

## **Buildings & Grounds Subcommittee Meeting**

December 14, 2015, 6:00pm  
Phillips 101, 30 Common Street

Attendees: John Portz, Liz Yusem, Charlie Kellner, Dr. Fitzgerald, Tom Tracy, Jay Francione, Peter Centola, Bob LaRoche – Hosmer Principal, April Romano – Early Childhood Director

Meeting was called to order at 6:05pm

### Stamatakis Playground Update

The playground update is currently in limbo because the firm that redesigned the play area did the work pro-bono and requested indemnification from liability, which the town cannot grant to a private party. As a result, the firm refuses to release their drawings to the town. An offer to pay for the work was rejected by the firm. The town engineer will not allow the RFP to start without engineering drawings.

The question of responsibility for the playground was raised again. In summer 2013, the gift account for the maintenance of the area was depleted. This was the original gift that funded the playground. Since the funding was depleted, it was decided that this playground should be maintained, like the other playgrounds in Watertown, by the DPW. Mr. Centola questioned whether the playground had been transferred to the town. The School Committee did vote in 2013 to transfer this playground to the Town under the auspices of the Park & Recreation Department and the DPW.

It is important that the handover to the Town happen quickly because some issues need to be addressed and repairs made to some of the equipment. Mr. Centola agreed that his department could handle the engineering aspects of the work, including grading and drainage issues. As an interim fix before installing a new play surface, more wood chips would be brought in to cover the area.

Mr. Kellner and Mr. Tracy recalled that the gift account had been zeroed out and that the playground had been passed to the Town. They agreed to a series of actions to be completed before the end of December, 2015, including:

- Construct a timeline and history of the funding.
- Verify that any account associated with the playground has a \$0.00 balance.
- Verify that the playground is formally handed off to the Town Council.

Mr. Francione indicated that Bob D'Arrico, the town Safety Inspector, had identified one piece of equipment in need of a small repair and that it would be fixed by December 18.

### Growing Places

April Romano, Early Childhood Director for the Public Schools, was present to discuss space needs for Pre-K students due to increased enrollment. Additional space has become available in the Phillips Building which the Superintendent and Ms. Romano would like to use to expand the Pre-K offering. The space is currently up to code and has sufficient space to accommodate up to 15 students (8 full tuition students and 7 special needs students).

Ms. Romano indicated that all classes are full in the current Pre-K program and there is a waiting list of 28 students.

The space is almost 1300 s.f. and could be configured to handle special needs programming, an office, breakout space, storage and children's bathrooms. Mr. Kellner and Mr. Tracy were checking into whether Pre-K funds could be used for engineering and design work, and will report back in January.

A MOTION was made to approve the use of the available space at the Phillips Building for Pre-K programming in time for the 2016-17 school year.

MOTION passed 3-0, unopposed.

#### Hosmer School Hallway Shading Options for Cooling

Mr. LaRoche, the principal of the Hosmer, was present to discuss cooling options for the school in light of the heat wave in September 2015.

Currently, there are internal shades in place on the Cove Rd. side of the building, which is South facing. There are another 10-12 classes on the Chauncy St. side and the art room which need shading or passive cooling.

Roll down shades cost approximately \$200 each. There are also new industrial film window treatments which are cost effective and prevent the window glass from heating up. External shade awnings were mentioned but dismissed as too expensive.

Mr. LaRoche will compile a list of all classrooms which need shade or cooling options and report back. Mr. Francione will research and compile information on film treatment options and approximate costs per square foot.

#### Bottle Filling Station Update

Currently, there are two water bottle filling stations at WHS – 1 in the lobby and 1 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. At WMS, there is 1 by the gymnasium. Two additional filling stations will be installed over the holiday break or in early January at the Middle School – 1 in the West Jr. section of the school and 1 in the lobby by the auditorium.

#### Capital Projects Update

Mr. Kellner presented an updated 5 year capital project plan encompassing all of the school buildings. Included in the plan are the yearly classroom furniture upgrades at each school and new furniture for the planned Pre-K expansion at the Phillips. A new maintenance vehicle and an integrated intercom/bell system for all 5 schools and the Phillips are also budgeted for. Architectural updates at the Hosmer and high school, carpet replacement and window repairs at the Lowell, new doors at the Cunniff and renovation of the science labs at the Middle School are some of the projects planned.

Mr. Carter, principal of WMS, presented a plan to the Superintendent to reconfigure a mixed use space for use as a kitchen and life skills area for special needs education. Amy Donohue, a special ed therapist, had secured a \$10,000 grant from the Watertown Education Foundation in 2015 to upgrade this room. After reviewing the programming and space needs, Mr. Carter presented the plan, and an additional \$15,000 has been added to the capital budget to upgrade the space.

The paperwork for the MSBA window repair program at WMS has been filed and the project is starting. Further details will be available at future meetings.

#### New Business

Dr. Fitzgerald brought up the space issues facing the schools and the enrollment increases projected over the next 10 years. She mentioned that the Pre-K expansion at the Phillips, planned for Fall 2016, is a small fix to a larger problem. This space will allow some flex space for Kindergarten programs at the Hosmer, but a larger solution needs to be found. She indicated that more space was needed at all of the elementary schools. Dr. Fitzgerald agreed to bring information about the enrollment projections to a future School Committee meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:05pm

Michael Shepard, Chair