

Capital Planning Committee Minutes

November 2, 2021

The Capital Planning Committee met in the Ritter Building as scheduled with the following members present: Tom Alonzo, Dave Passios, George Martin, Paula Bertram and Brian Lehtinen. Town Manager Heather Lemieux was also in attendance.

1. **Call to Order** – Chair called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.
2. **Public Comment - Comment from the Committee, Comment from the Public** – None.
3. **Approval of Minutes** – Tom Alonzo made a motion to accept the minutes of 10/19 with the correction of a typo in item 4 'comec' should be 'comes' and the minutes of 10/26 with the correction of the last page before public comment "a the" should be either "a" or "the". Motion seconded by Dave Passios. Motion passed unanimously.
4. **Review Capital Requests Submitted by the School Department** – John Murphy, new Facilities and Ground Director, and Superintendent Burnham presented the capital plan that was approved by the School Committee.

Primary School Air Conditioning Project – Superintendent Burnham explained that air conditioning will improve comfort to the building's occupants. The air conditioning at the middle high school provides a positive impact and keeps humidity down. The school is required to keep the environment within specific temperature range for some students that have heat limitations and IEP's, because high heat can trigger seizures. The school typically tries to install air conditioners of some type in any classroom that houses students with heat limitations. This presents a challenge because students are not in one room all day.

Dave Passios asked about the electrical capability of the building to accommodate the system that is needed, he noted that when it was designed back in 2005 it was designed to accommodate air conditioning. Mr. Murphy responded that there is space in the nearest panel. The current engineer is advocating for a separate panel because of surge concerns and equipment damage. However, before John Londa left, they drilled down and determined that there is enough room in the main panel to support the large equipment, and that the secondary panel can accommodate the smaller equipment. Mr. Passios question if this new equipment would max out these panels. Mr. Passios noted that over the last four- or five-decades corners have been cut in upgrades and then we have issues later down the road. Tom Alonzo questioned if the pricing proposed is with a separate panel? Mr. Murphy responded that it is not, this is a paired down number. Mr. Murphy added after completing the drill down and it was shown that there was enough capacity the engineer indicated he will sign off. Dave Passios cautioned that this be vetted 100% with the engineer.

Brian Lehtinen questioned why the air conditioning wasn't installed in 2005 when the building was constructed? John Murphy responded that it was to bring down the overall cost of the school.

Tom Alonzo noted that the description of the project is for air conditioning in classrooms and questioned if any of the other schools have air conditioning? Superintendent Burnham responded that there are smaller units in server rooms and the office. Mr. Alonzo questioned what areas of the school this proposed project will cover. Mr. Murphy responded that it would serve the classrooms and larger areas such as the library and café. Mr. Alonzo questioned how many students have special needs due to heat sensitivity? Superintendent Burnham did not have that number however there are currently 7 large units installed in classrooms. She added that there is a student at TCP in the ACE program that falls into that category.

Tom Alonzo questioned how many days on average do we exceed the heat threshold? Superintendent Burnham responded that medical providers identify the temperature range based on the individual student. She added that the temperature is different every year, second week in June this past year we had a very hot spell for several days in a row, and there were instances of students and staff showing symptoms of heat exhaustion and having to go home. Superintendent was not sure if anyone from the primary had to go home during the same time period.

Tom Alonzo noted that HVAC systems are very expensive and are the costliest to repair. Ms. Burnham noted that the Building Inspector may require that any air conditioner be on its own dedicated circuit and Mr. Murphy added that would be a challenge.

Dave Passios noted that the HVAC may not be capable of bringing the temperature below 70, however it can bring humidity down. Superintendent Burnham stated that at Turkey Hill the kids can come down to the high school auditorium in extreme heat, however they don't have that luxury at the Primary. Ms. Burnham noted that in her first year in the district, opening week was extremely hot. Students and staff started to feel unwell and productivity declined. Parents questioned why school was not canceled when the heat index becomes unhealthy.

George Martin asked if the scope of air conditioning, includes the gym. Mr. Murphy responded affirmatively, the project includes the gym and café. Mr. Martin questioned the cost to run the equipment? Mr. Murphy said that he will investigate and provide that information.

John Murphy informed the committee that as a safeguard the a/c would be tied to the main building system to prevent any type of override. He added that the High school is a good example because the drop lights and a/c are managed by building management system.

Superintendent Burnham noted that when the school can't maintain an environment that is mandated by a student's health plan, Lunenburg could be looking at out of district placement which could be \$80,000 for one student.

