

**EAST LONGMEADOW SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**



District Mission

"Our mission in the East Longmeadow Public Schools is to promote achievement and accountability in all endeavors as we educate today for the challenges of tomorrow"

DATE: January 7, 2019
TIME: 6:00 P.M.
WHERE: Superintendent's Conference Room

Meeting called to Order by: Richard Freccero, Chair
Chair stated that this meeting is being both audio and video taped, and asked if anyone else was taping the meeting.
Roll Call: Jake Brady, Student Rep, William Fonseca, Sarah Truiolo, Gregory Thompson, Richard Freccero, Gordon Smith, Superintendent of Schools, Elizabeth Marsian-Boucher, Pamela Blair, Asst. Superintendent for Business, Kathy Celetti, Recording Secretary

Approval of Minutes

2.1 Approval of the December 17, 2018 executive session meeting minutes.

**William moved to approve the December 17, 2018 executive session meeting minutes , Sarah seconded the motion.
Chair: Any further discussion? All those in favor say aye (5), those oppose (0), unanimous (5-0)**

2.2 Approval of the December 17, 2018 regular session meeting minutes

**Sarah moved to approve the December 17, 2018 regular session meeting minutes, Gregory seconded the motion
Chair: Any further discussion? All those in favor say aye (5), those oppose (0), unanimous (5-0)**

Committee/Sub-committee Communications

Student Rep: Currently, the high school Student Council is planning our first spring dance which would be open to all grades to participate. We are hoping this spring; we are working on fundraising right now. Spartanum auditions are being held this week after school. Many students and staff are working very hard to prepare for the show coming this spring.

Chair: Do you know the dates?
Student Rep: Sometime in March

**William motioned to move agenda item 5.1.1 MSBA Update up to the next item on the agenda , Elizabeth seconded the motion.
Chair: Any discussion, a ll those in favor say aye (5), those oppose (0), unanimous (5-0)**

Superintendent's Report:

5.1.1 The chair asked Mr. Smith to present the three different projects we have going on. Two different programs, the first MSBA program is the Meadow Brook Elementary Accelerated Repair Program and then move to the CORE Program at East Longmeadow HS.
Mr. Smith: We have two projects underway at MB under the Accelerated Repair Program through MSBA. Accelerated Repair Program looks specifically at projects for: roof replacements, windows and door replacements and boiler replacements. Two years ago, we were accepted to replace the windows and doors. That project is now completed. We are working on the punch list, originally when all the preliminary work and design work was being accomplished; we were designated as a town to receive reimbursement of 55% for all eligible areas of that project. When that's finished, with each submission to the MSBA, they review what we are submitting in terms of what we paid out in the project, and then all eligible payments that they can reimburse on, we get 55% back from the MSBA. The current MSBA program is different than the one that existed eight to ten years ago. When BPMS was built, the town fronted all of the money and we were reimbursed after the project was finished. The current program both the Accelerated Repair and the CORE Program work where you can submit as the project is going on and be reimbursed as they review what you paid for in the project. This past June we were notified that we were accepted into the Accelerated Repair Program for a roof replacement at MB, that project has also been set at 55% reimbursement for eligible portions. So far we hired our own project manager, "Pinck and Company". The way MSBA works, they have vetted owner project manager companies and architectural and design firms, basically they do a lottery draw and then they tell you when you've been accepted. Here's your owner project manager and here is your architectural firm. The architectural firm is Turowski Architects; we have met with them and we are beginning the preliminary design document phase. So those are the two Accelerative Repair Programs for MB. The CORE Program is the one that involves the HS and potentially looking at a new building, that's a different program. You put in a Statement of Interest and in order to put in a SOI, you had to have accomplished a facility study (2013); you go through the process where they have a system that each year, it just opened up again on January 4th, you have to log in and answer their questions around things such as roof; boiler system; HVAC system; plumbing, all the different systems you have making up your building. In addition to some basic facts, when the building was built; how many students are enrolled? For the last five years, each year we have submitted a SOI for a CORE Project at the high school. Unfortunately, in the last year somewhere in late December we have learned that they have not invited us into the eligibility period. With this current SOI that was submitted back in April 2018, we added this summer the Infrared Thermal Scan of our roof and gave that report to bolster our SOI, in addition, I met with the two state representatives and state senator. We discussed their support of the project and enlisted their support a little bit more strongly than just verbal support. Each one submitted a letter to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors who is the State Treasurer, Deborah Goldberg. Unfortunately, just before the holiday break we did not get invited into the eligibility period. After the holiday break, I did speak with our liaison Diane Sullivan from MSBA, as she's done in the last few years she sort of broke things down for me. She said that there were (70) projects submitted, (12) projects were invited into the eligibility period, which is lower than last year (15) projects were invited in the previous year. This tells me that possibly construction costs are now increasing, so their budget is not able to handle as much square footage. She also said that our SOI was competitive and has been competitive each of the last five years, that generally we are right in the discussion up until they get to that sort of (20) and below phase when they have to cut to (12). Things that we haven't been able to manufacture, that sort of puts other projects above ours: ageing systems which we have; age of the building which we have; impact to academic programming which we have; all are taken into consideration and have kept us very competitive. What we don't have, is we don't have an enrollment that's growing, so I can show that we would be overcrowding this building. That has jumped a number of projects over the years. If you have a portion of your building that actually is condemned, and you can show that it's condemned through an outside architectural or design firm, they verify that. Here's an example, in 2011 Mapleshade, when the roof was starting to cave in with all that snow that would be an example of a building that you cannot have. Were if there was an active SOI for that building, that might have jumped it to the head of the line so to speak. The town has insurance, and an insurance company enabled us to not only repair and replace the roof on cafe and the gymnasium but also to pay for our transition to a school in Wilbraham so that we could continue school for the Mapleshade students. Finally, the final point that Diane Sullivan made in terms of our SOI, because each year I ask very specific questions, after I have gotten over the disappointment and frustration, she said that things that keep us in the discussion are the fact that we know that the School Committee is

