

Andrea Moores <amoores@email.medfield.net>

Fwd: Can you help obtain answers?

1 message

Jeff Marsden < Jmarsden@email.medfield.net> To: Andrea Moores <amoores@email.medfield.net> Thu, Apr 14, 2022 at 11:04 AM

----- Forwarded message ------

From: Christine McCue <christine.mccue@verizon.net>

Date: Sat, Apr 9, 2022 at 6:43 PM Subject: Can you help obtain answers?

To: Feeney, Paul (SEN) <Paul.Feeney@masenate.gov>, Garlick Denise <denisegarlick@gmail.com>, Dooley, Shawn -

Rep. (HOU) <Shawn.Dooley@mahouse.gov>

Cc: Kristine Trierweiler ktrierweiler@medfield.net, Jeff Marsden medfield.net>

(Please share with Medfield Board of Selectmen and School Committee)

Dear Legislative Leaders for Medfield,

A few people (including my husband) recounted Election Day conversations with Rep. Denise Garlick during which an offer was extended to arrange a meeting with MSBA to get much-needed information and questions answered regarding its school building grant program.

While we have asked our town officials to do the same (or at a minimum seek an advisory opinion), we not been able to get a definitive commitment to do so. As a result, this e-mail is a request for your help with getting answers to important citizens questions to prior to the April 29 MSBA Statement of Interest filing deadline.

Here are the key questions:

- 1. What would happen if Medfield was to reapply to MSBA, but then decline an invitation into the program, if offered? Would there be political penalties and negative impacts on other towns/districts trying to get accepted? (We now have multiple Medfield town officials stating that they see no downside to submitting another Statement of Interest and that if Medfield were to get readmitted into the MSBA program, the town could decline the invitation if it later determines the program cannot meet its needs. In the meantime, it would appear other towns/districts would have been rejected by MSBA.)
- 2. To what degree would MSBA allow Medfield to shorten the timeline and project phases given the work that has already been done? Project delays of any kind will not only chip away at the ultimate value of an MSBA grant, but prolong student time in a deteriorating school.
- 3. Would MSBA consider accepting plans for a mixed-use facility, and if so, what would be the parameters or requirements (e.g., segregation of school costs eligible for MSBA reimbursement from ineligible Parks & Recreation expenses)?

4. If we experience another decline in student enrollment after it has already been certified by MSBA, what options do we have during the Feasibility Study to re-evaluate it without penalty? Public records from MSBA and project manager statements clearly indicate that in 2021 MSBA was willing to revisit and discuss enrollment projections after three years of actual data. Despite a town meeting vote asking the school building committee to take that step of asking for the enrollment re-evaluation, it never happened.

I am personally by no means anti-MSBA, especially when it would likely fund 25 percent of school building costs (the net estimate per former SBC). However, I, like many, many others are 100% for getting answers to the questions above so that if Medfield re-applies to MSBA, and gets readmitted (which I suspect will be the case due to political connections), the citizens of Medfield are fully aware of the pros & cons of the MSBA route. One of the biggest concerns is the longer timeline that the MSBA process will entail, which is estimated to add 2-4 years vs. a self-funded path. During that extended timeline, Medfield would be required to incur significant Dale Street School maintenance costs.

Other towns, including most recently Tisbury, have opted to self-fund its addition/renovation after its own analysis revealed that the self-funding path was the most prudent option. Leading up to the decision, various Tisbury town leaders had public discussions and debates about the pros & cons, yet here in Medfield, that is not the case. It appears once again, a significant decision will be made with little, if any, transparency.

Can you help to ensure the citizens of Medfield get answers from MSBA to important questions?

Our town officials have stated repeatedly that they want the community to unite on this school project, and that trust needs to be rebuilt with facts and data-driven decision-making. So why does it seem so difficult to get our town officials to do the due diligence and make the public, data-rich case for pursuing the MSBA program yet again?

After the May 2021 Town Meeting, more than 100 citizens reached out directly to MSBA to try and get answers to important questions (see attached letter), but unlike the advisory opinions MSBA provided to Hopkinton and Ipswich, it instead asked citizens to collaborate with town officials. We saw how well that worked out.

