

Essex School Building Committee Meeting Minutes - Draft

Date: February 26, 2025

Time: 5:45-9:30

Location: Essex Elementary School Cafeteria / Webex

Present: Henry Oettinger, Ariel Brain, Annie Cameron, Andy Oldeman, Charlie Haye, Michelle Cresta, Gordon Brewster, Jen Hocherman, Mike Gerhardt, Kim Provost, Ruth Preen, Tim McDonald, Tyler Virden, Theresa Whitman, Pam Beaudoin

A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:53 PM by Theresa Whitman

B. Public Comment - No public comment

C. Business Meeting

1) New Business - No new business

2) Continued Business

Review of Interview Process & Materials

- Committee members received scoring packets and interview rubrics.
- Each firm was given a structured interview format:
 - 15-20 minute presentation
 - 30-minute Q&A session
- Scoring sheets were completed during interviews, with the option to adjust after all presentations.

OPM Firm Interviews

- The following firms presented and responded to questions from the SBC:
 - Dore & Whittier
 - Turner & Townsend Heery (TTH)
 - LeftField
- A link to the recorded interviews is available here: *[Link to Be Inserted When Available]*

Reporting of Scores

At the conclusion of all interviews, the Committee Chair called for the reporting of scores. Committee members reviewed their evaluations and confirmed final rankings.

- Dore & Whittier emerged as the highest-rated firm, receiving a final score of 93.85%. Their strengths included:
 - Extensive experience with MSBA-funded projects.
 - Prior work with the district on the Manchester Memorial Elementary School project.

- Strong project management framework, stakeholder communication, and cost control strategies.
- LeftField ranked second with a score of 88.82%. The firm was noted for:
 - A hands-on project management style and strong stakeholder communication.
 - Effective community engagement strategies.
 - Less familiarity with the Essex-Manchester district compared to Dore & Whittier.
- Turner & Townsend Heery (TTH) ranked third with a score of 73.46%. The firm demonstrated:
 - A structured approach to cost management and project controls.
 - Strong scheduling methodologies.
 - Limited direct experience with Massachusetts school projects and MSBA compliance, making them less competitive.

The Committee acknowledged that all three firms demonstrated strong capabilities but agreed that Dore & Whittier aligned most closely with the needs of the Essex Elementary School project.

Deliberation on Firm Selection

- Committee members discussed the relative strengths of each firm.
- Dore & Whittier was recognized for its prior successful work with the district, familiarity with the two-town voting structure, and a strong community engagement plan.
- LeftField was noted for its excellent stakeholder communication strategies but lacked the same level of Essex-specific experience as Dore & Whittier.
- Turner & Townsend Heery had strengths in budget and project controls but lacked Massachusetts K-12 project experience and local stakeholder familiarity.
- After thorough discussion, the Committee reached a consensus that Dore & Whittier best met the priorities of the Essex Elementary School project.

Vote to Select an OPM Firm

Motion: Theresa Whitman made a motion to select Dore & Whittier as the Owner's Project Manager (OPM) for the Essex Elementary School project.

Second: The motion was seconded by Henry Oettinger.

Vote Tally: In Favor: 14 / Opposed: 1 / Abstained: 0

Motion Passed. Dore & Whittier was formally selected as the OPM for the Essex Elementary School project.

Vote to Approve Request for Services (RFS)

Following the selection of the OPM, Michelle Cresta requested that the committee confirm prior actions and vote to approve the OPM Request for Services (RFS) and authorize its advertisement.

Motion: Annie Cameron made a motion to approve the Request for Services (RFS) for the Designer Selection Process and authorize its advertisement.

Second: The motion was seconded by Henry Oettinger.

Vote Tally: In Favor: Unanimous

Motion Passed. The SBC formally approved the **Request for Services (RFS)**, allowing the district to proceed with issuing the RFS for the **selection of a design firm**.

Next Steps

1. Contract Negotiations with Dore & Whittier.
2. Release of the Request for Services (RFS) for Designer Selection.
3. Project Kickoff Planning:
 - Review of next milestones in feasibility study and MSBA process.
4. Community Engagement Initiatives:
 - Develop communication channels and public outreach plan.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:43