



Facilities Planning Committee Nov. 2, 2016 Meeting Summary

Call to Order

The third meeting of the Facilities Planning Committee was called to order 6:31 p.m. by co-chairs Luke Francois and Bob Hesselbein in the Middleton High School Library Media Center.

Members present: Paul Braun, Heidi Casey, Kendra Cleary, Bill Deno, Luke Francois, Luke Fuszard, Mike Gall, Bob Hesselbein, Seth Johnson, Ryan Kallies, Farhan Khatri, Sara Ludtke, Angela Mann, Alejandro Martinez, Dorothy Paler, Steve Plank, Abbie Rodriguez, Monica Schommer, Bill Vogel, Sam Wilson, Karin Zuegge.

Not Present: Laura Albert, Jack Hemb, Mark Opitz.

Others present: Superintendent George Mavroulis, Assistant Superintendent Sherri Cyra, Director of Business Services Lori Ames, Communications Director Perry Hibner and Gurdip Brar.

Welcome and Grounding Activity

Luke Francois asked members to identify what is the committee's purpose and who is the intended audience. He also asked members what is a question each one has for the group. Members were then asked to share their responses with up to five others.

Some of the responses to the committee's purpose included:

- Long-term planning, overcrowding solutions, better utilize facilities, building new buildings, helping sell, community engagement, accommodate educational methods for next generation, long-term viability and sustainability, continued educational excellence.

Some of the responses to the committee's intended audience included:

- Taxpayers, Board of Education, entire community, voters, parents, teachers, students.

Some of the questions raised included:

- How do you create equity amongst the schools?
- Will it be possible to look at a world-class facility outside the District?
- How do we get consensus in the committee?
- How does a referendum work?
- Will we make short- and long-term recommendations?
- What happens if referendum doesn't pass?

Bob Hesselbein reminded the members the committee doesn't need to find one solution but rather give the Board multiple options.

"We don't make decision; the Board does," he said. "We don't have to worry about the referendum. The Board has to do that."

State Funding Formula/Referendum Funding

Lori Ames shared a presentation on funding. She compared the District budget process to the way families budget at home with a checking account for bills, savings account, etc. But she said one difference is school districts must keep their funds separate from one another.

She noted revenue limit has been in place since 1993. The funds impacted by the revenue limits are Fund 10 (current operations) and Fund 27 (special education), which are most of the budget. Long-term borrowing to pay for interest and principal that isn't approved by a referendum falls under the revenue limit. Districts can also levy for a capital maintenance fund to extend the life of their buildings and sites.

MCPASD's operational budget is more than \$80 million, she said.

Funds not impacted by revenue limit include long-term debt from a referendum and Fund 80, which is money raised from community recreation programs.

Ames said 70 percent of MCPASD's revenue comes from taxes, while about 22 percent comes from the state. The higher the property values in a district the less state aid a district receives. Property-poor districts receive more state assistance, she said. MCPASD is considered a property-rich district.

She said 82 percent of operational budget is salary and benefits. Revenue limits are composed of tax levy, state aid and computer aid, which means 92 percent of MCPASD's budget is controlled by the revenue limit.

Under the current formula, student membership is the most important thing impacting the revenue limit, she said. The state figures that out on a three-year rolling average. A district needs to be increasing in enrollment to get more money. She also noted the state hasn't provided any increase per student for last couple of years.

A district could receive an energy exemption if it adopts a resolution to increase the revenue limit for energy. The district would have to enter into a contract with a vendor. MCPASD hasn't used it because we have been able to incorporate energy conservation within the budget or have implemented because of successful building referendums, she said.

She said the District revenue limit increased by \$2 million in 2016-17 almost solely because of enrollment growth. If enrollment had been flat, MCPASD couldn't have covered the cost of fringe benefit or salary increases.

"That's why other districts have had to lay off staff," Ames said.

She said when a district receives more state aid that doesn't change the revenue limit. It only reduces property taxes.

“It makes it sound like school districts get more money, but they don’t,” she said.

A district can increase or exceed revenue limit by the amount approved in a referendum. Referendums can be approved to issue debt (ex. build a new facility) or exemptions (such as utilities, new custodians). Districts have to identify what those costs are and put forth an operational referendum, which can be a recurring cost that goes on in perpetuity, or a non-recurring, which has a limit, such as five years, unless taxpayers approve it again.

