

COMMITTEE ON JOINT SCHOOL BUILDINGS

September 17, 2024 at 5:00 PM

Chairman O'Connell called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: School Committee Members O'Connell, Soule, Turner
Aldermen Terrio, Kantor, O'Neil

Messrs.: D. Saindon, J. Soucy, M. Lenfest

1. Presentation from LeftField regarding the School District Priority One Project to date.

Chairman O'Connell stated first of all I'd like to welcome our new member, Alderman Crissy Kantor. Welcome. I look forward to working with you on this important work in the city over the coming year-plus that we will be here, at least. Also, I'd like to express my gratitude to Alderman Morgan for his previous work here. With that, I will hand it over to LeftField and Mr. Saindon to lead the presentation.

David Saindon, Project Executive at LeftField, stated first let me apologize. I don't know if this is a communication issue with the projector or a lack of technology skills with me, but this is the best I can do with the projection tonight. For tonight's agenda we will do a progress update, look ahead activities, budget and invoicing, scheduling, progress pics, and then questions. For activities completed within the last thirty days, this will be somewhat repetitive. I had an email that was sent out to the JSPC on August 23, and then a similar update was provided at a meeting on August 26. Apologies if this is somewhat repetitive. Eversource committed on their delivery of power. That is behind us. The classroom move to the modulars with furniture has been completed as well as internal school moves. Site restoration is complete at the modular sites. There was continued interior fit-out at all modular units leading up to the delivery of the modular. They were delivered for the teachers' use on August 26 and the certificate of occupancy came on August 30. There was an open-house at McLaughlin on August 29. I felt that was very successful. I was there in the afternoon session. There was a late morning or noon session as well. There has been ongoing coordination and installation of technology as well as fiber cabling that occurred throughout August. Regarding outside of the modulars, we have had continued CM procurement for the middle schools and Beech Elementary. We have received proposals for all four middle schools, Group I and Group II, as well as Beech. We had interviews for the Group I middle schools for the CMs. We had continued development and refinement with the middle school schedules as well as programming and design for Beech and the middle schools. There has been continued coordination regarding the Amoskeag deed release. As far as the future thirty-day look-ahead, we will complete the modular punch list within the next month. MEP training for modular equipment, continued refinement of IT at the modulars, closeout of Consigli GMP for the modular contract, and Triumph for their role with the modulars. We will finalize the CM award for Group I. As of today or a week ago, Consigli was awarded Group I, which is Hillside and McLaughlin. I am currently working with district counsel on getting that contract setup. They have been notified with a letter of intent, and to proceed with pre-construction services. Regarding Group II, which is

Southside and Parkside, those interviews occurred last week. We have interviews scheduled for Beech this Thursday. Once we conduct those two series of interviews, selections will be made for Group II as well as Beech. There is going to be ongoing continued development with the schedules, coordination of phasing for Hillside and McLaughlin, and continued design development estimating. Beech is continuing with schematics; it is leaving conceptual and going into schematic. Hillside and McLaughlin are moving forward with design and development. We will continue our discussions with Amoskeag on the deed release. We are in the works of getting a vendor on board to do a Priority I project update that is more of a centric website that would have all project updates or a one-stop shop. As far as the graph, you can see the modulares are complete. We are going into closeout within the next month. Beech, McLaughlin, Hillside, Parkside, and Southside programming is complete or close to it. You can see the design is moving forward with Beech from conceptual into schematic. McLaughlin and Hillside are moving to design development. Parkside and Southside will follow from a design standpoint. CM procurement. Obviously the modulares are done. McLaughlin and Hillside are at 100%; Beech, Southside, and Parkside are all at 80%. For the purpose of this, they are somewhat tracking at the same time even though the interviews are staggered by one week. Bidding and construction and closeout we will start populating in the coming months. As far as a modulares update, pretty much everything is green with the exception of closeout. During questions we can get into any questions you may have. Eversource has delivered on all of their power requirements. As part of the report that was sent out on Friday, this is an overall rolled-up summary of all of the different six budgets that we are tracking. This one is a snapshot of the modular project because this is essentially complete and we are going to be doing a financial cleanup within the next month. These are the invoices for period ending August 2024. These were approved by the district on Friday the 13th. They will get another approval on the 19th, and the checks will be issued on September 20. These costs, even though technically they have not been expended yet, are carried in the budget as encumbered. As part of the report, we have individual schedules for all six projects. For this presentation, it is just showing that it was part of the report. Then we have some pictures of classroom setups. Some of these are probably considered in the process of being setup. The classrooms are definitely in use. Jen Soucy from SMMA will go through a couple of slides at a high level showing the design schedule and process for the other projects.

