

Town of Milford
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
September 6, 2023

Present: Terrence Dolan, Community Development Director
Patricia Kenyon, Secretary, CIP Member
Bill Cooper, Facilities Coordinator, School District Representative
Dana Dahl, CIP Member
Michael Thornton, CIP Member
John Andruszkiewicz, CIP Member
Susan Smith, Planning Board Representative
Paul Bartolomucci, CIP Member
Christi Michaud, School District Superintendent
Noah Boudreault, School Board Member

Not Present: Peter Basiliere, Chair, Planning Board Representative
Kathy Parenti, Library Trustee Representative

Recording Clerk: Jane Hesketh, Community Development

Meeting Agenda

1. Fifth Departmental Presentation of Requests: School District
2. Continued Committee Discussion on Definitions, Project Evaluation & Scoring Criteria
3. Mtg. Minutes: None to review
4. Upcoming Meetings: 09/13/23, 9/20/23
5. Other Business
6. Adjournment

Call to Order

Terrey Dolan, Community Development Director acting as Chair, opened the meeting (P. Basiliere on Red Cross assignment). He introduced himself, and then took attendance around the table. All members (except P. Basiliere and K. Parenti) were present.

He updated the committee on upcoming meeting locations and provided an updated schedule. In addition, he informed the committee he received changed project requests from Jim Pouliot, Water Utilities. Jim Pouliot will present the updated requests at the meeting of September 20, 2023.

T. Dolan stated Bill Cooper, School District Facilities Coordinator was present to make a presentation as well as Superintendent Christi Michaud and School Board Member Noah Boudreault.

Department Presentations

1. School District, Superintendent Christi Michaud

Christi Michaud began the presentation by recognizing both Bill Cooper and Noah Boudreault. She proceeded by saying while the School District Warrant Articles are separate from the Town Warrant Articles, she is appreciative and understands the amount of work facing the town which will benefit everyone including students. She looks forward to working together with the committee. She moved ahead to the projects being presented.

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Department Presentations

1. School District, Superintendent Christi Michaud

a. Bales School Project

Superintendent Michaud began by summarizing the project to renovate the Historic 1894 Bales Building. This project was voted on at the last election and lost by a small margin. This did show an interest in this project. As a result, the project plan and purpose was revised to include the Project Drive Program at the High School. She then distributed additional information to the committee which showed financial information from the School District. C. Michaud proceeded with an explanation of the figures as well as a history of school projects. In addition, the handout included drawings of the Bales Building depicting the various areas that will be added with the restoration. Her presentation continued with an explanation of the crowding when kindergarten and pre-school was developed for the district. C. Michaud proceeded with the details for the project and what the benefits would be by using a building that has thousands of available square feet and is already owned. The benefits outlined were:

- Save approximately \$70,000 annually by stopping bussing to and from High School and Bales and put money towards a bond.
- Improve air quality by removing asbestos from floors, walls, and windows at Bales.
- Return Preschool to Jacques (JMS) School (Grades PreK -1), and give back three (3) classrooms to Heron Pond for their growing class sizes.
- Give JMS students back their lunchroom and auditorium space by using the Bales gymnasium for Physical Ed.
- Use renovated classrooms at Bales for Jacques Art, Music, & Library (making space for Preschool).
- Give space back to the High School for their Alternative Education Program (Project Drive). The students in this program have classes at both the high school building and the Bales building requiring transportation continually throughout the day.
- Move SAU (Superintendent, Human Resources, Business Office, and Student Support Services) renovated spaces at Bales giving space back to Milford High School.

Again, she pointed out the voting from March 2023 and projected estimation for voting at the next election. The estimate for the project is approximately \$4,000,000 (\$3.3 million with the additional going towards asbestos removal). Superintendent stated Bill Cooper, Facilities Coordinator will be working with the construction firm to determine if there is an opportunity to decrease this figure. C. Michaud asked if there were any questions.

John Andruszkiewicz asked about funding in relation to the High School Program, and if the Bales cost included the High School project. Superintendent stated the cost is only for the Bales Building and the next project will explain this (funding will be from the State for this project, but not the Bales Building project).

