



PLANNING & BUILDING COMMITTEE

Merrimack School District

<https://www.sau26.org/domain/23>

Minutes October 9, 2024

Present: K. Bernier, G. Perry, S. Albuquerque, A. Santoriello, F. Rothhaus and School Board liaison L. Rothhaus.

Excused: T. Groff

Also Present: Chief Educational Officer B. Olsen, Business Administrator M. Shevenell and Architect P. Marinace

S. Albuquerque call the meeting to order at 7 PM.

New Central Office Plan

S. Albuquerque told the Committee that a report listing the tax impact per thousand dollars of valuation was now available on the District website. He also said the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the next steps to present a recommendation to the School Board and asked M. Shevenell to share slides of the two proposals that had been discussed at the Deliberative Session.

M. Shevenell told the Committee the first plan was 11,000 square feet, had space to house all the staff the District wants to locate in the Central Office and included a 1,400 square foot meeting room. He said the second plan was a good plan but was only 8,000 square feet so the meeting room was smaller and many staff that the District would like to locate in the Central Office would have to remain housed in schools.

Discussion included

- Many staff need private offices due to a need for confidentiality.
- On-site conference space is a definite District need, not a want.
- The current building issues need to be addressed sooner rather than later and the District has to file a change of use permit for the current buildings if not replacing them.
- The District has a history of proposing short-term partial solutions, rather than long-term complete solution and then has to build additions in order to build what it needs.
- The Committee needs to come up with a plan to recommend to the School Board after it has updated and reviewed all the options.
- The Committee can still review the design plan to look for ways to reduce costs.
- The Committee needs to get updated cost estimates.

S. Albuquerque made a MOTION to move forward with the larger design. Second: G. Perry
Discussion included:

- The School Board determines the term of a bond.
- The longer the term of the bond increases the actual total cost of the project.
- Taxpayers need to be provided with up-to-date information.

The MOTION PASSED 4 – 1 – 0 (A. Santoriello opposed) The School Board liaison was in support of the motion.

S. Albuquerque asked M. Shevenell and P. Marinace what the next steps are.

M. Shevenell and P. Marinace suggested the following:

- M. Shevenell will get up-to-date cost estimates from two contractors as well as up-to-date bond interest and length of bond costs.
- P. Marinace will put together a construction timeline, expecting go out to bid January 2026 and project completion in Spring 2027.
- M. Shevenell suggested a more accurate depiction of the outside of the proposed building is needed.
- P. Marinace said a strong effort to educate the public is needed and there should be a contingency plan.

A. Santoriello asked if the Committee would be looking at the Capital Improvement Plan (C.I.P.) soon.

M. Shevenell told him that he was currently working with the Maintenance and Technology Directors on updating the C.I.P. He said he was especially looking at the need to repave O’Gara Drive as well as the need to repair and finish the sidewalk on O’Gara Drive.

Approval of Prior Minutes

G. Perry made a MOTION to approve the Minutes of September 4, 2024. Second: K. Bernier.
MOTION PASSED unanimously with the School Board liaison in agreement.

Next Meeting

After discussion, by consensus, the next meeting was scheduled for November 13th - meeting location to be determined. Dates of future meetings will be discussed on November 13th.

L. Rothhaus made a MOTION to adjourn. Second: G. Perry.

S. Albuquerque declared the meeting adjourned at 8:06 PM.