Jen Soucy, Project Architect with SMMA, stated we wanted to give a visual to get a snapshot of where we are at with design for Hillside, McLaughlin, and Beech. Hillside and McLaughlin are part of what we are calling the Group I middle school project; Parkside and Southside are being staggered as far as the design schedule. We don't have a schedule for that because we haven't started those two middle schools. For Hillside and McLaughlin, you can see the red dash line indicates today. You can see we are well onto design development. We have already gone through schematic design where we have scoped out all the programming, met with staff and departments in order to develop the design of the addition, as well as the scope of the renovations. Design development is continuing to develop the design and finalize it to be ready for the construction document phase where we prepare the drawings and specifications for bidding and construction. We are planning to move into construction documents towards the end of September in preparation for issuing early foundation and steel packages for the addition. This will enable us to get procurement of the steel and to

shop drawings so that we can put shovels in the ground for these two additions in early spring 2025. I want to update you on the new Beech Elementary school. We just completed what we call the feasibility phase, so we had several options for massing of the building on the site which we reviewed with the School District. We have come out with a preferred option. We are just beginning schematic design: developing the floorplans, meeting with staff, and developing the exterior design of that option. We are planning to complete schematic design at the end of October. We are moving into design development through the beginning of next year. Then with the intent, again we will be issuing early foundation and steel packages, in April 2025. Then shovels in the ground with the intent of summer 2025.

School Committee Member Turner stated thank you for the update. Can you share details on page five of our packet which talked about refinement of IT in the modulars? Specifically, the internet, Wi-Fi, phone, cameras, and door access. My kids go to Hillside so people are quick to bend my ear. Can you shed any light on where we were, any hiccups, and where we are headed?

Mr. Saindon stated I can provide a high-level answer, and then Mark Lenfest can provide more of a granular level response. He is more involved with the day-to-day. The IT was a little bit of a rocky road on that delivery. I'd have to say it all comes down to there being certain technology, a widget or device, that was a supply chain challenge. They could not get it in time. That required everything else to work. There were a lot of things that were installed but they just couldn't communicate and work. As of the 12th, all modulars had internet. Maybe one modular had a little light coverage but they did have internet and I think that has been corrected this week.

Mark Lenfest, Senior Project Manager at LeftField, stated getting into the details, the district IT department had ordered a SFP module, which enables the fiber to work. Everything we have in the modulars is fiber based, so all of the wireless access points cable back to a data closet which then goes into a network switch, which is powered by the fiber back to the main buildings. They had ordered it but it did not get provided by the vendor. Our resource within IT followed up on it. They have been working on getting a better delivery date. That is actually shipping on the 20th. That being said, they worked with a district vendor who did an exceptional job of providing a work around. Instead of having the system required piece of equipment, they were able to use a product by Axiom and create a network support that allowed us to have internet and Wi-fi. Although we have had a supply chain failure, through some hard work by district IT and their vendor they were able to supply internet and Wi-fi. Taking that a couple steps further, there are some other systems that require a little more enhanced support and we need that system recommended piece of equipment to be in place to bring everything online. Again, we have intercoms, security, and card-access. Regarding card-access, we have one issue on one door which is not an IT issue but a mechanical failure of a solenoid. It got shipped from California and arrived today. That will be installed at Parkside. That is the only FOB that is currently not activating the release on the crash-bar. That will be done today. We have one other door hardware issue where there is a keyed entry where the trim has an internal mechanical failure. That has also been ordered. That door is locked. The crash-bar works correctly for emergency egress. We have one other issue. There were six PoE switches, which handle a couple of other systems. Those were repurposed from an existing inventory by some good work by district IT, who have

been very responsive. They repurposed those so those have been ordered for replacement. Other than that, in totality we should be at 100% by next Friday.

