

**School Building Committee  
Westport Community School  
DATE: Tuesday, April 7, 2015  
TIME: 6:00 p.m.  
PLACE: WHS Media Center**

**PRESENT:** Chair Dianne Baron, Co-Chair Tracy Priestner, Jon Bernier, David Cass, Ann Marie Dargon, Michael Duarte, Michelle Duarte, Tim King (Left at 6:47 p.m.), Bill Lawton, Robert Medeiros (Left at 6:34 p.m.), Warren Messier (Left at 7:00 p.m.), Robert Nogueira, Joseph Pacheco (Arrived at 6:05 p.m.), Carolyn Pontes, Kevin Rioux, John Tunney, Cheryl Tatalo (Left at 7:00 p.m.), Sue Ubiera, Antone Vieira, Antonio Viveiros, Adam Charest, WMS Student

**ABSENT:** Thomas Gastall, Jim Hartnett, Nelson Terra, Woodrow Wilson

**GUESTS:** Richard Fenstermaker and Julie Gagliardi, Somerset/Berkley School Building Committee

**I. Call to Order** – Chair Baron called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Chair Baron introduced Ms. Julie Gagliardi to the members. Mr. Richard Fenstermaker had not arrived yet. Both were members of the Somerset/Berkley School Building Committee. Ms. Gagliardi was in charge of the communication plan and Mr. Fenstermaker was the Chair of the 20 member committee and dealt directly with the MSBA. While waiting for Mr. Fenstermaker to arrive, Chair Baron moved to the Action Agenda.

**II. Comments and Statement from the Public/Citizen's Participation** – None at this time.

**III. Action Agenda**

A. Approval of Minutes of Thursday, March 26, 2015

Motion by Rioux, seconded by Pontes

All in Favor

B. Formation of Committees – Chair Baron informed the members that she, Co-Chair Priestner, and Dr. Dargon met to decide how the committees should be divided into subgroups. She listed the six (6) subgroups and asked the members to think about what group they would be best suited for.

1. Communication Team
2. Canvassing Group
3. Construction Design Team
4. Website Design
5. Feasibility Team
6. PowerPoint for Town Meeting

Ms. Gagliardi explained that since they were able to use the Model School Program they did not need to do the feasibility study first. Their committee broke into subgroups and utilized the members' expertise. They developed good relations with the local newspapers and TV stations; along with their local cable station. Also, since they were in the Model School Program, the members; along with community members and local TV, were allowed to tour a brand new school and video that tour. This was also done in the old school.

Ms. Gagliardi stressed the importance of communications and identifying the needs. They involved employees, parents, and community. All communications were funneled through

the Chair; however, each of the subgroups would do their own press releases.

Mr. Fenstermaker arrived and spoke about the process and their use of subcommittees to utilize the expertise of their members. Some of the subcommittees were comprised of not only members but parents and other members of the community. Mr. Fenstermaker stated that the more people you involve, the easier it is to get your message out. The Somerset/Berkley project started in September of 2010. Communicating the correct information was extremely important. There was usually one person on the subcommittee that would be the speaker for the group.

Chair Baron stated that the Town meeting would be held on May 5 and the warrant article for the Feasibility Study would be up for approval. There was a discussion concerning the cost of the feasibility study. Somerset/Berkley's initial funding request was for 1.3 million for the feasibility study and construction documents. They had asked for addition funding to keep the process going until the next Town meeting.

Dr. Dargon informed the members that the MSBA requirements had changed in 2010 regarding the use of a Model Program. Westport is under the new regulations. There is no Model Program, at this time. Therefore, no cost savings, but we may be allowed to look at Model plans. Westport is in the eligibility stage and had seven (7) deliverables to submit. The last one is the appropriation of funds for the feasibility study. Once those funds are appropriated, Westport would move into the Feasibility Stage.

There was a discussion concerning how to determine what company would do the study. MSBA has guidelines for this and how to decide on a Project Manager. Somerset/Berkley sent out invitations and those that applied were reviewed by a subcommittee and scored. The final decision was brought to the full committee.

There was a discussion concerning how receptive the community was to the school project. Co-Chair Priestner stated that it would be a difficult task. Money was spent to remediate the WMS and many believe the money was wasted. She would like to focus on moving the community forward. Dr. Dargon stated that the EPA informed the district that it would either have to completely remediate the WMS or evacuate. The decision was made to evacuate.

