

**MINUTES of the Building Committee Meeting held on Tuesday, August 23, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.
in the central office Board of Education meeting room**

Members of the 22-23 Building Committee

Jack Wesa ----- EDC and Resident
Ron Millovitch ----- Former First Selectman
Jim MacBride ----- Grandparent and Resident
Brian Kallio ----- - Director of Maintenance and Facilities
Adam S. Burrows – Superintendent of Schools
Kate Beuparlant -- Board of Education Chair

Copy to: Amy L. Suffoletto ----- VES Principal
Lloyd A. Johnson, PhD – Dir. Student Services
Darlena Loranger ----- Ex. Asst. to Supt.
Tracey Hanson ----- First Selectwoman
Jody Grenier ----- Fire Marshall

Membership, Purpose of the Building Committee, and projected sequence of events

The Superintendent thanked the members for volunteering to be appointed to a Building Committee. The town recently received \$102,911 of state reimbursement for eligible expenses related to the oil tank replacement. Federal ARP ESSER III grant funds have already been approved by the State Department of Education for a new gymnasium HVAC system and security upgrades. There is always the possibility of the release of new grant opportunities, especially to improve air quality, safety in schools, and learning loss from COVID.

The purpose of this committee is to guide the processes of completing small projects. The projected sequence of events requires some projects being completed during this school year and others waiting for completion in the summer of 2023.

The following is from the 8-11-22 Board of Education MINUTES:

The Voluntown Board of Selectman recently approved a request by the Superintendent to establish a Building Committee to review the completion of upcoming smaller projects. A state reimbursement of \$102,911 for the oil tank project has been received. Federal ESSER grant balances and potentially other funding and/or grant resources may also be available. *It is the intention to have the Building Committee make a presentation at a future town meeting to approve use of the oil tank replacement funds, after the committee has gone through steps to secure the best prices.*

The following Board of Education decision also documents our efforts to be transparent about the process for using reimbursement funds and grants allocations.

MOTION # 20 (8/11/22) was made (Wicks/Thompson) to verify the Board of Selectmen's appointment of Jack Wesa, Ron Millovitch, James MacBride, Brian Kallio, Kate Beuparlant and Adam Burrows to a Building Committee to review the following projects to meet the educational/program goals of our Preschool through 8th grade programs at Voluntown Elementary School and its Central Office: asbestos abatement, A/C for the gym, security upgrades and other school system improvements, as needed. All in favor; motion passes.

Our Building committee needs a Chair:

Motion #1 on 8-23-22 by Ron Millovitch and Second by Jim MacBride for Jack Wesa to serve as Chairperson. Motion unanimously approved.

Projects Under Consideration:

Asbestos

VES is an older building and has an asbestos abatement inspection completed by an outside consultant every five years. Small amounts of asbestos may be present in some of the floor tiles in the building. There is also an overhead pipe in the ceiling of the hallway in the 1953 section of the school. Brian Kallio will contact the consultant for the EASTCONN area of Connecticut to complete a site visit. He will extend an invitation to meet with this committee to review any recommendation for asbestos abatement. This project will need to wait until the summer of 2023 because students are not allowed in a building during an asbestos removal project.

Removal of a Hallway Carpets

The hallway carpets need to be replaced. The Board of Education has requested a review to replace the hallway carpeting with tiles. The 1953 section of the hallways may have small amounts of asbestos in the older tiles. Brian Kallio will review this issue with the asbestos abatement consultant to determine the best approach of removing these tiles and the old carpeting. It is our goal to install tiles in the hallways.

Video Surveillance

We currently have about 36 video cameras in and around the VES. This system uses older technology with a cumbersome way of accessing information. The installation of new cameras to cover the Constitution Field side of VES and the recently installed pavilion have been placed on hold until we secure quotes for better equipment with quick accessibility of security purposes. Adam Burrows is in the process of hopefully securing three quotes and will present information at the 9-20-22 Building Committee meeting.

