

COMMITTEE ON JOINT SCHOOL BUILDINGS

November 12, 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.: M. Lenfest, J. Soucy, J. Chmiel

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

Mark Lenfest, Senior Project Manager at LeftField, stated thank you for having us this evening. With me to my right is Jennifer Soucy with SMMA. We will jump right in. Activities completed within the last thirty days; we have continued the modular punch-list. We are down to the final elements that need to be scheduled during school break. We will attempt to do some things during the Thanksgiving break, and then over Christmas break. Some floor leveling, so there will be some removable tile and then reinstallation of new tiles. It takes a little longer. The project needs to be setup and then we need to wax and coat the floors. That will be the ideal time to do that. That's the only stuff that is hanging out there. Triumph has done a good job of wrapping that up. The next two items here are closeout Consigli's contract. Consigli has done an excellent job. They turned in their binders early. We are processing their binders and Triumph's binders. By that, I mean all of the as-billed contract closeout, warranty information, product data. That review and coordination is ongoing. The coordination and installation of technology took place over the last month. Almost all of that is wrapped up. Manchester School District IT Department has their arms around any open items with the vendor. They have been very responsive and in contact with us. The only items that aren't complete are part of a larger district-wide upgrade. CM contracts for groups one and two - negotiations have been ongoing. We will be wrapping those up within the month of November. Pre-construction meetings are ongoing for group one as well as for Beech. Continued development of various project schedules. We won't see much of an update for this month's project schedule. We have been concerned or focused on refining the budgets and seeing where we are at. That being said, Consigli has made a big push with exploratory site-visits. They will be able to narrow-in on the timeframes on what the construction is going to take on the various scopes of work. Estimate reconciliations for both group one and Beech. What that is is you take the current set of drawings and they do an estimate. The architect and design team along with us goes through the estimates and we come to a universal agreement on where we stand on the budgets for each before we move on to the next phase of developments. Right now, group one is under budget and Beech is being refined. Right now we are a little over, but we are within a margin and we're evaluating that at this time. Continued Beech Elementary programming. We are going to talk a little more about that in a few minutes. That is going along very well. We did attend the Lands and Buildings Committee meeting last month and will be joining them again on November 19. At the School Board meeting, the commissary kitchen was discussed. Jennifer will discuss that in a few minutes. We will be reporting to this group so you know what was decided. Procurement of website implementation. That contract and kickoff meeting has

happened. We will be looking to go through the elements of that with the district and will be looking to roll that out. It should be at the end of this month or beginning of December. Continued communication with all stakeholders. The communication in Manchester has been excellent with all departments. In the next thirty days it says complete modular punch-list. Being completely honest, the flooring at Southside modulars will be in December. That won't be complete until December. MEP training for modular equipment. I have discussed that with Triumph and Facilities. We are nailing down the date that makes the most sense so they are ready to do that. Continued closeout for Consigli for modular contract. We are at the closeout stage. We are buttoning up some loose ends. No reason why that won't be this month. Closeout for Triumph modulars. We are holding some money based on the flooring that needs to be resolved. Other than that, we have done retainage reduction and are moving forward with that closeout. All three contracts are projected to be executed. Group one with Consigli, group two and Beech with Harvey. Continued pre-construction meetings for group one and Beech are scheduled with Consigli weekly, and with Harvey at this month for Beech multiple times a week. Continued development of project schedules, you will see that as we move forward. Phasing Hillside and McLaughlin. We have done a deep-dive on that. Progression into construction documents for Hillside and McLaughlin. That is part of the exploratory that we have been doing. Continued Beech budget refinement. I spoke about coming out of reconciliation. We will be attending Lands and Buildings on November 19 with the expectation that we would be in front of the full Board also on November 19. Development of the P1 website. We hope to have at least the demo of that at the end of this month. Continued communication with all stakeholders. As part of our site development, there is survey work going on at the Beech site to capture all site elements that need to be incorporated and designed. This next slide discusses the commissary kitchen options regarding Beech Elementary.

