




'23 SEP 1 2:39PM

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, August 2, 2023 – 4:30 pm

This was a hybrid meeting of the Finance Committee held jointly with the Select Board and the OES School Committee in the Nauset Room at Town Hall, with remote participation provided by Zoom technology. Real-time public access was provided by Orleans Channel 18 on the Town website and cable television.

A meeting of the Orleans Select Board was held on Wednesday, August 2, 2023. Present were Select Board Chair Michael Herman, Vice Chair Mark Mathison and Board members Kevin Galligan, Andrea Reed and Meff Runyon. Town Manager Kim Newman and Ron Collins, Building & Facilities Manager, were also present.

Peggy O'Sullivan from Media Operations provided technical support for this meeting.

The Select Board addressed a number of other agenda items before convening the joint meeting focused on the OES Asset/Accessibility Study.

Gail Briere, Chair of the OES School Committee, convened her Committee for an interview with a candidate for a vacancy on the School Committee. Other OES Committee members present included Ian Mack (participating remotely), Ginger Marks and Sassy Richardson.

Joint Meeting with OES School Committee and the Finance Committee for the Capital Asset/Accessibility Presentation by Habeeb & Associates

The Finance Committee meeting was called to order at 5:25 pm by Finance Committee Chairman Nick Athanassiou. Also attending, and thus constituting a quorum were Committee Clerk Elaine Baird and Committee members Lynn Bruneau, Constance Kremer and Tony Pearl. Chris Kanaga, Ed Mahoney and Peter O'Meara were absent.

OES School Committee Chair Gail Briere briefly described the need for the study, noting that early in 2022, a number of age-related issues with the OES facility had caused the Town to consider a number of projects - HVAC work and windows for the 1988 section of the building and new roofs for the entire building. The MSBA approved partial funding for a study of the window and roof work and an OPM was named but it was quickly realized that the total cost of the 3 projects would trigger full compliance with MA GL 521 CMR (generically, the accessibility code for all public buildings). The study was stopped - without knowing the full cost of compliance. Instead, an ad hoc committee was formed to select a consultant to perform an "asset and accessibility" study. Habeeb & Associates was chosen to identify the cost of renovating the facility or building a new school based on their experience as well as MSBA criteria.

(Note: The Habeeb presentation document was provided with the Select Board meeting packet and the 83-page report was distributed separately and has since been posted on the Town website.)

Mr. Habeeb briefly reviewed the presentation document, which includes photos of the existing facility as well as cost estimates for Option 1 - the renovation of the facility (identifying 3 phases of priority renovations) and Option 2 - replacement of the existing facility. He then welcomed questions from the Board and Committees.

Ms. Briere asked about Option 1 - Renovation which shows costs for Priority 1, 2 and 3 renovations likely within 2, 5 and 10 years, respectively. A footnote says that the costs exclude \$8M-11M of structural modifications that are described in the Executive Summary of the full report. This \$8M-11M could/should be added to the \$44.6M total for the Renovation estimate - right?

Mr. Habeeb - yes/true. Looking at current codes/new structural codes. Could become an issue potentially (thus new building code - structural code - could require compliance and thus additional costs c/be required).

Mr. Athanassiou - why wouldn't you include these costs here? Mr. Habeeb - can't fully determine without exploring more.

Mr. Athanassiou - reading the full report - there could be even more expenses (reference to potential to find problems underground). Mr. Habeeb - yes/possible - can't know.

Ms. Bruneau - along the same lines - wouldn't a new building have same/similar underground issues? Were "Haz-Mat" issues considered in determining the estimate for "demolition" in the "New Building" estimate or in the "Renovation" estimate? Mr. Habeeb - inflation was included in the estimates but not "unknowns". Re demolition - the "best number" was used - aware of some potential "Haz-Mat" issues but could be more.

Mr. Galligan - recognizes this as a very preliminary assessment; however, very surprised re new footprint and reference to \$4.2M for temporary classroom complex. Why not build on a new footprint and then demo old building and then restore old space - like NRHS project is doing?

