

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
January 5, 2016
Bedford High School - Large Group Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 7:50 p.m., Mr. McAllister called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Guay, Mr. Pierce, Mr. Hafer and Mr. Brosgol.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Mr. Sills announced the following:

Susanne Bruggeman is on a leave of absence and Julie Melo will be her long term substitute at Davis School. Also, Cheryl Pepsia has been appointed SPED Program Administrator at the middle school.

4. Space Needs Task Force Report

Mr. Sills presented the findings of the Space Needs Task Force on their recent work on examining the space needs at our schools. Mr. Sills reminded the School Committee what the Task Force was created to do:

- Verify NESDEC Enrollment Study projections on long term growth
- Analyze cost-saving alternatives to building additions
- Recommend space additions/solutions to the School Committee

While verifying growth projections, Mr. Sills said that he directed the Space Needs Task Force to focus its efforts on finding solutions for the Lane School first. He learned that the MSBA (state building funding authority) will only support one project in a town at a time and that applying for state aid is a very long process. Therefore, Mr. Sills decided that the Davis School project should go through the MSBA funding application process since modular classrooms are already in place to deal with the large kindergarten enrollments. He would like the Task Force to consider adding on to the Lane School without state funding. Ultimately, the Task Force will study space needs at all schools, except the high school.

(He has since learned that the MSBA denied the Davis application for funding this year.)

Methodology

The Task Force compared the NESDEC enrollment study (updated in Fall 2015) with two other population projections performed by outside agencies. They also reviewed:

- Public and private school enrollment trends
- Building permits and housing sales
- Correlating the spike in multi-dwelling housing and school enrollment increases
- Changing relationship between Bedford births and kindergarten enrollment
- The impact of school quality, immigration, pent-up housing demand, relative affordability, town services, and our unique school configuration with the uptick in-immigration.
- Likelihood of the enrollment trend continuing based on data from Planning and Assessors, in the pipeline developments, potential future developments and senior housing turnover rates.

Mr. Sills reported that the three studies had differing enrollment projections. The Task Force concluded after much study that the NESDEC projections seemed most reliable. Mr. Sills reviewed the highlights of the NESDEC projections:

- Enrollment will continue to grow through 2025 where it is expected to peak (at 2016 levels)
- Bedford is growing more rapidly than Middlesex County as a whole.
- Growth is driven by new families moving into town
- Kindergarten is expected to follow current growth trends through 2024-5 school year.
- Birth to Kindergarten ratio is growing.
- According to NESDEC, single family home sales were at 129 on September 30th. Last September 30th, there were 118. (Overall down from the previous two years)

Mr. Sills reiterated the fact that real change tends to occur at the kindergarten level. The Task Force attributes kindergarten in migration to:

- The quality of schools and town services
- Bedford's relative affordability
- Pent up demand from the 2009 recession
- Construction of many new multi-dwelling units
- An increase in tears downs of small homes and replacing them with larger homes
- Development of privately-owned subdivisions
- Immigration

Mr. Sills presented many charts illustrating these attributes.

According to Mr. Sills, realtors describe Bedford as a "hot" market. Also, Massachusetts is the fastest growing state in the Northeast, and has been for the last five years. Most of the population growth is attributed to immigration. Also, the employment outlook for Bedford and nearby communities such as Waltham and Burlington is good. The expectation is to see more homes being turned over from older families to younger families with children.

Mr. Sills said that the Planning Board sees 101 units of housing actively moving forward and then there are another 54 in the discussion stage. Subdivision potential in Bedford could add another 3.5 students annually over the next ten years.

The Task Force concluded that the NESDEC projection of long term enrollment is highly supportable.

Mr. Sills said the group then focused on what can be done to manage this growth at the Lane School. Mr. Sills reviewed recent year's renovation projects at Lane.

The Task Force also looked at and ruled out repurposing space at the school and using a temporary inflatable structure for the gymnasium.

In the end, the Task Force recommended adding 6 new class rooms for Lane School in order to meet enrollment and programmatic needs.

