

**Portland Board of Education
Special Joint Meeting with the Board of Selectmen and the
School Facilities Study Committee
Tuesday, February 15, 2022 @ 7:00 pm**

Note: Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, attendees participated via Zoom

1. Call to Order

Sharon Peters, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

BOE Members Present: Sharon Peters, Meg Scata, Lauren Christensen, Laurel Steinhauser, Tim Lavoy, Stacey Benham, and Dave Murphy

Board of Selectmen Members Present: First Selectman Ryan Curley, Ralph Zampano, Robert Hetrick, Shaun Manning, and Michael Hernandez

School Facilities Study Committee Members Present: Lou Pear, Peter Filanda, Eileen Moynihan, Kerry Darby, and Scott Nicol

Also in attendance: Superintendent Dr. Charles Britton, Assistant to Superintendent for Business and Financial Affairs Stephanie Fragola, Director of Buildings and Grounds Carl Johnson, Gildersleeve Principal Ryan Walstrom, Peter Prowda, Michael Sorano and Bryce Sens from Friar Architecture, and members of the Portland Public Schools community

2. Agenda

Dr. Britton introduced Peter Prowda. Mr. Prowda gave an extensive presentation of his “Portland Public Schools Enrollment Projected to 2031.” Based on current enrollment, historical enrollment data, birth data, town population data, changes in housing units, enrollment in private, magnet, vo-ag/technical, and other public schools, Mr. Prowda is projecting a 5% growth in student enrollment by 2031.

Mr. Prowda’s last enrollment projection for Portland from 2008 was off by only 4.8% overall, even with changes from half day to full day kindergarten, an increase in School Choice students, and an increase in access to Magnet Schools. He indicated that this was a higher degree of accuracy than we might expect from this new projection through 2031.

Mr. Prowda has seen an overall trend and predicts a continued increase to the number of students choosing to attend technical high schools. Portland might be the type of community that technical schools will increasingly draw from. This is a future unknown, along with changes to pre-K programming and increases in numbers of School Choice students. He does not anticipate immigration having a significant impact on enrollment numbers in Portland. Dr. Britton shared that Brainerd Place developer Dan Bertram has suggested Portland can anticipate an increase of approximately 25 K-12 students, based on the limited 2 bedroom units that will be constructed in Phase II of construction. This number was not included in the initial presentation prepared by Mr. Prowda.

Dr. Britton introduced Bryce Sens and Michael Sorano from Friar Architecture. Mr. Sens and Mr. Sorano gave a brief presentation on State of Connecticut Reimbursement Rates and Eligible Costs. Friar has surveyed all of the school buildings. They anticipate when they meet with the School Facilities Study Committee in March their Existing Conditions reports will be completed.

Mr. Sens explained that the state has a formula to generate “Allowable Square Footage” per student. The Allowable Square Footage calculation is equal to our reimbursable square footage.

Mr. Sorano explained the types of expenses that are reimbursable by the state. Anything that is considered maintenance, replacement or refurbishment is not a reimbursable project. Out of the \$28 million of necessary improvements outlined in the Gordian Sightlines report, 80% are not eligible for reimbursement. If Portland just made the alterations as outlined, only \$4.5 million would be eligible for reimbursement. In contrast, projects that are coded “renovation as new” will cost more than regular renovations but are eligible for state reimbursement. There are two rates for reimbursement for construction in Portland: “Renovation as new” Construction is 51% reimbursable, while new construction is 41% reimbursable.

Friar Architecture will run various scenarios and projections for Portland, utilizing our enrollment projections from Mr. Prowda, estimating what will be eligible for reimbursement, what rates Portland will see, and square footage overages.

Dr. Britton is optimistic based on where we are in our timeline that the School Facilities Steering Committee will have a facilities modernization plan ready to present to the Board of Education and Board of Selectmen by June.

3. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:32pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Laurel Steinhauser, BOE Secretary