

**STRATEGIC CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 23, 2025**

(In person and Town Zoom A)

Present: Brett Betkoski, Carl Johnson-Chairman, Jennifer Martinez, Darcy Parmelee, Bob Shea, Ben Srb, Laurel Steinhauser-Vice Chair

Absent: Christopher Dickman

Others Present: Dr. Charles Britton (Supt. of Schools), Michael Sorano (Friar), Bryce Sens (Friar), Michael Pelton (1st Selectman), John Dillon (BOS), Tim Lavoy (BOS)

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chairman Carl Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Portland High School Media Center located at 95 High Street, Portland, Connecticut.

**2. APPROVE AGENDA**

Ben Srb introduced John Dillon and Tim Lavoy (members of BOS), one of whom will become a member of this commission to replace Michael Pelton. Laurel Steinhauser made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Ben Srb, all were in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

**3. APPROVE MEETING MINUTES: 1/9/25**

Laurel Steinhauser made a motion to approve the January 9, 2025 meeting minutes, seconded by Jennifer Matinez, all were in favor, none opposed, motion carried. Michael Pelton resigned from the committee as BOS rep to replace Ryan Curley as 1st Selectman.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Beth Anderson, 44 West Cotton Hill Road, stressed the importance of having the groups collaborate with each other. She encouraged the schools to leverage the local dollars. It is helpful to understand the difference between capital improvement and operational expenses.

**5. DISCUSSION ON ELEMENTARY FACILITY NEEDS AND POTENTIAL CONSOLIDATION (ONGOING)**

The meeting was turned over to Michael Friar who made a slide presentation explaining the needs and deficiencies of the three schools: Gildersleeve, Valley View and Brownstone. During the week Mike met at Gildersleeve School with cost estimators to learn of changes since the last time they met. He explained eligible costs and ineligible costs and what affects our taxes locally and what the State pays. We are at Reimbursement rate was 51% of eligible costs. Any grant, i.e., solar, has to be separate from this grant otherwise it will come off the top. Overbuilt by 20%. We were over allowable sq.ft. Our enrollment is flat and we are overbuilt.

Some but not all of his comments are listed below:

Gildersleeve School: Condition Fair; shows deterioration. Chipped brick; needs repointing. Window sills need cleaned up. Windows are low performing and need replacing. Roof needs replacing. These things being fixed make it super-efficient. If you do HVAC over, it is over 50%, and you will have to bring it up to energy code. Fair: 5-7 years.

Valley View: Older building showing age. Lot of deteriorating conditions. Parking lot bad shape; needs to change traffic flow; not reimbursable. Deterioration of interior and exterior walls. Mechanical/electrical have problems and need investment. Fair Condition. 5-7 Years.

Brownstone: Fairly good condition. Separate into town side and school side. A lot of the stuff is not reimbursable.

Of the three schools, Valley View and Gildersleeve are in worse condition than Brownstone.

Carl said we will let Mike do what he needs to do with the numbers. The bottom line is: what are we spending here. If we spend millions but don't upgrade HVAC, in time that will need to be done. Let Mike come up with the best scenario and then we will decide what to do.

Mike said he reached out to the State, they reimburse temporary space. Mike needs two weeks to complete his study. We are at a standstill until we see some real numbers.

Bob Shea made a motion to cancel the next meeting on January 30 and meet on Thursday February 6, at 6:00 p.m. Jennifer Martinez seconded it, all were in favor, motion carried.

## **6. PUBLIC COMMENT**

John Dillion thanks all who participated and said it is all about dollars and cents. He listened to the presentations and what is involved in simple terms re renovations to the buildings and how the funding works. He believes it makes sense to do a presentation in the auditorium for the public so that they know the parts that they were concerned about and that were missing in the earlier presentations. Even though it doesn't say it in the charge, it would be the best thing to do to put the minds of the public at ease.

Tim Lavoy thanked Friar and the commission for their presentation.

## **7. ADJOURN**

Brett Betkoski made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Darcy Parmelee, all were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Sharon Hoy*

Sharon R. Hoy, Recording Secretary