



School Construction Committee
Maine State Board of Education
Minutes of the May 27, 2022 Meeting

The School Construction Committee met via Zoom on May 27, 2022

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Fern Desjardins (Chair), Wilson Hess, James Ford

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mary Becker, State Board of Education staff
Kristin Bishop, Maine State Board of Education
Scott Brown, MDOE School Facilities staff
Valerie Chiang, MDOE School Facilities staff
Jim Harford, MDOE School Facilities staff
Nathan McIvor, MDOE School Facilities staff
Ann Pinnette, MDOE School Facilities staff
Roberta Hersom, MSAD 49 Superintendent
Kathy Cogan, CHA Architecture
Ben Winschel, CHA Architecture
Nathaniel Cram, CHA Architecture
Andrew Johnston, Atlantic Resource Consultants

Fern Desjardins called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Motion by Wilson Hess, seconded by Fern Desjardins, and voted unanimously by those present to accept the April 29, 2022 minutes as written.

Scott Brown provided an overview of the RSU 49 New Elementary School Construction Project, noting that it was first on the MCIP Priority List. He also stated that a completed Site Application was on file at the Department and that the district had held a successful straw vote as required. Superintendent Roberta Hersom then explained how public presentations and forums have engaged community members and provided opportunities for feedback on the proposed site and the project. She provided a brief overview of the site selection process and then turned the presentation over to Andrew Johnston to provide a more thorough review and technical analysis of the site selection process and the proposed site. Kathy Cogan then spoke briefly to the school board's recommendation to reprogram the existing Benton Elementary School to a PK-2 grade-level with the new adjacent facility to provide grades 3-6 programming.

Kathy Cogan also noted that the parcel was used to grow hay for a nearby farm and that a purchase agreement was in place for the property. The school board held a community straw poll on January 26, 2021 on the parcel chosen for the proposed site. 73 were in favor, 7 were opposed, and 5 abstained.

Wilson Hess asked about the extent of soil testing that had been done on the new site to date. Andrew Johnston explain that extensive testing had been completed including PFAS which were not above background levels. He also stated that additional testing would occur as the project advances.

The Committee discussed the potential impact of the Town of Albion's potential withdrawal from the district. The Superintendent also clarified that enrollment in the SAU has been steady and that 574 students are projected to be in the proposed building.

Motion by Fern Desjardins that the Committee recommend that the RSU 49 Site Approval Exhibit be placed on the June 15, 2022 State Board of Education's business agenda with the Committee's recommendation of approval. The motion was seconded by James Ford and voted unanimously to approve by those present.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

The next School Construction Committee meeting is scheduled for June 24, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.