

**Canton School Building Committee  
and School Committee Joint Meeting  
December 20, 2023  
Minutes**

**A. Call to Order:** Chair O'Halloran asked for a motion to call to order the Thursday, December 21, 2023 School Committee Open Session Meeting at 6:03 pm. Superintendent Folan, Chair of the SBC, opened the School Building Committee Meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

**Attendees:** Kimberly McCourt (SC)  
Kristian Merenda (SC)  
Kendall O'Halloran (SC)  
Derek Folan, Superintendent (SC & SBC)  
Stephen Marshall, Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations (SC & SBC)  
*(Left the meeting at 7:27 pm)*  
John Connolly (SBC)  
Charles Doody (SBC)  
Tom Kelleher (SBC)  
Brian Lynch (SBC)  
Bob McCarthy (SBC)  
Jonathan Mulhern (SBC)  
Tina Perez (SBC)  
Sarah Shannon (SBC)  
Andrea Stuart (SBC)  
Lou Tarmy (SBC)

**Absent:** Laura Arboleda (SC)  
Maureen Moran (SC)  
Bob Benedetti (SBC)  
Amy Tom (SBC)

**Guests:** Justin Thibeault, Ai3  
Lynn Stapleton, LeftField

**B. GMS Building Project Update:** Mr. Thibeault reviewed the GMS Building Project schedule overview including building options (addition/renovation vs. new construction) for both grade configurations (6-8 or 5-8) and a matrix to identify what option is best and thus inform the final

decision. Criteria included Educational Program, Community & Access, Construction Phasing, Sustainability, and Cost.

Superintendent Folan announced his recommendation for grade configuration. Advocating for a 5-8 grade configuration, Mr. Folan noted that the 5-8 grade configuration will provide enhanced educational opportunities for our students and will alleviate the overcrowding in the elementary schools. This decision was born out of meetings, discussions, workshops, community forums with live polling, and facility assessments in both the GMS as well as the three elementary schools. Careful consideration was given to current 5th grade model (two teacher teams), grade level separation, and controlled interaction. Educators were strongly in favor of the 5-8 grade shift noting that academic neighborhoods and collaborative spaces offer extra opportunities to be a part of the school.

**C. Public Comment:** Ms. Haley Pecarski, a graduate of Canton schools, spoke of concerns with a 5-8 grade configuration for the new GMS. She expressed concern with moving 5h grade students into a bigger building. She wondered how students would be protected from bullying in a larger community. Ms. Pecarski asked the group to consider dignity and civility as an important part of school culture.

**D. New Business:**

**Grade Configuration Recommendation and Vote:** Mr. Folan recommended the 5-8 configuration. Ms. Merenda requested an estimate of the impact in tax costs to residents. Lynn Davenport (LeftField) indicated that the range is not set yet, but would be able to supply some range estimates and reimbursement levels from MSBA after both votes (grade configuration and Performing Arts Space) were recorded.

Hearing no further questions or requests for additional discussion, Chair Merenda called for a motion to vote on grade configuration for the new Galvin Middle School. Kristian Merenda made the motion for the school committee to modify the current 6-8 grade configuration at the Galvin Middle School to a 5-8 grade configuration for the new Galvin Middle School project in conjunction with the MSBA process. Kimberly McCourt seconded. Roll call vote was unanimous at 3-0 and recorded as follows:

Kristian Merenda	yea		
Kimberly McCourt	yea		
Kendall O'Halloran	yea		
		3 yeas	0 nays

**E. Future Business:** The next Open Session meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 21, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

**F. Adjournment of Canton School Committee Open Session Meeting:** Ms. O'Halloran called for a motion to adjourn the Wednesday, December 20, 2023 Canton School Committee Open

Session Meeting at 7:03 pm. Ms. Merenda made the motion; Kimberly McCourt seconded. Roll call vote was unanimous at 3-0 and recorded as follows:

Kristian Merenda	yea		
Kimberly McCourt	yea		
Kendall O'Halloran	yea		
		3 yeas	0 nays

**G. SBC portion of the Meeting:**

- a. Performing Arts Space Review:** Ai3 Principal, Mr. Thibeault, gave an overview of the Performing Arts Space options:

- a. Auditorium: dedicated performance space
- b. Cafetorium: stage attached to a dining space;
- c. Gymnatorium: stage attached to a gymnasium

Mr. Thibeault showed examples of all three building options, noting size , seating capacity (600 or 800 seats), availability of each space within the school day, and cost estimates, and did note the MSBA will partially reimburse for Cafetoriums and Gymnatoriums, but will not consider middle school auditoriums eligible for reimbursement. He indicated that live polling from Community Forum #3 suggested residents were in favor of investing in an auditorium.

