



Facilities Task Force Meeting Minutes June 22, 2023

Welcome and Introductions

Jay Yeager, Director of Maintenance and Operations, welcomed everyone.

Members in attendance:

Dr. James Everett Superintendent, Kurt Harvill Assistant Superintendent, Derek Forbes MHS Principal, Laney Brannen MP3 teacher, Robert Kratzig Assistant Principal at MMS, Lisa Gilchrist Director of Public Relations, Adrienne Somera Director of Teaching and Learning, Bryant Michaelson Director of Activities and Athletics, Todd Torgeson MMS Principal, Erin Schweigert IRE parent, Chantell Bertollini IRE parent, Alec Covert IRE parent, Joe O'Brien Director of Technology, Tim Faber with King Architecture, Karl Noste IRE and MMS parent and Paul Kratzig, community member.

Group Norms

Dr. Everett reviewed the group norms.

1. Attend all meetings and be on time.
2. Listen to and show respect for the views of other members.
3. All questions are welcome.
4. Be an attentive listener and hold each other accountable.
5. Carry out assignments on schedule.
6. Extend grace and assume positive intent.
7. Always strive for win-win situations.
8. Every member is responsible for the team's progress/success.

Facilities Task Force Purpose

The task force will meet once a month for the next five months. One additional meeting will include a site visit to a neighboring school district. The task force will review the study and survey and then recommend a list of priority projects to the School Board along with the reasoning for their decision. Yeager explained the task force purpose aligns with the core value of wellness from the new strategic plan.

Our Timeline and Process

July 26 at 5 p.m. (**not 5:30 p.m.**)

- Financing for facilities projects.

Aug. 23 at 5 p.m. (**this is a date and time change**)

- Site visits to Meridian Middle School and Irene Reither Elementary School.

Sept. 26 time at 5:30 p.m.

- Site visit to Meridian High School.
- Review all information so far.
- Prioritize projects for recommendation.

Oct. 24 Review at 5:30 p.m.

- Review draft recommendation and provide feedback.

Review Past Projects

A review of past projects was shared. The most recent bond was in 2010. The previous bond was for \$17 million to build Irene Reither Elementary School and to rebuild the high school. Yeager explained that state funding was available to fund the construction of Meridian High School, but those funds are no longer available.

Presentation of the Study and Survey by Tim Faber with King Architecture PLLC

Tim Faber with King Architecture presented the study and survey to the task force.

Comments and Questions from Task Force Members

During the presentation of the study and survey, task force members asked the following questions.

A task force member asked how often our buildings are evaluated. Yeager explained that our facilities are evaluated annually by district staff and every five years by an outside organization.

A task force member asked what the building rating is of the bus facility. Yeager explained that only educational spaces were given a score, additional facilities such as the bus garage, maintenance building and District Office were not scored by King Architects but were included in the study and survey.

A task force member asked why we would choose to go with septic as opposed to tapping into Bellingham sewer. Dr. Everett shared that there is a septic system being designed as part of potential funding for a future skills center. It may be possible for the City of Bellingham to bring the sewer line that terminates at Smith Road up to the location of the future skills center. The cost to do so would be incurred by the district (and part of the potential federal award) to allow access to the sewer line for the skills center and MHS/District Office. If we were to tap into the sewer line this would be a huge cost savings for the district.

A task force member asked for clarity on the cost of the MMS renovation versus rebuilding on the existing site, or rebuilding on a donated site, and why we would build new if it is more affordable to renovate. Faber explained that MMS is a non-reinforced concrete structure and a difficult campus to secure because of all the outbuildings. Faber went on to share concern over where we would house students if we did renovations in phases and stated that there would still be safety issues that would need to be addressed if we only renovated. Faber said that a new building would be the least disruptive to the learning environment.

Information was shared about a 6.5-acre plot of land adjacent to IRE that the district purchased four years ago. Building on this plot of land would allow the district to tap into the overbuilt septic system at the existing IRE school.

A task force member asked how the estimated costs in the study and survey were determined. Faber explained that a soft cost estimate is determined by multiplying the building square footage by the average per square foot cost to develop in our area. A 30% buffer is added to the soft cost to determine the estimates that are included in the study and survey. Additional financial information will be shared during next month's meeting.

A task force member asked for clarity on how the recommendations were determined. Yeager explained that when the study and survey was created, they were tasked to look at all facility needs in Meridian to best serve our students. The cost of projects was not included in the recommendations. The task force will review the recommended projects and costs at the next meeting. It will be part of the task force's purpose to determine the prioritized projects to present to the School Board taking everything they have learned, including cost, into consideration.

A task force member asked if creating the task force was a requirement. Superintendent Dr. Everett explained that when we consider asking the community to invest a large amount of money into our schools, it is essential to us that our community is part of that decision-making process. The task force member expressed gratitude for being part of the process and for the formation of the task force.

Next meeting is at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, July 26.