

MSHS Working Group Meeting
January 31, 2022 at 6:30 pm
Zoom Meeting
[View recording here](#)

In attendance: Working Group members, Ben Ford, co-chair, Bob Coates, co-chair, Raphael Adamek, Sherry Sousa, Ryan Becker, Jim Fenn, Jason Drebitko, Ben Jerve, Joe Rigoli

Guests: Bob Crean, Jen Stainton, Matt Stout, Jessica Stout, Marlena McNamee, Jim Haff, Rayna Bishop, Curt Peterson.

Ben welcomed everyone to the meeting. He put up in Zoom, a PowerPoint deck to review the meeting agenda; recap and level-set the MSHS new build project. It has been about 10 months since the working group has met.

Agenda items:

Project Recap

Next Steps

Fundraising

Achieving Net Zero

Functional Design

Public Comment

Ben reviewed the history of the project starting in 2016 with the formation of a group to evaluate the Woodstock MSHS. He provided an update on the State of Vermont Agency of Education, construction aid application and a recent meeting with AOE officials to clarify construction aid issues and process.

Jason stated the need for the project to be shovel-ready and defined that term. Further design development takes five months and then six months to complete construction drawings.

Ben discussed the key drives of the financing strategy including private fundraising, finding the lowest interest rate for a municipal bond, any potential for state construction-aid funding, other federal funds, enrollment, and on-going evaluation of other funding sources. Federal funding does not look to be a viable source of funding given the status of recent federal legislation.

The Fundraising Working Group secured Woodstock EDC funding to hire a part-time fundraiser and Marlena McNamee is shortly to be hired by the WCSU. Marlena introduced herself.

Ben described the strategic potential of including in the current project design, the goal of building a net zero or zero energy school facility. Ben Jerve and Jim Fenn both commented that higher upfront cost of net zero can pay-off over the life cycle of the building. Matt Stout highlighted the federal and state tax incentives and advantages of lease and PPA arrangements

on alternative energy projects like solar and solar storage. There are ways to put zero money down, lease back energy and save on delivery costs. Net zero has flash and can be attractive to funders without driving up the life cycle cost of the project.

There is a need to update the functional design of the building plan and re-address COVID – HVAC needs, the inclusion of 6th grade, enrollment trends as well as be sure the design meets current program needs. Joe Rigoli confirmed that the new building HVAC design should meet state requirements and there is new advanced technology that could be incorporated but at a cost. Sherry will take the current program design assumptions back to faculty and staff.

Ben put up a New England School Development Council enrollment projection table for Woodstock. Enrollment is predicted to grow unlike other areas of the state. Sherry noted that the elementary schools are feeling the stress of pre-K enrollment. The inclusion of the 6th grade in the MSHS design is to provide future capacity. There are 100 pre-K students in the district currently.

The idea is to design a school that can be regional and handle future growth. Flex points in the design are the 6th grade space and a potential, pre-build for a third floor. The third floor prep is an expensive option and not currently built into the design.

Jim Haff addressed current facility issues and Board Building and Grounds Committee's concern about taking care of the building until something new happens. Ben answered Curt Petersen's questions about fundraising, the river corridor and proposed outdoor track and, age of pre-K children.

Ben thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 pm

Submitted,

Bob Coates