

**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: April 4, 2019
TIME: 6:00 P.M.
WHERE: East Longmeadow High School Cafeteria

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: Gordon Smith, Superintendent of Schools, Jake Brady, Student Rep, Pamela Blair, Asst. Superintendent for Business, Sarah Truoiolo, William Fonseca, Elizabeth Marsian-Boucher, Gregory Thompson, Richard Freccero,
Absent: Kathy Celetti, Recording Secretary

Introduction of Guest:

Lorraine Finnegan - SMMA
Phil Pionelli - SMMA
Michael Clark - Chief of Staff - Senator Lesser
Pat Carnovale - Director for the Governor
Representative Brian Ashe
Dr. Flanagan, Principal ELHS

Superintendent's Report:

5.1.1 Informal Forum on working towards a new high school and the Massachusetts School Building Authority process.

Chair: This is an informal forum in working towards a new high school. We are hoping this meeting is purposeful and informative. It is a four part program.

- Superintendent Smith will explain where we are right now and how we started the process back in 2013
- There will be a brief video highlighting parts of the high school from March 29th when Madam Treasurer Goldberg and the MSBA officials, as well as Senator Lesser and Representatives Ashe and Puppolo toured the high school
- We will hear from the architects, Ms. Finnegan and Mr. Pionelli from SMMA and from Representative Ashe, Mr. Clark and Mr. Carnovale.
- In the end I will give the audience ten minutes for questions and comments.

After that, all of us will remain here for any individual questions you may have for us.

Phil with SMMA: Back in 2013 we conducted a Master Plan of the school district that data went into the SOI. Recently the school went to NESDEC for an update on the demographics of the district. Student enrollment is on the rise. Lack of handicap accessibility; under sized classrooms (40% smaller than what's recommended); lack of AC units; the building is tired.

There are eight priorities that we look at: structure unsound; severe overcrowding; loss of accreditation; preventive severe overcrowding in future; modernization of school facility; short-term enrollment; obsolete building; and court-ordered.

Process: January - SOI opens; April SOI closes; Review the SOI; Review the SOI and accompany documents for content; Conduct student visits; recommend SOI into eligibility period, this take a full calendar year to process.

You do get additional reimbursement points for how well you maintain your buildings.

Building Process: SOI process (approx. 12 months); Eligibility period (10 months); Feasibility Study (9 months); Schematic Design (6 months); Development Design (5 months); Construction Document (8 months); Construction (24 months); Close Out (3 months), taking up to 6.5 years to build.

Representative Ashe: This is not an easy process. I get your frustration. Everything that could be done is being done. We are all behind this and continue to support it.

Mr. Carnovale: We have been in constant contact with ELPS. This does fall under the State Treasurer's office and not under us. We will support you and we all want to be a part of this process that is why we are here.

Mr. Clark: Our office stands ready to assist the Town of EL and the school department in any way we can. Unfortunately, the MSBA process is not a political process. Our ability to affect the outcome is severely limited, but that doesn't mean we can't be your advocate. Last fall we did submit a letter of support for the HS building to the MSBA. We also brought the Treasurer out here on Friday. MSBA does look at community support

Chair: What I heard from MSBA, one small piece was they weren't sure the community was behind it. I think right now with the tour on March 29th and this showing, that's the key. Letting the officials of MSBA know that this community is 100% behind getting a new HS, that's the key.

Gregory: Once we get invited into the process, that's when we really need the community support. But we also need approval from the town. This is a town decision.

Parent: Can we get smaller projects done?

Chair: We do keep up our repairs through DPW and Capital Planning.

Rep. Ashe: Accelerated Repair Program through MSBA - there is absolutely a mechanism in place whether it's through the town or MSBA.

Parent: What if we start losing students, will that hurt us.

Ms. Finnegan: No it doesn't change your chance

Parent: if we get accepted into eligibility, is that a Town Council vote?

William: Town Council needs to vote on it, and then we have a Special Town Election.

Parent: The property on Hamden Road that is being underutilized, that was purchased from the Town, is there an opportunity to put that property back up for sale and the funds from that be put towards some of the critical repairs or new building?

Gregory: It would be up to the Town Council to make that decision. How much we use it and how much it's worth, it's not a bad idea. But it would only be a drop in the bucket.

Parent: I know we talked about the SOI criteria; one of the things that came off of the NESDEC was accreditation. I am concerned as a parent where you are in that cycle as well as how the building conditions will impact ELHS accreditation.

Dr. Flanagan: Some of the things on the NESDEC list we have already addressed. We put money into our library, technology, we are very close to being 1 to 1 district. There are some things we can't control for example: the size of the hallway. We are taking a strategic look at trying to address that list they gave us. I think we are in pretty good shape.

Mr. Mazzariello: My last year on the School Committee in 2010, we talked about a new HS. Back than one of the things that's frustrating to me, and still is, I visited five area schools and they all have new HS. Those schools have not been maintained. ELHS has always maintained it school, roof, boilers, generators, windows, and the life. I always felt that we were being punished. The fact that we kept up our building. The last accreditation, they compared our school to a church because it was immaculate. We did have problems and we took care of those problems. I

listen to you, I don't follow everything, but I just feel it's frustrating. And that this community deserves a new HS and we hope that we can get one in an expedite fashion.

Parent: Do we have a grant writer to write grants?

Chair: We do have people that do write grants.

Parent: But do you have a grant writer?

Chair: Not one in particular per say, because we have a very flat central office.

Mr. Smith: SOI, I take the majority of writing it, that's in consultation not only with the master plan, it was developed in 2013. Also in bouncing ideas off of Lorraine and Phil. This year we had a very active group of parents who have taken an interest and I shared the SOI with them and they offered revisions. We can also add supporting documents; someone asked about letters if you want to send letters to me I can send it in support of the SOI.

Minutes Recorded by: Kathy Celetti

Respectfully submitted by: Superintendent Smith

Signature