supporting it, there has been support from the town and that they have a good working relationship with us from previous projects.

Chair: Would anyone from the committee like to say something.

Gregory: So we have to talk about our strategy going forward or are we just going to address what has happened up until now?

Chair: First I would like to hear from the residents, move from there on.

Opportunity for Visitors to Address the Committee

Chair: At this point, on the agenda it's called "Opportunity for visitors to address the committee". I have to make three very clear points.

- This is an opportunity for statements to be made in a positive manner, there can be no detrimental comments about any person or position
- It is not a question and answer session, but we are very aware of very important comments that are going to be made. Mrs. Celetti will be taking notes so that we have a record of those comments
- Speakers are allowed (3) minutes, the reason for that is that we give everybody quality time to speak and not have one person dominate, so I will be like "quote" the timekeeper. At this point, I'm going to turn it over to you. Would anyone like to speak first about the MSBA Core Project at the high school? Please speak your name and address:

Mr. Harding - 134 Old Farm Road:

My wife and I moved to town (5) months ago. We did our selection of East Longmeadow very delicately and with great interest. We also looked at Longmeadow and Wilbraham, we like the rural beautiful area that the town provides, great schools, where the kids rank, how do kids do when they get out of school. We have gotten to meet a lot of folks; I've met a few of you, some other from church. I am speaking on behalf of a lot of folks that are really concerned. What the folks want to hear is "what can we do to help you". We know you are working hard and we know submissions have been made. So a couple of quick points:

- What can the community do to help you?
- How can we get there?
- What do we need to do?

I and a lot of folks behind me want to be a part of the solution. This is just a small representation behind me that you see. Mr. Thompson, let's talk about a solution.