I truly believe that if we could have gotten the written advisory opinions that we needed from MSBA back in May 2021 (with the help of our elected and appointed officials), we wouldn't be in this position now. Based on our project manager assessment at the time, Medfield would still be in the MSBA program today with only one year lost.

Thanks in advance for any support you can provide to get some kind of written advisory opinion from MSBA before the Statement of Interest submission deadline of April 29.

Sincerely,

Chris McCue Potts

7 Curve St., Medfield

P.S. This article provides additional insights/perspectives: https://patch.com/massachusetts/medfield/opinion-clarifyingschool-path-forward

Jeffrey J. Marsden, Ed.D Superintendent Medfield Public Schools 508-359-2302 Follow me on Twitter @JeffreyJMarsden #medfieldps #medfieldpln

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4 attachments



MSBA letter from Medfield-Dale St project-5.26.2021.pdf



Ipswich G-MSBA letter_6.23.17.pdf 2292K

Hopkinton-msba_letter_3_11_11.pdf 284K

May 26, 2021

Mary Pichetti Director of Capital Planning Massachusetts School Building Authority 40 Broad Street, Suite 500 Boston, MA 02109

Dear Ms. Pichetti,

A large number of Medfield residents (signers of this letter included) support the Dale Street School project in Medfield currently operating under the Feasibility Study Agreement (until Nov. 30, 2021). However, a plurality of the town, as demonstrated at Town Meeting on May 17, are not in favor of the Wheelock/Elm Street location which has been proposed in the Preferred Schematic Report submitted to MSBA in December 2020 and approved by the MSBA in February 2021. Although non-binding, the vote at our May 17 Medfield Town Meeting asking our School Building Committee to re-consider the current Dale/Adams Street site passed (229 – 212).

As you know, the Medfield Special Town Meeting (expected this fall) would require a 2/3 majority vote to go forward with the project. We fear a failed vote will set the town back considerably. On the other hand, a change in location (to Dale Street) would most likely achieve the necessary vote for a new or renovated and expanded school. Beyond this letter, we will continue to take steps to advocate for a unified approach with our SBC.

To help better inform the town, as you have done previously with Ipswich (2017) and Hopkinton (2011), we are seeking an MSBA response to the following questions:

- 1) If Medfield were to change its Preferred Solution to the current Dale Street School site (official address is 45 Adams St., Medfield) while still under the terms of the Feasibility Study Agreement, what steps would our district need to take within the existing MSBA program framework to do so? We know it is important to obtain guidance before the Project Scope & Budget Agreement is executed this summer.
- 2) What type of flexibility would MSBA be able to provide to Medfield to help expedite the process, including review of a new PSR? For example, could preliminary schematics be submitted with additional fine-tuning at a later date? Both the Dale and Wheelock sites were submitted in the PDP and studied until approximately Sept. 1, 2020; most of the recent work has been schematic design focused on the Wheelock site. We do realize that the Town would need to appropriate additional funds to cover the cost of additional schematic design and site work, but we feel confident that the community support exists for taking that step.
- 3) With regard to an enrollment projection of 575 students that was certified in 2018, we will soon have three years of actual enrollment numbers to provide a more accurate 10-year projection. Given that our 2021-22 elementary school enrollments are significantly lower than projected in 2018 (by about 200 students for grades K-5), the design enrollment was based on a 20-year projection, and Medfield has significantly underutilized space in two of its existing schools (Blake Middle School and Medfield High School), would MSBA consider reevaluating the certified enrollment projection as part of the Dale Street School project shift to a new Preferred Solution? Based on internal documents received from a Public Records Request, as well as feedback from our Leftfield project manager, it seemed MSBA was open to reevaluating the enrollment projection (without forcing Medfield back to the Eligibility Period) if new information was provided, and after three years of actual numbers.