Ms. Gagliardi stated that the main benefit of the feasibility study would be to give a very comprehensive look at what your options are and the best use of the funds. In the case of Somerset/Berkley, the negatives were looked at and addressed. Dr. Dargon stated that the MSBA would not help with remediation. A WMS Feasibility Study has already been done. Ms. Gagliardi explained that Somerset/Berkley many years ago had a study done and it showed how it would be more cost effective to build new than to renovate the old high school.

There was a discussion concerning the percentage of reimbursement from the State, the history of the Town and overrides, regionalization, and enrollment projections.

Ms. Gagliardi told the members how their committee constantly kept the community informed by using different forum such as, the Council on Ageing, reaching out to the general public, and working with the Somerset Regionalization Action Group. Mr. Fenstermaker took advantage of being in the Model School Program and invited people to

accompany them on the tour of the new school in Norton. The community could see what their school would look like in the end. The local cable station would run their tour videos. Presentations were made at the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee meetings to win their support. A slogan was used on their flyers that were either mailed or distributed by hand. The flyers would explain the “Yes” and “No” vote.

There was a discussion concerning the estimated cost of flyers, the importance of showing the tax impact per household, how to keep the community updated on the timeline, that they need to stress the percentage of reimbursement from the State, create a website, and how the MSBA builds in contingencies to help district try and stay within budget.

Mrs. Michelle Duarte spoke about the PCBs at the WMS and the cost related to the remediation versus the cost to build a new school. The 46% reimbursement needs to be stressed. People in the community want to know why it costs \$700,000 for a feasibility study, when the WMS Feasibility Study only cost between \$25-30,000.

Ms. Gagliardi and Mr. Fenstermaker left the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

#### **IV. Informational Agenda**

A. Update on MSBA Visit on April 1, 2015 – T. Viveiros and T. Vieira

Mr. Antone Vieira informed the members that the discussion during their meeting with the MSBA was about the size of the building and the projected enrollment. This would be approved at the State level. The MSBA projected enrollment at just under 1500 students. Mr. Antonio Viveiros stated that the MSBA was leaning toward a 6-12 school building. The buildings are designed for 85% capacity.

Chair Baron asked that they discuss the subcommittee groups so they could get an idea of who would be interested in servicing on which subcommittee. Dr. Dargon recommended that Chair Baron or Co-Chair Priestner go through the expectations of each group.

1. Website Design – Co-Chair Priestner recommended members review the Somerset/Berkley Building Committee’s website. Westport needs to develop a website to show the community who the experts are on the Westport School Building Committee with the use of resumes and photos.
2. Construction Design Team – This team needs to consist of teachers who can speak on 21st century learning needs.
3. PowerPoint for Town Meeting – This group needs to focus on a quick comprehensive and very well done PowerPoint to answer questions concerning spending \$700,000 for a feasibility study.
4. Feasibility Team – This team would work with the Clerk of the Works and Project Manager.
5. Canvassing Group – Co-Chair Priestner recommended that this group go out into the community. Meet with various Town organizations, hold Coffees, attend various school and Town functions.
6. Communication Team – This team needs to develop comprehensive statement to communicate our needs – an “elevator speech.”

Mrs. Sue Ubiera recommended focusing on the next 2 ½ weeks. The committees are important, but we need to meet this week and put together a plan to speak with the COA and PTOs prior to the Town Meeting.

Co-Chair Priestner recommended a tour of the WMS and invite the public. Dr. Dargon suggested touring while the students are in the school. There was further discussion concerning presenting a PowerPoint at the Town Meeting, setting up a website or Facebook page, sending out a press release, and having babysitting services available during the Town Meeting.

Members agreed to have the next meeting at the WMS on Monday, April 13 at 6:00 p.m. A tour of the WMS would be provided to the public. Invitations would be extended to the Board of Selectmen, FinCom, and Mr. Steve Fors.

B. Plan for Town Meeting - tabled

C. Strategize Communications Plan - tabled

**V. Comments and Statements from the Public/Citizen's Participation** – None at this time.

**VI. Adjourn**

Motion by Nogueira, seconded by Rioux  
Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

All in Favor