The District recommended building a full auditorium based on current ticket sales and attendance data at CHS auditorium, and the additional educational and community benefits the space would allow.

**H. Public Comment: Performance Spaces**-no public comments were heard.

- I. Performance Space Discussion and Vote:** Mr. McCarthy was in favor of building an 800 seat auditorium, and charged Ai3 to look at everything to bring the cost down. Mr. Doody, Mr. Scollins, Mr. Connolly, and Ms. Merenda all supported an 800 seat auditorium.

Mr. McCarthy made a motion that the School Building Committee vote to support an 800 seat auditorium for the new Galvin Middle School project under Item #9. Mr. Doody seconded.

Voting was unanimous and recorded as:

Mr. Marshall-yea  
Mr. Connolly-yea  
  
Ms. Merenda-yea  
Mr. McCarthy-yea  
Mr. Scollins-yea  
Mr. Doody-yea  
Mr. Folan-yea

Approved by School Building Committee  
on January 3, 2024

Approved by School Committee  
on January 18, 2024

7 yeas            0 nays

**J. Project Approvals:**

**a. November 15, 2023 Meeting Minutes:** LeftField representative, Ms. Stapleton, presented the 11.15.23 minutes for a vote of approval. Hearing no questions or concerns, Mr. Folan called for a vote to approve minutes as written and presented. Mr. McCarthy made the motion; Mr. Connolly seconded. Voting was unanimous and recorded as:

Mr. Connolly-yea  
Ms. Merenda-yea  
Mr. McCarthy-yea  
Mr. Scollins-yea  
Mr. Doody-yea  
Mr. Folan-yea  
6 yeas            0 nays

**b. LeftField OPM Contract Amendment No. 1 for Cost Estimating Services:** Ms. Stapleton explained the billing for performed by AM Fogarty for cost estimating comparisons. The cost of this amendment is \$9,900. Mr. Folan called for a motion of approval.. Mr. Connolly made the motion, Mr.McCarthy seconded. With no further discussion. Voting was unanimous and recorded as:

Mr. Connolly-yea  
Ms. Merenda-yea  
Mr. McCarthy-yea  
Mr. Scollins-yea  
Mr. Doody-yea  
Mr. Folan-yea  
6 yeas            0 nays

**c. LeftField and Ai3 Invoices for November:** Ms. Stapleton reviewed bills from LeftField and Ai3 in the amount of \$110,185.83. Mr. Folan called for a motion of approval. Mr. Connolly made the motion, Mr.McCarthy seconded. With no further discussion, Hearing no requests for discussion, Mr. Folan called for a vote. Voting was unanimous and recorded as:

Mr. Connolly-yea

Approved by School Building Committee  
on January 3, 2024

Approved by School Committee  
on January 18, 2024

Ms. Merenda-yea  
Mr. McCarthy-yea  
Mr. Scollins-yea  
Mr. Doody-yea  
Mr. Folan-yea  
6 yeas                      0 nays

**7. Feasibility Study Budget Overview:** Ms. Stapleton noted that 96% of the budget is committed; 42% has been expended to date. LeftField is reserving \$56,240 of uncommitted funds until the construction delivery method is chosen.

**Future Meeting Dates:** The next School Building Meeting is scheduled to meet remotely on Wednesday, January 3, 2024 and Wednesday, January 17, 2024 when decisions around construction method will be discussed and voted on.

**8. Adjournment:** Mr. Folan called for a motion to adjourn the Wednesday, December 20, 2023 School Building Meeting at 7:38 pm. Mr. Connolly made the motion; Mr. McCarthy seconded. Roll Call vote was unanimous and recorded as:

Mr. Connolly-yea  
Ms. Merenda-yea  
Mr. McCarthy-yea  
Mr. Scollins-yea  
Mr. Doody-yea  
Mr. Folan-yea  
6 yeas                      0 nays