Mr. Saindon asked could you give us an update, that there was no issue with the fire alarm system, right. I don't have a social media account, so I don't follow it but if there is any commentary on social media, we want to make the record clear regarding the fire alarms.

Mr. Lenfest stated what happened with the fire alarm was in order to get occupancy, they test both the modulares and the modulares integration with the existing buildings. That was done and we achieved occupancy on August 30. All six modulares have been tested to work with their existing buildings. That being said, when they did a fire drill at Beech, they used a control panel option for fire drill. They pushed the button and it activated the school but not the modulares. Forest Ransdell got me on the phone. All the techs and I got in there at 6:00 AM Tuesday and coordinated with the Fire Department and pulled alarms in the building. The building went into alarm and the modulares went into alarm. We reset the system and pulled the pull-station in the modular and the modulares went into alarm and the building went into alarm. Everything worked exactly as it is supposed to. It is literally an option within the fire alarm control panel. Superintendent Chmiel engaged the Fire Chief and he said he does not want it changed; that is exactly how he wants it to operate. His teams know exactly how each panel is supposed to be programmed, and they are correct, and do not touch them.

School Committee Member Turner stated thank you for the transparency. There is a healthy relationship with this committee and you folks to make sure that the questions get asked and the answers are real. I am leaning on your confidence that the students are safe, there is internet, there are working fire alarms, the teachers can teach, and the teachers can use their phones. I understand there were hiccups. We are essentially waiting on a patch that is in place, or this work around, and then we are waiting on the September 20 shipping of the specific piece of technology equipment, then we will remove the work around and put in what was essentially supposed to be there in the first place.

Mr. Lenfest stated correct.

School Committee Member Soule stated I want to echo what School Committee Member Turner said. I also wanted to say my husband and I attended the open-house at McLaughlin and everything was in place. What was so exciting to me, having dealt with portable classrooms, was how nice they were and how well built they were. The strength of the doors which were not hollow but definitely well made. The excitement on the faces of the families and kids who were so excited to see the inside and surprised. If you have never been in a modular, it is not like the old ones. It was so exciting to see that. I don't think there was anyone that came out with an unhappy face. They had questions, but they all came out really feeling good.

Alderman Terrio stated I ask these questions at every meeting so I sound like a broken record. Are there any issues that you are concerned about now going forward?

Mr. Saindon stated regarding the modulares, no.

Alderman Terrio stated in general.

Mr. Saindon stated no. Getting the CMs on board and getting them to start the process. We have some planes to land regarding Beech and once they land we can get Beech going. My only concern is maintaining schedule; if you don't maintain schedule costs go up year after year.

Alderman Terrio asked looking at the slides, it looks that we are all on schedule correct.

Mr. Saindon answered things have fluctuated that can be absorbed overall, but yes.

Alderman Terrio asked what would be absorbed.

Mr. Saindon responded you can put a schedule together, and then something can be delayed two weeks but it is not necessarily going to delay the end date. I've been in the business for thirty-plus years and have never been on a project where everything tracked exactly to your original schedule. There is always fluctuation but you always want to hit that end date.

Alderman Terrio asked are we on budget or under budget.

Mr. Saindon replied you are going to be under budget for the modulares. That savings is going to be moved to the other projects and expended, trust me.

Alderman Kantor stated thank you for the presentation. It is summer 2025 when you are going to start construction, right?

Mr. Saindon stated the intent is spring of next year for Hillside and McLaughlin. Then summer of 2025 for Beech.

Alderman Kantor stated I know there are issues with traffic congestion over at Hillside and the egress at the end of Myrtle Street. When will that be paved? It is taking teachers 30-35 minutes to leave the area. I was told that was supposed to be taken care of and it is supposed to be an emergency route for buses as well.

Mr. Saindon stated my answer is, unfortunately, really not an answer. I know there is going to be an internal meeting this week to gather the applicable parties and talk about that. Aside from that, I really can't comment on the traffic. I hear that there is traffic at Hillside. I know that it is my opinion that there is ample parking. I know that you might have to walk a little further but there is ample parking. As far as traffic, I am going to defer to others who are going to be attending the meeting to try to get on the same page.