Brian Lehtinen asked for clarification regarding the systems in the other schools. Mr. Murphy explained that Turkey Hill has a/c to core, where the offices are, the server room, the receptionist area and nurses office. Portable units are used because of window limitations. The Middle High School is all roof style units. Superintendent Burnham added that the business management system controls, so that classrooms can't be adjusted by individuals.

Superintendent Burnham and Mr. Murphy will get back to the Committee on the following questions:

- a. How many students have special needs due to heat sensitivity?
- b. How many days on average do we exceed the heat threshold?
- c. Estimated cost to run and maintain the system?

Replacement of 2008 Dump Truck with Plow – John Murphy explained that the current vehicle is very rough, corrosion has eliminated use of the lift body. This vehicle was transferred from DPW, and it had a salting unit attached to it. While mechanically sound, the body is gone. Mr. Murphy stated that plow is needed for snow operations. George Martin questioned if this vehicle would be used throughout the year. Mr. Murphy said yes, it would be used for plowing during the winter and used for grounds keeping and maintenance in other months. The vehicle is parked outside.

Mr. Murphy informed the Committee that during the winter the school is dependent on DPW for salting. The vehicles are not washed routinely. Paula Bertram noted that if you don't wash vehicles exposed to road salt they will degrade.

Mower – Mr. Murphy told the Committee that the current mower is surviving, welded axle and various parts back together. The mower is a 2000 and starting to have serious issues. It is difficult to obtain replacement parts. This machine is shared on multiple campuses. The athletic fields are outsourced.

Tom Alonzo questioned the status of the alarm system. Superintendent Burnham responded that they plan to do the work over Christmas break. This project was funded through the school department budget.

Heather Lemieux questioned if the School Committee has discussed long range plans such for Turkey Hill. The Superintendent responded that Lunenburg is going to need to build either a full replacement school or a significant addition to the existing school. All the systems at Turkey Hill (which was constructed in 1967) are original, and difficult

to repair due to age. John Londa became an expert on the existing system. The electrical system is woefully inadequate for current day. Only two electrical outlets in each room.

Tom Alonzo noted that in FY29 – FY31 the Town will be looking at 12 million in capital requests for Turkey Hill. Superintendent Burnham noted that what is built into the capital plan is the Town's portion, School Committee would be seeking funding from MSBA. It was noted that if funds are obtained from MSBA the Town is required to provide a 10-year commitment that the building will be used as a school.

It was asked where would the students go during construction if the Town went with new build versus renovation? Superintendent Burnham responded that it would depend on the location; there is some field space contiguous with the fields and the turf. Would need to engage architect to design. Tom Alonzo noted that it would be similar to what happened with the middle high school, build new school while occupying old building then demolish old building and utilize for fields.

John informed the Committee that the solar array agreement is in place until 2025 for Turkey Hill. As part of the solar contract the company will come out 1 time and remove and replace panels. George Martine opined that panels wear out 1% a year, by the time you look at moving them might make sense to replace with newer technology.

George Martin asked about population trends and the school impact. Superintendent Burnham said that is the wild card on the table right now. There is in new legislation pending at the federal level, which may require universal Pre-K. If required the schools may be looking at shifting a grade level to other schools. Superintendent Burnham noted that there has been steady increase in enrollment over past few years. Paula commented that the Planning Board has just done a population study that may be useful to the school.

Tom Alonzo asked if the School Committees will be asking for a new building? Superintendent Burnham responded that last year a 10-year forecast was done based on data that's available through the MSBA. MSBA funding is determined based on the number of requests received and the most needed projects. The Town has to determine if they are ready to pursue a new building or significant renovation financially. Superintendent Burnham said the Town could submit a letter that we are planning to build a new school, may have to submit every 5 years until approved.

Committee discussed the impact of utilizing MSBA funds for planned renovations (roof etc.). Once funding is awarded, the building must be utilized as a school for ten years; if ten-year mark is not met then the funding may have to be refunded and no additional applications would be accepted by MSBA.

Dave Passios noted that the Green Communities Task Force is currently closing out projects and then will be working on new grant. Some of these grants may be beneficial to the Town, John Murphy responded that he is currently working on a report which must be submitted by November 19, 2021

5. **Action and Agenda Items for Future Meetings** – Brian will put the possibility of police vehicle rotation for next month's agenda.
6. **Public Comment: Comment from the Public, Comment from the Committee** - None
7. **Adjournment** – At 6:42 p.m. Tom Alonzo made a motion to adjourn, seconded by George Martin, passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:

Paula Bertram

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