

MASCONOMET REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
20 Endicott Road, Boxford, MA 01921

District Capital Investment Task Force Meeting

April 23, 2019, 7:00 p.m. - Masconomet Administration Building

MINUTES

Present: David Rivers—Chair; members John Spencer, Susan Givens, Dot Flaherty, school committee member Zillie Bhaju. Absent: member Kosta Prentakis

D Rivers called the meeting to order at 7:10pm.

D Rivers asked for additional capital requests that might be folded into the upcoming capital work.

D Flaherty said that she has two major asks: furniture and classroom modifications: tables, chairs, bean bags - but not traditional desks. She would like to have learning spaces configured to support new teaching techniques. For example, movable partition walls and flexible project spaces. Although out of scope, she would love to expand the middle school to include 6th and even 5th grades. A difficult problem is that in the middle school, kids are either coming or going. Students do not have much sense of belonging in middle school.

D Rivers pointed out that Masconomet could integrate administrative space into that expansion.

D Flaherty cited other schools that have a “mall” – a relatively small space, for cafes, repair shops, art/craft center, bank – a concept that has been successfully integrated into other schools.

S Givens noted that Masconomet had developed a similar concept at one time. The concept was lost with turnover and shifting priorities at the Principal and Superintendent level. She said that the high school could really use a collaboration space. Perhaps repurpose the courtyard as a collaboration space with multiple hallways to connect it to the building. It would consist of mostly maker spaces, usable for every subject area, for pull-out work, interdisciplinary project based learning. There would be enough room for four large maker spaces.

D Flaherty said that inside the classrooms, she wants to move to a facilitator model, where the teacher collaborates with, rather than lectures to the students.

S Givens said that a space usage plan is key we need to know what outcome we’re after, and then work toward making the space into something that will help achieve that outcome.

J Spencer said that it is always nice to have a plan in place, in case an opportunity to put it in place arises.

S Givens - once we’ve developed a plan, MEF could probably help too. She envisioned a future where junior year could be a capstone project for students, senior year could be a co-op, transitional experience. The district would need to develop deep partnerships with businesses.

D Flaherty said that in that model, we could have a seminar every month with the seniors, to share what they've learned.

D Rivers asked how the district can get there, without derailing the repair work.

S Givens said that the path to get there is something the new superintendent would be driving. What do you want your graduates to be able to do, and then design your programs to produce those results. Right now the educational model is not grounded toward our vision - that's something that needs to change.

D Flaherty suggested having groups of departments, effectively de-silo-ing them, so that they can have deep collaboration.

S Givens said that bringing in the reps from the BOSs has worked very well - we've been able to get the voices of the other stakeholders, and also bring them along in the thinking of our investments. The goal for the next administrative team would be to come up with the new model for delivering education, and determine what capital projects and specific outcomes are needed to enable that model.

S Givens said that the next big part of the capital work is sequencing. She estimates that it will take 4-5 years to complete the work. Over the next year, we will need to work with Habeeb, or Carlos, or whomever to do the sequencing. After that, we will need to carefully time how and when we will need the money to pay for the design services. We can save a lot of money if we can time the revenue. If we can keep the revenue coming from the towns as our bonds roll off, we may not have to borrow money, and in turn, save millions of dollars – it'd be tight, but we just might be able to pull it off. But we can't determine how the funds would need to be spent until we know the sequencing. Once we already have the funds we need to pay for work, we don't need a 2/3 majority vote to get funding for the design services, only a simple majority to designate the funds for the work. We should get the instructional development capital work on the table during the design phase. She pointed out that her replacement would need to be skilled enough to finesse a plan like this.

D Rivers adjourned the meeting at 8:15 pm.

Upcoming meetings: none planned

minutes recorded by David Rivers