

COMMITTEE ON JOINT SCHOOL BUILDINGS

July 8, 2025 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

Absent: Alderman O'Neil

Messrs.: D. Saindon

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

Chairman O'Connell stated I'd like to note that I received a call from Alderman O'Neil who is on vacation. He sends his apologies for not being here.

David Saindon, Project Executive at LeftField, stated we have continued happenings which will continue for the next two years. Apologies if this is repetitive. We will continue OAC meetings for the G1 projects, continue logistical refinements at the two applicable sites for the G1 projects, continue development of the project schedules, and continue additional group 1 sub-contractor scope procurement. There will be a resubmission of the GMP by Consigli. Site contractor mobilization for the G1 projects. Soil delineation has been completed. For G1 projects, HVAC, drywall, fire protection, demolition, and abatement subcontractor descopes have occurred. We received full building permits for McLaughlin and Hillside. Ongoing design development estimates and reconciliation for Southside and Parkside with continued design development into construction documents for those two projects. Programming is continuing for Beech and coming to a close. Site access and coordination with city agencies has occurred. The schematic development estimate has occurred with Beech. The reconciliation was completed. For the modulars, the ERVs have arrived and I believe they are being installed. For the next thirty-day look-ahead, we will have the resubmission of the GMP for Consigli for the G1 project, continue meetings, and continue logistic refinements. Hopefully we will complete the formal awards for roofing, MEPs, drywall, and abatement. We will continue scope procurement and descopes with all of the sub-contractors and finalize the SWPPP. We continued site work with soil excavation and removal. Seventy-five percent of construction document pricing will be followed by estimate and reconciliation for Southside and Parkside. Continued design development for Beech, which will be followed with an estimate and reconciliation. Continued pre-construction meetings for G2, Southside and Parkside and Beech. Finalization of the Beech project schedule. We will hopefully award the Beech CM contract. We have the CM procured we just don't have an executed contract. Continued design development for Beech and hopefully a closure to the year of the installation for the modulars.

Chairman O'Connell asked what is the SWPPP.

Mr. Saindon answered the storm water prevention plan. When a contractor mobilizes and commandeers a project site while there is an existing drainage system in place

most likely, they have to modify it as part of the design. It is their responsibility to control the surface hydrology before the new system is installed. Essentially, that is what SWPPP is.

School Committee Member Soule asked can you explain the GMP resubmission. It is going to happen next month but I want to know why.

Mr. Saindon stated I will do my best. Due to my limited involvement, the district was asking for further clarification and more information.

School Committee Member Soule asked so due diligence basically.

Mr. Saindon replied yes; a lot of dot the I's and cross the T's and more due diligence.

School Committee Member Soule stated as far as Beech programming, I want to let you know that the Beech Street principal is happy with her participation. I want to make sure the community understands that there will be open areas for community use at the new Beech Street Elementary School. If people have questions and comments, they should reach out. They are very excited to have that space available for use, and how it is going to be setup. If anyone wants further information, I am happy to talk with Kelly and come back with it.

Mr. Saindon stated as you can see with this graphic, the modulars will hopefully be complete by next month. Beech programming is wrapping up. Design is ongoing. All we have to do is execute the contract with Harvey, McLaughlin, and Hillside. As you can see bidding is ongoing, and procurement of sub-contractors is ongoing. Site work activities have commenced and are ongoing. For Parkside and Southside, programming is on the tail end and design is progressing. The CM is 100% procured and we have an executed contract for the G2 projects. Bidding and construction will be forthcoming. We have the budget that we have shared. It has been delivered and shared as part of the monthly report in a detailed fashion. This is the rolled-up version with all six projects. As far as invoice summaries, we don't have that as part of this packet or presentation because the invoices are being approved tomorrow. It is a timing issue of payments from the district and the time of these meetings.

Chairman O'Connell asked is that information forwarded to the committee through the clerk as soon as it is available or is it reported the following month.