4) With regard to a potential shared-use project, how might Medfield structure and segregate the school project component within MSBA guidelines? The Dale Street School currently has a collaborative relationship with Medfield Parks & Recreation, now housed in an adjacent 1927 building in poor condition. Children from the grade 4/5 Dale Street School frequently walk to Parks & Recreation after school for programming, and the school is used for a day camp in the summer months. Both Parks & Recreation and the Dale Street School project have incorporated expensive new basketball courts/gyms in their respective, preliminary plans at a time when a nearby athletic club has recently built two full-sized courts. Many residents (and even town officials) have expressed an interest in exploring innovative, cost-effective approaches with the Dale Street School project to meet dual needs. For example, could the school design incorporate an annex (paid by separate, non-reimbursable funds) for Parks & Recreation, and/or some other type of shared-use space that would allow it to operate in or adjacent to the school on the downtown site?

As context for these questions, please consider this data:

- The previously noted May 17 Town Meeting where a Citizen's Petition-sponsored Warrant Article was brought forth recommending that our Dale Street School Building Committee chose the Dale Street site for the project. The Article passed with 229 votes in favor, and 212 votes in opposition, signaling that it will be challenging to obtain a 2/3 vote on the school project this fall if the Preferred Option is the Wheelock site.
- Based on 853 responses to a May 2020 community survey conducted by the Dale Street School Building Committee, 38% preferred the Dale Street location; 25% preferred the Wheelock location; 23% did not have enough information; and 15% had no preference. From a statistical standpoint, the favorability rating for the Dale Street site is unlikely to change with additional respondents. (Of the respondents, 40% do not have children in the schools.)
- Information gathered from the recent Medfield Master Planning effort, with a near-final plan in place, 55% of Medfield residents do not have children in the schools. Many residents within that contingent are senior citizens who have had no or limited opportunities during the pandemic to voice their views about the proposed \$77-80 million school project, but they will most certainly vote at the ballot box.

As past and present supporters of public education, we do not want to see the Dale Street School project experience a failed vote this fall based not only an unpopular site selection, but one that is in keeping with MSBA's own statutes. Important considerations regarding the Wheelock site include:

- Higher expense, with an estimated \$9+ million for new infrastructure and site work alone;
- The site is not proximate to downtown amenities such as the public library, businesses, museums, town hall, fire station, police station, and as previously mentioned, the Parks & Recreation building, with all sites providing a wealth of both academic and social-emotional benefits for 4th and 5th graders;
- Traffic conditions are predicted by engineers to change from "Good" currently to "Very Bad"
 on Elm Street, a historic and newly designated Scenic Road, creating safety, quality-of-life, and
 environmental/health concerns given increased emissions;
- Walk-ability and bike-ability which is extremely high at Dale Street currently (60 bikes counted
 on one recent day), is predicted to drop significantly at Wheelock due to the more remote and
 less populated location, as well as safety factors such as lack of sidewalks on busy side roads;

- The Wheelock site is within a Well Protection District (even with newly drawn boundaries)
 and Archaeological Protection District. While the recent archaeological study did not result in
 significant findings, the entire area has been deemed highly sensitive by Mass. Historical
 Commission, which still presents a risk of schedule delays during the construction period if
 artifacts are uncovered. The adjacent Water Treatment Plant is advancing to a second-phase
 archaeological study due to findings; the Hannah Adams homestead project, also adjacent to
 the school property, has been required to conduct an intensive study; and
- Loss of contiguous open space and a substantial increase in impervious surface is not
 environmentally sound given the presence of wellfields that are critically important to
 Medfield water supply especially considering that Medfield's water system has been deemed
 highly susceptible to contamination by Mass. Department of Environmental Protection.

We respectfully ask that you provide guidance to our community and town officials on possible paths forward with regard to changing its Preferred Solution to the Dale Street site.

A community response can be sent to <u>DaleatDaleMedfield@gmail.com</u> and it will be shared with all signers below.

Sincerely,

Tara McKee Gray Tom Powers

Claire D. Shaw Abby and Jeff Marble Joanne Candlen George P. Gallagher Nancy & Scott Kane George F.X. Gallagher Jr. Mary Carter Meghan and Kurt Jackson Eric Scott Trent Powell Raoul & Chris Manchand Dan Medeiros and Ann Dolloff Alex & Leah Maider-Porter Pauline Hogg & Susan Parker Galyna & Iurii Kryvanych Matt and Denise DePiero Sean and Lisa Murphy Martha & Joe Henry-MacDonald Nancy Kelly Lavin & Chris, Colton & Cally Lavin Stephanie Seeley Tom Seelev Judy and Jeff Gordon Linda Kipper John and Joyce Rose Martha Moon Peter & Irene Buttler **Bob & Alison Howard** Mr. and Mrs. Michael Jones James Howley Donna Knott Bob & Nancy Kufferman Jerry Potts

