

1 Joint Facilities Advisory Committee Meeting

2 Thursday, July 23rd, 2020

3 Meeting Minutes- Approved 08 27 2020

4 Attendees Via Webinar:

5 Administrative Team: Adam Steel- Superintendent, Anna Parrill- Principal Clark/Wilkins

6 Committee Members: Pim Grondstra- SCSB Member, Ellen Gruzdien- ASB Member, Stephanie  
7 Grund- SCSB Member, Amy Facey- SCSB Member/ JFAC Chair, Shannon Gascoyne, JFAC  
8 Vice Chair, Amherst NH, Victoria Parisi, Amherst NH, Jeanne Ludt, Amherst NH, Christine  
9 Grayson, Amherst NH, Brian Coogan, Amherst NH and John D'Angelo- Amherst Selectman,  
10 Amherst NH.

11 Public: Lance Whitehead and Anne Ketterer- Lavallee Brensinger Professional Architects,  
12 Manchester NH, and Lisa Eastland, 19 River Road, Amherst NH.

13 Meeting Minutes: Danae A. Marotta

14 I. Call to Order

15 **Ms. Shannon Gascoyne, JFAC Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00PM.**

16 II. Minutes Approval

17 **Ms. Parisi motioned to approve the Minutes of June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Mr. Grondstra seconded**  
18 **the motion. The vote was unanimous, motion passed.**

19 III. Subcommittee Updates

- 20  
21 • PR Subcommittee

22 Ms. Gascoyne noted that the PR Subcommittee continues to meet regularly. The community  
23 survey was launched a few weeks ago and went through a variety of channels. Mr. Lance  
24 Whitehead and Ms. Anne Ketterer, from Lavallee Brensinger, will be sharing the results tonight.  
25 Additionally, they have a community volunteer that will help them with a website that is specific  
26 to the JFAC work. Ms. Ketterer will help them decide what documents to add to that site.

27 The Committee thanked Ms. Ketterer.

- 28 • Souhegan 2.0 Subcommittee

29 Ms. Victoria Parisi noted that their newly formed Souhegan 2.0 Subcommittee is off to a great  
30 start. She, Ms. Stephanie Grund and Ms. Lisa Eastland have met with SAU #39 Business  
31 Administrator, Ms. Michele Croteau, SAU #39 Director of Facilities, Mr. Roger Preston and  
32 SHS Principal, Mr. Mike Berry. Next week, they have a meeting with Mr. Whitehead and Mr.  
33 Preston to get more information. They plan on bringing a project priority list to JFAC in August,  
34 looking at cost, impact, need and expected return etc.

35 They have recommended to SCSO Moderator, Mr. George Bower, that a member of the  
36 Souhegan Advisory Finance Committee is involved. The Souhegan 2.0 proposal is large and this  
37 would be the right time for input. They are excited to share more information in August. She  
38 then shared her email [vparisi@sau39.org](mailto:vparisi@sau39.org)

39 Ms. Ludt added that she would be happy to help.

40 Ms. Grund noted that she has reached out to Mr. Bower.

41 Ms. Facey thanked the subcommittee. There is great work that is happening, and they will be  
42 able to distill it down to items that are critical to do. She believes that the Souhegan Board will  
43 be grateful for all of the work they have done.

44 Ms. Gascoyne noted that Mr. Roger Preston is here on the call. She thanked him for all of his  
45 work.

46 IV. Discussion- Clark Wilkins

47 Mr. Whitehead commented that first he would like to go through Clark/ Wilkins, summary of the  
48 survey and the design of AMS.

49 He shared his screen displaying C/W. He first started with existing conditions and added that  
50 they looked at both buildings. They have maxed out the Clark School site and they cannot do  
51 significant additions. As you know the building is in fairly rough condition. Everything that is  
52 listed as a 1 is an undersized classroom per the Dept. of Education standards. If there is a 2, that  
53 classroom should have a toilet and sink included per their standard and DOE standard. They have  
54 also noted a lot of ADA issues and they structural sediment at the front of the school. This means  
55 that this school is not a good candidate for expansion.