Ms. Kremer asked about embedded carbon considerations. Mr. Habeeb re environmental considerations - less of an issue if keep existing building. If build a new building, add more carbon to overall environment.

Ms. Reed asked about potential "life" of a renovated building. Mr. Habeeb - if a comprehensive renovation - could be 40-50 years - but would still need to maintain it.

Ms. Reed - thus same value for investment dollars as for a new building.

Ms. Richardson - question for Ron Collins (Orleans Building & Facilities Manager) re the Town's status as a "Green Community". Was Mr. Habeeb aware of the Town as a "Green Community" - and what impact on OES renovation or new construction?

Mr. Collins - reference to "Green Community" incentives for things like heat pumps, electric systems, etc. Noted that there w/be increased electrical demand if we go "Green" and go away from fossil fuels. Reference to 1956 restrooms - would have to knock out walls and fixtures and floors. In the main 1956-1960 building sections, the underground cast iron services are beyond their useful life. New (more) electrical service wouldn't fit into existing space. Driveway is too

narrow for a new/bigger transformer. Underground utilities - would have to dig up whole ground floor for new utilities. Re renovation - reference to "wind loading" - must address this with structural improvements (for hurricane force winds). Earthquakes less likely on the Cape - but hurricanes/wind are very likely. Have to do the structural work in a renovation to have comparable to a new building.

Ms. Richardson - what about compliance with "Green" code? Mr. Collins - would need to comply with updated building code - thus "Green" code.

Mr. Galligan - re Option 1 (renovation) - more discussion on this is needed. (But for Option 2) - but why put in trailers and then build a new building adjacent to the building and then later demo the old building? New HVAC is going in now - \$1.5M - 10 year life. If we do the Option 1 - Priority 1 work now - but then the new HVAC work would be thrown away? Much to talk about.

Mr. Mack - re the HVAC work - we're currently investing to make the school safe for our children. Are we limited on what we spend now? Ms. Briere confirmed - yes - HVAC work is \$1.4M. Mr. Mack referred to the 3-year window on spending (total dollars on a rolling 3-year cycle is what determines spending limits). If something else fails - we would have \$1.6M. If there were a catastrophe and we need \$2M - would we have to bring the building up to code - to make it accessible in order to fix the problem?

Mr. Habeeb - the MSBA doesn't grant waivers for catastrophes. If you have made a commitment to do the work in a defined timeframe - he has seen an appeal process and a "half" waiver in that case. Bottom line - public buildings should be accessible. It is very hard to get variances (waivers).

Mr. Mack - (recognizing that this is the first meeting/discussion) - but need to move forward - can't discuss this for years as we have sometimes.

Mr. Athanassiou - we need an emergency plan regardless of option chosen (eg, if a hurricane flattened the school tomorrow, we need a plan. Need "sequencing" for emergencies.

Mr. Runyon - in professional field of school design, is there an optimum size that an elementary school of 250 students w/ require? Mr. Habeeb - standard used in planning schools - 12.5 acres.

Mr. Runyon - for the School Committee - as we open discussions about the facility - is there going to be any looking at more out-of-the-box planning - eg, is there a partnership opportunity with a neighboring town re elementary schools - or move a grade or 2 to the Middle School? Will those questions be explored by anyone?

Ms. Briere - she will take a stab at answering the question - to make him/all aware: Nauset Public Schools consists of 5 separate districts - 5 separate school committees. OES only has jurisdiction over Orleans. In order for anything to be done with another town, it would have to be at a higher level.

Mr. Runyon - Select Board level? Is that what you mean?

Ms. Briere - No - school committees are in control. They are open to out-of-the-box remedies. But Orleans can only control OES. They are the school committee for OES. The Region is a

different district. Brewster is entirely different district Even if there were discussions around these ideas, unless those school committees went along with it, we have no control over it.

