

RYSE School Building Committee Meeting Minutes
October 5, 2016

In Attendance: Chair Lisa Macaruso, Craig Louzon, Arthur Nelson, Marie Glass, Melania van der Hooff, Fred Stanley and John Dobson (new Charlestown Representative – arrived at 6:12 PM). Absent: Vice Chair Erick Davis, William Day, Etta Zasloff and Arian Boisclair.

Administrators in Attendance: Superintendent Barry Ricci, Interim Director of Administration and Finance Susan Rogers and RYSE School Director Carolyn Garlick. Also in Attendance: KBA Representative Suzy Schuck, Hopkinton Town Council Vice President Barbara Capalbo, Westerly Sun Reporter Cynthia Drummond and District Clerk Donna Sieczkiewicz.

I. Meeting Call to Order

Vice Chair Macaruso called the meeting of the RYSE School Building Committee, which was held in the Administration Building Conference Room, to order at 6:05 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was followed by a moment of silent meditation.

II. Approval of Minutes of August 9, 2016

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Fred Stanley and it was VOTED: To approve the minutes of August 9, 2016 as written. In favor: Unanimous (Dobson was not in attendance for the vote).

III. Approval of Bills

Superintendent Ricci, in an effort to be as transparent as possible, stated that the invoice from Print Source had already been paid, prior to the Committee's approval. Procedures have been put in place so this does not happen again. Chair Macaruso noted that the Committee did, however, approve this expenditure prior to the invoice being paid.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Fred Stanley and it was VOTED: To approve payment of the Print Source invoice. In favor: Unanimous (Dobson was not in attendance for the vote).

VI. Lack of Impact of Middle School Oil Spill on Building Project

Chair Macaruso reported that Senator Morgan visited the RYSE School through a request made by a Chariho student. She met with Director Garlick to address concerns from her constituents. There is a group in the community telling others that the oil spill will have an impact on the new addition and also on the aquifer and surrounding turf farms. GZA (oil remediation), DEM and KBA have all confirmed that the oil spill will have no impact on the building project, the aquifer or surrounding turf farms. There are three points of data all supporting this. Remediation of this spill is almost complete. What remains of the oil spill is at the opposite end of the building and was traveling in the opposite direction. GZA is crafting a formal letter to DEM stating there is no adverse affect from the oil spill on this building project. This will be the fourth piece of support to support it. We have already put an addition on the Middle School that was closer to the oil spill than this will be and there was no rumors spread about that. She asked all Building Committee members to please share this information with those who bring up this concern. Craig added that, let it be known that he has been on the School Committee for five years now and there have been numerous presentations by GZA (public meetings). He is concerned as to why individuals would be making a fuss out of it now. Melania added that they should let people air their concern and then they should address it; there are some people who just like to stir up stuff. Fred noted that when the wells were switched, the State did a survey and concluded that no wells were contaminated so they used the Middle School well water for CTC. Superintendent Ricci commented on the visit from Senator Morgan. Senator Morgan stated that she heard there was a concern from turf farmers about the oil spill so the Superintendent asked Director Garlick to reach out to the Senator to find out who raised the concern but we haven't heard back from her. Suzy asked if this information should be added to the website. All were in agreement that it should be added. John Dobson arrived at 6:12 PM and Chair Macaruso recapped for John what had been discussed to this point. Introductions were made and John was thanked for joining the Committee.

V. Public Communication and Information Plan

Chair Macaruso questioned if Suzy wanted to present first to which Suzy replied that she would like to hear all that has transpired since the last meeting. Chair Macaruso thanked everyone for the time they have spent at all of the community events. She asked for feedback from the Committee as she was not in attendance at all of the functions. Melania noted that the Superintendent hasn't done his Open Forum in Richmond yet but she has heard other speak about the meetings so far. The Richmond Police Chief attended one sponsored by the Chariho Task Force and he said it was a wonderful presentation. He extended his thanks to Lisa for sharing the information with others. Melania then noted that both she and Lisa attended the Ashaway Open House and Lisa was very popular there; people were drawn to her and the rendering of the new building. She did state, however, that RYSE is not well known and felt they needed to get the word out about this school. Lisa agreed that the elementary population did not know much about the campus. Marie stated that she felt the response was better than she expected. She agreed with Melania that the biggest question was "what is RYSE". They did know about the trailers on the property and they don't like them. Craig did two Open Houses at Charlestown School plus the Open Forum and felt all were relatively positive. He felt there was a lack of knowledge amongst the senior population and that about 30% of the elementary school population knew what the project was about. Melania added that once explained, there was positive feedback. The biggest misconception is that people think that is where the misbehaved students go. Once they explained the need for the building and what the programs were, she received no complaints (no negativity). Chair Macaruso noted that she attended the Chariho Task Force meeting on Monday after the School Committee's presentation from the Youth Task Force. This group spoke about mental health/illness and the stigma associated with it and with RYSE. The Building Committee has to work on this stigma and try to remove the association with RYSE. John felt the press would be important in getting the word out. They should write letters to the editors. Discussion ensued on the costs associated with an ad in the paper versus a flyer that could be inserted in the Press paper which is delivered to all families in the South County Press area. Craig questioned remaining funds to which the Superintendent reported that there are some small bills from KBA outstanding (he asked Suzy if she could have Larry forward the amounts owed). There are no legal bills so the Committee would have money for advertising. Melania questioned if they would be putting out something referencing the building project or something that explains what RYSE is? Chair Macaruso noted that this was a good question to which Marie added that they have to be careful how they explain the school. Some responses she heard were "My kid will never use that." Barbara commended Cynthia Drummond. She has written about RYSE and has tried to get the word out. Barbara suggested they write letters to the editor that could focus on the issue of wellness and state that RYSE is part of the solution to this concern. Fred agreed and noted that the students coming out of this Program are assets to the community. He will do an article on the benefits these students are getting from RYSE. These students feel like they are second-class citizens and we need to change that. Chair Macaruso recapped the discussion and added that they could also interview RYSE graduates. Suzy noted that letters and editorials are one direction she would suggest. She stated that bumper stickers or signs are also effective. You can also ask candidates who are running for election if they would support it. Carolyn was asked her perspective on getting parents/students of RYSE to rally. She replied that she would reach out to them. Chair Macaruso cautioned that there is a boundary limit for students. She asked Melania when the next Richmond Republican Party meeting would be held as she felt that speaking at this would be beneficial. Melania noted that they meet on the 4th Thursday of the month and they do allow people to come in and speak but they are not allowed to stay for executive session. Suzy noted that the one positive is that she has not heard anything negative regarding the cost. If they are using the oil spill, that is positive as they can't think of anything else to use to sabotage the project. If the Committee is going to do a mailing, you will need to move quickly. The flyer they have printed has too much information so it would need to be redesigned for a mailing. Chair Macaruso asked Suzy if she could redesign the flyer if they decide to go with a mailing. The Building Committee would have to vote on this if they want to move forward with a mailing. Arthur stated that he would like to hear points of view on this. Craig made a motion to approve the funding to put the flyer in the appropriate venue for viewing by the public. Fred seconded the motion. Melania felt people get more out of going door-to-door and by doing the community events. She felt these were more beneficial than a mailing. John stated the mailing would be about \$1100; an ad in the paper would be about half that cost. He would vote to go with the ad as he feels more people would read it. Arthur asked the Superintendent to describe in one word the school/kids to which Superintendent Ricci responded "support". It is a place that serves kids with multiple/diverse needs. The school supports them so they can thrive. Arthur then asked how much