Alderman Kantor asked when you make your plans, and if that is supposed to be paved, is there a timeline.

Mr. Saindon stated I'm going to call it the Myrtle Street extension and that was never planned to be paved.

Chairman O'Connell stated can I just jump in before we get any confusion. I understand where the confusion is coming from because there is a lot of stuff out there. A few things are important. It was never part of the plan to open the entry in and out of Myrtle Street. That is not known by everybody. Some people thought because it had been mentioned that the entrance to Myrtle Street extension that the plan was to use that. I know that some of the teachers at Hillside would really like to do that, as well as others. I want to be clear about that. It wasn't as though it had been waiting to be done and it hasn't gotten done because it got delayed. Right now there is no plan to do it. There is a meeting this week to talk about Hillside and congestion, if there is and what there is. We will also talk about the entry and egress for teachers and buses and if it should be changed. There are various agencies involved here. There is a connection between the work being done under the school building project, which is under the auspices of this committee, and the work which is being done by the City on Reservoir Avenue. I am not trying to disown any of it at all because I think it is appropriate that we talk about it. However, it is important to know that if there were never any new building going on at Hillside, the changing of the traffic flow and the design of it on Reservoir Avenue was and is the work of the Department of Public Works in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Department. You'll notice one of the things is that there is a new sidewalk along the side of Derryfield Park, which was seen as a deficit all along. You couldn't walk from the tennis courts down the hill because there was no sidewalk and people wanted to use that park so Mr. Gomez and others identified if there was really going to be proper use of Derryfield we should do the sidewalk. The City's traffic engineer and the Department of Public Works and others had looked at Reservoir Avenue for some time regarding changing the flow of traffic there to make it easier to get in and out. Then along comes the school district and we're going to be building an extension on Hillside. We're taking up space that was parking to put modulars on so now that is where that new piece of temporary parking was put down below so teachers could park there. That was all the plan that was signed off on with everybody that that was going to work. There were people during that time saying we should look at the Myrtle Street opening. Others were saying we don't or shouldn't do the Myrtle Street opening. That is where we are. There is a meeting on this week which will involve City, Traffic, our people working on the school project, and others to start to look at all of this to reach a conclusion. I would say it is in a state of flux now, but I want you to know Alderman Kantor, and the public that there are three or four different entities across the city and everybody who should be at the table is at the table and I would hope the teachers at Hillside will have a seat at that table, too.

Alderman Kantor stated that sounds excellent.

Chairman O'Connell stated whether there is resolution or not, there is debate about it but no agreement that that should happen. That is what the meeting is about.

Alderman O'Neil stated one of my items was the fire alarm test. Like you, I don't do social media. I heard about it. The Superintendent and I have spoken briefly about it. The communication, and I believe it came from the school district, said the fire alarm system wasn't working. That was not the truth. It got people stirred up because somebody sent something out that they didn't know what they were talking about. The whole time it was just a test switch on the panel. Mark stated that when you pull the pull-station in the modulars or the buildings, everything worked. The school district can't be

putting out information that is incorrect. Chief Cashin I spoke to today about it, and he is happy with how everything is going. I'm not blaming anybody, but it got people stirred up and it didn't have to. I'm going to use your plane landing analogy on Beech Street. There are still some items that need to happen there to land that plane. We have to get the runway ready. We are not putting the cart ahead of the horse by designing for Beech Street when we need to get the runway ready?

Mr. Saindon stated the design for Beech is progressing. It has gone from conceptual going into schematic. If for some reason in the near future I feel we are getting out ahead of our skis, I will talk to the district. We will look at the options at that point, but I don't feel we are at that point yet. We do need to resolve some unknowns with Beech.

Alderman O'Neil stated fair enough. Jen, what am I going to ask about?

Mr. Saindon answered if everyone has been paid on time.

Alderman O'Neil stated that's true; that's my big thing but I am going to ask about gym space. I know it is going to be tight at the middle schools. Is there any opportunity there, and with the new Beech Street is there an opportunity to do something beyond single basketball court there?

