

**STRATEGIC CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 6, 2025**

Present: Carl Johnson-Chair, Brett Betkoski, Christopher Dickman, John Dillon-BOS, Jennifer Martinez, Darcy Parmelee, Ben Srb, Laurel Steinhauser-BOE

Absent: Bob Shea

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Carl Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. in the Portland High School Media Center, 95 High Street, Portland, Connecticut.

2. APPROVE MEETING MINUTES: February 27, 2025

Page 2, item 4. Discussion of Sightlines Report, change "Middle School" to "High School". The approval of the minutes was tabled until the next meeting.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

Add item #3 "Approve agenda," and renumber the remaining items and delete Sightlines tour discussion. Ben Srb made a motion to approve the amended agenda, seconded by John Dillon, all were in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Valley View teachers Corrine Sorivano, 8 Hilltop Drive, Maureen Garcia, 59 High Street, and Brittany Leclair, expressed concern on behalf of many of the Valley View School teachers about the possible closing of the school. They told of many features that made it friendly for the primary-aged students and difficult for them to relocate to another school. In addition, Valley View has the best opportunity for future expansion.

Eileen Moynihan, 51 Indian Hill Avenue, expressed concern about BIS which was never designed with elementary students in mind. If it is kept open, she urges that it be brought up to modern standards. She told of her experience as a teacher at BIS and some of the things that she and the students experienced, including uncomfortable temps, electrical needs, no phones in classrooms, and inadequate air quality. She also expressed concern when the students had to cross over Middlesex Avenue.

Sue McDougal, 22 Prospect St., told of the things she experienced and appreciates the teachers speaking out. As negotiation president, she wants the teachers to be safe, healthy, and be able to work in sound buildings. She asked the committee to consider the concerns expressed by the teachers.

5. DISCUSSION ON SIGHTLINES FRIAR'S REPORT

Carl explained the report with Bob's numbers in red in the far-right column. The red numbers are Bob's current estimates and is a tally of the numbers above. A discussion ensued as they went line-by-line. Carl asked that members make notes on their individual copy and that they keep their questions for next week when Bob returns.

Carl suggested that a walk-through be scheduled for next Thursday, March 13 from 5:00-6:30 PM after which the Committee will meet at the high school starting at 6:45 p.m. Bob will take notes for the walk-through. Mike from Friar will also attend. Carl will clarify this with Michelle and then notify the committee members. Meet in the back parking lot for the tour.

Regarding the earlier public comment, Ben wants everyone to know that if the decision is made to move the kids to other schools, consideration will be taken regarding their bathrooms and classrooms. There would also be a new configuration for Gildersleeve. The committee wants to make sure they are not creating a scenario that would not be safe for the children. Ben loves the input from the public.

It was suggested that the list be cleaned up where we are taking stuff out of the schools. John suggested hiding lines on the spreadsheet, not deleting them. *Note: See Stephanie Tetro's offer under Public Comment to do this.*

John said the next level of discussion should be renovate vs. capital improvements.

Ben said people think renovate to new is getting so much more than renovate to nice. He believes the real difference is insulating exterior walls. That is the biggest difference that wouldn't happen under renovate to nice.

John Dillon thinks the reason the last plan didn't pass was because the public did not understand or were not given enough information.

Carl said when the work of the committee is complete, he would like to see us have a couple of public meetings where Friar is present so everyone can understand how this all works. The public needs to know what financial impact this will have on them. People need to understand how much it will cost them and what they are paying for.

John said the general public needs to see what we did and how we came up with the end result.

Ben said the biggest failure would be if we create something that doesn't pass. John Dillon said we have to balance this project with many other things.

It was noted that Bob's numbers include escalation costs; the others do not.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Stephanie Tetro, Great Hill Road, offered her assistance with the spreadsheet. She asked for an electronic copy of the spreadsheet so she can filter out the columns that they don't want shown.

She couldn't follow along tonight because she didn't have a copy of the spreadsheet. When the time comes, she strongly suggested having the bond counsel explain the plan to the public.

Dylan Bernard, Technology Education Teacher at the High School (via zoom), said that the high school auditorium does not have projection capabilities at this time due to the screen being damaged and this should be taken into consideration if future meetings need to be scheduled for the public.

7. ADJOURN MEETING

Ben Srb made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by John Dillon, all were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Hoy

Sharon R. Hoy
Recording Secretary