state aid does the District get for the trailers? He had the impression that the three Town Councils semi-supported it. Superintendent Ricci replied that the District does not get any state aid for the trailers and the three Town Councils unanimously supported the project. All of this is noted in the FAQ Fact Sheet. We have attempted to share what the school is but if you don't have a need to use the school, some people don't care. Chair Macaruso asked what the Committee's perspectives were on the motion. Superintendent Ricci noted that one option might be to authorize the formation of a subcommittee to make the final decision regarding publication or mailings and authorize the subcommittee to approve funding for this. This could be a smaller group with a representative from KBA and the Superintendent. You have done Phase I so this could be Phase II which would bring you to election day. Chair Macaruso questioned if the subcommittee could be formed today to which Superintendent Ricci responded "yes" as their purpose is "Public Communication". Craig withdrew his motion and Fred withdrew his second.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Fred Stanley and it was VOTED: To form a subcommittee of the RYSE School Building Committee to come up an informational plan for the public and authorize them to expend necessary funds for Phase II of the Public Communication and Information Plan, not to exceed \$3,000, for this purpose. In favor: Unanimous.

Lisa Macaruso made a motion, seconded by Craig Louzon and it was VOTED: To nominate John Dobson as a member of the subcommittee. In favor: Nelson, Louzon, van der Hooft, Glass, Stanley and Macaruso. Abstained: Dobson. The motion carried by a vote of 6 in favor with 1 abstention.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Arthur Nelson and it was VOTED: To nominate Lisa Macaruso as a member of the subcommittee. In favor: Dobson, Nelson, Louzon, van der Hooft, Glass and Stanley. Abstained: Macaruso. The motion carried by a vote of 6 in favor with 1 abstention.

Suzy stated that she would be joining the subcommittee as KBA's representative. Sue Rogers questioned that as this subcommittee is authorized to spend up to \$3,000, will she be able to pay invoices as they come in up to this amount? The Superintendent noted that the Chair of the Building Committee would have to be authorized to approve payments of bills to a certain amount. As this is not on the agenda and has not been done, the Building Committee will still need to approve payments of invoices incurred by the subcommittee.

The Superintendent noted that the question on the ballot is not the same number in each of the three towns. It is #8 in Hopkinton and Richmond and #9 in Charlestown. It is not the last number either but it is close to the last one (it is last in Charlestown and Richmond and second to the last in Hopkinton). Chair Macaruso charged each Committee member with the responsibility to make sure the voters in their respective towns know where the question is located on the ballot.

The Committee reviewed the October event schedule and committee members noted their availability for the remaining events as follows: Craig and Erick will attend the RYSE School and High School Open Houses on October 6 (Carolyn will also be in attendance), Jane Daly will be at the Charlestown Town Hall on October 11 (as this conflicts with a School Committee meeting, the Superintendent will be at the High School for the School Committee Meeting). John noted that he could be in attendance at the Charlestown Town Hall meeting. Lisa and Melania volunteered for the Open Forum with the Superintendent at the Richmond Town Hall (although Melania noted that she may not be able to stand in as a Building Committee representative as she may be attending as a member of the public). Lisa, Marie and Fred all offered to attend the Hopkinton Town Council Meeting on October 17th.

VI. Architect's Report

Suzy noted that Ben Monroe has left KBA (he moved to Canada) so he will no longer be working on this project.

VII. Schedule Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, November 2, 2016 at 6:00 PM in the Administration Building Conference Room. The subcommittee was asked to remain after the meeting so they could decide on a day and time to meet.

VIII. Adjourn

Melania van der Hooff made a motion, seconded by Marie Glass and it was VOTED: To adjourn at 7:47 PM. In favor: Unanimous.

Donna J. Sieczkiewicz, Clerk