



**Strategic Facilities Committee Meeting #11
Teleconference / Board Room at Central Office
Garrett County Board of Education
40 S Second Street
Oakland, MD 21550**

Minutes of September 23, 2019

Facilitator: David Lever

Committee Members Present: Crystal Boal
Jim Browning
Patrick Damon
Karen DeVore
David Lever
Tracie Miller
Jennifer Paugh
Kevin Null
Carissa Rodeheaver
Nathan Sorber
William Swift
Richard Wesolowski
Duane Yoder

Dr. Lever called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m. A few of the committee members joined the meeting in the Board Room while the other members joined via teleconference. Joel Gallihue, AICP, Consultant to the Facilitator for student enrollments, joined the meeting via conference phone.

I. Introductions

Dr. David Lever, Facilitator, welcomed the committee members and made certain that committee members had received the meeting documents.

II. Community Feedback Sessions: Takeaways, Observations

The committee members discussed the community feedback sessions regarding the preliminary recommendations. The committee discussed some of the hostile comments, high emotions, and the misunderstanding of some terms and information. (ex. what deferred maintenance means.) Committee members discussed the many concerns received regarding the Head Start additions and inquired if this should be revisited, especially with the overcrowding issues on the southern end schools. Dr. Lever stated that Head Start would only be initiated if adequate space is available in the elementary schools. Mr. Yoder, committee member, stated that studies and data have shown there is great value, from the academic and behavioral standpoint, with students learning in early childhood programs. He

also stated there is additional value from the educational and community standpoint with having the Head Start programs in the elementary schools. A committee member also expressed concerns that the principals and staff were not consulted in advance of the preliminary recommendations.

III. Planning Recommendations

1. Revisions to Capital Program Recommendations:

Dr. Lever shared revisions to the Preliminary Strategic Plan recommendations that were presented to the Board of September 10, 2019. The revisions were based on the community comments and on the detailed development of the FY 2021 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) by Ms. Baker and the GCPS staff.

a. Handout 1 – Revised Six-Year Capital Funding Schedule

Dr. Lever shared the Facilities Strategic Plan Preliminary Capital Plan: Revised Tentative Funding Schedule. The report included an Option 1 for the Southern Middle/Broad Ford Elementary (SM/BFE) Project, but also an Option 2 for capital improvements of existing facilities if the SM/BFE Project does not proceed. Option 2 would include the Broad Ford Elementary School roof replacement, an entryway with security vestibule, and open space enclosures.

b. Handout 2 – Changes from September 10, 2019 Preliminary Recommendations

The second handout included revised preliminary capital improvement plan tentative funding schedule. Changes included:

- Disruptive behavior additions were removed from the school system’s draft Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and will be completed with operating funds.
- Board office relocation will be moved to Tier 2, and depends on the decision to redistrict/grade band reconfiguration.
- Southern Middle School / Board Ford Elementary School renovation and expansion would be broken into 3 tier phases: feasibility study (Tier 1), design (Tier 2), and construction (Tier 3).
- Head Start would be delayed one year
- Open Space will be deferred with first project to be completed in FY2022
- Crellin and Swan Meadow would be moved to Tier 3, depend on Board decision regarding school closure
- Building systems - Friendsville Elementary ceiling would be removed from CIP and completed under operating budget.
- Building systems - Route 40 boiler would be moved to tier 2, depending on decisions of possible school closure.

c. Handout 3 – Revised Funding Tiers Chart

The Preliminary Capital Plan for Tentative Project Tiers report further outlines the changes detailing the 3 project tiers and the total, State and local costs.

- Tier 1 projects include security vestibules, Disruptive Behavior, Head Start, Building Systems, including the Southern High School Building Envelope and the Northern High School Boiler and Pavement, and the Southern Middle /Broad Ford Elementary Project Feasibility Study.
- Tier 2 projects include open space conversion; building system renovations for the Yough Glades Elementary pavement project and the Route 40 boiler replacement; the Southern Middle /Broad Ford Elementary design; and relocating the Board Office.
- Tier 3 projects include the construction of the Southern Middle/Broad Ford Elementary Project; the Grantsville Elementary electrical project; Crellin Elementary School renovation and addition; and Swan Meadow School - to be determined.

d. Handout 4 – Southern Middle/Broad Ford Elementary Decision Tree

The Southern Middle/Broad Ford Elementary Project decision tree includes the project details and the timeline for the “Two in One” option (Option 1) and the option if the existing facilities remain (Option 2). The report also includes the timeline for Option 1 and the decisions that will affect the scope and funding for the project. These include redistricting options, grade band options, and school closure options.

