



**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Meeting Minutes  
 October 30, 2012  
 Room 210, Billerica Town Hall**

Meeting was called to order by Mary McBride, Chairman, at 7:00pm.

<b>Members</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Excused</b>	<b>Arr. Time</b>	<b>Dep. Time</b>
Mary K. McBride, Chairman	X				
Thomas Aquavella, Vice Chairman	X				
John Piscatelli, Secretary	X				
Ed Giroux	X				
Patrick Logue, Jr	X				
Rino Moriconi	X				
Scott Morris		X			
Philip J. Newfell	X				
Kathleen Paulsen			X		
Mark Efstratiou	X				
Anthony Ventresca	X				
John Griffin, 1st Associate	X				
David Howe. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Associate		X			

First order of business was a discussion regarding the funding of the special election to decide upon whether to fund the town center project. Paul Watson, Town Accountant presented. Election to be approved by the board of Selectman on Thursday November 1. Likely date is Monday, November 19, with schools being open.

Funds to be drawn from the FinCom reserved fund.

After a brief discussion regarding whether the existing budget could simply absorb the funds (expected to be \$25,000), a motion was filed to approve the funding contingent upon the board of selectman setting a time and date for the election.

Motioned by:	Ed Giroux
Seconded by:	Mark Efstratiou
In Favor:	9
Opposed:	1 (Piscatelli)
Abstained:	0

Tim Piwowar and Dan Cugno presented the summary of the Billerica Public Schools Facilities study.

Tim reviewed the goals of the design, followed by a review of each school's enrollment and square footage.

Tim explained that full day kindergarten has a cost impact of \$500,000 in year one, after which time chapter 70 funds are available.

Tim offered tours of any school. Tom A to coordinate, and based on a request by Patrick, ensure all tours start after 630PM.

Tim reviewed the 6 options under consideration. All options, along with detailed explanation, are contained within the packet handed out, and posted to the town web site. The following minutes capture the key follow up actions, rather than describe the presentation which is already documented.

High school accreditation team to visit in the fall of 2013. We must show that we are in the process of addressing facility needs or we will likely be placed on probation. The fact we are in the midst of the Facilities Study will likely prevent being on probation.

Cost estimates, and key decision points were reviewed. The three key decisions are: 1. Type of high school investment (eg repair, rebuild, etc.), (2) what should the grade span of the District be, (3) location of new HS

Time line for reviews and recommendation was reviewed, with the key dates of a town meeting vote being targeted for spring/fall 2014 and a new school opening fall of 2017 or 2018, if the proposal is passed.

A motion was made to extend the meeting past 10PM:

Motioned by:	Ed G
Seconded by:	Mark E
In Favor:	9
Opposed:	1 (Patrick)
Abstained:	0

Following the presentation, some key comments were:

John Piscatelli suggested the following:

1. Once we have an aligned recommendation, and the associated capital estimates, that a grid is developed in order to depict, based on the average tax bill, the annual cost, by year, for the approved Parker School debt exclusion, the middle school debt exclusion, and the high school debt exclusion. This grid will show town meeting, the duration and expected incremental annual tax impact, for each project area (existing and proposed). This grid shall be "net" of whatever can be incorporated into the existing budget (eg self imposed debt limits and available free cash) so as to demonstrate the true incremental tax impact.

John Piscatelli described a list of obstacles that would likely be raised during the town meeting review process, and must be addressed in order to gain support. This list includes:

1. Describe how maintenance protocol will be changed in order to ensure any new building is maintained in a superior fashion to the current approach.
2. Though a town wide issue, describe efforts to contain unfunded liability, in order that town meeting feel comfortable in approving school based debt exclusions.
3. Describe what efforts (town side and school side) are aligned, in order to demonstrate that at least some of the capital needs, are addressed through cost reductions, vs placing the entire burden on the tax payers. These efforts should include, but not be limited too, any discussion regarding the outsourcing of non core skills, as well as organizational design to place any redundant (school side/town side) function under one management structure.

4. Describe the committed, measurable (inclusive of the method to measure) expected positive impact to education derived from the construction of new facilities.
5. Any new facility will likely result in some percentage of teachers not having the skill set to take advantage of new technology. How will this be addressed in terms of training, as well as dealing with some percentage of teachers who may not be able to accept the training?
6. Can we use the sale of existing land to partially off set the capital needs?

Tony V asked:

Should we continue to use MEC and MSEC?

Tim replied that MSEC is continuing to sever ties with MEC, and our only current involvement with MEC is in shared transportation.

Tim said that Dr. Chris Scott, Executive director of MSEC, has offered to address FinCom in the future.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting as follows:

Motioned by:	John Piscatelli
Seconded by:	Rino
In Favor:	10
Opposed:	0
Abstained:	0

Meeting adjourned at 10:15PM.

Submitted by:

John Piscatelli  
Secretary