Ms. Bruneau - along those lines - if it were Brewster - how would it work? If those 2 school committees got together and talked - even to float the idea? And who/what is the “higher level”? Where is “governance” defined for the elementary schools the way the Town Bylaw defines the “governance” relationship between the Town and the Nauset District? There’s nothing in the Town Bylaws or Policies re the relationship between the Town and OES - though (Ms. Bruneau) didn’t look at MA General Laws.

Ms. Briere said that she can’t answer the question (about “higher level”).

Mr. Herman noted that the discussion at tonight’s meeting is about the Study and that a follow-up meeting would be needed. Focus tonight on the Study, then take it home, digest it and come back together - all 3 bodies (groups) and move the conversation to another level if we could.

Ms. Reed agrees with the way forward but before we get together again - what do we need to know that we don’t have in front of us now? Then the next meeting w/be more productive.

Mr. Pearl re the Study - referring to new construction, especially on the existing site. Does the \$11M anticipate everything that c/be found? All negative experiences? How much more c/be found wrong? Mr. Habeeb - they tried to include enough in the cost (for a new building). Mr. Pearl - not asking for him to be clairvoyant. Mr. Habeeb - today’s number with inflation built in, noting that often numbers rise. Mr. Pearl - re inflation - given today’s costs of materials and labor - those costs are often different from “standard” inflation - is an inflation factor of 5% enough? Mr. Habeeb - can’t answer; premature to calculate impacts of construction/inflation.

Ms. Bruneau - back to Ms. Richardson’s questions/comments about “Green” communities - referred to the new/pending opt-in specialization building code that Orleans may consider for adoption that would be effective next July 1, 2024 if the Town adopted it - presumably that new opt-in specialization code would apply to this new building. What about consideration for a “passive” building”, etc?

Mr. Habeeb - they did not anticipate a “net-zero” energy building; that would increase building costs; however, they did anticipate an all-electric building. There c/be different levels of energy efficiency. He is not familiar with what the Town is moving toward. It can be a costly proposition to create net-zero public buildings.

Mr. Mathison noted that this is likely something that will come up. He referred to a recent study for the MA Home Builders Association and others (by MIT) - an extensive report that he will circulate to those interested. The report noted that there could be a 2.4% cost increase for compliance with the new opt-in specialization code for a multi-family building.

Mr. Athanassiou referred to the Renovation numbers - is it worth doing (a renovation)? Based on Ron’s (Collins) comments on the difficulties with a renovation . . .

Mr. Habeeb - yes, it would be difficult. But if the Town can afford it and wants a new building, then that’s a good way to go. If you’d rather try to renovate what you have, that’s an alternate. Is

it worth it? That is a value judgment that I'm not sure that I should be making for the Town of Orleans.

Ms. Kremer with a question for Mr. Collins regarding renovation drawbacks. "Tell us about the present use of the school - regarding the transformer and comparison of electric usage between OES and Town Hall. What does OES need right now? Are we over or under utilizing electric resources now?"

Mr. Collins: now - OES is using it to the limit; Town Hall is under. If we're going to a "Green Community", we will need bigger service than now. In addition - any new equipment w/ not fit in the present location. Also re the renovation - some things cannot be renovated - eg, the 1988 corridor is 7'2" in the K-2 Wing - no space to go up; w/be w/in 6" of trusses. Can't renovate everything to current code. Renovation of electric systems would need to look to the future.

Mr. Galligan agreed with the need to park this (discussion) and dedicate (another) full session to options and exploring questions. Something he didn't see in the full report - (MA) building code is currently/nw going through review with a base code update effective January 1. Are the numbers in the reports based on this new (January 1) code?

Mr. Habeeb - I believe they are - the code was to have been effective (this past) July 1.

Ms. Richardson noted that she had checked the MSBA website and found a 6/14/23 memo that speaks to "Green" schools. She reviewed the memo to understand the MSBA's expectations regarding needs/compliance requirements for renovations/new buildings.