France Murphy Annette Wells Diane Marsili Steve Craig Sheila May Bill and Beverly Dron Andy and Bob Costello John Saia Dr. Heidi Feldman Judith M McGue Victoria and Gary Lia Susan McCusker Marian and Robert Lent Susan Rothstein Mr & Mrs Stephen Murphy Leeann Bravo Carl and Kathy Ciancarelli Hilary Ziven, Kate Pittman and Ella Pittman Suzanne and Paul Trumbour Nancy Coakley Chris McCue Potts

P.S. This list of 80+ names is as of 6 p.m., May 26; more will be added.

Massachusetts School Building Authority

Deborah B. GoldbergChairman, State Treasurer

James A. MacDonald Chief Executive Officer John K. McCarthy Executive Director / Deputy CEO

June 4, 2021

Ms. Chris McCue Potts (on behalf of all community members named on the May 26, 2021 letter) 7 Curve Street Medfield, MA 02052

Re: Town of Medfield, Dale Street Elementary School

Dear Ms. Potts:

The Massachusetts School Building Authority (the "MSBA") is in receipt of your letter signed by a group of residents dated May 26, 2021, that includes several questions for the MSBA related to the proposed Dale Street School project.

The questions in the letter are related to a change in the proposed project site, the expedited review by MSBA of a new Preferred Schematic submittal, the MSBA's reconsideration of the agreed upon enrollment, and the community's ability to create shared uses at the proposed project site with local organizations.

The MSBA understands that the Medfield School Building Committee has voted to postpone the submittal of the Project Scope and Budget report to the fall and plans to perform community outreach. As the letter noted above has been distributed to the Chairs of the Board of Selectmen and School Building Committee, the MSBA respectfully requests that the authors of the letter discuss these questions with local officials and demonstrate local consensus with the Eligible Applicant and members of the School Building Committee to determine next steps for the proposed Dale Street School project.

The Eligible Applicant listed for the Dale Street Statement of Interest in Medfield is the Chair of the Board of Selectmen. The community outreach presents an opportunity for the authors of this letter to seek consensus with local officials on the direction for the Dale Street School building project and to determine any questions that the Eligible Applicant may submit to the MSBA on potential changes to the status of the proposed project.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at (Mary.Pichetti@MassSchoolBuildings.org).

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June 4, 2021
Medfield, Dale Street Elementary School

Sincerely,

Mary Pichetti

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Director of Capital Planning

Cc: Legislative Delegation

Michael Marcucci, Chair, Medfield Board of Selectmen

Kristine Trierweiler, Medfield Town Administrator Jessica Reilly, Chair, Medfield School Committee

Dr. Jeffery J. Marsden, Superintendent, Medfield Public Schools

Michael LaFrancesca, Director of Finance and Operations, Medfield Public Schools

Michael Quinlan, Chair, Medfield School Building Committee Lynn Stapleton, Owner's Project Manager, Leftfield, LLC

Laurence Spang, Designer, Arrowstreet Inc.

File: 10.2 Letters (Region 4)

Deborah B. Goldberg

James A. MacDonald

John K. McCarthy

Chairman, State Treasurer

Interim Chief Executive Officer

Executive Director / Deputy CEO

June 23, 2017

Ms. Robin Crosbie, Town Manager Town of Ipswich 25 Green Street Ipswich, MA 01938

Re: Town of Ipswich, Winthrop Elementary School

Dear Ms. Crosbie:

In response to the Town of Ipswich's ("Town") letter dated June 20, 2017, the Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA") offers the following to assist the Town in its efforts to determine its preferred solution as part of the MSBA's school construction grant program.

The MSBA appreciates the challenges that a school district faces when selecting its preferred solution, defining the scope, cost and schedule of a proposed project, and securing the local authorizations and financial commitments required for a proposed school construction project to move forward.