Mr. Saindon stated it is reported the following month as part of the monthly report. What we sometimes do, typically tomorrow or Thursday, is we will submit a finalized presentation. When we submit the presentation to the clerk it is a draft. It is typically 90% complete. Sometimes what we have done, since the invoice is going to be approved tomorrow, we will update this presentation and send it to the clerk. If anyone wants to take a deep dive with the budget or invoices, we are happy to set up a Zoom call. We still have the weekly look-ahead where you can log on to these two websites for McLaughlin and Hillside. Months ago, there were some glitches but there are no more glitches. As for the schedule for Hillside, the addition is projected to go out to December 2026 with exterior site work and landscaping continuing. McLaughlin is anticipated to go out until the middle of August for the addition for 2026. Summer work

will take place during the summer months. For Southside and Parkside, the addition goes out until December 2026. Renovation work goes out to August 2028. Weekly, the schedules are addressed and reviewed with the district and the city at a more granular level. This is a high-level schedule. For Beech, it is slated to mobilize early 2026. There are ground improvements that have to occur. That is going out for new construction to June or July 2028 with site work and landscaping following. FFE and tech and occupancy will be in the summer 2028 then abatement and demolition and the Beech Street site restoration.

School Committee Member Soule stated we had tentatively said April for the Beech Street groundbreaking. This shows they are starting construction in February.

Mr. Saindon asked was it mentioned April of next year. I will open it up to the project team. My opinion is that it would be best to have Harvey mobilize and do some ground improvements and get the site ready and then have more of a groundbreaking for the actual foundations.

School Committee Member Soule asked when you decide, can you get back to us. The community wants to know when the groundbreaking will be. It is tentative, but I saw February and April.

Chairman O'Connell stated to mobilize, it's the same that happened at Hillside and McLaughlin, we had the groundbreaking. Something has to happen before then. It doesn't happen the day the first truck drives in. There is work going on now in various ways with surveying. The formal groundbreaking is now being planned for April. Harvey will be there as soon as it makes sense. We want the school ready as soon as possible. There will be notice of the groundbreaking well in advance.

Mr. Saindon stated Harvey could be mobilized in doing ground improvements but then when the equipment goes away, someone could say what have you done for three months. For public optics, April does make sense to me.

Chairman O'Connell stated for Hillside's schedule, there is a drop-back for the completion of the addition. Hillside is now joining the others for completion of the addition in December 2026. Are we working to get that back to where it was?

Mr. Saindon stated yes, the project team is.

Chairman O'Connell stated the delay back to December 2026 worries me. Anytime there is something that changes...the expectation was that the addition at Hillside was ready for occupation by the students and staff on September 1, 2026. It was to be handed over to the district for occupancy in July 2026. We are now seeing that it won't be complete until whatever date later in the year. So, the occupancy won't happen until after Christmas. Why did that happen? What are we doing in order to get the schedule back?

Mr. Saindon stated with me filling in for Mark Lenfest, I won't be able to answer that. I don't want to dance around it.

Chairman O'Connell asked is every effort being made to get the schedule back to what it was.

Mr. Saindon stated the project team is working with Consigli to pull that back. As far as publicly identifying the causes of that, I am going to defer to Mark Lenfest. If I don't have the answer, I'm not going to give you one. I don't want to dance around it.

Chairman O'Connell stated this committee looks at the big picture. It is about being on budget and on time. Even though the project is on time for its ultimate delivery, there is a major slippage when a significant piece of the project drops back from the beginning of the school year. That's a semester.

School Committee Soule stated rather than going around this, you can update us next month so we know where we are with that and what progress has been made. That way the public hears it. Your answer is sufficient at this point because we don't have the answers. In another month we should.

Mr. Saindon stated it is probably a multi-faceted answer with multiple factors involved.

2. Monthly status and financial report for June 2025 submitted by LeftField.

*On motion of **School Committee Member Turner**, 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.*

Alderman Terrio stated the school district's budget was going to get cut by \$12 million. Fortunately, that has been reversed. In talking to our State Senator, we have gotten a two-year reprieve. Is the School Board looking at it? Hopefully, we keep the \$12 million into the future but if in two years the legislature decides to either cut the \$12 million or reduce it, how are we paying for these projects?

