



School Construction Committee
Maine State Board of Education
Minutes of the April 29, 2024 Meeting

The School Construction Committee met in Room 103B, Cross Building, 111 Sewall Street, Augusta.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Fern Desjardins (Chair), Kristin Bishop, and Edmond Morin

OTHERS PRESENT:

Dwight Anderson, Civil Engineer, Stantec
Joe Britton, Architect, Lavallee Brensinger
Lance Whitehead, Architect, Lavallee Brensinger
Christopher Howell, Superintendent, RSU 14
Ann Pinnette, School Facilities Manager, Department of Education
Valerie Chiang, School Construction Coordinator, Department of Education
Nathan McIvor, School Facilities Staff, Department of Education
Scott Brown, Director of School Facilities, Department of Education
Marcus Hatch, citizen, RSU 17/MSAD 17
Canna Adams, citizen, RSU 17/MSAD 17
Sandra Poland, citizen, RSU 17/MSAD 17
Bruce Bryant, Former State Senator
Heather Manchester, Superintendent, RSU 17/MSAD 17
Jim Marshall, citizen, RSU 17/MSAD 17
Donna Marshall, School Board Member, RSU 17/MSAD 17
Brenda Lynn Gould, citizen, RSU 17/MSAD 17
John Haney, citizen, RSU 17/MSAD 17
Troy Ripley, School Board Chair, RSU 17/MSAD 17

Chair Desjardins called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

Motioned by Bishop, seconded by Morin, and voted unanimously by those present to accept the March 29, 2024 minutes as written.

Chair Desjardins introduced the first item on the agenda, *Major Capital School Construction Program; Design and Funding Approval Consideration for Phase 1 Site Development; RSU 14 Windham - New Middle School Construction* and asked Director Brown to provide background information for the Committee.

He explained that the project will be divided into two phases due to its complexity and cost, which will require two separate State Board approvals and construction processes. It has been determined that this will provide cost efficiencies for the project and allow the school to open one year earlier.

Superintendent Howell began his presentation by thanking the Committee for the opportunity and the district is grateful for state support. He then stated that all approvals are in place and that the first phase of the project is ready to move forward for construction bidding. After reviewing the site plans and budget Superintendent Howell answered several questions from the Committee. There were several questions regarding the transportation of students and bus routes.

Motioned by Bishop, seconded by Morin, and voted unanimously by those present that pursuant to MRS Title 20-A § 15905(1) and State Board of Education Chapter 61, Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects, this exhibit be placed on the May 8, 2024 State Board meeting agenda and the State Board of Education grant Design and Funding Approval for Phase I Site Development to RSU 14 for a new grades 5-8 Middle School construction project as presented.

Chair Desjardins then introduced the next item on the agenda, *RSU 17 School Construction Project Discussion*.

She provided an overview on the state's school construction approval process; highlighted statutes, rules, and guidelines; reviewed the rating process; and noted the debt ceiling limit. She also discussed the Committee's site visit to the district's elementary schools in August of 2022 and the Supplemental Budget, L.D. 2214, Amendment C-A, Part AA, Section AA-1, which may provide a grant opportunity for the elementary school in West Paris.

She then allowed questions and comments from meeting attendees. Those questions included topics such as building maintenance costs, student transportation within the district, high construction costs, small schools, and funding to reopen the West Paris School.

Chair Desjardins then introduced the next item on the agenda, *Legislative Update*.

She reviewed L.D. 2285 Resolve, Directing the Department of Education to Establish the Commission to Study School Construction Policy and Funding. She noted that the bill has been placed on the legislative "study table" and she will provide an update when more information is available.

Chair Desjardins adjourned the meeting at 11:18 a.m.

The next committee meeting will be on Friday, May 31, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 500.