

Chelmsford School Committee

Work Session Notes

January 2, 2024

Meeting Time: 6:00 p.m.

Meeting Location: CPS Central Administration Office, 230 North Road, Conference Room

School Committee Members Present: Donna Newcomb (Chair), Dennis King (Vice Chair), Susan Mackinnon (Secretary), John Moses, and Maria Santos

Also Present: Jay Lang (Superintendent), Linda Hirsch (Assistant Superintendent), Joanna Johnson-Collins (Director of Business & Finance)

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The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Newcomb.

This meeting being a work session where no old or new business would be voted on, the meeting was neither televised nor recorded.

Discussion of school enrollment report and educational facilities planning:

The MSBA Eligibility period for Parker Middle school will officially commence on April 1, 2024. A number of matters will need to be addressed in the 180-day eligibility period between April 1 and December 31, 2024.

Committee members discussed working with the superintendent and his staff to develop a comprehensive presentation on the status of the potential project, including how we got here, the various phases of MSBA programming, and what potential outcomes we may realize for Chelmsford because of this potential building project. Superintendent Lang will take the lead on preparing the PowerPoint presentation with talking points that all members can use with their committee liaison assignments, so everyone is presenting the same information publicly. We will aim to have this completed by the end of January.

After Eligibility period, the next MSBVA phase is a Feasibility study. Town meeting will need to appropriate approximately \$ 1.5 million to fund this work beyond January 1, 2025. We need to decide whether April or October 2024 Town Meeting is the most appropriate meeting to seek the funding commitment. It looks like the April town meeting may be the best, as that is when financial commitments are typically presented. Superintendent Lang will coordinate the Town Manager Cohen and get back to the Committee with a recommendation.

The feasibility study would include architectural plans for at least three options to replace the current Parker Middle School. Options to be considered include:

- a) Replace Parker with a new grades 5 & 6 school. McCarthy would continue to operate as a middle school as well.
- b) Replace Parker with a new grades 4, 5, & 6 school. This would free up space in the elementary schools.
- c) Build a new grades 5, 6, 7, & 8 school for the entire town and re-purpose the McCarthy School.

Topics to consider:

Would the TV studio be considered in the project? How will we communicate to town residents the benefit of a new school to the community? Communicate the very real concern of increasing school enrollments.

Next steps:

Prepare presentations to town groups such as PTOs, Chelmsford Business Alliance, town committees and boards, and consider public forums. Schedule appointments with groups for February and March. Host a community forum. Talking points on a CTM program.

Town Meeting presentation in April.

Dennis King made a motion to adjourn the meeting. John Moses seconded. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.