56 The Wilkins site is almost the opposite. There are opportunities for expansion and there are two  
57 means of access. The only areas they would stay away from are the wetlands. It is a simple  
58 efficient layout. You will see areas like these, that were former classrooms, that are used for  
59 special services, such as Speech, they do not have great acoustics and great space. They have a  
60 couple of minor issues, security (creating a secure vestibule), a small fire issue (which is a dead-  
61 end corridor) and some rooms that are undersized for what they would like to see.

62 Regarding programming, given that the sizes in each classroom and enrollment numbers, K, 1<sup>st</sup>,  
63 and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade should ideally have 9 classrooms. For preschool, 2 classrooms will work. That is  
64 going to change every year based on enrollment and it is not an easy predictor. Kindergarten  
65 should really get to 9, they have 7 classrooms now. Additionally, for K and 1<sup>st</sup> grade principals  
66 and staff would like to see a Workshop Model. They did not apply that to all grades. Second  
67 grade should also go to 9 classrooms. They know that they are short on 4<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms as  
68 there are two portables. Two Art rooms and two Music rooms would work well across all grade  
69 levels. The Stars and My Time programs should have more space. A Multi-Media learning space  
70 would also be ideal with a computer lab and Makerspace. They would be looking at adding  
71 50,000 feet of educational space, that is assuming that they are all on one site.

72 He questioned whether there should be an SRO at the schools.

- 73 Mr. Steel replied no, the SRO it is a shared position.
- 74 Principal of Clark Wilkins, Ms. Anna Parrill, also replied, no.
- 75 Mr. Whitehead asked about two PE spaces, they could do a large gym subdivided or a large gym.  
76 He questioned if they want to build in locker rooms as part of any new construction.
- 77 Mr. Steel suggested that the community weigh in on that.
- 78 Mr. Whitehead commented that they would be adding 113,000 square feet of space. That would  
79 be a major addition or new construction on this site. He then showed an organizational diagram.
- 80 Mr. Steel clarified that this is a diagram not a proposed building design.
- 81 Ms. Gruzdien asked about the Special Education space.
- 82 Mr. Whitehead replied that the Orange spaces are Special Education specific.
- 83 He explained the idea of leaving the existing structure and do a small addition to set up a secure  
84 entrance on this footprint. He then questioned if they should continue in that direction and if they  
85 are comfortable with that.
- 86 Ms. Grudzien remarked that this is what Hollis/Brookline has. They already have a lower  
87 elementary, it is Pre-K and K.
- 88 Ms. Parisi inquired about the staffing, from a financial impact.
- 89 Mr. Steel explained that with two buildings, the Capital Expenses will be lower, but the  
90 Operating Expenses are higher.
- 91 Ms. Facey questioned if they thought about where the lower building will be placed.
- 92 Mr. Whitehead replied that he would recommend it be on the upper site so that they have more  
93 access and try to work a connection between the two buildings. It seems to be the most cost  
94 effective. The upper school would be Pre-K through grade 3. Option 2 is to build everything on  
95 the Upper or Lower Field and knock the original building down or sell it. He can do the exercise  
96 and figure out the staffing and cost implications.
- 97 Ms. Ludt inquired if they could add a second story.
- 98 Mr. Whitehead replied that it will not be cost effective, as structural codes change every two  
99 years. They would have columns on the outside and the students could not be in the building as  
100 they would be running heavy steel through the building. It is something that they do in cities  
101 when they have run out of land.
- 102 Ms. Gruzdien remarked that she does not mind having two different schools, although ideally,  
103 they would all be in one building.
- 104 Mr. Steel added that they cannot eliminate any options and they need to look at all of the costs.
- 105 Ms. Facey agreed with Mr. Steel in that it is important to see all of the information.