Chair: If I can address a couple of points:

One thing we kept in mind, the percentage of students which is obvious, otherwise you all wouldn't be here. What makes it difficult for us here is that we have to take care of our current students, we can't just let the building run down, we can't stop doing repairs, we can't stop doing unnecessary revisions to the building, and we have to take care of our current students. Take a tour of this building, this building looks in wonderful shape, guarantee from the tiles to floors. The infrastructure is severely aged, it's old, our electrical grid is maxed out, plumbing is in trouble, and our HVAC is in trouble. But when you take this building and someone who traveled all over the state to different schools buildings, this building to the average person is a beautiful building. You might find that remarkable to hear but it's true. Some school districts, I'll say this very carefully, let their buildings run down, they don't make repairs, they sacrifice the present for the future, and that is why we are caught with a little bit, we've done some very comprehensive approaches. Every year that this comes up, the past five years this is the SOI, we review it, and we have testing done, as Mr. Smith said. We tested our roof last year, we had Contest in here testing our air quality, and we are constantly revising that document every year. So it's a breathing, visible live document. It's not something we did five years ago, that document has changed every single year and we have tried to use a very comprehensive approach from testing to yearly reviews, political outreach, local involvement with Town Council, DPW, so I guess we are also looking at other ways to do this. We really appreciate this forum right now.

Elizabeth: We had MSBA to actually come in and walk the school. We have had our representatives and senator tour and write letters on our behalf.

Mr. Smith: MSBA came twice because what they try to do is follow-up on the SOI that are competitive, what they call senior studies. I see many familiar faces in here who toured with me back in May. It was very similar to that tour that I gave all of you in May. I took them through the depths of the weight room and the old locker rooms, because I thought it was important for them to see that. However to your point, Ms. Marsian-Boucher, they also do their own survey of as many or all the schools in the state and then they give another rating to school. What we are writing and how they are rating us. Our ratings to both your point and Mr. Freccero point are decent. I will continue to research this, as I said the window to put in another SOI if that is where the School Committee would like to go opened on Friday. Look at, where are the ratings that those schools got in and that's something I've tried to do each year.

Mr. Steven Chrusciel - 28 Country Club Drive:

Mr. Chrusciel: Is that document available to the public? Mr. Smith said yes we can make it public.

Mr. Chrusciel: Is there a way to post it on the school department's website? Mr. Smith said yes, I would have to scan it.

Mr. Chrusciel: Is that assembled with the help of a third party? Mr. Smith said in this document you have the facility study from 2013 done by SMM Architectural Firm, SOI we put together, Roof Study by Garland Assoc., outside experts as well as internal folks putting this together.

Mr. Chrusciel: With all due respect, walking through this high school, I don't find it impressive at all. Is there something different we could be doing? I'm sure everyone here in attendance would be more than happy to help figure that out. MSBA is a political organization; let's not pretend politics doesn't have something to do with who gets picked. Parents don't want to move out of town, they love where they live, the neighbors, the neighborhood.

One parent stated, that's where it's heading, as a town we need to support our students. I'm not going to lie, I'm looking at other options, I've been talking about this for four years now, and we are no further along.

Greg: It's not unusual for districts to go out 5, 6, 8 years. We are in good shape for a building relative to others. Longmeadow got in when there was more money, Wilbraham had some other issues that helped them along. Contact those that can make a difference. We have a state treasurer who is in charge of the MSBA board. That's the first person we should all be contacting. Your state and local representatives. We have to convince MSBA that we are a project. We could let the building go, but we have always been against that. It is conceivable that MSBA could say no for another 2, 3, 4 years. At what point do we think about other options, that's what we have to talk about, because I don't know when MSBA is going to invite us into the process.

Parent: In the past, I got the feeling that you guys didn't want us to contact MSBA directly. I wrote letters and I got the sense that you thought that that wasn't productive. So are you saying something different?

Greg: Yes, constituents they need to hear from other people, other than just us. It's important for those that make decisions to know how to go about things. You are entitled to do whatever you want.

Parent: How come you guys haven't reached out to us, and said "we need your support as a community"?

Greg: I know others might have different strategies, but you've got to go to the people who make the decisions. We've invited them, we get rejected because we don't have overcrowding and there are other buildings that are worse off, can't beat that.

Elizabeth: It is very disappointing, like we are being punished for taking care of our building. Maybe if the community as a whole, a group gets together, have signatures, maybe a letter that is cohesive that talks about your concerns and maybe move on.