2. Revisions to Funding Recommendations:

Handout 5 – Revisions to Funding Recommendations

The Funding Recommendations handout outlines the suggested revisions to the preliminary funding recommendations. The committee will recommend that the Board adjust the State-local capital funding formula during the 2020 legislative session. They will recommend that the decision to move the Board of Education offices on South Second Street to another location be deferred until after the February 2021 decision on the SM/BFES Project. They will propose that the recommendation for the Board to work with the County Commissioners to investigate a modest property tax increase be dropped at this time and be looked at after the February 2021 decision. The committee will recommend to identify joint Board/County functions and identify joint users of available school spaces.

IV. Discussion

The committee discussed the imbalance of students between the northern and southern ends schools, full or over-capacity enrollments in some elementary schools on the southern end and under-capacity elementary schools on the northern end. A committee member stated there are 2,200 empty seats in the county and somehow the schools need to be “right sized”. A committee member was concerned regarding redistricting at Broad Ford Elementary and the impact it could have on those 20 or so students and their families. A committee member also discussed a survey that was sent to teachers regarding the high emotional needs and behavioral problems. She stated the initial results of the survey show that staff are requesting further assistance and support for these students. Schools believe that there is a huge disconnect between schools and the administrators regarding what levels of support are needed.

Another committee member stated that the purpose of the Strategic Facilities Committee is to look at facilities and provide recommendations for the entire school system looking at the big picture. There are a lot of things that will flow from these recommendations, but in the interim it is clear that there are large deficiencies at Broad Ford Elementary and Southern Middle School and these two schools hold nearly 30% of the total school population. He stated something needs to be done for these two schools as their facility issues have been delayed for too long. He also felt that the local government should be doing more to support the school system.

The committee members discussed some concerns regarding the Broad Ford Elementary and Southern Middle School renovation/expansion project. Dr. Lever stated the feasibility study would start the process for the project and would detail much of this information that the committee and public have questions and concerns about. Included in the study would be how the two schools would operate separately but could share some common spaces like the cafeteria and gymnasium. He stated that this has been done in other school systems successfully such as St. Michaels Elementary/Middle/High Talbot County, MD.

Another committee member stated that the committee received some differing views from the community at the September listening sessions and it is their job to take this information into consideration but present options that will be in the best interest of the school system as a whole. She stated the committee has done a lot of work and

they're at a point where they can present possible options that are fiscally responsible for the Board to consider. She stated that the committee can make recommendations, but wouldn't be able to discuss the fine details and specific costs of the projects. She stated they can't come with a plan if they don't have any knowledge of funding capacities or the funding sources that will support the recommendations. Ideally the committee would present their options and a good timeline for the Board to consider.

The committee decided that it was necessary to schedule a meeting with the Board president and the County Commissioners to gather feedback regarding the funding needs of the school system. They agreed that it is prudent to determine the feasibility of the local government's capacity to fund the capital projects before moving forward with the final recommendations. Dr. Lever stated he would work with Dr. Paugh to get this meeting scheduled.

Dr. Lever reiterated he will work on a report to articulate the clear purpose and statement of values for the committee along with their final recommendations. He will post it on the google drive for their review and feedback. He stated he will also work on scheduling an informal meeting with the County Commissioners. He also stated that a committee meeting will be scheduled in two weeks based on the committee's responses to the next doodle poll.

A committee member requested that it be on record that this is the time to gather feedback from the principals. She also wants to ensure all of the recommendations align with the Board and administrators' goals and vision.

V. Adjournment

Nate Sorber made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Kevin Null seconded the motion. The committee unanimously approved the adjournment of the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 1:54 p.m.