In balancing the need of addressing local challenges with the need for the MSBA to target its limited program funds toward school districts and projects that are ready to make the financial commitment to move forward in a timely manner, the MSBA grant program includes:

- A Feasibility Study Agreement ("FSA") with a term of up to 30 months to complete the
 work required for a feasibility study and schematic design, and to secure MSBA Board
 approval of a proposed project scope and budget;
- A process for districts to request additional time to complete the work required in the feasibility study agreement, if needed;
- A regulatory requirement for a city, town or district that has been approved by the MSBA Board for a proposed project (e.g. board approved project scope, budget and schedule) to secure local authorizations and funding in 120 days or less from the date of the MSBA Board's approval; and
- A policy statement regarding a failing local vote.

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Should any district in the MSBA's core program determine that its Preferred Solution may not represent the most appropriate solution to meet its needs prior to securing MSBA Board approval of its proposed project scope and budget, the district has the option of reconsidering its preferred solution within the terms and conditions of the executed Feasibility Study Agreement.

The Town's Preferred Schematic Report, submitted to the MSBA on January 4, 2017, concluded that construction of a new building designed to serve 775 students in grades K-5 on the site of the existing Winthrop School was the most educationally appropriate and cost effective solution for the Town. The MSBA staff reviewed that submittal, found that the options investigated were sufficiently comprehensive in scope, the approach undertaken in the Feasibility Study was appropriate, and the District's preferred solution was reasonable, cost-effective, and met the needs identified by the District, and then forwarded a recommendation for consideration by the MSBA Board of Directors ("Board"). Based on that recommendation the MSBA Board approved the District to proceed with the development of a schematic design to consolidate the existing Winthrop Elementary School and the Doyon Elementary School in a new building on the existing Winthrop Elementary School site.

Should the Town determine that it no longer believes that its preferred solution, approved by the MSBA Board on February 15, 2017 meets the needs of the school district and that it would like to re-examine its prior analysis and findings, the Town must notify the MSBA of its intent in writing on Town letterhead, signed by the Chief Executive Officer, Superintendent, and the Chair of the School Committee, in a request that includes:

- A brief overview of the discussions and concerns that led to the Town's decision to reexamine the analysis and findings of its previously submitted Preferred Schematic Report dated January 4, 2017;
- A summary of the features of the Preferred Solution that are to be re-examined (i.e. different site, or different agreed upon study enrollment option, different grade configuration, etc.)
- An updated FSA schedule, and if beyond the term of the FSA, a request for MSBA to seek approval from its Board of Directors to extend the term of the FSA;
- An updated FSA budget, and if beyond that included in the FSA, a description of the Town's plan or actions taken to date to appropriate additional funding, and when it anticipates completing those activities;
- A certified copy of the School Building Committee meeting minutes, which includes the specific language of the vote and the number of votes in favor, opposed, and abstained, regarding the decision to revisit the analysis and findings of the prior Preferred Schematic Report.

MSBA staff will review the request, may seek additional information, and if found reasonable and in conformance with the scope of the FSA would invite the District to present its request to the MSBA's Facilities Assessment Subcommittee. Pending the outcome of that meeting, staff

Page 3 June 23, 2017 Ipswich Letter

would generate and forward a recommendation at the next available Board of Directors meeting to seek approval to extend the term of Ipswich's FSA.

If the Town confirms that a new preferred solution is required because the existing preferred solution no longer meets the needs of the District, and the Board approves a recommendation to extend the term of the FSA, the Town will be required to submit a new Preferred Schematic Report for consideration and approval. In addition to the Preferred Schematic Report requirements defined in the MSBA's Module 3 - Feasibility Study Guidelines on the MSBA website, the Town will need to include two additional appendices. One appendix that provides a narrative description of the process, discussions, and analysis that summarizes why the updated preferred solution better meets the needs of the district including certified copies of the school building committee votes documenting its decision to rescind its approval of the prior Preferred Schematic Report. A second appendix that includes "red-lined" version of all documentation associated with educational programming and educational visioning to demonstrate the changes from the prior documentation.

If the Town ultimately concludes that its original preferred solution is the most appropriate solution, the Town will not be required to present a new Preferred Schematic Report before it can advance into the development of a schematic design. The Town will need to submit a letter that summarizes the activities and findings of the updated work that states continued interest in proceeding with the original preferred solution, an updated feasibility study schedule, and a request for extension to the feasibility study agreement, if required.

