

**Arlington School Committee**  
**Facilities Subcommittee Meeting, September 14, 2022**  
**-DRAFT Minutes-**

**Attendance**

**Subcommittee members:** Jeff Thielman (Chair), Kirsi Allison-Ampe, M.D., Jane Morgan (via zoom)  
**District administration:** Dr. Elizabeth Homan (Superintendent), Michael Mason (CFO)  
**Other Attendees** None

Mr. Thielman called the meeting to order at 5:07 p.m.

**Minutes**

The minutes from the subcommittee meeting on March 21, 2022, were not available for review. Mr. Thielman will distribute them to committee members this week, and a vote on them will take place at a future meeting.

**Playground Updates**

Mr. Mason gave an update on the playgrounds:

- Work on all playgrounds is scheduled to finish by the end of October 2022.
- The Bishop playground should be completed by the end of September.
- Stratton's playground will be done by mid-October.
- Due to supply chain issues, work will be completed on the Peirce by the end of October. A wood fiber mulch will be in place when the project ends. At the end of the school year, the town will close the Peirce playground to allow for the installation of a rubber surface. The cost is \$30,000, and the Town is looking at various sources of funding.

Dr. Allison-Ampe asked when we would receive a report indicating which playgrounds are owned by the Town and which ones are owned by the school district. Mr. Mason said he will get this to the committee shortly.

**Ottoson Middle School Capital Needs Assessment**

The committee discussed a report from On-Site Insight evaluating the capital needs of the Ottoson Middle School.

At the start of the meeting, members discussed the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) criteria for reviewing Statements of Interest for the core program. The committee noted that the MSBA considers "the age of the building, the amount of space per student, the current and projected

enrollment, the condition of the major systems of the school, the general environment of the building, and the appropriateness of the building to the educational mission.”

Committee members made these comments:

- The major concern the district leadership and some members have is that the school is not designed for the education of middle school students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The building has an early 20th-century design and is inconsistent with the educational designs of our K-5 schools, the Gibbs School, and the high school. Those who spoke about this issue said the building is not appropriate for OMS’ educational mission; this meets one of the MSBA’s criteria for a Statement of Interest. The report, however, does not address this.
- The committee discussed the need to elaborate further on the deficiencies of the educational design.
- Dr. Homan spoke with Town leaders who are reluctant to support significant investment in capital improvements at the Ottoson if the district is going to move forward with an application to participate in the MSBA process.
- Dr. Homan and Mr. Mason spoke about some of the assumptions in the report, which identifies \$13 million in recommended upgrades over the next 20 years. Their sense, after speaking with Town leaders is that the costs will be higher because:
  - Estimates are often lower, due to inflation,
  - The full depth of challenges in the facility is not known, and
  - The report does not reflect the Town’s sustainability and electrification priorities.
- A point was made that we are scheduled to see a leveling of enrollment district-wide. Enrollment is considered when entering the MSBA process.
- The group decided further discussion was necessary and that it would be premature to prepare to submit a Statement of Interest by April of 2023; it is more appropriate to have broader discussions in preparation for a potential SOI submission in April of 2024.
- It is not clear what impact the AHS Building project would have on a potential April 2024 SOI submission.

Mr. Mason said some items in the On-Site Insight report will be submitted to the Capital Planning Committee, including:

- Addressing ceiling tile issues in the blue gym, roof framing in the wood gym, and improving insulation,
- New gym dividers,
- Replacement of interior heating and ventilation units
- Replacement of the central system of paging and announcements
- Electrification upgrades
- Boiler control replacements, and
- Fixing and repairing exterior masonry walls and other building envelope improvements.

The last two (boiler control replacements and repairing the exteriors and other parts of the building envelope) cost almost \$4 million.

**Gibbs Middle School**

Dr. Homan wanted the committee to be aware of increasing space constraints at Gibbs. The school moved to three lunch periods because of the relatively small size of the cafeteria. We are likely to see an increase in the enrollment of 6<sup>th</sup> graders in 2024-25 to the degree that we may need extra classroom space. The district's submission to the Capital Planning Committee calls for the leasing of modular classrooms and an additional classroom at the school. Dr. Homan will decide later this fall whether the requested space is still needed.

**Motion to Adjourn**

At 6:01 p.m., Dr. Allison-Ampe moved to adjourn the meeting. Second by Ms. Morgan. Motion approved unanimously.