The Superintendent explained the potential tax increase to residents; over 20 years it will be \$.18 per \$1000 for the \$4,000,000 and then decrease each year after the 20th year.

Dana Dahl inquired about the history of this project since she was aware it has been a project for some time now. C. Michaud explained the time line/history for the Bales project.

Susan Smith, to confirm, the estimated increase in tax is \$.18 per \$1000, therefore, \$18 per \$100,000 with an average home price of \$380,000 would roughly equate to an increase of less than a \$100 per year. S. Smith then asked about the drawing of the building design. Bill Cooper then explained the proposed layout and the reasoning for the layout. This was then briefly discussed to further explain the safety needs/considerations in the design.

Susan Smith asked about the asbestos abatement being a separate project and what the cost will be. Bill Cooper explained the figure first established a year ago was \$400,000. He explained the building was inspected by various companies and it was felt it made no sense to do only the bottom 2 floors which was what they initially looked at. It was agreed the entire building needs to be done and this will be a large project. Bill Cooper explained the cost needs to be bid again.

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1. School District, Superintendent Christi Michaud

a. Bales School Project

S. Smith asked the timeline for this project. Superintendent Michaud said it would not be until 2025 that work could begin. Bill Cooper explained there are a number of administrative procedures that need to be followed. Given all that needs to be done, Bill Cooper said the end date may be around 2027. C. Michaud explained the project will be done in a phased approach.

Susan Smith questioned why the Jacques School renovation has been put on hold over the Bales Building renovation. Superintendent Michaud addressed this by explaining the history of the Jacques School renovation prior to the School Board request for a study to be conducted regarding the Bales Building. Superintendent then deferred to Bill Cooper. He stated the dead zone and the Jacques School are basically land locked. There was an addition in 2010-2011 for four classrooms. He explained the history of the research done to build another addition to the school, and the various options vs. the drawbacks. Basically, he said, there is no place to add on to the Jacques School. He further explained other ideas for school building expansion and the idea of using the Bales Building was the best option.

Paul Bartolomucci asked about enrollment in regards to a 10-12 year projection in view of the fact other towns are actually closing schools due to decreased enrollment. Superintendent stated there is a yearly Stats Report showing these types of figures; each year there is an up and down fluctuation for Milford but not in the 100's like towns that are closing schools. The fluctuation she is seeing is small; either up or down. Paul Bartolomucci asked if the Superintendent could get an accurate projection and she acknowledged she could. School Board Member Noah Boudreault added there is a possibility to expand the pre-school program. P. Bartolomucci asked about the cost for this and the Superintendent said she needs to look into that.

P. Bartolomucci questioned the fact not all children are attending due to certain situations; how does this affect enrollment. Superintendent said she will need to look at those figures. C. Michaud addressed the statement by saying each child is different in their needs. In addition, she said, there are requirements dictated by the state.

Paul Bartolomucci asked about Project Drive in terms of it being a Special Needs Program. C. Michaud: it is not a Special Needs program but an Alternative High School Program. It does include students that may have an educational disability or an IEP, but it is not specifically for Special Need Students. It will include students with certain emotional needs.

P. Bartolomucci asked if consideration has been given to bringing back into the Milford schools children who are now receiving education elsewhere, and what the cost savings would be for doing that. C. Michaud: it has been considered and there would be a savings of approximately \$50,000 - \$200,000 per student. Each student's needs are different, however, and placement as well. Some students have returned to the Milford schools, but there are obstacles that need to be addressed to bring more students back. The topic of special programs for certain students was discussed further in regards to costs. P. Bartolomucci said he would like to see the figures and C. Michaud acknowledged that.

Dana Dahl to Christi Michaud: then those students who are currently going between the High School and Bales every day, is it because of space? C. Michaud: no, it is due to resources that are available. Paul Bartolomucci: then with the Bales Building renovation, Project Drive Students will no longer be bussed because all resources will be housed at the High School. C. Michaud: that is correct. P. Bartolomucci emphasized the need to know the cost savings.