Ms. Soucy replied for the middle schools, we have planned to add an addition to the gym an alternative PE space. That is not necessarily a gym but it could be for dance, yoga, other equipment. That is in addition to the program that they have.

Alderman O'Neil asked is it in proximity of the gymnasium.

Ms. Soucy answered yes; close by.

Alderman O'Neil asked could it theoretically be big enough that kids could play basketball without any fans or bleachers.

Ms. Soucy stated I would have to confirm that. The intent is it is not going to be fit out that way with the basketball equipment. That hasn't been a request.

Alderman O'Neil stated I don't have any say in this other than as a member of the community.

Ms. Soucy stated we have been working with the principals and the staff to make sure we are providing them with what they've asked for.

Alderman O'Neil stated we have the Superintendent here. The two things that unite kids in this city of all ethnic backgrounds and all social and income backgrounds, are basketball and soccer. I learned last winter about futsal, the Brazilian soccer. There are not a lot of opportunities for kids to do that indoors. Chairman O'Connell might know better; is futsal only indoor or can it be outdoor?

Chairman O'Connell replied it is an indoor sport.

Alderman O'Neil stated I'm just throwing that out there for the Superintendent to hear and she has maybe heard this from me before, too. Any opportunities to create those kinds of spaces that don't have to have seating are a big issue in our city; accessibility for all our kids. It is not necessarily the school district's issue to solve but it would be a great opportunity if the school district and the programming allowed it and the budget could build out a little bit of this. I'm not looking for fans and I'm not worried about bleachers. Just a place where the kids can play. That is all they are looking for. It is limited in this city. Maybe Beech Street is the greatest opportunity. It is where one of the biggest needs is.

Ms. Soucy stated we appreciate the comments.

Alderman O'Neil stated ok you hear my message. Moving on, I did get a little ahead of myself. You are right, number one is the subs getting paid. I'll put the gyms as number two. Finally, is there some contingency left out of the modulares?

Mr. Saindon stated there is.

Alderman O'Neil asked how quickly do you think you will try to close out with Consigli. I'm going somewhere with this.

Mr. Saindon replied we will do what I will call an account reconciliation. We will pay them as much as from a contractual standpoint they have done the work, we can release retainage, and they get paid so they can pay their subs. I will not close out the contract. I will probably leave the contract open for a few more months because it is very common that something may come up. If something comes up, I want to be able to have the flexibility of saying Consigli, can you please do this.

Alderman O'Neil stated one issue, not a major issue, will be the Maple Street side of Beech Street. So east of the modulares gets hydro-seeded. Unfortunately, there was use on it right away. It might be great if we can hydro-seed. I don't know the perfect timing, but sometime in November, and let it grow over the winter. It didn't really have a chance to take. I don't know if that has happened potentially at McLaughlin but I haven't physically seen that. It is not a major item, but if we can think about that and work with Josh Gagne to determine it. You don't want to go too late; you don't want to hydro-seed after the snow, but you also don't want to let whatever use is there get done and then come in on a day and there is no hydro-seed.

Mr. Saindon stated point well taken.

Alderman O'Neil stated I don't know the other locations I have seen. There was some at McLaughlin.

Mr. Saindon stated what was hydro-seeded at McLaughlin, I was there. I think it looks great. I got feedback from others that it has established itself and taken off.

Alderman O'Neil stated east of the modulares at Beech Street never had a chance to take because they got used right away.

Mr. Saindon stated I will defer to others. I am not familiar with the condition of Beech. Point well taken.

School Committee Member Turner stated I wanted to circle back to Alderman Kantor's comments about traffic at Hillside. I have a sixth grader at Hillside who rides the school bus. We have seen dramatic improvements. Today was day nine of school and in the past nine school days it has increasingly gotten better. I am not sure it is perfect. The time of buses on Reservoir Avenue mingled with drop-off in the morning has decreased so I think over nine days parents have probably decided it is easier if your child rides the bus. Parents may have had the first week of school jitters and were driving their kids to school, and it caused more cars to be there than normal. Day nine there are fewer cars. The flow is better, with my own daughter reporting. Tonight, if we are wrapped up in time, Hillside's PTO meeting is at 6:00PM. I am headed back over there and there will be no shyness of folks to tell me if I'm correct or not. They will talk to Mr. McCafferty and there will be parents and teachers there as well. Make sure to get feedback. Based on last Monday's school board meeting, Assistant Superintendent Ransdell gave us the update that sounded like things were improving for the better so I wanted to make that point.