Mr. Chrusciel: Has SMMA been involved since the original 2013 study

Mr. Smith: Yes, each year I contact them and discuss how construction costs may have escalated over the past year. They have a copy of the facility studies, so we look at the individual projects, and at all five schools.

Mr. Chrusciel: I know some communities employ architects and OPM's as part of getting approved. They know how to navigate the system. This is really important. Maybe having a professional assistant would help the grass-roots side of the argument. Something that we organize together, oppose to us doing our own thing and you doing your own thing.

Michelle Dulchinos-20 Abbey Lane

I couldn't agree with you more Beth and Greg. Thank you for all you've done. I think what we need to do is put this in the past and move forward as a group, for the community and for everybody, that would be the best approach. Employ the right people to help us, they are professionals and know how to get this done.

Lauren Parzivand-7Speight Arden

I grew up in EL and moved back five years ago. Have you ever gone over to Longmeadow and said how did you get the money? Have you ever conferred with the

other towns and said what is the difference between your proposal and ours? What I worry about if you say, population is part of the issue, and how are you going to maintain the population. I want to venture out every avenue.

Mr. Smith: To answer your question in terms of consulting. Every year I consult with local superintendents who have received a project. When we submitted our first SOI five years ago, I actually sat with the W. Springfield, Longmeadow, and Hampden/Wilbraham Superintendent's and looked at what they had written that got them in. Interesting thing, not discounting hiring a consultant to look at that, much of their SOI has less detail than ours. Maybe having someone such as a professional consultant look at it in addition to SMMA with me, might be a good option. I feel the frustration that you all are feeling.

Lauren Parzivand: Could it be that we are giving them too much information?

Mr. Smith: To answer the second part of your question, what are we doing with students? We have become very creative knowing that our electrical system is at its maximum capacity. We are moving towards laptops, chrome books, also mobile carts where they are charging. We are moving that around the school if you will. Interesting enough we have become creative, look at different things that we can and cannot do. We work with DPW and IT Dept. how do we handle this piece. I can't expand the science lab walls. We need the science labs to be up to 21st Century capacity.

Lauren Parzivand: Thank you very much and again thank you all for what you do.

Darlene Reese-Sittig-159 Canterbury Circle

We relocated to EL in 2000, heard this was a great school district. I was fortunate to go on the tour in May. I was appalled, I was shocked, the school is in worse shape than I thought. What is disappointing is when you talk about capacity, I don't know if it was stated properly. I am here because I don't know what the transparency process is on this project. As a committee, what are you going to do differently? I loved your question Mr. Thompson, "what is the strategy going forward". What you have done in the past is not working. It's got to change, whether it means involving a committee of folks that are here, that are concerned. Utilizing the parents and why you can't have some experts with construction and MSBA that are willing to help. As a concerned resident, I am worried about the quality of the education for my children. The loss of tax growth, town revenue should concern everyone in this room. I don't know what's been happening the last few years, but it's time to change that, help you guys get this approved. I heard about this on the forum that we were declined. That shouldn't be the case, we all pay tax dollars, and we deserve to know the process.

Gregory: How would you like us to notify you, through robo-call?

Darlene Reese-Sittig: Why not a robo-call, why not a webpage or shared project space. You guys are all over google chrome, use google drive, come up with new ways to communicate with us.

Elizabeth: I don't think we didn't want people to know, we found out right before the holidays. Tonight, actually was the meeting we were really going to be discussing it.

Chair: I just want to make sure the quality of education in this building is still first-rate. I agree with you Darlene, we have to do something different other than this. I don't know what that is other than Ms. Goldberg, Mr. Lesser, Mr. Ash and Mr. Puppolo, have to hear from us. Mr. Smith has reached out to them last year, they all wrote letters of support for this.

Parent: What about the locker room that is closed down because of some kind of virus, or jump in the pool where there are bandages in it.

Darlene Reese-Sittig: Or when the filter is broken and we had our swim team swimming in it.

Chair: I'm feeling the same anxiety that everyone is feeling.

