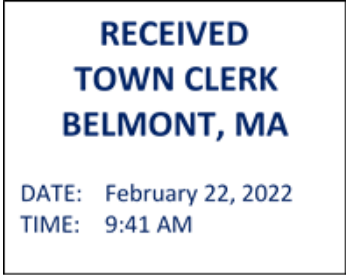


BELMONT MIDDLE and HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE
Final Meeting Minutes
Friday, February 4, 2022
Virtual Zoom Meeting
8:00 AM



Meeting #136

Committee Members Virtually Attending:

Chair Lovallo; Members, Bob McLaughlin, John Phelan, Joel Mooney, Ellen Schreiber, Patrice Garvin, Kate Bowen, Tom Caputo, Chris Messer, Pat Bruschi, Jamie Shea, David Blazon, Mike McAllister, Diane Miller, Emma Thurston

From CHA: Don White, Tony DelGreco, Tom Gatzunis

From Perkins+Will: Vital Albuquerque, Brian Spangler, Brooke Trivas, Christina Mulligan

From Skanska: Jim Craft, Mike Morrison

Members Absent: Joe DeStefano

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Chair Lovallo. He thanked Matt and the Belmont Media Center for their technical support. He explained the remote meeting protocol, e.g., state your name before speaking, mute computers, and he explained how the Committee will vote, etc. Meeting materials will be posted on the BMHSBC website, shortly after the meeting. He also advised residents that they can click into the meeting during resident comment time by pressing #9 or by “raising” their hands.

Chair Lovallo took attendance via roll call, reviewed the agenda, and turned to the first item on the agenda.

II. Next Building Committee Meetings

Friday	Feb. 11, 2022	at 8:00 AM	Virtual	[137]
Wed.	Feb. 16, 2022	at 8:00 AM	Virtual	[138]

III. Update on Project Cost Projections

Chair Lovallo began by asking if Committee members had comments based on last night’s meeting.

Mr. McLaughlin stated that we need to hold off on the field west of Harris Field; perhaps the field can be funded via CPA funding. He then spoke about the timing of the solar panel placement. The panels will be installed, he emphasized, it is just a matter of when. The panels need to be looked at with regard to what else will need to be given up. What is given up to attain PV needs to be balanced out with PV’s benefits. The items that we give up now, may never be replaced, but the panels will be done

FINAL

eventually. Our obligation is to support education and programs. We may need to consider postponing the solar panel bid. He noted that the federal government may offer grants, or the state may, or our local electric light company may be able to help fund the solar panels. He said he supports putting PV and Harris on hold, at this time. Chair Lovallo concurred that the funding could possibly be found in other places.

Ms. Schreiber spoke to the trade-off of removing items now or seeking out other funding sources. Other funding sources could be out there. Could we not cover the number but go and find additional money, she asked? Chair Lovallo replied that we need to give guidance now to the design and construction teams. But, yes, we can look at two or three solutions to solve the problem, and we will need a deadline though. However, we can't make commitments without the funding to back those commitments up.

Mr. Blazon noted that the BHS electricity bills have doubled (they are now \$50,000 per month) as they are relying on the solar panels to offset the costs. Electricity costs will grow to \$80,000 a month once the middle school comes online.

Ms. Garvin said that we do need the solar panels, and also, we need to investigate other options to fund them before going back to the community for more money or cutting programs. Ms. Bowen noted that solar was planned for the Wellington and that has not happened yet. Solar panels are a commitment that was made. Some of the items on the contingency list do not impact programming. Installing PV will help the town's operational budget, she said.

Ms. Brusch spoke to the solar plan at the Wellington. She said there are some items that could be cut that do not impact programming. She agreed that we should be exploring other funding options to have the solar.

Chair Lovallo spoke to the installation of the geothermal well fields and the rebates and credits that can be achieved with solar panels.

Mr. Phelan asked for the actual number that needs to be reduced. Chair Lovallo noted that, if the Committee carries the minimum contingency discussed last night of \$500,000 and adds that to the predicted overage, the target reduction is \$7.2M.

Ms. Shea said the solar panels need to go up in light of the escalating electricity bills. Community members, who are experts in the field, may be able to offer insights on other funding sources.

Mr. Caputo suggested making the decision in two phases: eliminating the west of Harris Field project and areas that don't impact programming now. The next step will be to search for other sources of funding to achieve solar panels.

Mr. Messer spoke to the timing of identifying any additional funding in light of the need to spend project dollars. Harris Field is project dollars, so the removal of it saves money. The timing will need to be considered. Mr. Craft noted that we are over the budget on Harris. Chair Lovallo added that west of Harris Field is a Belmont (not MSBA) cost, because MSBA deemed these costs ineligible for State Grant funding.

IV. Project Contingency Value

FINAL

Chair Lovallo provided an overview of the Allowances and Contingencies document. He reviewed the various categories, e.g., owner's contingency, owner's allowance, CM contingency, etc. as well as the reimbursements.

Committee members asked questions and offered comments about this document.

Ms. Schreiber stated that we need enough of a contingency going forward so we are not put in this position again. The \$500K number feels small, she said. Ms. Miller asked for more insight on the numbers. Mr. Gatzunis spoke to the contingency from the onset (6 percent) as well as other contingency money that was put forward (\$600K - \$1M) to cover unknowns. We may need \$2M in order to be safe, he said, but that is a big number. Mr. Albuquerque spoke to the risks present at the beginning of the project and noted that we might be beyond needing the full 6 percent. Mr. Morrison spoke to the cost exposure in Phase 1 and noted that some of the risks (requiring a 6 percent contingency) were already addressed in Phase 1 and included as exposure items in Phase 2.