Alderman Kantor asked how about the teachers being able to leave in a timely fashion. That was a big concern.

School Committee Member Turner stated I will ask tonight. I haven't heard anything about that. I will inquire tonight.

Alderman O'Neil stated I heard what happens in the afternoon. It is supposed to be the buses get in before the parents do pick up. That is supposed to be what happens. I drove by there and there were three cars and I know police are trying. They are enforcing it; they are writing tickets. That's the only way to change behavior. The rest of Reservoir Ave was pretty good. All it takes is a few to mess that up. They will have to get a ticket. What is the morning procedure regarding that?

Chairman O'Connell stated if you wouldn't mind me saying so, this is the Joint School Buildings Committee. These topics are either school district or city committees. I am not trying to stymie the conversation I'm just making the point. We are a long way away from brick, mortar, concrete, steel, and getting these buildings delivered on time. Alderman O'Neil, I would say the situation is as how School Committee Member Turner has said, it is in flux. The city engineers who are I've been told by DPW Director Clougherty are the experts, know what they are doing. They designed it. I am sure they are also paying attention. I was directly told by Mr. Clougherty that this is in the hands of the experts and they know what they are doing. We get to oversee the experts. I understand that, but I worry...

Alderman O'Neil interjected you didn't know the aldermen were experts. My question was what happens in the morning. I know what is supposed to happen in the afternoon.

Chairman O'Connell stated I don't know there is anybody here qualified to say. If you want an answer.

School Committee Member Turner stated give me thirty seconds and we will move on from this topic. The buses and cars are intermingled on Reservoir Ave in the morning. Fewer people are dropping off and more students are on the buses. In the morning they are intermingled. I don't believe that it is causing any major delays.

Chairman O'Connell stated if you wouldn't mind, I am going to stop the conversation there. We are completely out of our scope. This is a discussion to be held maybe at the Board of Mayor and Aldermen for traffic, or if it's a school bus discussion at the Board of School Committee. We don't have any of the people who know the answers sitting around this table. They are not there, either. We are having a conversation amongst friends in the middle of the work of the committee. If you'll appreciate where I am coming from, I would like to point something out if I could. I think delivering a project and doing it successfully is important. The fact that kids were in classrooms, comfortable classrooms that are safe, and not in buildings where corridors are too narrow for safety, or where proper teaching couldn't happen because the school is too old...one particular point I'd like to make is in the State of New Hampshire we lose close to ten workers a year in worker related accidents. It is easy to say those words, but those are ten people who lose their lives on construction projects, or at work – not just construction, ten people at work. A subset of that is construction. I've heard nothing of any injuries or anything worse on these six different building sites. Is that correct that this was successful and there were no injuries?

Mr. Saindon answered that is true.

Chairman O'Connell stated congratulations to you and Consigli, Triumph, and to everybody who is there working with tractor trailers and digging holes and dynamiting. We had dynamiting going on with this project. We weren't playing with Legos. Kudos to you for bringing the first of these projects in and bringing them in safely.

Mr. Saindon replied I would say controlled blasting; not dynamiting.

Chairman O'Connell stated I know a little bit about the other kind but that was from my days back in Ireland.

School Committee Member Soule stated I would appreciate it if next month in your report you will specifically let us know what has happened with the IT situation, the workaround, and any of the other questions we had here should be referenced just so we know and the community knows.

Mr. Saindon replied sure, no problem.

2. Monthly status and financial report for August 2024 submitted by LeftField.

*On motion of **School Committee Member Soule**, duly seconded by **School Committee Member Turner**, it was voted to accept the report and submit it to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and Board of School Committee for informational purposes.*

*There being no further business, on motion of **School Committee Member Turner**, duly seconded by **Alderman Kantor**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Normand". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Clerk of Committee