

**School Building Committee**  
**Westport Community School**  
**DATE: Thursday, March 12, 2015**  
**TIME: 6:00 p.m.**  
**PLACE: WHS Media Center**

**PRESENT:** Dianne Baron, Jon Bernier, David Cass, Ann Marie Dargon, Michael Duarte, Michelle Duarte, Jim Hartnett, Tim King, Robert Medeiros, Warren Messier, Robert Nogueira, Joseph Pacheco, Carolyn Pontes, Tracy Priestner, Kevin Rioux, John Tunney, Sue Ubiera, Antone Vieira, Antonio Viveiros

**ABSENT:** Thomas Gastall, Bill Lawton, Nelson Terra, Cheryl Tutalo, Woodrow Wilson

**I. Call to Order** – Dr. Dargon called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**II. Informational Agenda**

A. Organize and Define the Purpose and Scope of the Work – Dr. Dargon welcomed the members of the newly formed School Building Committee. She informed them that the MSBA requires a committee for the project and that they will need to elect a Chair and decide who will be voting members. The BOS, in conjunction with the School Committee will appoint this committee and its members. Each member will need to be sworn in at the Town Hall.

Dr. Dargon presented each of the members with a notebook that included a PowerPoint presentation and MSBA documentation. Dr. Dargon briefly went through the PowerPoint and spoke about the PCBs at the WMS, that six (6) of the seven (7) deliverables had been completed and sent to the MSBA, the need for a feasibility study, the bid for the eight (8) modulars that will be placed at the MAC. Dr. Dargon also informed the members of the reconfiguration of the grade levels: MAC – grades Pre-K -2; WES – grades 3-6; and WHS – grades 7-12. The MSBA had invited Westport to attend the eligibility meeting in Boston and fourteen (14) attended. Dr. Dargon informed the members that the ADA issues at the WMS were also stipulated in the SOI that was sent to the MSBA. Once funding is secured for the feasibility study, the MSBA will meet with members of the committee and recommend whether the feasibility study will be granted or not. Also included in the notebook was the School Building Grant Program, the Compliance Certification, the Enrollment Projections, and the Maintenance and Capital Plans.

Dr. Dargon explained that under the Maintenance and Capital Plan we could get additional funding from the MSBA. At this time, 46% would be reimbursed, but with the Maintenance and Capital Plan there could be an additional 1 to 1 ½% added to that percentage for reimbursement.

At this time, each of the committee members present, introduced him or her self and spoke briefly about their background and why they wanted to be part of the committee.

Dr. Dargon asked Mr. John Tunney, who has been involved in a school building project, if he would speak on the process. Dr. Dargon informed the members that she had been part of one in the past, but the MSBA has since changed some of the

procedures during the past five (5) year.

Mr. Tunney stressed the importance of planning well and having as few change orders as possible. These changes are expensive and hard to explain to the School Committee, BOS, and the FinCom. He also stated that it can be difficult to get the residents involved. In Fairhaven, a new school had not been built in fifty (50) years. As for the committee, the committee worked well together because they were all working toward the same goal.

Mr. Tony Vieira stated that he was involved in a school building project in Acushnet. He stressed that the committee needs to be structured and there needs to be more involvement from the community. The committee members also need to get the community on board with the feasibility study. Mrs. Tracy Priestner agreed that the community needs to be kept informed and they need to rally their support.

There was a discussion concerning “model design” schools. In the past, if a “model design” was used to build a school, the Town could get additional funding from the MSBA.

Mr. Vieira spoke about the article concerning the feasibility study for the Town warrant. The committee needs to be committed to bring the information forward to the voters at the Town meeting. There is \$700,000 from Certified Free Cash that the members would like to utilize for the feasibility study. A portion of these funds will be reimbursed by the MSBA.

Mr. Michael R. Sullivan informed the members that an “Elevator Speech” is needed for the members. They need to sell the study and the building of a new school. The community needs to know that the WMS could be shut down by the EPA at any time, if readings are too high. Mr. Sullivan stated that it make no sense to put more money into the WMS.

Mrs. Priestner stated that in the past, babysitting services had been provided by volunteers during the Town meeting. If this service was offered again, more parents may attend. Mr. Vieira stated that the School Committee needs to promote a vision for the enrollment and the number of schools needed in the Town. Mr. Tunney asked if any polling had been done within the Town or if any marketing strategies had been thought about to promote the project.

Dr. Dargon spoke about the successes at Town meetings compared to voting at the ballots. If all parents came out at Town meeting, there is a good chance of the feasibility study passing.

Mrs. Dianne Baron suggested promoting the project through public forums or coffees.

There was a discussion concern where the article for the feasibility study would be placed in the warrant. Some had concerns that the article was placed at number 27 and should be moved closer to the start of the meeting. Mr. Tunney informed the members that in Fairhaven their strategy was to get the voters list and make phone calls. He also suggested hand picking community leaders, not politicians, to promote the project.

Mr. Warren Messier stated the article being placed at number 27 on the warrant, is aligned with the section for committee monies. The community needs to be informed and questions need to address before and at the Town meeting about the feasibility study. The community needs to see the school as a State of the Arts project and not the Taj Mahal.

There was further discussion concerning offering babysitting services at the Town meeting and Mr. Vieira speaking with the Town Clerk and Board of Selectmen to move the article for the feasibility study up on the warrant.

Dr. Dargon informed the members that the School Building Committee will need to be approved by both the School Committee and the Board of Selectmen. Once that is done, each of the members will need to be appointed to the committee. The membership list needs to be sent to the MSBA by March 27, 2015. Dr. Dargon would like to see the approval of the School Building Committee to be placed on the March 23 Board of Selectmen agenda. It will be placed on the School Committee's agenda for March 25.

At the next meeting, a Chair, who will be the facilitator, needs to be voted on. Dr. Dargon informed the members that she and the School Committee members will be their support system and will do much of the work. She will also need to know who would like to become voting members for the committee. She reassured the members, that non-voting members will still be able to contribute to the committee. The committee can choose to have all members vote or only a few. Once the shovel hits the ground, the project could take from 22-26 months before completion and meetings could be called on a 48 hour notice.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 24 at 6:00 p.m. in the WHS Media Center.

**III. Comments and Statements from the Public/Citizen's Participation** – None at this time.

**IV. Adjourn** – Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.