Jennifer Soucy, Project Architect with SMMA, stated as Mark had mentioned this is something that was brought to the Board of School Committee last month. There is no action required tonight by this committee. It is for informational purposes only to discuss what was decided by the Committee. The existing Beech school currently has a commissary kitchen. It serves ten of the twelve elementary schools. As we were programming the new Beech Elementary school and going through early design, as a leadership group we questioned whether having the commissary in the new Beech school was the right solution long-term for the district. As a group, we put together this matrix which evaluated what the available options were for the commissary so we could rate each option qualitatively and quantitatively from a cost perspective. As a recommendation out of that, we recommended to the committee to remove the commissary from the new Beech Elementary School that we are planning and locating it somewhere in the district at a location or several locations. There are several viable options that we are exploring and we will continue to explore, but we feel confident that we have a solution in district. By removing the commissary, it also allowed us to free up some square footage for additional programming in the new Beech Elementary School.

Alderman Terrio asked you don't think the new Beech Street School is the best place for the commissary.

Ms. Soucy replied that is correct.

Alderman Terrio asked where would you put it instead.

Ms. Soucy answered we are still exploring several options. One of the options that we did look at was West High School. There are also some options we are working on with the food service director for the district and also possibly some other options with pairings with some of the schools that are close by. The existing commissary at Beech is 5,000 square feet.

Alderman Terrio stated I am assuming that at the new Beech Street School you weren't intending for that, so you want to move the commissary to another school.

Ms. Soucy stated that is part of the reason. We were planning to put it in there, but then as we explored it further for all the criteria that we list here, even just in terms of location in the city and other purposes, we explored removing it and that would give us some additional space for programming or an opportunity to reduce the square footage of the building.

Mr. Lenfest stated it also potentially provides for additional educational opportunities in other locations that are not beneficial to an elementary school. Priority 1 Projects update. You will see here we are making progress. Programming in Beech is close to wrapping up. Parkside and Southside is by schedule where it should be. Design work is progressing. You see a big jump in McLaughlin and Hillside coming up in the next few months. CM procurement will all be at 100% at the end of next month with the execution of the contracts. As you can see, we are holding 5% on the closeout of the modulars based on wrapping up the final paperwork and the work we are projecting to be done over the holiday vacation. Modular summary update shows that contractually our closeout is pretty consistent with all of them with the exception of Southside where we have that flooring issue which is being addressed. Other than that, the punch-list itself is 96% complete on all items.

Chairman O'Connell stated you referred a number of times to the Southside flooring issue. This committee isn't aware of that. Can you explain what the issue with the modulars at Southside is and what the plan is?

Mr. Lenfest answered originally we noticed that there was telescoping - when an item under a floor starts to project through the top of the floor and you can see it breaking the surface. We noticed that at Southside in the corridor. It means there is something wrong with the substrate or it hadn't been cleaned prior to installation. Triumph went out and replaced roughly 24 tiles. That being said, we still have some transitions and this is where the modulars are seamed together with a transition. A transition is more pronounced than a tile can adequately bend, so it will cause a crack in the tile. We noticed this and SMMA noted it on their punch-list back on September 25. We are noticing that those tiles are cracking. What needs to happen is those tiles need to be pulled up from the substrate and it needs to be completely cleaned. It goes from nothing to basically half an inch so you can level the floor so the tiles lay flat. There will be no stress on any of the seams. You won't see and separation in the tiles and you won't see any unnecessary pressure that causes cracking within the tile.

Chairman O'Connell asked this will be done over vacation.

Mr. Lenfest answered yes, we are targeting Christmas break to have that done.

Chairman O'Connell asked is it being done at no expense to the city or the district.

Mr. Lenfest replied correct; it is covered.

Alderman Kantor stated I have some questions about the kitchen. You mentioned West and you have some other places where you might move it. Do you have the pros and cons on why it would be put at Beech Street?

Mr. Lenfest answered we do. By taking it out of Beech Street Elementary, it gives us roughly 5,000 square feet to do more enhanced programming for that age group. There are other opportunities, some existing spaces within some of the high schools in Manchester, that could benefit from a commissary kitchen and the educational opportunities that would provide to some of the students. It makes a lot of sense to repurpose other space. We have run the numbers cost-wise. It makes sense. It was presented to the Board of School Committee, more of a deep-dive and it was voted on that it made sense to move forward. During the construction, the commissary kitchen at the existing Beech School will still be open so there will be no lapse in coverage. From a cost-perspective and programming-perspective, and a potential educational opportunity for the district, it made sense.

Alderman Kantor asked what is the total cost of the whole project.

Mr. Lenfest replied the Priority One project is \$306 million.

Alderman Kantor stated I wanted to make sure I got that right. Does that include the kitchen or is it additional if you move it to another school? Is this an additional cost?

Mr. Lenfest answered it is not.

