



CROMWELL MIDDLE SCHOOL

BUILDING PROJECT

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JoAnn Doyle
TOWN CLERK
CROMWELL, CT *pl*

Meeting: CMS Building Committee
Date: Wednesday, August 24, 2022
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Place: Cromwell High School Library Media Center

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqpKruXEFcurFBsTLHt3Zkw>

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Rosanna Glynn, Chair at 7:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call

CMS Building Committee

Present: Rosanna Glynn, Chair, Shannon Hughes-Brown, Vice Chair, Matt Blanchette, Ken Cleveland, Ken Jackson, Blaise Messinger, John Post. Alternates: Jessica Lamb (via conference call), Heather Jacobs

Administration - Absent

Board of Education Members - Alan Schumann

CSG and Other Representatives - Absent

Town Representatives - Absent

III. Approval of Agenda

Rosanna stated she would like to make two changes; remove item VI. New Business B. Review Future Selection Sub-Committee Process with Possibility to Vote on Agreed Process. Change VIII. Interview Committee Report to Town Selection Committee Update.

Motion to Approve the Amended Agenda made by Ken Jackson, seconded by Shannon Hughes-Brown. Vote: Unanimous.

IV. Approval of Minutes from August 11, 2022 meeting

V. Public Comments - None

VI. New Business

a. Chairperson's Update

Rosanna read the following:

Good evening, everyone. On Sunday, I thought that my update this week would be a quick one... but alas, I have a long one for this week, so please bear with me.

This week has been a great learning experience, not just for myself, but I believe for others on the team as well. We are still learning our way, we are still teaming and discovering each other's boundaries, and we are still developing and growing as a team. Let me start with providing my perspective on the events that occurred this week, where I believe we mis-stepped, and what we need to do to move forward.

Before I get into it, let me say that I am going to be completely transparent and open about our discussions and events that took place. One of the values that I hold true, and expect this committee to hold to, is transparency. We don't have enough of that in this town, and I feel as though we are setting a great example for everyone about the benefits of being open and honest for the public to witness and be part of.

OK, so, Going into Monday, I could sense everyone's energy and enthusiasm for the interviews that were going to take place on Monday and Tuesday. It has taken us ALL a lot of hard work and dedication just to get to this point. The entire firm selection process is a significant step for this committee because the architect and project manager are two critical partners in our project. There were expectations set going into the interviews Monday – expectations that this committee discussed, agreed, and voted on at our July 27th meeting.

The expectations were:

1. That the selection sub-committee would follow up on references, finalize questions, set up interviews, conduct the interviews, make a selection of the initial short list, and then the final list.
2. That both the short list and final list would be brought to the larger building committee for approval prior to proceeding to the next step.
3. That the building committee members, not on the sub-committee, and who participated in listening to the interviews, would be able to provide input to the sub-committee prior to down selection.

Here are where the mis-steps took place, and where we have identified lessons learned:

1. The building committee did not have authority to create a sub-committee in the first place. The building committee, in the eyes of the Town Manager, and in accordance with the town purchasing policy, made a recommendation of who we felt should be on the selection committee. The Town Manager unofficially accepted our recommendation and the persons we saw as our sub-committee were actually the selection committee, as per the town purchasing policy. What is the difference you may ask? A sub-committee would have to follow the rules; by-laws and/or actions voted on by the building committee. The selection committee, as it is not in any way related to the building committee, does not.

2. Since the selection committee is not tied to the building committee's discussions or actions voted on, they were not obligated to meet our expectations as outlined previously. This is where the breakdown occurred. The selection committee, under advisement of the Town Manager and Finance Director, were

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being directed to act as a selection committee. The rest of the building committee, unaware of the nuances between the two terms (that being selection committee vs sub-committee) were expecting the team to uphold the expectations that we had all agreed to as a building committee.

