

HOPKINTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Wednesday, March 29, 2011

Joint Working Session 7:30 PM

Middle School Library

Minutes

School Committee Chair Rebecca Robak opened the regular meeting at 8:00 PM with the following present:

Members:

Ms. Rebecca Robak, Chair
Ms. Jean Bertschmann, Vice Chair
Mrs. Nancy Alvarez Burdick, Member
Mr. Richard de Mont, Member
Mr. Troy Mick, Member

Also Present:

Dr. John Phelan, Superintendent
Dr. Mary Colombo, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Ralph Dumas, Director of Finance

Others: Members of the Hopkinton Elementary School Building Committee, Members of the Board of Selectman and Town Manager

I. Pledge of Allegiance

II. Working Session

Dr. Phelan shared that the purpose of the meeting was to draft a response to the MSBA regarding the failed STM and Failed ballot vote regarding the elementary school building project. The expected content of the response to the MSBA is to include the following:

- 1) A statement regarding commitment toward going forward for another vote
- 2) A communicated plan for getting to the next vote
- 3) A time line attached to that plan for getting to the next vote

A protracted conversation of the issues of the failed votes and next steps was had. The BOS Chair and his colleagues shared their impressions and suggestions regarding how to interpret the vote results and move forward. Ms. Robak agreed that "we heard" the communication from the community regarding the proposal put before them. The Chair explained that the first charge is to understand what the "No" meant and then spend time explaining to the community what process lead to the proposal being the preferred option and how the feasibility supported that preference. This explanation to the community is important for moving forward because it reviews the criteria decided upon for pursuing viable alternatives which will lead to the preferred option. Once that is done, the process for revising the criteria will be the next step toward developing alternatives, options and a future proposal that will be supported by a majority of the voters.

Ms. Robak added that prior to explaining this to the community; however, it is important to give a people a chance to weigh in on what lead them to not support the proposal. Mrs. Burdick shared that her review of comments shared with the Committee as well as comments shared online suggest that cost, location, design and grade configuration were major themes shared by voters thus far. Mr. Mick, Mr. de Mont and Mrs. Bertschmann acknowledged that many more voices should be heard from prior to moving forward.

Mr. Khumalo advised that the BOS vote on Ballot Question 2 (debt exclusion for new school) and Articles 36 and 54 which pertain to borrowing for the new school and the land transfer a Fruit Street school would have required. The Committee agreed with that advice and proceeded with those votes.

On a motion made by Mr. de Mont, seconded Mrs. Burdick, the School Committee voted to withdraw Question 2 (Ballot Question 2; “Shall the Town of Hopkinton be allowed to exempt from the provisions of Proposition two-and-one-half, so called, the amounts required to pay for the bonds issued in order to construct a new elementary school on Town-owned property located at 50 Fruit Street in Hopkinton to replace the existing Center Elementary School?”) from the Annual Town Meeting Warrant and not to place it on the Annual Town Election Ballot.

Vote: Favor: 5 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 0

On a motion made by Mr. deMont, seconded Mrs. Burdick, the School Committee voted to withdraw Article 36 (Article 36; “To see if the Town will vote to appropriate, borrow or transfer from available funds, a sum of money to be expended under the direction of the School Building Committee for the construction of a new elementary school on Town-owned property located at 50 Fruit Street in Hopkinton to replace the existing Center Elementary School, pursuant to a construction contract procured in accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 149, or a contract utilizing construction management at risk delivery method in accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 149A as determined by the School Building Committee which school facility shall have an anticipated useful life as an educational facility for the instruction of school children of at least 50 years, and for which the Town may be eligible for a school construction grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (“MSBA”). The MSBA’s grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any project costs the Town incurs in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the Town. Any grant that the Town may receive from the MSBA for the Project shall not exceed the lesser of (1) forty-four and seven tenths percent (44.70%) of eligible, approved project costs, as determined by the MSBA, or (2) the total maximum grant amount determined by the MSBA.” Fruit Street Elementary School Building Project) from the ATM Warrant.

Vote: Favor: 5 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 0

On a motion made by Mr. de Mont, seconded Mrs. Burdick, the School Committee voted to withdraw Article 54 (Article 54; “To see if the Town will vote to transfer the care, custody, management and control of the real property located at 50 Fruit Street in the Town of Hopkinton and shown as Tract 7 on a plan entitled copy of which is on file with the Town Clerk’s Office) to the School Committee for the purpose of constructing and maintaining a school building on such property in accordance with the provisions of the Project Scope and Budget Agreement entered into by and between the Board of Selectmen and the Massachusetts School Building Authority, dated February 25, 2011; provided, however, that the existing Department of Public Works facility on such property shall remain in the care, custody, management and control of the Department of Public Works until such time as the Elementary School Building Committee determines that such facility must be moved or demolished; and provided further that each of the existing athletic fields located on such property shall be maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department until such time as the Elementary School Building Committee determines that use of such field is incompatible with construction activities on the property or a Certificate of Occupancy is issued for the school building thereon, whichever occurs first, and, after the issuance of such Certificate of Occupancy, each such field shall be made available for the use of the Parks and Recreation Department as necessary; and provided further that any portion of the school building, school parking areas, school playing fields or other uses related to the school building that extends onto Tract 6, as shown on said “Fruit Street Conceptual Master Plan,” shall be maintained by the School Committee.”

Vote: Favor: 5 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 0

The BOS considered these votes as recommendations and took these votes as well.

With respect to Questions 3, 4 and 5 currently on the ATM, the BOS Chair shared that the citizens who submitted these petition Questions have asked for them to be withdrawn. The BOS has decided to take no action.

Work continued on drafting a response to the MSBA. The BOS voted to authorize the Superintendent and the Chair of the BOS Chair to draft and sign the response to the MSBA. The draft letter will be circulated to the members of both the BOS and SC for comments to be submitted to the BOS Chair. Following receipt of all feedback the Superintendent and BOS Chair will incorporate that feedback, sign the letter and submit it to the MSBA.

III. Executive Session - No session needed

IV. Adjournment

On a motion made by Mr. Mick, seconded by Mr. de Mont, the School Committee voted to adjourn the meeting.

Vote: Favor: 5 Opposed: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 0

The meeting was adjourned at 9:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Robak, Chair
Jean Bertschmann, Vice Chair