Ms. Soucy stated no, we have it included in the \$306 million.

Chairman O'Connell stated the commissary kitchen is where food is prepared and distributed to other schools. The fact that it ended up at Beech Street at some time in the past was an accident. It was because there was space available there. If you were starting from a green field, would you put a 5,000 square foot space in to prepare food in the middle of a city school where every square foot for teaching is critical? And at a cost of \$2 or \$3 million and the building that you are building is effectively a food preparation space? There is still going to be a modern kitchen there, it just won't be preparing food for the other schools. It is part of the long-term planning. When the long-term plan for the school district is complete, you will see that addressed and what it should look like in the long-term. Everything from should there be a full kitchen in every school cooking fresh food or should there be two to cover twelve schools. All of that will be in the long-term plan; none of that is complete today. At this moment, it is a decision about spending money to place this 5,000 square foot entity within premium education space in a school where we need as much programming as possible. It came before the School Board to make the decision.

Mr. Lenfest stated it is an incredible opportunity for one of the age-appropriate schools that could take this on. Having a CTE program for kids that want to learn how to work in a kitchen atmosphere versus where it is today.

Alderman Kantor stated thank you. To me, if we are going into the high schools, then Phase Two should be presented. You use the word explore a lot. I find that interesting, because I feel like you have already asked for a certain amount of money and I believe that the design should be done and everything that is needed. Exploring should be done before the ask of money. How are you supposed to know exactly how much money you need if you don't know exactly what you need to do with every purpose of everything?

Mr. Lenfest responded we are constantly challenging the design. The \$306 million was requested with purpose. That being said, when the opportunity to challenge the idea comes up, we challenge it. To be able to do something within that budget that will be more beneficial to the district, that is what was bearing fruit on this. The opportunity to give more programming space to the elementary school aged kids, and possibly relocate this kitchen to another space that provides an opportunity for another age group, it was a deep-dive and it challenged the original thought and it made sense.

Alderman Kantor stated I like that it makes sense. The whole repurpose of another building is excellent. I think that Phase Two should be revealed to make the best decisions for all children.

Mr. Lenfest stated speaking very transparently, I am not involved in Phase Two. I am Priority One. This idea does not take into consideration Phase Two. This is my Phase One budget and what makes sense for the district based on this budget, what is best for the district. Putting this kitchen in another school, potentially a high school, makes sense because it is within my budget. There are space opportunities and some of these exist in different locations. Honestly, regardless of what Phase Two is or becomes, this makes sense for my Phase One.

Ms. Soucy stated but as a larger group in terms of Phase Two, it will be taken into account. We will be reviewing that all with the Phase Two work that is ongoing and that will be shared soon.

Alderman Kantor stated in regards to the fields at Beech Street, I think originally you said they were not going to be included when I asked where the kids are going to play.

Chairman O'Connell stated I want to make sure we are finished with the kitchen, then we can go to the fields. I don't want us to go from topic to topic. Are there any other questions on the kitchen issue? No. If you want to take questions on the fields now, or do you have more of your report to go through?

Mr. Lenfest stated we can talk about the fields. I am not sure what the question was.

Alderman Kantor stated the question was about the fields and what is there and what someone had said that they are going to be replaced exactly the same amount of space. Is that true?

Mr. Lenfest answered I can't speak to that. We are presenting to the Lands and Buildings Committee and eventually to the full Board of Mayor and Aldermen. I know there is a proposal. There seems to be some different ideas of what is going to happen. All I can say, is that we are looking to build the new school at the Sheridan-Emmett Park and we will be demoing and restoring the land where the existing Beech School is as well as where the modulars are when they are removed.

Alderman Kantor asked where will the kids play during the construction and how long will the construction take.

Mr. Lenfest stated the construction is two years. Where will they play? Right now there are existing playgrounds and basketball courts at the Beech Street School. I would have to look at what else is available in the neighborhood. That being said, there were some ideas proposed that were not accepted.

Chairman O'Connell stated I want to be careful here. We have an agenda item before Lands and Buildings next week. The paperwork for that is going forward to the Aldermanic Committee and should be in people's packets as of this weekend with the proposals around what exactly is going to happen with the basketball courts, the play area, and the fields. There are associated drawings and dimensions in those documents. I don't want to stymie the conversation but we don't have any of that before us tonight. I don't want to preempt the conversation for next week. We are at some risk by doing that, because we are just creating new news here. Whatever might be said or not said, people will say I thought I heard at the meeting at the Joint Committee that you were doing this. I think since it is not on our agenda and the packet is on the Aldermanic side that question should be answered at the Board of Mayor and Aldermen's meeting. Mark, will you be at that meeting? Who is attending the Lands and Buildings meeting?

