



The Chairman called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

Present: Superintendent Steve Stone, Phil Thibault, Dennis Piendak, David Martin, Andy Graham, Linda Trouville, Rob Sheppard, Rebecca Duda, Kate Hodges, Katherine Foster, Barbara O'Connor, Nick Botelho, Josh Taylor, Michael LaCava

Absent: Renee Young, Stefanie Fields

LiRo-Hill – Paul Kalous

MVG – Frank Tedesco, Al Cuevas, Bill Peters, Dennis Grudkowski
Cam Gosine, Brennan Consulting

Town Department Heads present: Alison Manugian, Fire Chief Mike Cunha, Police Chief Peter Bartlett, DPW Director Ed Patenaude

Minutes for Approval

Mr. Sheppard made a motion to approve the minutes of July 23 2025 as presented. Ms. Trouville seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Design Updates

Mr. Kalous discussed the feasibility and schematic design schedule timeline. He noted the SBC to vote on schematic design on 08/20/2025. The MSBA is to vote on the schematic design on 10/29/2025. They will be getting the cost estimates on Friday and should discuss them at the next meeting as to what the total budget for this project is.

Mr. Cuevas stated they had a recent meeting with Town Staff this afternoon to go over the site circulation, busses and cueing, the roadway and culvert plan. Superintendent Stone interjected that they can get 14-17 busses in the cueing at the front of the site and they won't be on the street. Mr. Cuevas continued that the overall site will have snow storage and it was indicated with a line around the site showing areas where snow would go. Cam Gosine of Brennan Consulting, talked about the roadway widths being five lanes, two bus lanes, for entering and exiting, and two car lanes and a ten foot fire lane wraps around the building. Mr. Gosine talked about the how the culverts are designed and built and there will be two so in the event one failed, there will still be another one. These culverts are in four-foot sections. There are retaining walls all around the building and in the back they are two to three feet off of the property line. To provide A.D. access it necessitated the walls and to keep within the buffer of the wetlands. Snow storage will use up some of the parking. There was a discussion of losing thirty-six parking spaces of the two-hundred thirty-eight, low 200's still enough parking for staff. They briefly talked about the play area subsurface ground water discharge basins, infiltration systems, drainage basins south of the access road. The bold dashes on the plan indicated wetland replication.

A question was asked about where the wells would be located and MVG indicated where the original building was and at the gravel lot at the play field and in the back of the building. It is a close loop system and you can store things over it. Mr. Cuevas touched briefly on the interior layout of the classrooms and the stacking of each floors classrooms. He talked about the main entry, plenty of egress, and the dining areas.

Ms. Manugian Dracut's Community Development Director commented that the team has done a great job on a difficult site and had some concerns about the Town's boards having to make compromises and allow waivers on conservation issues and concerns on life safety issues. There is a concern on the retaining walls and heights of the retaining walls.

Mr. Cuevas continued talking about the interior and exterior of the building drawings. The Team then discussed some of the security assets of the building. Mr. Tedesco stated this is the first initial take on the security. They will be talking further with Public Safety and consulting with someone who worked on the Sandy Hook school and they will put them in touch with Dracut. They briefly went over the lock down areas of the school and the safe zones. Mr. Tedesco explained safe zones are assembly areas which are locked down a different way. Superintendent Stone stated there would be meetings with the Principal, SRO, Fire, Police to discuss and tweak the security plans. The local public safety has the final say on layout. Mr. Cuevas talked about the entry vestibules. The visitor is gains access into a vestibule, states their reason for being there and then let in to the main building. Superintendent Stone stating when they visited a couple of the newer schools in other communities the vestibules are annoyingly efficient. There was a discussion on the doors and having a sidelight, door handles, locks, cameras, glass break detectors, card readers. Card readers allow management of who is allowed where inside the building. There will also be police and fire two-way radios. There will be halo vape sensors and concealed weapon detection systems. A Radio repeater will be on the building to help with communications within the building similar to what is in the high school.

Mr. Kalous discussed the technology budget \$1.7 million of \$860 students which is about \$2,000 per student which is above the \$1200 allowed by MSBA. This is very preliminary and it is projected out to 2029. The FF&E budget for 860 students is \$2.6 million which is about \$3,000 per student. Again above the MSBA allowable. Mr. Kalous added they have a list of items that will be under the construction budget for reimbursement.

Chief Mike Cunha talked about the culvert and the MVG team stated it is one foot thick. Chief Cunha will get them the weight of the ladder fire truck. This is the heaviest vehicle within the fleet of the town they will have. Chief Cunha also had concerns on the setbacks and the walls on the current plan. The plan shows the wall on the boundary line and the trucks fit currently however if that roadway shrinks for any reason they will have to re-evaluate the plan. Mr. Gosine, the civil engineer, stated they would address it if the need arises. Mr. Martin talked about the wetlands and being within the fifty-foot buffer and it puts the Board in a difficult spot. Mr. Sheppard disagreed with Mr. Martin's assessment. He stated this fifty-foot buffer was just passed at the Town Meeting, with a waiver. The snow storage question came up and there is no calculation of snow inches they use best practice. In the event of a major snowstorm, snow would need to be trucked off site. Mr. Patenaude the DPW Director noted that they would not be able to get to this school to clear the snow and truck the snow off during the storm. Mr. Taylor asked if we could get an estimated cost of what this snow removal would cost? Mr. Gosine talked about when the old building comes down they could use that area to store snow. Mr. Patenaude noted with the guardrails and fencing and curbing it will be difficult to move the snow on this site and protect the wetlands. Mr. Graham stated he would address having the equipment to take care of this clearing. They talked about storing the equipment and where that would be on site.

There was a discussion by Ms. Manugian about the culverts and the steep walls and whether consideration had been made for critter crossing. Mr. Sheppard asked if they are abiding by D.E.P standards or town standards and whether all the culverts in town provide for critter crossing. Ms. Manugian stated the new ones do.

Chief Peter Bartlett discussed the disadvantages on the site if a catastrophic event occurred. He talked about the traffic pattern problems and the possible bottleneck at Bellevue and Methuen St. He has a concern with a one way in and one way out. This will affect how we plan. They will have to do a traffic deploy plan with other agencies. If the road is blocked it puts them at a tactical disadvantage getting to the site during an emergency situation.

Ms. Hodges made a statement that they are not against the project. They are doing their jobs and upholding the Town's bylaws and expressing their concerns on the project, which is their job to point these items out. Mr. Sheppard responded that he appreciates the comments.

Calendar

Mr. Kalous noted some important milestone dates with the MSBA – August 28 being the submittal of the schematic design, September 17 potential MSBA FAS SD Review meeting, October 1 potential MSBA FAS SD review meeting.

They will need to have a meeting next week in addition to the August 20th date. Most people seemed available from the committee. They will discuss the estimates of the project. The meeting may be held at the administration building or Harmony Hall.

Adjournment

Ms. Duda made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:58 p.m. Mr. Sheppard seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.