This is what should have happened:

1. Once a disconnect was realized, there should have been a tactical pause established where I was brought into the mix to settle the issue, or to find common ground. As this issue was brought up late Monday evening, and I was 4 hours away, it could not be settled. Additionally, the right people weren't around to have this discussion. I did end up having a meeting with the Town Manager and Finance Director Tuesday afternoon as soon as I got home from my trip. John Post and Sharon were part of that discussion as well. Through that discussion, it became clear where the missteps took place and what we need to do differently moving forward. I also want to highlight that we owe Sharon our thanks for brilliantly coming up with a compromise that I believe all of us felt comfortable with, and that the Town Manager approved as well. So thank you Sharon, again, for your idea and helping us get to common ground.

So with that, let me switch gears to what should NOT have happened that Monday night because I think in hindsight there were things we could have done differently.

We shouldn't be attacking one another. We shouldn't be firm in our decisions without giving thought, understanding or discussion to the situations evolving. If a compromise cannot be found, then we need to stop what we are doing and find the right people to help us find the common ground. Yes, that will impact our schedule, possibly. Yes, things can get delayed, possibly. But that is OK as long as we are doing what is right for this project, this community, and most importantly for the future of our town's children. Let's not lose sight of that.

So, moving forward, here are some changes that need to be incorporated.

1. First, and foremost, we are going to have lots of situations where we disagree on things – whether its decisions that are being made, or processes we need to follow. It is paramount to the success of this building committee that we hear each other out, that we RESPECT each other's opinions, that we don't make threats or put anyone down for their viewpoint or position, and that we don't dismiss anyone's point of view. This is basic teamwork. High functioning teams listen to one another. And again, if we can't come to a conclusion ourselves, I will, as your chair, find the necessary resources to help us come to those conclusions.

2. We are also still learning. We are learning about town policies, personalities, and procedures. There is still a lot of ambiguity in the town's processes, and much is open to interpretation. At the end of the day, we have to rely on the Town Manager's interpretation of those policies, there is no choice in that matter. And as I was firmly told, he is OUR town manager, and we have to do what he says. If we disagree, we can then bring it to his attention and hope that an accommodation can be made.

3. Third, for each firm we need to select, we will continue to make recommendations to the town manager as to who should be on the selection committee. I would like to see at least 2-3 of our building committee members on that committee as we have the most knowledge of this project. But, again, it is at the discretion of the town manager. I think he is very reasonable and accommodating in this aspect and understands that we bring a level of knowledge and understanding to that selection committee that will be hard to find elsewhere.

4. Next, The Town manager has authorized the building committee to listen in to the interviews and provide written notes and observances to the selection committee as additional points of reference for their decision-making process. These notes must be submitted anonymously to the selection committee head prior to their final selection. For the purposes of the interviews conducted yesterday, I would like those submitting notes to email them to me by Friday so I can compile and send them to John this weekend. This should give the selection committee enough time to read through them prior to their next meeting.

5. Additionally, we need to dissolve the sub-committee since its existence doesn't align with the town's purchasing policy. As the Town Council decided at their last meeting, this building committee has no authority to choose the selection committee. We are only given the opportunity to make recommendations to the town manager.

6. Last, we need to remember what our focus is on – building a next generation school for our town's children. Let's always find the best opportunities to leverage all the resources that we have at our disposal to ensure this project's success. We are all experts in our own industries, we are all passionate about this project, and we are all dedicated to seeing it through. Let's make sure that we continue to work together, lean on each other in all aspects, and most importantly, keep our interactions respectful and in alignment with our code of conduct, which we will review again today as well.

Last thing I want to say is that I want to apologize for the way I handled Monday evening. In my experience, situations like this pop up because of a communication breakdown. And I am very sensitive to effective communication, so this was a double whammy for me personally. I didn't have all the information I needed to settle the issue. I could say I was at a disadvantage since I was caught off guard, but that isn't an excuse. Next time, and there will most likely be a next time, I will force a tactical pause while I go acquire the information that I need to make an educated decision for the team, and not rely only on the building committee's decisions when external influences are at play. A lesson learned for me is that though the Town Council has entrusted this huge responsibility to this building committee, we are still subject to the Town Manager's directions and decisions, and we need to continue to be sensitive to that. With that said, let's move on, together, and review our code of conduct again so that we can grow together as a team. We have a long three years ahead of us – I want it to be more fun and enjoyable than not!