Mr. Lenfest answered David Saindon and I will be there.

Chairman O'Connell stated David, who would normally be here but can't be here tonight. Superintendent Chmiel is here also. There is nothing to hide here, I just want to be careful. We are now talking about a subject that is on the agenda of Lands and Buildings to be moved to the full Board for discussion and approval within a week of tonight. I don't know if we should be pulling stuff out of there to discuss here. I am just one voice. There are six of us here. Whatever you all feel, I never want to stymie conversation, Alderman Kantor. You understand my position, I hope.

Alderman Kantor stated absolutely.

Chairman O'Connell stated whatever the committee feels, I am fine with.

Mr. Lenfest stated we are not prepared to discuss it more than what I've already said which is that there will be a presentation to Lands and Buildings. We are currently on budget for the \$306 million. The modular breakout budget is coming in under budget. There will be a couple \$100,000 under budget that we will report back to this committee and let you know where that has been put back into the other projects. The invoice log. Since this was generated, it has been executed. It was signed on Friday, November 8, a few days ahead of schedule. The approval of the district is required on November 15,

Finance signoff will be November 21 and checks will be issued on November 22. Everything is ahead of schedule for the payment cycle. We spoke about the schedule earlier. This will be refined as we move forward. No big changes over the last month.

Alderman Terrio stated a while back we had heard about a communication problem and issues with internet and communications within the modulars. I've heard from some parents that is still ongoing. Is that correct?

Mr. Lenfest stated there is a larger district upgrade that is ongoing. We don't have communication problems as much as we have a supplemental system. The MSD IT Department worked it out. It is called WebEx. The teachers are currently using handheld devices and computers while they await the system or district upgrade on the IP phones. That is a different project that was concurrent with ours. Our lines are installed and ready for the IP phones, the third-party vendor who was awarded the contract through the district independent of this project is working on theirs through Manchester School District IT.

Alderman Terrio stated so for any communication problems there is a fix. When will the issue be resolved?

Mr. Lenfest stated the IP phones, I do not know. Basically, with that district upgrade they have to issue phone numbers for each of the locations. That is independent of this project.

Chairman O'Connell stated let's have Dr. Chmiel address the issue. It is a network issue. It is a capacity issue for the network.

Mr. Lenfest stated it is a coordination with a third-party vendor. The network is working. We have communication, cameras, door buzzers...everything is working. The phone numbers that need to be issued and the availability for that is through a third-party vendor. That has nothing to do with the modular or our Phase One project.

Jennifer Chmiel, Superintendent of Schools, stated in regards to communications in the modulars, right now we have the intercom system up and running, internet is up and running, the WebEx – which essentially allows you to use your laptop, iPad, cellphone, as your desktop phone – is running. I use my WebEx all the time. I don't use my desktop phone. I go through my computer. It gives you a transcript of calls coming in which is a nice feature. We have walkie-talkies, and we also have spaces in the buildings if there needs to be private calls. Everything is up and running with the exception of a physical hand-held phone that would go to someone's ear. We have the technology that can get us past needing a desktop phone at this point.

Alderman O'Neil asked are there physical phones in every classroom.

Superintendent Chmiel stated minus the modulars right now.

Alderman O'Neil asked and that is what is being waited on.

Superintendent Chmiel stated that is what we are waiting to get pulled in because the phone upgrade was part of our \$2.7 million grant that we were awarded from one of the Congressional spending grants that went out. When we started to roll in the project, we got stuck with getting the modular phone numbers prescribed for all of those phones that needed to go in. Given that glitch, we pulled in the WebEx as our work around to make sure they have access to phones.

Alderman O'Neil stated bottom line is students and teachers have internet access.

Superintendent Chmiel stated they do. The IT team has done a nice job of recognizing where the system was starting to get strained. They are making sure that we increased speed and access to internet in McLaughlin and Green Acres. That loop connects to Memorial. We are working on upgrading it for some of our free-standing schools without modulars as well.

Mr. Lenfest stated that is fiber lines and networks, which is independent of modulars.

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

*On motion of **Alderman O'Neil**, duly seconded by **Alderman Terrio**, 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 **School Committee Member Soule**, 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