afterschool program. After discussion, Ms. Ordonez moved that the School Committee recommend Article 15B of the annual town meeting warrant in the amount of \$250,000 for the purpose of examining site and building feasibility and schematic design options for Fort River School including: site, structural, and environmental analysis; implementation of a community engagement process; formation of a school building committee; development of an education program; selection of an Owner's Project Manager (OPM); initial schematic drawings of selected preferred options; and initial schematic designs and independent cost estimates of those designs. Ms. Ordonez will speak to the article on behalf of the School Committee. Mr. Demling seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Hazzard noted that JCPC voted to ask Town Meeting to authorize the full \$500,000 to replace the boiler at Wildwood. She noted that, due to the procurement process and the requirements to remediate the issues in order to install the new boiler, it cannot be in place until fall of 2018. If there is a decision to build a new building, it is anticipated that

approximately 25% of the cost will be able to be recovered. Mr. Nakajima noted that a new or very substantially renovated building is likely to take seven or eight years to complete. He said it strains credulity to think the Wildwood boiler can last that long. Ms. Ordonez asked how we know that the amount of funds needed is \$500,000. Dr. Morris explained that Mr. Bohonowicz, Facilities Director, had the boiler evaluated and that was the estimate based on the design elements and the physical boiler. Ms. Douangmany Cage asked when we would find out if Wildwood was accepted into the MSBA process if we submit in 2018. Dr. Morris noted that we will likely find out in the winter of 2019. Mr. Demling then moved that the School Committee recommend the Elementary Schools Article 15A of the Annual Town Meeting warrant: Capital Program—Bond Authorization in the amount of \$500,000 for replacing the boiler and making associated repairs at the Wildwood Elementary School. Mr. Demling will speak to the article at Town Meeting. Mr. Nakajima seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Hazzard asked Ms. Ordonez and Mr. Demling to send the statements they plan to make to the other members of the committee. Feedback should be sent to Ms. Westmoreland, who will get it to Mr. Demling and Ms. Ordonez.

Mr. Nakajima then moved that the School Committee recommend the elementary schools section of Article 9 of the Annual Town Meeting warrant: Amherst Elementary Schools Operating Budget. Ms. Hazzard will speak to the Article on behalf of the School Committee. Ms. Douangmany Cage seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Dr. Morris noted that he will also be speaking to the two operating budgets for the Amherst and Regional schools. Ms. Hazzard noted that there is currently a \$70,000 request for the Fort River roof, but Mr. Bohonowicz recommends reducing it to \$20,000 if the feasibility process is approved by Town Meeting. Ms. Ordonez requested that Dr. Morris reach out to the architects to ensure that the reduction in funds is prudent. Mr. Demling asked if the Committee has a desire for the Charter Commission to invite them to another one of their meetings before they finalize their recommendation regarding the make-up of the School Committee. The committee agreed that they would like to attend another meeting, so Ms. Hazzard will reach out to the Charter Commission.

#### **6. Adjourn**

**7:02 p.m.**

Mr. Nakajima moved to adjourn at 7:02 p.m. Ms. Ordonez seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Debbie Westmoreland