Darlene Reese-Sittig: Do we need a new writer, author? Do we need somebody who is not a part of this committee? Do we need to contract someone; do we need someone that is completely outside the loop that is better at persuasive writing than we are?

Gregory: We can't make-up things that don't exist in this building. The crux of it is that we are not qualified under the criteria that they are laying out for us.

Darlene Reese-Sittig: If you properly stated capacity, if we are not writing that the teachers are physically moving desk.

Gregory: We do, we've stated capacity of this building, how many students, those are facts, and we are not over crowded.

Darlene Reese-Sittig: The information is not out there for me to read.

Gregory: You can read it, it's a public document. We can't call everybody; all you have to do is ask.

Darlene Reese-Sittig: Why are you getting hostel?

Gregory: I'm not; we have put an awful lot of time into this. We are all very frustrated with the process, we feel your pain. Many of us have been touched by students in this building, and other buildings. We want what's best for them, so to say that we are lacking in what we are doing, we are open for other approaches, but it's not for lack of trying. I just want to make that clear, that's my point, do you understand that?

Darlene Reese-Sittig: Yes I believe for the record, I didn't say you have been lacking in what you are doing. I'm saying we need a new approach.

Gregory: We need more involvement yes, but I don't know that the approach is wrong. We are following the procedures in the policy, 70 districts applied, only 12 got in.

Mr. Maccarini - 348 Pinehurst Drive

I have been a resident for 56 years, I have four grandchildren. The first three will not make it into the new high school. We maintain this building too well. We had a lady in our ski group; she was on the board in Longmeadow. She said in Longmeadow, we did a lousy job of maintaining our schools. Just a thought, everybody talks about a green building, maybe what you can do is you can get some data on what our operating costs are (electrical and fuel wise) per square foot. Maybe get that and see what other schools are doing. I think you will find that we are probably spending a lot of dollars per student more than what these new schools are. Being green and very conservative operating wise. That might be something to look at.

Mr. Smith: The lighting in all our school buildings has been renovated so that we are actually greener, at least with lighting.

Mr. Maccarini: That's our problem; we are maintaining the schools so well. There might be another approach from an operating cost stand point.

Mr. Harding: When is the next one, document?

Mr. Smith: The process opens on Friday, January 4th and it's due in late April.

Mr. Harding: What about the pool?

Mr. Smith: the pool is not something that is reimbursed.

Mr. Harding: What about the locker rooms?

Mr. Smith: They have gone through the locker rooms, and it is documented.

Gregory: We can let the building go or we fix it, we have students in the building, it's a catch 22. If there is a better solution we are all ears.

Patricia Carando - 151 Old Farm Rd.

I've spoken to several school committee members; I have talked to them at lengths about the school building. I want a new building. We moved here for the schools, because your numbers are great and your teachers are great. I am adamant about a new building. I want to thank you for the exceptional teachers that are in this building. I have two children in this building, while there are a lot of physical issues in this building; my kids are taking wonderful classes and have wonderful teachers. A school environment is not just about the walls, it is the teachers and the support that they get from administration and I want to thank you for that. And, I want a new school.

Chair: At this time I am going to allow Mr. Smith to finish, we will take a five minute recess to give anybody in audience who wants to approach the school committee to speak with them, because some people may have felt a little bit uncomfortable speaking in front of a crowd.

Mr. Smith: I just want to finish off on what the process entails.

- Opened up on January 4th
- We need to develop a Statement of Interest
- School Committee need to vote on the SOI indicating that they support the submission of another SOI
- Town Council has to vote, indicating that they support another SOI

Without those two votes, you cannot even submit the SOI, once we get those, and then we finalize the document. We have to get it in physically, in this type of format.

Gregory: Something Mr. Smith spoke about, the Town Council is the other part of this issue. The Town Council, they all need to be on board going forward. So it's not only us that signs off on the SOI, it's also the Town Council.

Elizabeth: To what Ms. Carando said, I know some of us have kids in this school and some of us have students who have graduated. I get it; it's not a pretty site.

My kids graduated from here and are in college. Ones graduating early, the other ones not paying a penny. It's because of their hard work, also what they were taught in this school. They had everything they needed and our kids have some better technology than other schools around us. It's not an excuse not to get a better school, they are not lacking because of it.