Mr. Messer stated that Covid costs are not yet over; funding needs to be carried over to cover to Covid costs down the line. Ms. Bruschi noted that there is money put aside for Covid going forward. She added that we need an amount that moves us forward and has some funding remaining for when the project ends. However, the number should not be "Christmas Day" number with people adding "nice to have items". She said \$500-\$700K seems to be a good range. The Field House (i.e., BHS gym) is a big unknown, she added. Mr. Mooney added that new construction is occurring at the middle school and will need a "new construction" contingency. He suggested that the Committee bookmark \$750K and move in to working on the Refresh List spreadsheet. Chair Lovallo suggested a figure of \$765K, which placed the overall target reduction at \$7.5M.

V. Review of Project Contingency Refresh List (Part 1)

Chair Lovallo noted that the list of items (on the Refresh List spreadsheet) amount to about \$10M; the Committee should work toward reducing about \$7.2M worth of items. Mr. Gatzunis started with the G list of cost event/exposures; Chair Lovallo started with moving the following items into the F column (i.e., "delete from the project"):

- the moving of soil
- field work to the west of Harris Field
- the White Field House demolition
- centralized Middle School acid neutralization

Next, the heat rejection pad at the Middle School entry was discussed (that it is a relief valve); Mr. Blazon said he was OK with this elimination as it may just cause additional water drainage and ice.

Chair Lovallo paused this agenda item to allow for resident comments.

VI. Comments from Belmont Residents

Mr. Brian Kopperl provided information on other funding sources for solar panels, i.e., Dept. of Energy is funding new technology grants. It is unlikely that this project will get bailed out; other

FINAL

funding sources are not probable.

Mr. Dean Hickman spoke in support of PV and noted that it will save the town money and it supports the town's energy plan. This has to be done to support the children who will deal with the climate crisis. He asked if Skanska would be willing to do anything to help the town out of this predicament.

Mr. Robert McGaw said that the spreadsheet and numbers are fuzzy and incoherent. The numbers do not seem accurate. Why do they keep changing? Jettisoning PV does not solve the problem.

Ms. Hoffman spoke in support of PV.

Ms. Lisa Pargoli said she is finding this very unclear and confusing. She spoke to the expense of the two schools and that taxpayers can't bear any more burden. The Committee must figure this out.

Mr. Iler asked why the Overtime from Skanska is untouchable when we are cutting to the bone? We need to look for savings. Obtaining PV funding from other sources is a fantasy.

Mr. Joel Iglesias expressed that, as a BHS student, there are so many benefits to solar and it can be used in education.

Mr. Phil Thayer said that if the solar is funded as a separate project, it would result in less savings. He said to fund it (PV) with the school building bond.

Ms. Kitch (BHS student) spoke to the educational benefits of solar for the students.

Ms. Stephanie said that the financial presentation is very confusing and she is concerned that taxpayers are going to be further taxed.

Mr. Bob Singler spoke in support of PV.

Ms. Carolyn Bishop suggested that the White Field House project be tabled at this time and that the PV be preserved now.

V. Review of Project Contingency Refresh List (Part 2)

Chair Lovallo resumed the conversation around what can be eliminated. He raised the possibility of eliminating the Middle School Media Center sky light. Mr. Albuquerque provided some extra details on the Middle School sky light noting that it provides natural lighting to the Media Center (Library) area. Mr. Phelan shared that natural light has been a highlight of the new high school; he would like to keep the sky light. It might make more sense, he said, to focus on the larger items. Ms. Shea agreed that the natural light is valuable; she asked if removing the sky light would add to the electricity costs? Mr. Albuquerque replied that the savings would likely be more than any added costs. Mr. Messer made a suggestion about the glass and noted that the Committee has to make some tough decisions to achieve the required savings. Ms. Bowen said that there will still be a lot of natural light in this space even if the sky light is removed.

Chair Lovallo suggested that more research might be needed to get through the Refresh list (there is \$1M to go). He said the Committee could keep with the decisions made earlier in the meeting. Ms.

FINAL

Schreiber stated that the sky light decision should be made today and another meeting should be scheduled sooner than a month out. Chair Lovallo replied that there may be other items that can be considered that are not currently on the list that is in front of the Committee. It will take some time, he said, to uncover other such possible items. Mr. Phelan noted that once we dig into the other items that are presently on the list, we will see that they also have value. PV has huge value, he continued, but it will come at the cost of losing other valuable items.

Chair Lovallo asked if it would be helpful to review the Refresh list in more detail.

He then suggested that the Committee meet again on Friday, Feb. 11 at 8:00 a.m. to continue today's meeting.

Ms. Shea and Mr. Phelan remarked on what a beautiful space the new building is.

VII. Approval of Project Contingency Refresh List

This agenda item did not happen.

VIII. New Business/Other

None.

IX. Related Meeting Documents

1. CHA: Construction Costs Summary
2. Contingency Refresh Report

X. Adjournment

The Chair ended the meeting at 10:15 a.m., following a motion made by Mr. McLaughlin.

Respectfully submitted by:

Lisa Gibalerio

Approved: 
Chris Messer, Secretary

02/20/2022
Date

FINAL