

**Design Subcommittee  
Concord Middle School Building Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
November 19, 2020  
Virtual Meeting conducted via Zoom**

**PRESENT:** Court Booth, Dawn Guarriello, Laurie Hunter, Charlie Parker, Chris Popov, Matthew Root.

**PRESENT FROM HILL INTERNATIONAL:** Mike Carroll.

**PRESENT FROM SMMA:** Kristen Olsen, Matt Rice.

**Call to Order**

Court Booth called the online meeting to order at 8:30 AM. He noted that the meeting was recorded. Members conducted a roll call for attendance.

**Agenda Discussion**

Mr. Booth reviewed the agenda and explained that he and Charlie Parker had conducted a space analysis of the “modified treetops” design that was received from SMMA before Building Committee (CMS SBC) work was suspended in spring, 2020. Their work was authorized by Mr. Hult during the pause to help the entire Committee understand the way in which that design serves students and their educational programs and introduce a model for design and space analysis that can be applied to design changes as they evolve.

Mr. Parker informed the Subcommittee that Mike Carroll of Hill International was authorized to meet with him and Mr. Booth for purposes of verifying data and sources.

Citizen comments: None.

On a motion by Mr. Root, seconded by Ms. Guarriello, the Subcommittee minutes of March 25, 2020 and April 15, 2020 were approved by roll call vote.

Mr. Booth presented 20 slides, in order to share the space utilization analysis and present a model by which the CMS SBC can understand the current design and

Ms. Guarriello noted that the size of the building should be need-based, in support of the education plan. Mr. Booth noted that the Education Plan will require attention and careful consideration and that it should align with school design. A review of the Education Plan is anticipated.

The analysis focused on building size, or square feet, as the key metric and a determinant of cost. It considered external benchmarks, notably MSBA and Scituate and Beverly; also Braintree and the nine schools for which comparative data was furnished by Hill in the spring. Scheduled space and unscheduled space was examined, and “core” and non-core utilization, consistent with the school population, was considered.

Mr. Parker stated, “the real purpose of this analysis is to enable us to ask some questions,” and “have a dialogue” about the school we need in order to make assumptions visible.

Findings presented in the slide deck and discussion followed.

Current design exceeds MSBA guideline by 20%. (slide 5) When instructional space only is considered (slide 6) the design is 26% over that of MSBA, while Beverly and Scituate is over by 4 and 8 percent respectively. Per-student space for our design is currently at 78 square feet, with Scituate at 67 and Beverly 61. Dr. Hunter

explained that there are split teams in those two schools. Mr. Parker recommended that the full Committee examine the implications of full (“ideal”) and split team approaches.

Comparative data from 8 schools that were provided by Hill International shows a variance between the 8-school average and our design of +18,000 GSF or +14.4% (slide 7).

The MSBA provides a scheduling guideline of 85% occupancy (slide 9). The Committee and the Design Subcommittee has not discussed this; Mr. Booth stated that we don’t have a scheduling goal at this time. Ms. Guarriello stated that 85% is typically easier to achieve at the high school level, difficult at the elementary level, with more mixed results at the middle school level; teachers would not have exclusive use of their rooms at a use level of 85%. Mr. Root asked what a reasonable use level might be. Mr. Carroll explained that the MSBA assumes that regular classrooms are to be used 6 of 7 periods each day, or 85% of the time.

The space and scheduling analysis was conducted based on the current design (new building) and the current student-class scheduling (two buildings in operation now).

Utilization of core (team areas) is currently at a 57% for the four daily classes only; it increases to 72% with Health, Digital Literacy, and “RTI” student interventions also meeting in those rooms (slide 10). World language, art, music, technology, and physical education, if meeting in fully dedicated rooms, average out at 67% utilization. Dr. Hunter indicated that she will want to “map out” scheduling again in order to understand how the building will support programming; current scheduling from the two buildings is re-scheduled into the new design for purposes of the analysis presented here.

An alternative model was presented (slide 11), to examine space efficiencies should the core classrooms and team spaces accommodate language classes and if other instruction (art, music and technology) were each to be reduced by one room and used more frequently (with a potential 81% efficiency).

Mr. Booth explained that spaces for teachers and their planning was not considered during this exercise, as that data (teacher locations during non-teaching periods) is not yet available.