At 6:55PM the chair stated that we will be taking a five (5) minute recess.

At 7:10 the chair stated that we are back from recess

Assistant Superintendent of Business Report:

5.2.1 Ms. Blair presented the fall commission check from Grynn and Barrett in the amount of \$1,694.87 for Mapleshade gift account.

Elizabeth moved to approve the check for MS from Grynn & Barrett in the amount of \$1,694.87, William seconded the motion.

Chair: Any further discussion? All those in favor say aye (5), those oppose (0), unanimous (5-0)

5.2.2 Ms. Blair presented the fall commission check from Grynn and Barrett in the amount of \$2,838.92 for Birchland Park gift account.

Elizabeth moved to approve the check for BP from Grynn & Barrett in the amount of \$2,838.92, Sarah seconded the motion

Chair: Any further discussion? All those in favor say aye (5), those oppose (0), unanimous (5-0)

5.2.3 Ms. Blair presented the fall commission check from Grynn and Barrett in the amount \$1,716.40 for Mountain View gift account

Elizabeth moved to approve the check for MV from Grynn & Barrett in the amount of \$1,716.40, William seconded the motion

Chair: Any further discussion? All those in favor say aye (5), those oppose (0), unanimous (5-0)

Old Business : None

New Business:

7.1 Mr. Smith presented the draft 2019-2020 school year calendar.

Chair: The Collaborative voted unanimously on the calendar

Mr. Smith: The start date and end date similar to previous years. Traditionally, the last day before vacation in December is a half-day. The question is, does the 20th become a full-day and keep the 23rd as part of the vacation week or make it a half-day like we've done in the previous calendar.

William moved to approve the draft 2019-2020 calendar as presented, Sarah seconded the motion.

Any further discussion:

Gregory: The Friday on August 30th, do we still want to take that. I used to like that.

Mr. Smith: Yes, it's still there

Roll-call vote: William (Yes); Sarah (Yes); Gregory (Yes); Elizabeth (Yes); Richard (Yes); unanimous (5-0)

7.2 Waiver of 12 month retirement notice per Article 9 of the Secretary's Contract was presented in executive session.

Gregory moved to approve the 12 month waiver s for retirement as discussed in executive session, William seconded the motion

Chair: Any further discussion? All those in favor say aye (4), those oppose (0), abstention (1), (4-0-1)

7.3 Mr. Smith presented to the committee the FY2020 Budget Development Outline. Mr. Freccero said look more at "Social Emotional Support". Mr. Smith said that he will bring the request from the Leadership Team to the February meeting.

November 29, 2018 - Meeting with ELPS Leadership Team for initial discussion on district procedures for budget development

December 20, 2018 - Meeting with ELPS Leadership Team: Review Budget Request; Discuss ELPS School Committee Goals for 2019-2020; Discuss potential building and department needs; and Identify potential budget challenges

January 3, 2019 - Meeting with ELPS Leadership Team: Finalize discussion of identified needs and possible challenges; review and finalize requests from the building and departments

Building Level Meetings :

December and January Building School Council meetings: discuss FY2020 budget development and building needs.

December and January Dept. Head and Faculty meetings: discuss budget development process and building needs with staff

School Committee Budget Development Meetings:

January 7, 2019 - Overview of process and timeline

January 22, 2019 (TENT) - Review Town Budget information and possible parameters

February 4, 2019 (TENT) - Review identified needs and potential challenges; review preliminary budget information

February 25, 2019 (TENT) - Finalize preliminary budget information for discussion with Town Manager and Town Finance Director

Town Manager sends a proposed budget to the Town Council by May 1st; Town Council adopts final budget by June 1st.

Chair: Thank you Mr. Make, Thank you Jake

William moved to adjourn at 7:28 P.M., Elizabeth seconded the motion.

Chair: Any further discussion? All those in favor say yes (5), unanimous (5-0)

Minutes Recorded by: Kathy Celetti

Respectfully submitted by: Superintendent Smith

Signature