- 106 Ms. Gascoyne echoed Mr. Steel and Ms. Facey.  
107 She questioned Mr. Whitehead if that the Wilkins School footprint, as it is, only adequately  
108 serves two grade levels of students.
- 109 Mr. Whitehead replied, yes.
- 110 Ms. Gascoyne reminded the Committee that with anything they build on the Upper Field they are  
111 responsible for the costs. The Lower Field may be more feasible.
- 112 Ms. Facey mentioned that the ASD owns that land.
- 113 Mr. Whitehead added that they will look at both options and differences in staffing.
- 114 Ms. Parisi asked if they can look at the drop off area, so that Kindergarteners do not have to  
115 navigate a large area.
- 116 Mr. Whitehead replied, yes, he will look at the full site design.
- 117 Ms. Ludt asked if they are taking into consideration Covid with space for social distancing.
- 118 Mr. Whitehead replied that he can, and it is a work in process. What he is hearing in the industry  
119 is treating the mechanical systems like hospitals with rooms not sharing duct work.
- 120 SAU #39 Director of Facilities, Mr. Roger Preston, added that renovating the existing building  
121 and adding an addition they need to think about phasing and what to do with the students.
- 122 Ms. Parrill remarked that it would be great to have one building but suggested to have a second  
123 building close enough so that they can share staff.
- 124 Mr. Whitehead replied that he will share the diagrams out and continue to refine them. He will  
125 then show them a concept if they build an entire new school. As a next step, he will show the  
126 committee the cost comparison. He will start with the order of magnitude cost and the  
127 Construction Estimator will put detailed costs to the option that the committee chooses.
- 128 V. Questionnaire Results
- 129 Ms. Anne Ketterer discussed that they first began with the question of where the respondents  
130 reside either Amherst or Mont Vernon and how the community feels (1,057 answered, 3  
131 skipped). There were several public notifications and they had over 1,000 respondents with  
132 Survey Monkey being beneficial. Of that, there were 86% or 909 from Amherst and 14% or 148  
133 from Mont Vernon, and that was important.
- 134 Second, they asked how long were the respondents living in the area. 49.05% of responses that  
135 have lived there over 11 years, 26.47% were at 5-10 years, 16.92% at 2-5 years and 7.56% less  
136 than 2 years.
- 137 The next question was about priorities. There were 76.63% parents that currently have a  
138 student(s) in the SAU 39 system, 4.07% that will have a student(s) in the system in the future,

139 13.91% that no longer has a student(s) in the system, 3.78% that has not had any experience with  
140 any student(s) in the SAU #39 and last, 1.61% or 17, that is a student in SAU #39.

141 Next, they asked about the school that their student(s) attend. 42.49% are at Clark/Wilkins,  
142 42.37% are at Amherst Middle School, 41.91% at Souhegan High School and 11.18 % at Mont  
143 Vernon Village School.

144 The 5<sup>th</sup> question was the “what” portion. The question was “ a quality public education system is  
145 important to me and impacts my community”. Of that 1,054 answered, 6 skipped. 89.18%  
146 strongly agree, 9.68% agree, 0.76% somewhat agree and 0.38% disagree.

147 Question #6 was “I believe the District’s most pressing facilities needs for Clark Wilkins and  
148 Amherst Middle School are- Please rank 1-6 with 1 being the most urgent need to address”.  
149 (1,034 answered, 26 skipped). She added that the increasing enrollment resulting in larger class  
150 sizes and greater student/teacher ratio was at the top of the list. The second was the need to  
151 improve/modernize inefficient and aging systems (HVAC/ roofs, etc..). The third, safety and  
152 security.

153 Question #7 was to “Select priorities you find most important when considering public education  
154 facilities”. The most critical element was building safety and security (56.20%) followed by  
155 spaces that allow for lower student-teacher ratio (44.10%) and then updated technology and  
156 science labs (37.98%).

157 Question #8 revolves around “How familiar are you with the District’s facility needs and the  
158 process being used to find solutions”. Of the respondents, 60.48% were a little familiar, 23.14%  
159 not at all familiar and last, 16.38% extremely familiar.

160 Question #9 “Please share with us which sources you use to become informed about school  
161 related issues” (1,045 answered, 15 skipped). You can see that the most used one were the school  
162 emails, followed by the Nixle alerts, Amherst FB pages, Amherst Citizen and Friends.

163 Question #10 “What other feedback would you like to share regarding the future of public-school  
164 buildings in the SAU (specifically, Clark-Wilkins and Amherst Middle School)” 200 answered  
165 with 860 skipped.