Matt Blanchette asked in regards to the selection process, how would we have known that otherwise and was the town not aware that we were making that decision? Rosanna said, technically the town manager should be attending these meetings or listening in to give feedback, but he has not been able to up to this point. Meeting was set, and could request that they review the minutes of the meetings. The agenda and minutes are posted and sent out, Rosanna said she can request that they review the minutes so that we are doing things correctly through their perspective. The Town purchasing policy does not clearly indicate one way or the other if the selection committee can solicit feedback from others, so we, as a committee, approached this as an assumption that was not agreed to by the Town Manager. In the future, Rosanna will meet so that there is clarity where there is not. John Post said he would like the verbiage to change for future projects in the Purchasing Policy because it was not clear what we were supposed to do. Ken Cleveland said we are all novices and we should rely on the Town to provide guidance, and Shannon Hughes-Brown said that we should also be prudent in our own research due to misinformation, we have to do our due diligence because there was not clarity. Rosanna said Sharon DeVoe came up with a really great compromise. John Post said this should be put in the play book for the future.

Rosanna stated in regards to the Cromwell Middle School Building Committee Rules of Conduct, she added the following:

Duties of Chairperson

1. Chair all meetings.
2. Prepare an agenda for each meeting, seeking input from the architect, contractor, project manager, staff, Board members, committee members, and public comments; or to direct the agenda to be prepared by another.
3. See that agenda is made available to the Administrative Assistant to be distributed to Committee members at least two days prior to meetings.
4. Serve as primary contact with the architect, contractor, project manager, the Board of Education, the Town Council, the Town Manager, and Financial Director, and any other entities, as representation of the Building Committee as a whole.

5. Present any needed presentations to Cromwell Town Council and/or Board of Education for their input/ratification.
6. Settle any procedural issues or questions with the Town Manager, Town Council, or any other Town representative.
7. Enforce the rules of conduct set herein for the entire building committee.

Rosanna stated that we need to dissolve the Interview Sub-Committee.

Motion to dissolve the Interview Subcommittee made by John Post, seconded by Matt Blanchette. Vote: Unanimous.

Rosanna stated September 8th is the CMS Open House, we will cancel that meeting and have a Special Meeting on September 1st, which will be an Executive Session. We will then move forward with our selections to the Town.

Motion to Amend the Meeting Schedule and cancel September 8th meeting and add September 1st Special Meeting made by Matt Blanchette, seconded by Shannon Hughes-Brown. Vote Unanimous.

VII. Communications Sub-Committee Report

Shannon stated they are preparing the September newsletter which will highlight that the committee is in the process of hiring an architect and project manager for the project. Dr. Macri is going to check to see if we can use the electronic service that Cromwell Public Schools use to disseminate information to families and will contact other district Superintendents for tours.

VIII. Selection Committee Update

John stated the committee narrowed down the selection to a short list. Interviews were on Monday for architects/engineers. Interviewed Perkins-Eastman, Antonozzi Architects, Tecton and SLAM Collaborative. Tuesday we interviewed for project manager and interviewed Colliers, CSG and Arcadis. Next step, will be to receive written input from building committee members and will meet on Monday night to come up with a selection for September 1, 2022 to present in Executive Session.

IX. Public Comments - None

X. Comments, Updates and Announcements from Board Members and Admins - None

XI. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn the Regular Meeting of the CMS Building Committee at 7:35 p.m. made by John Post, seconded by Matt Blanchette. Vote: Unanimous.

Public Session of the committee meeting ended at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Hicks
CMS Building Committee Recording Clerk