A comparison of Scituate and the CMS design’s spaces for “other” academics (media center, small group meeting spaces, teacher preparation rooms, SPED breakout spaces) shows a requirement of about 10,000 NSF for CMS, and 14,000 for Scituate (slide 16). The way in which these spaces are named and used requires further explanation and analysis. “What are they doing differently that would inform us?” asked Mr. Booth. Dr. Hunter explained that the school uses split teams, and teachers do not have their own rooms exclusively. Scituate’s media center is different also. Dr. Hunter stated that she is currently discussing four options for reducing square foot requirements. Ms. Guarriello noted that Scituate’s approach to distributing media center resources, instead of centralizing them, may confuse the net-to-gross square feet calculations. Mr. Parker stated that while Concord’s design calls for separate team commons and a media center, Scituate has combined these functions. Mr. Carroll stated that Scituate’s media center (listed as 0 on the slide) should be equated with the learning commons, as they serve a dual function. The difference for other academic space has Scituate at 14.5 NSF and Concord at 20.3, or a +5817 GSF difference for CMS; Ms. Guarriello noted that the Scituate split team model is a factor in this difference, and Mr. Parker noted that this kind of information has to be made available to the Subcommittee and the full Committee, and discussed.

Slide 18, Consolidation Opportunities, combines the model with core areas at 81% utilization (noted above) and the sizing at the Scituate level for other academics to produce an overall GSF size reduction of 18,642 GSF, to effectively size CMS at the average of the 9 schools in the Hill benchmarking. “Various optimizations could yield ~18,600 GSF.” (slide 19)

At the conclusion Mr. Booth asked, if the model “is a tool we can use when other modifications come our way?”

Dr. Hunter reported that she is working on the draft of the Education Plan. She and Mr. Cameron are discussing different options with the staff now: eliminating “clean teams” and having fewer than 9, having teachers share rooms and requiring travel by some, moving language classes into the core areas, and reducing the number of non-core “specials” rooms. “All this feels like loss” to the teachers, reported Dr. Hunter. She will have a recommendation about this.

Court asked about process going forward; how do the Chairs plan to advise the Design Team at this point?

Mr. Hult thanked Mr. Parker and Mr. Booth for the work and stated that the Building Committee will be expected to discuss Concord’s plans and how they differ from other recent middle school projects. He stated that the educational plan is central to the work now; that the community expects a sustainable building, that supports the arts; with costs that the Concord community can manage. Balancing these objectives is the task now.

Mr. Hult reported that he has met with SMMA to examine cost estimates, with Dawn leading discussions to understand the cost drivers in the current design. Now the size modeling, and the educational plan, and the cost factors (\$100m budget assumed) must be brought together.

Ms. Guarello reported that she has reached some agreements with Kristen Olsen and Lorraine Finnegan about general construction costs and strategies, with site and program analysis still required. She stated that the \$100m budget might be considered for the core building, not to include an auditorium and the medium-size gym.

Mr. Hult believes that the next Committee meeting must focus on a revised schedule to bring the project to Town Meeting in the fall of 2020. Perhaps the feasibility phase can be completed in two months. Lessons from the CCHS experience about how to complete the schematic phase are important for this project.

Ms. Guarriello supported the team model as “critical” and Dr. Hunter reported that the experience of the current school year supports the value of team teaching.

Mr. Hult referred to the likely fiscal uncertainty in the next 1-2 years. Mr. Crane, Town Manager, indicated that this work is being done at the right time. For local revenues, property tax receipts are currently strong, and other local receipts and state aid projections are down. Property owners should “have the ability to pay” given the current collection data.

Mr. Hult would like Dr. Hunter to review the analysis discussed today in order to identify any data that is not clear; to meet with Mr. Parker and Mr. Booth before today’s presentation is shared with the Committee. He would like Ms. Guarriello to be prepared to present on cost drivers when the Committee meets. Ms. Guarriello asked Kristen Olsen to provide copies of a new set of benchmark schools that they recently discussed.

While compromises are always necessary, Mr. Hult stated, ultimately there will be “a beautiful new school.”

Mr. Booth and Ms. Guarriello discussed the value of teacher-to-teacher communication about children that is enabled by team teaching. Mr. Parker emphasized the need for understanding specifics of space and utilization plans and objectives as it applies to teams, “written down.”

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:58 AM (Guarriello motion, Root second) by roll call vote.

Meeting video available at:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ry9TMQgArNw&list=PL1TTzrWEKOOKQSCY4ADcNvk7hoJ9\\_IrH8&index=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ry9TMQgArNw&list=PL1TTzrWEKOOKQSCY4ADcNvk7hoJ9_IrH8&index=1)

Attachment: 11.19.20 slide deck