Security Upgrades

Outside access doors will need some upgrades to the newest technology to allow quick access in the school office to be immediately aware of an open door. Our faculty, staff, and students have had many successes in maintaining safety, but an upgrade of our security equipment is needed.

We are also reviewing an upgrade in access cards for all faculty and staff. Our school system has received compliments with the effectiveness of the faculty and staff in completing safety drills and compliance with the procedures.

It was noted that new security grant funds might be available on a competitive basis. Voluntown will seek to complete an application, if released.

Telephone System

Our current telephone system has had an increase in poor quality issues and there is a need for replacement of telephones and improvement in sound quality. Jim MacBride indicated he will check with Jim Ward regarding the system. He will also check with COMCAST to document the current status of our equipment, service, and ways to improve our telephones.

A/C for the Gymnasium

The airflow within the gymnasium needs to be improved. Our school system submitted a federal grant application and \$78,000 has already been approved for the installation of a new HVAC system in the gymnasium. Adam Burrows mentioned this project may require the services of a structural engineer to assess the strength of the gym roof for the weight of a new HVAC system. He also noted recent price increases may require a transfer of funds from another part of the approved federal grant to complete the gym HVAC project. We are waiting for approval of the reallocation of federal funds. It is our intention to fully fund this project with federal funds.

Why are we installing a new HVAC system in the gymnasium?

There is a need for better air flow in the gym. As Brian Kallio pointed out, the current air handlers are not efficient. We have made repairs on the existing older overhead fans to improve air circulation.

The current ventilation system is very noisy and interferes with programs using the gymnasium.

The gym is used as an emergency shelter and increased heat waves now show a need for a place where citizens receive relief from excessive heat.

Our gym has also become the location of any voting.

There is a significant environmental change for students using the gym for lunch, Physical Education, and other events, etc. A new HVAC system would allow for equitable environments throughout the building.

Central office HVAC upgrades

The white house which is the Central Office of the school system is now 35 years old. The older HVAC system required a cleaning-out of the vents this past winter which offered some improvement. It would be helpful for this committee to arrange for an assessment of what facility upgrades may need to be made in the white house.

Other Projects and Funding Sources

There have been several smaller repair projects that recently required using the operating budget to make repairs. The current #2600-430 Repair and Maintenance Services approved budget for 22-23 is \$50,940. Unanticipated repairs have occurred since this budget was approved and we are now looking at cuts in other parts of the budget for maintenance repairs. The Board of Education reviews monthly expenditures and is aware of changes in the budget or the annual spending plan. Savings in tuitions or other accounts allow for the reallocation of funds. In 17 budget yeas we have never needed to go back to the town to ask for additional allocations.

This Building Committee is using grants and other sources to complete projects. The Capital Improvement Plan for the school system did not list any requests that might increase the local property tax. All projects would seek to use outside funds or be completed by using the school operating budget. Through research this committee may decide to make a recommendation for budget items to add to the 23-24 BOE Budget Proposal. Short term borrowing may also be an option as a last resort. This requires approval by Board of Education and would become part of a proposal for the operating budget. Our current 22-23 budget has a last payment of \$25,000 for a major electricity upgrade through a special Eversource program for reducing electricity costs.

The next meeting of the Building Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, September 20, 2022, at 11:00 a.m. in the central office.

The meeting adjourned at 11:26 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Adam S. Burrows

Special Note:

Tracey Hanson contacted me on 8-25-22 about a Town Meeting during the week of September 26, 2022. She asked if our Building Committee needed to make a presentation. I stated we just had our first organizational meeting yesterday. I mentioned our Building Committee will let her know when we are ready for a future Town Meeting. She agreed that we would need to have specifics about the uses of the \$102,911. I replied that it is in our goals to have specific allocations for telephone upgrades, video surveillance/security improvements, asbestos abatement/hallway carpeting, etc.

(ASB on 9-1-22)