Mr. Sills said that he recommends that the School Committee approve issuing a RFQ for a Feasibility Study and Schematic Design for 4-6 classrooms at the Lane School at a cost not to exceed \$78,500. Mr. Sills proposed the following timetable:

- January 2016 – SC approves issuing an RFQ for Feasibility/Schematic Designs
- February 2016 - Award an RFQ
- March 2016 – Town Meeting votes on Construction Documents
- April 2016 – Debt Exclusion vote/Award of contract
- June 2016 – Construction documents/bidding complete
- August 2017 – Construction/project complete

Mr. Hafer said that the report was solid and that it is really a good thing that people want to move and live in Bedford.

Mr. Hafer said that when we did the high school renovation project, the town approved the project with out knowing the MSBA outcome. What has changed? Mr. Sills said that today, the MSBA has many more restrictions. A School Department cannot even start the process at all, including a feasibility study, until the MSBA approves.

Mr. Pierce said that it is uncertain that the trend in kindergarten enrollment growth will continue. But after reviewing all of the information, it does look like it will continue and more space will be needed at the Lane School. He said that his visits to the Davis and Lane schools were eye opening. He said seeing the repurposing of space and the lack of any open space was very convincing that it is time to consider adding on.

Mr. Brosgol asked if there was any information given to us as to why the Davis School was not selected by the MSBA. Mr. Sills said that there are school districts with more immediate needs. Mr. McAllister said that Belmont applied to MSBA for thirteen years before its high school project was accepted.

Mr. Brosgol said he would like more information on how the planning board views the impact of new developments in town. He thinks that the impact is always underestimated. He believe these new projects in town will draw in families with children.

Ms. Guay said that the Task Force prepared a very thoughtful report. The trends clearly indicate moving forward with a Feasibility Study.

Mr. McAllister agreed that the report was very thorough and that it validates what we have all been seeing in town – growth. This report allows the School Committee to take action. He thanked Mr. Sills and members of the Task Force.

Mr. McAllister also noted that these projections are not certain but he feels that there is no reason to wait for more information. He believes it makes sense to move forward.

Ms. Guay made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve issuing an RFQ for a Feasibility Study and Schematic Design for adding 4-6 classrooms at the Lane School at a cost not to exceed \$70,000 which will come from the 2016 Capital Budget.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

5. Superintendent's FY'17 Budget Request

Mr. Sills said he and Mr. Coelho analyzed the budget request again and found a discrepancy, in our favor, in the out-of-district numbers. Also, another employee has announced a retirement.

As a result, the new increase for the FY'17 budget is at 3.52%, just .02% off of Finance Committee guideline.

Mr. Sills said the school FY'17 budget request is \$37,349,416 and the Finance Committee number is \$37,343,398 – a \$6,018 difference.

Mr. Sills did reiterate that he believes this is a modest request and everything he asked is needed and provides value.

The School Committee decided to end budget discussions for the evening.

6. Superintendent's Report

Ms. Sallee reported that she saw a great professional development today with the art and music teachers.

Mr. Sills said that Friday, January 15th is an all district professional development day. BHS and JGMS will be doing their own Ed Camp. Lane will be looking at assessing student writing. Davis will be undergoing professional development in reading comprehension.

7. Liaison Reports

Mr. Hafer distributed a draft of the Revolving Funds Guidelines. He said that this was a first draft and asked members to send him comments. The goal is to present a final draft to the School Committee on January 19th meeting so that a vote can be held on January 26th. The guidelines can then be presented to the Finance Committee at the January 28th meeting.

8. Minutes

None

9. Future Agenda

- Review and approval of the School Calendar for 2016-17.
- The next School Committee meeting will be January 19, 2016.

10. Adjournment

Mr. Brosgol made the following motion.

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 9:15 p.m. not to reopen.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Hafer

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. McAllister	Yes
Ms. Guay	Yes
Mr. Brosgol	Yes
Mr. Pierce	Yes
Mr. Hafer	Yes

School Committee Secretary

Date

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Exhibits/Document

- Presentation: Space Needs Task Force – Lane School
- Draft of Revolving Funds Guidelines