Mr. Athanassiou - one last thought - the Option 1 numbers and the Option 2 numbers are basically the same. If we were to decide today - it would not be on just the basis of the numbers.

Mr. Herman said there are many unknowns in Option 1 and some (but fewer) in Option 2.

Ms. Kremer - aside from the numbers, what is clear in renovation vs. build - the new building would be substantially smaller (by 5500 SF) than the current building with less space for music, less space for art - always the first to go. A smear cafeteria, fewer classrooms - though modern technology. These are key things to remember from this report.

Ms. Reed - building on question - in any way that we invest - what are we building for our community? Reference to Art, etc. That's up to us - this (report) isn't the plan that we're endorsing. That is the work going forward - how to build to our values - both in performance and long term environment and building to educate our students. We aren't hearing some of this in our discussion (building to achieve all of these goals). What do we need to know before we continue this conversation? No value discussions about what we want. What flexibility - eg, (a building that could) function as a shelter, other (types of) classrooms or admin space or senior space. What adaptations for future use? We haven't scratched the surface.

Ms. Briere requested that the full Study/report be posted on the Town website. The Powerpoint presentation doesn't give the full picture re the pros and cons of each Option. The Community is going to weigh in very heavily. They have an investment in this building so it w/be best for them to have the full report.

Mr. Herman agreed. The full report will be posted on the Town website tomorrow (8/3/23). (He/they) will work toward a September date to meet (again) together. He expects feedback from stakeholders so (all will be) prepared for the next meeting - to go deeper/with more questions.

Mr. Runyon re comments from Mr. Kremer and Ms. Reed - any new school should offer at least equivalent curriculum and programs as OES is offering now - not consider reducing any of this.

Mr. Herman noted that Option 2 includes planning for a 40% increase in enrollment over the current enrollment (232 students vs. today's 145).

Mr. Habeeb said that the current facility is not the most efficient - eg, "circulation". Thus there is some redundancy in space. The new building includes programming for everything in the existing facility - but it eliminates the inefficiencies.

Ms. Richardson - thanks for Habeeb & Associates; reference to working with them on the 2014 facility study. Mr. Habeeb - reference to strong, forward-thinking number of Boards/Committees in Orleans.

Mr. Galligan - thanks also to NRSD Superintendent Brooke Clenchy and NRSD School Committee Finance Sub-Committee Chair Judith Schumacher - both of whom are in the audience at tonight's meeting. Their presence helps to assure voters that this is a matter of great importance.

Ms. Briere - thanks to the Select Board and the Finance Committee for coming together for the presentation - for collaboration on this important issue.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn the Finance Committee by Ms. Bruneau and seconded by Ms. Kremer. The vote was unanimous, 5-0-0 (there was no need for a roll-call vote as all Fin Comm members participating in the meeting were physically present in the Nauset Room).

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The joint meeting adjourned at approximately 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Bruneau, Chair Emerita

The documents listed below are all in the Finance Committee Drop Box except as noted:

1. August 2, 2023 Finance Committee meeting agenda
2. Habeeb & Associates OES Capital Asset Assessment presentation document (Select Board meeting packet for 8/2/23, Select Board website)
3. Habeeb & Associates OES Capital Asset Assessment Final Report - July 27, 2023 (OES website)
4. Nick Athanassiou "Thoughts on OES Habeeb Study"
5. Lynn Bruneau "Comments/Questions re Habeeb & Associates Capital Asset Assessment" for OES / 8/2/23"

The minutes for the August 2, 2023 Finance Committee meeting were reviewed and approved at the August 31, 2023 meeting. **Motion to approve by Ms. Baird; second by Mr. Pearl. The vote was 5-0-1 with Mmes. Baird and Bruneau and Messrs. Athanassiou, Kanaga and Pearl all voting “aye” by roll-call. Mr. O’Meara chose to abstain as he was absent from the 8/2/23 meeting.** Ms. Kremer had not yet arrived at the 8/31/23 meeting in time for the review and approval of the minutes.