The MSBA will apply all standard funding limits in the determination of eligible costs during evaluation of the Town's total project budget submitted as part of the Town's schematic design submittal.

Sincerely,

Mary Pichetti

Director of Capital Planning

Cc: Legislative Delegation

William M. Craft, Chair, Ipswich Board of Selectmen Sarah Johnson, Finance Director, Town of Ipswich Carl Nylen, Chair, Ipswich School Committee Dr. William I. Hart, Superintendent, Ipswich Public Schools Kevin Murphy, Chair, Ipswich School Building Committee Paul Queeney, Owner's Project Manager, PMA Consultants LLC Robert Bell, Designer, Perkins Eastman

File: 10.2 Letters (Region 3)

Massachusetts School Building Authority -

Steven Grossman Chairman, State Treasurer Katherine P. Craven
Executive Director

March 11, 2011

Dr. John E. Phelan, Superintendent Hopkinton Public Schools 89 Hayden Rowe Street Hopkinton, MA 01748

RE: Hopkinton Public Schools, Center Elementary School Project

Dear Superintendent Phelan:

I am writing in response to a recent inquiry from residents of the Town of Hopkinton regarding the Center Elementary School Project. The two items for which the residents requested the MSBA provide clarifications are: (1) can the District switch the scope at this stage in the process, and (2) what would be the repercussions of a failed Town Meeting vote.

- (1) As you know, the MSBA Board of Directors voted on February 9, 2011 to allocate an amount up to \$14,883,693 toward the Center Elementary School project to replace the existing grade K-1 Center Elementary School with a new PreK-5 facility at the Fruit Street site in the Town of Hopkinton (the "District"). This was the culmination of years of collaboration by both the District and the MSBA to reach agreement on the scope, schedule and budget for the Center Elementary School project. It is important to note that the MSBA Board of Directors February 9, 2011 vote is contingent upon the agreed upon scope, which includes the replacement of the existing grade K-1 Center Elementary School with a new PreK-5 facility at the Fruit Street site. If the District were to substantively alter the project from the scope presented as the District's preferred alternative, this may require the District to begin a new feasibility study process, add significant delay to the agreed upon schedule and would require receiving another affirmative vote of the MSBA's Board of Directors at a future board meeting.
- (2) Although to date, only one district approved for a Project Scope and Budget Agreement with the MSBA has failed to vote to appropriate funding for the proposed project, many districts have asked what would be the impact on their proposed project if the local funding vote were to fail. Pursuant to the MSBA's regulations, a district has 120 days following the Board of Directors' vote to approve the Project to acquire and certify local approval for an appropriation and all other necessary local votes or approvals showing acceptance of the cost, site, type, scope and timeline for the proposed project. Please understand that although we appreciate the challenges that districts face, our regulations specifically include the requirement to obtain the local appropriation within 120 days to ensure that our capital program money is targeted toward projects and

districts that are ready and able to make the financial commitment and move forward in a timely manner. Given the capital needs of school districts throughout the state and the MSBA's limited capital program funding, the MSBA cannot indefinitely tie up funds allocated for a project that lacks local support.

If Hopkinton's vote were to fail, the District may contact the MSBA to provide the vote results and explain the District's understanding of the reasons for the failed vote. The District also may propose and submit to the MSBA a plan to remedy the failed vote and a suggested timeline for such a remedy. The MSBA would continue to work in collaboration with the District to understand the District's perspective on the failed vote and their plan of remedy. However, if the vote fails and the District decides to repeat the feasibility study and schematic design efforts and develop a scope that the District does support, the District will have to proceed through feasibility study and schematic design with no financial participation from the MSBA.

Sincerely,

Mary Pichetti

Director of Capital Planning

Cc:

Senator Karen E. Spilka

Representative Carolyn Dykema

RJ Dourney, Chair, Hopkinton Board of Selectmen

Town Manager Norman Khumalo

Rebecca Robak, Chair, Hopkinton School Committee

Brian Main, Owner's Project Manager

Dave Finney, Design Partnership of Cambridge

File Letters 10.2 (Region 2)