Chris Labonte to Christi Michaud: what should happen if the Bales School project does not pass and the High School project does pass; is there another plan? She said there is another option if this occurs; she then explained this.

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Department Presentations

1. School District, Superintendent Christi Michaud

a. Bales School Project

Susan Smith to Christi Michaud: What do you have any projections on how the Bale School will help and how long it will accommodate the school district? C. Michaud: in answer to projections, she does not see any major fluctuations. This topic continued to be explored and discussed. C. Michaud said the changes in enrollment are reflected in the budget.

Mike Thornton, to summarize, it appears we are trying to acquire a new school that will solve the land lock situation and the Bales/Jacques situation; what's the return on the \$4,000,000 investment and will that accommodate the school's needs for an extended period of time or is this a "stop gap" measure.

Christi Michaud in addressing this comment: it terms of enrollment this should accommodate for a few years but there are other things that need to be looked at in regards to the building itself and the maintenance that will be involved. Bill Cooper added the plans to make the building more accessible and elaborated on that plan. He did say the building was built in 1894 but it is in great shape. He continued by saying the roof was replaced in 2008, the windows will be replaced and the doors will probably be updated and overall it will be in good shape. The second and third floors will be empty. The building is about 36,000 sq. ft. with more spaces if expansion is needed. He outlined the use of the spaces at Bales and the parking areas as well as the additional areas available for expansion. As an example he stated the SAU has been in the High School for 30 years so he feels the Bales building will be around for another 30 years; the idea is to make do with what is available. Also, there will be increased parking made for the building.

Susan Smith asked about a playground. Bill Cooper said it is not part of the Bales School Project, however, they are looking at that and he talked about the options; a new playground could be quite costly (\$450,000 approximately). Superintendent Michaud added there is discussion about this. The School Board has allotted some funds and asked for a proposal. Various vendors have been contacted specifically looking at a rubberized surface and a few pieces of equipment. The approach will be to do this in phases. She was contacted by a representative from a prior Teacher's Organization who is knowledgeable with fund raising for playgrounds; they may assist with fund raising.

Selectman Labonte expressed his concerns regarding the expenditure of \$4,000,000 and if this is really going to solve the problem, or will there need to be another situation just a few years from now that will require more funding.

Mike Thornton: from what Bill Cooper has said, there is a land lock situation at Bales/Jacques as well as a traffic problem. Perhaps it is best to put the money where it can be used to the best advantage in view of other considerations; this is should the land become available.

Chris Labonte: Do we put more money out now when in 5 years the needs may change? Bill Cooper interjected by explaining the current land lock problem and easy access would not be available with an emergency. B. Cooper went on to say more in regards to ongoing maintenance. P. Dargie pointed out the \$300,000 spent recently to add on to Jacques. Bill Cooper continued with further information about the Bales building maintenance. M. Thornton to Bill Cooper: your point being that deferred maintenance is costing more. B. Cooper said the deferred maintenance is being kept up with; but there are major projects that still need to be done in all of the schools. There was more discussion and input in regards to deferred maintenance.

Susan Smith then asked if a survey had been done. Christi Michaud: we did one in May 2023; there were 307 respondents; 76 % said were interested in doing something with the Bales building. Superintendent Michaud reviewed some of the survey questions and the response percentages. Further discussions continued about surveys and ways to communication with parents. Superintendent asked if there were any ideas.

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6 **Department Presentations**

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8 **1. School District, Superintendent Christi Michaud**

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10 **a. Bales School Project**

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12 Patricia Kenyon to Christi Michaud: What is currently housed in the Bales building? Christi Michaud: 1st floor is the
13 Alternative High School Program with about 20 students; 2nd floor the entire Student Support Services team and
14 other office spaces. P. Kenyon to C. Michaud: where is the SAU Office? C. Michaud: the SAU Office and Business
15 Office are in the back of the High School. B. Cooper: the 3rd floor of Bales is vacant; IT Director has an office in
16 Student Services in the High School. He then explained the 3rd floor is vacant because the Fire Department
17 instructed the school to close it off for occupancy. P. Kenyon asked: of the 36,000 sq. ft. of space, how much is
18 currently not used? B. Cooper: about 20,000 sq. ft.