166 Ms. Ketterer highlighted a few comments. One community member replied that their “hope is  
167 that any improvements done will not be a band aid type fix but a truly thought out solution”.  
168 Another was “spend as if it were your money. Wisely and prudent”. She added that they will  
169 most definitely do that. Another comment was “Please just get on with making a choice. This is  
170 too many years talking”. She noted that it is wise to slow down and work through strategy.

171 Ms. Gascoyne thanked the public for responding. She is happy to see all of the input and this is a  
172 first opening of a dialogue.

173 Mr. Whitehead inquired if the group was interested in seeing some direction of the middle  
174 school. He understands that the committee had a prior meeting.

175 VI. AMS Concept Ideas

176 He clarified that these are no means final solutions and need a lot of refinements. They need to  
177 take input from the Committee, Administration and the Community.

178 He further showed the committee the first of three scenarios noting that they are somewhat  
179 similar. It was clearly designed as a middle school in clusters and fits the educational value. The  
180 number on complaint was the pie shaped classrooms as they are not functional. He suggested  
181 using what is good in the building and fix the big issues. He is looking for a critique.

182 In the first scenario he showed the committee the opportunity for a center learning commons.  
183 They can terrace the center area and it can be a community used space. He then suggested  
184 enlarging the Music rooms and have an Art and Music wing. The Makerspace would be  
185 relocated, and the addition is outlined in red. He also mentioned moving the playground away  
186 from traffic and rearranging the parking lot.

187 Ms. Ludt inquired about the Makerspace and if they considered it being on the outside.

188 Ms. Facey added that there was a lot that was put into it and it was something that they paid  
189 attention to.

190 Ms. Grund noted that there is a lot of machinery as well.

191 Ms. Facey gave her full support for moving the playground in any scenario.

192 Ms. Gruzdien added that it is important to move that playground. There are more parents that are  
193 driving their students to school and it gives them a lot of space to park.

194 Mr. Whitehead mentioned that the upper floor is the same and they have all 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>  
195 accommodated in their team rooms.

196 He then explained concept #2. In this design, they can do small additions and add World  
197 Language in each pod. The downside is that it is costly because there are three exterior walls for  
198 one room. He added that they might want an outdoor space and it can be contained in a  
199 courtyard.

200 Mr. Preston inquired how long will the proposed addition come out.

201 Mr. Whitehead replied, 25 feet.

202 Mr. Preston asked about the elevator staying in the same spot.

203 Mr. Whitehead replied he would like it next to the Learning Commons because that is the  
204 transition.

205 Ms. Gascoyne gave her support for the courtyard idea.

206 Ms. Gruzdien commented that it is hard for her to conceptualize the expansion in the front of the  
207 building.

208 Ms. Eastland remarked that many of the Specials teachers are doing more than one thing. They  
209 move back and forth, and it will change the dynamic. She asked if the Learning Commons was  
210 enclosed.

211 Mr. Whitehead replied, open.

212 Ms. Eastland suggested closing or having a barrier to keep the distraction level down.

213 Ms. Grudzien added her support for the flexible space and community space.

214 Ms. Eastland questioned where the Health class is located.

215 Ms. Gascoyne added that she is envisioning the open area like a museum.

216 Ms. Ludt asked where the SRO's office is located and if it is close to the open space.

217 Mr. Whitehead replied that the he has not located a spot yet.

218 Ms. Ludt noted her concern for open spaces and security.

219 Mr. Whitehead showed Ms. Ludt how they can get the sight lines in the upper section for  
220 Administration.

221 Ms. Grund asked if there was breakout space for students.

222 Mr. Whitehead replied, yes, they could work that out and it is throughout this plan.

223 Ms. Eastland inquired about storage.

224 Mr. Whitehead responded that they are trying to create things that are flexible. They have not  
225 gotten to that point yet.

226 Ms. Facey thanked Mr. Whitehead.

227 Mr. Whitehead remarked that he is looking for feedback. He will work with the Principals to  
228 refine this plan.

229 VII. Meeting Adjourned

230 Ms. Facey commented that the next meeting is on Thursday, August 20<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Whitehead will be  
231 giving an update and they will be hearing again from the subcommittees.

232 She closed by thanking Mr. Whitehead and Ms. Ketterer for all of their work.

233 **Ms. Facey adjourned the meeting at 7:39PM**

234

235