Ames said smaller projects of \$1 million or less could be funded but not possible for any bigger projects unless going to make bigger curriculum or staffing changes.

Middleton High School Tour

The members received a 45-minute tour of MHS and spent much of the time looking at the library-media center, cafeteria-courtyard and smaller areas such as music classrooms.

The LMC was originally the gymnasium at MHS when it was built in 1949. Principal Steve Plank said up to 75 students are turned away every period because not enough space. There are also issues with technology because the floor is the old gym.

Mavroulis believes a new LMC is a top priority and mentioned turning it into a student center.

“For a high school this size, it poses a lot of challenges,” Mavroulis said.

Plank noted the library just got rid of 1,500 books to create more space. Luke Francois, said the footprint of the LMC is pretty much the same as when he graduated from MHS in 1989.

The cafeteria-courtyard holds two lunches daily and between 1,200 to 1,400 students stay on campus for lunch, Plank said. He said many of the students are forced to eat in the hallways or other areas of the schools because not enough room for that many in the cafeteria-courtyard.

The members saw the school’s sole family consumer science classroom. Sherri Cyra noted without the revenue limits this is a space that could be updated or expanded. She also said city businesses are interested in partnering with MHS and would like to use the space during non-school hours.

“We could put it to good use and so could the community,” she said.

“This is another one of those spaces we just can’t accommodate what students want,” Plank said.

The members took a brief look at the three-story math-science wing that was added in 2001. Plank said stair traffic is heavy throughout the day and the school is considering letting students go up one stairwell on the east end and down the west end stairwell to alleviate issues.

Members also visited the two traditional technical education areas along with the Project Lead the Way rooms that were remodeled a few years ago. Mavroulis said some of the powers machines don’t work and that students are being turned away in woods and metals.

“The trades are exploding,” said Mavroulis, who noted MHS has just started an advisory committee involving local business leaders to come up with ideas to improve the programs.

Luke Francois also noted that these are tough-to-fill positions and the quality of the facilities can play a huge role in recruiting or retaining those educators.

The members also toured the field house and the music rooms. Plank noted band enrollment is expected to grow to 320 students within two years.

“That’s the size of the UW-Madison band,” one member noted.

MHS School Day Video and Tour Debrief

The members viewed a 5-minute video that highlighted some of the areas with the most traffic at MHS, including the four-corners hallway near the administrative offices.

“They are just packed in there,” MHS principal Steve Plank said. “Students have done an impressive job of how to create a pattern that works.”

He also showed footage of the cafeteria lines. He estimated that two-thirds of students (about 700 for each period) stay for lunch and one-third leave. He said with only a 30-minute lunch period students don’t have much time to go very far off campus.

George Mavroulis said turning the library media center into a student center would create additional space during lunch time. He said a new LMC and additional classrooms could be built in an addition south of the current building.

A member noted there were no students with disabilities in the video. Plank said MHS has a number of students with significant disabilities. Staff try to keep those students on one level if possible and have them leave class a few minutes before passing time to make it easier.

“When our students see a student in a wheelchair, the sea just parts for them,” Plank said.

A member also wondered if administration is more interested in remodeling the building. Mavroulis said he simply wanted to share what architects have said about MHS. He doesn’t want not trying to suppress any ideas, including a possible new high school.

Plank shared that MHS has worked hard to be good neighbors with area residents, many of whom are frustrated with all the cars on the surrounding streets. One idea that has even been floated is a multi-level parking lot.

Plank said there have also been ideas to make more of the building three stories. Mavroulis noted one area that wasn’t covered in the tour was the courtyard, where a 3-story addition could go.

Hesselbein noted one question for the committee is how big a high school do we want to have before the District divides into two high schools.

Location of Next Meeting/Closing

Luke Francois noted urban planner Mark Roffers will attend the next meeting and thought it was important to give him a lot of time to present and answer questions. As a result, he suggested holding the next meeting at Park, which is a smaller elementary school that won’t take as long to tour. The committee agreed.

Francois reminded the members in order to wrap up their work by May and present options to the Board of Education, the committee needs to start brainstorming options in January and February. He shared questions the members wanted answered and asked if there were others to add to the list. The additional questions included:

- What could be done at Pope Farms? How many schools can go out there? Athletic fields?
- What has been investigated so far?

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.