19
20 There was discussion about Bales building uses after the Asbestos Abatement is done; no students will be on the
21 upper levels. B. Cooper said the space on the 2nd and 3rd floors will be available for whatever is needed and some of
22 the building can be done in house.

23
24 P. Kenyon asked about the Stats Report that was previously referenced to forecast enrollment and how is this used in
25 planning? C. Michaud: the reports are used yearly for budgeting. P. Bartolomucci brought up home sales/new home
26 development and how to use that information about the number of children entering the district. The planning of the
27 community is dependent on that kind of information.

28
29 P. Bartolomucci to C. Michaud: if the Bales Project is not voted in, will CTE help support the programs being
30 proposed? C. Michaud: she acknowledged CTE does support the programs; then she outlined the needs and demands
31 as well as the eligibility. More discussion followed about CTE.

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33 Superintendent Michaud returned to the drawing of the planned Bales and High School buildings, and asked if there
34 were any questions pertaining to the drawing.

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36 **b. High School Project**

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38 P. Kenyon asked about the entrances. C. Michaud explained this and so did B. Cooper. Further details were
39 presented on the access points and discussions continued. C. Michaud provided more information and access points.
40 S. Smith asked about a large enough space for recreation indoors. This was discussed.

41
42 C. Michaud brought up items that could be eliminated, deferred or downsized to reduce the cost based on the survey
43 that was conducted.

44
45 S. Smith asked about plans for the High School building problems. B. Cooper addressed this by giving examples of
46 how maintenance problems are not always predictable. He continued by explaining how there are tradeoffs to
47 maintenance based on priorities. Christi Michaud added by informing the committee about the items that have been
48 prioritized to repair in the High School.

49
50 There was discussion about out of district students in regards to CTE which the Superintendent then elaborated on.
51 She indicated some of the available space may bring students from other districts into the district. C. Michaud will
52 find out about what these figures will be.

53
54 Susan Smith asked about the renovations to the High School to accommodate the new programs for CTE.
55 Bill Cooper explained how this will be done in a phased approach. Superintendent Michaud explained
56 where to go on the Milford School Board site to obtain detailed information on these projects. School
57 Board Member Noah Boudreault stated: site is "milfordk12.org"; at top of page click on "School Board" which
58 will then provide links to these projects.

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6 **Department Presentations**
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8 **1. School District, Superintendent Christi Michaud**
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10 **b. High School Project**
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12 Susan Smith asked about the time lines for the projects and if they will be done at the same time. C. Michaud
13 explained both projects will go forward in March 2024. If Bales passes, that will start first in 2024. The
14 High School Project cannot start until 2025 because that is when state funding will be available.

15 P. Bartolomucci: therefore, the bonds will not be funded for the same years. C. Michaud acknowledged
16 this is correct.
17

18 P. Bartolomucci asked if there will be a Health Program. C. Michaud: we would like to have such a
19 program, but it needs to be developed and staffed; not as part of this project. Such a program is
20 envisioned, however. P. Bartolomucci asked about partnering with other institutions. C. Michaud said
21 there are state laws in regards to this, but the district does partner with local community colleges. There
22 was more discussion about this and about programs offered for adults.
23

24 Discussions continued about tax rate increases, school programs, the options for CTE if Bales doesn't
25 pass and what the expenses would then be, and class spaces. In addition, the number of students who
26 currently travel out of the district was discussed.
27

28 Superintendent Michaud finished and thanked the committee.
29

30 **Meeting Minutes**
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32 No minutes to review this week.
33

34 **Upcoming Meetings**
35

36 Next meeting 9/13/23 at the Police Station; DPW Projects.
37

38 9/20/23
39

40 **Adjournment**

41 Terrence Dolan adjourned the meeting.