Chairman O'Connell stated the State of New Hampshire singled out the City of Manchester to reduce significantly the funding for special education students, for poor students, and for English language students. For the state to decide to the extent of \$12.2 million to take that money from the City of Manchester is egregiously wrong. I appreciate the Governor, our Mayor, and others fighting back against this immoral move. It makes no sense. It is a terrible thing to do, to separate out the largest school district in the state with the largest number of homeless children, poor children, special education children, and decide that you want to take \$12 million away for no reason. There is open animosity. As one member of the Board of School Committee, I think I am aware of the financial place we are in. We are all public servants here. The City of Manchester and its budget process over the last two years has decided to fund the Manchester School District significantly below the cost of living. We have a tax cap number, as we all know, which is meant to be the hold-steady number. No new programs; we hold-steady. Our health insurance is going up by 10% this year. No combination of that is covered under the below the tax-cap budget. I'm not trying to make cheap political points; this is just fundamental. If the state were to decide...if there are worse people than those there today, the ones who said last month when asked about feeding children said it is summer time, let them go pick berries...as you know,

that was the chair-person of the Finance Committee. The number one guy said about hungry children it is summer time, let them eat berries. Let them go pick berries is what he said. There is another statement out there publicly saying that it is our business to defund public education. Another one of the top three leaders in the state house. If they continue down that road, and if the City of Manchester decides to fund its public schools at 1.5% per year additional money, every year since 2020...I know there have been other funds from other places but the taxpayers of Manchester have been asked to give 1.5% per year to cover the costs of teaching 12,000 students. That is the real problem, Mr. Terrio. There is no answer to that. This year in the budget we are using \$9 million of rainy-day funds and we used \$9 million last year. We have gone from approximately \$30 million in reserves to \$15 million over just two budgets. There is no more money. We are in a terrible place. So you all know, the Mayor and I and the chairman of the Finance Committee, former Mayor Bob Baines, and Dr. Chmiel, are meeting in a series of regular meetings starting the last week of July or first week of August. The four of us are going to meet to begin discussions about what we are going to do because we are in a world of pain for next year. The \$17 million that we didn't get that I think we could have under the tax-cap is an annual amount. With the \$12 million that might be taken by the state, that is \$30 million below where we expected to be. If we had lived in a reasonable state where people said let's fund our schools at the cost-of-living, nothing fancy, we won't buy new books or put luxury things in place but just fund the schools steady, we could be \$30 million behind. I am not trying to avoid the question, but then the question becomes will we go back to 2013 when we eliminated 160 teaching jobs in this city. I don't want to be alarmist, but the reason why the mayor and I and Bob Baines and Dr. Chmiel are meeting regularly starting in three weeks is because the situation is serious. I don't want to separate out this project as how this is going to be paid for. Under our current budget is one of the line-items at approximately \$17 million per year to pay for the bond. That is if we bond the full amount. We don't know if that will happen or not. It is possible that won't happen, which would cause that \$17 million to come down. We will be talking about that. We will be looking everywhere. I am sorry for the longer answer, but it isn't a direct question about the State of New Hampshire attacking the largest city in the state and its public education for not good motives. There is nobody in the state house that came with good motives. No one is saying that they have a legitimate reason for it other than we have decided we don't want to fund the poorest kids in the state. We can't separate out this project. We need to separate out what we are going to do about kitchens, transportation, teacher salaries, and all the things.

Alderman Terrio stated I am happy to hear that although this is a bad situation that you, School Committee Member Baines, the mayor, and Dr. Chmiel are already working on this problem. We have two years before the next budget cycle.

Chairman O'Connell stated we have a year for this next budget. It is not just about the state, it is about what we do next year. Next year, whoever is mayor, it isn't just two years. Next year's budget is a big issue. What are we going to do? Everything needs to be on the table.

School Committee Member Soule stated the answer to the question is we are all working on it. The most important thing that all of us can do is become educated and fully understand the implications of all of this on our community. To single out Manchester is a travesty, but regardless of that, we have to focus on what we're going

to do and how we are going to get through this. We need everyone to work together. That is the piece. The Board is getting informed. We will inform you. Our legislative committee has taken very strong actions on this. That is the piece the community needs to understand. If you have questions, come to us. We can give you answers, and if we don't know them, we will find out for you.

Chairman O'Connell stated thank you and thank you for the question. We may have different views about things, but there is no question the reason why the four of us are meeting is because it is an urgent issue that needs to be addressed and can't be let go.

*There being no further business, on motion of **School Committee Member Soule**, duly seconded by **School Committee Member Turner**, 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