

School Board Meeting Minutes August 10, 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rodney Kibler, Chairman; Jason Collier, Vice-Chairman; Leah Paladino, Member; Sharon Mack, Member; Harry Daniel, Member; Andrea Whitmarsh, Superintendent; Shanna Deane, Clerk

MEMBERS PRESENT BY TELEPHONE: N/A

MEMBERS ABSENT: N/A

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: Jim Frydl

There was no closed session.

Dr. Kibler called open session to order at 6:02 pm.

Mrs. Mack made a motion to accept the consent agenda as presented. Mr. Collier seconded. No discussion. All ayes, motion carried.

Dr. Kibler stated public comments could be made on matters not below on the agenda. There were no public comments.

Dr. Kibler closed public comments.

Dr. Whitmarsh presented information item #11-173, Facilities Study Update. Dr. Whitmarsh introduced Robert Moje and Bryce Powell of VMDO Architects. Dr. Whitmarsh stated a community presentation was held in May of 2016 regarding the facilities study and presentations were made at the schools. Dr. Whitmarsh stated there had been lots of feedback received after community and staff members attended the presentations. Dr. Whitmarsh stated at this school board meeting there will be information on the process and potential solutions.

Mr. Moje of VMDO Architects started off the presentation with a brief review of the process up to the August 10th date. This update included a summary of the feedback received from the community and school staff members. Mr. Moje reviewed the growth and projected growth charts for each school that included the 2016-2017 enrollments. After showing the numbers, Mr. Moje reiterated that there is overcrowding at all of the schools.

Mr. Moje reviewed the quality assessment and reviewed the comparison of our schools enrollment per square foot with the state averages. Mr. Moje reviewed the efficiency and operating costs of the facilities study. Mr. Moje reviewed the analysis of the study which includes the following four key areas:

- Every school approaching or over capacity.
- Every school lacking qualitative program space to support education.
- Middle school and high school kitchen and dining spaces insufficient for current and growing enrollment. Most of the kitchen equipment in the district is nearing replacement.
- Every school has traffic and parking issues.

Mr. Moje reviewed the feedback that had been received as a result of the community and school presentations. This feedback included the following:

- Traffic and safety are top priorities at all schools.

- More pedestrian space needed on all sites.
- Consider adding bus routes to reduce the number of car drop-offs.
- Need for a more direct path from elementary school to the high school. Elementary school students walk over to middle/high school to meet their parents (staff).
- Would be nice to have a more defined walking/running circuit at Stanardsville campus.
- Little to no middle school recess/PE space.
- Lack of outdoor space.
- Aesthetics of site and school entries does not make a good first impression.

Mr. Moje reviewed the proposals from VMDO, which consist of:

- Vehicular flows and pedestrian safety must be addressed
- Outdoor learning, recreation and athletic space must be increased.
- School identity can be improved through site moves.
- A new school is needed to alleviate density issues on all other school sites.
- Remove bus parking from school sites.

Mr. Moje summarized the existing site of the Stanardsville campus referencing the current drop off plan, the current pedestrian paths and current parking plan. After summarizing what the school division currently has, Mr. Moje showed the revised drop off plan, proposed pedestrian paths and a proposed parking plan. In addition, Mr. Moje compared the current Stanardsville campus plan with the revised Stanardsville campus plan.

Mr. Moje summarized the Ruckersville campus. Mr. Moje compared the current plan with similar types of proposals as the Stanardsville campus. The proposals for the Ruckersville campus include:

- Improve traffic flows
- Move parking to the periphery of site; preserve the interior for pedestrian use.
- Establish masterplan and hierarchy for site elements and circulation.
- Increase landscaping to improve pedestrian experience, highlight main paths, and create outdoor places.
- Seek to combine site and landscape moves to improve school identity.

Mr. Moje turned the presentation over to his colleague Mr. Powell. Mr. Powell reviewed the feedback for the building options. The feedback consisted of:

- Consider building a new high school, in lieu of a new elementary
- Why is a new elementary school being considered when all students come together at the middle school
- Convert the high school gym to cafeteria/media center, build a new gym
- Give more attention to improving the Technical Center interior environment.
- Find another use for the Nathanael Greene Primary school
- Immediate Nathanael Greene Primary School concerns include toilets, water, mice, HVAC and acoustics
- Add classrooms to the Technical Center to alleviate needs at the high school
- Middle school capacity may be sufficient by a room count; however, the reality is very different due to former renovations reducing class size
- Concerns about existing finishes and interior experience at all schools.
- Options for serving lunch at the Technical Center to alleviate high school cafeteria congestion
- Question of how to improve the experience of high school and middle school lunch with 24 minutes to work with
- If a central kitchen is built, would there be possibilities for reuse of existing kitchens and space

- Would the school district be attracting growth if a new elementary school is built
- Build vertical for future projects
- Avoid incremental moves that do not fully address deficiency
- Is there a certain order the projects need to be carried out

Mr. Powell reviewed the proposals that related to the feedback regarding the building options. The proposals included:

- High school and middle school kitchen and cafeteria deficiencies must be addressed.
- Another school is needed to provide capacity relief.
- A Central Operations Facility is an innovative solution to a number of issues.
- Qualitative space to be found or created at all schools.

Mr. Powell reviewed the logistics, operations and placement of the proposed Centralized Kitchen. Mr. Powell stated the centralized kitchen would be a part of a central operations facility which is proposed to be placed behind the Technical Center. Mr. Powell stated along with the centralized kitchen, there is a proposal for a maintenance building, a building for offices, storage and training and central bus parking. Mr. Powell presented an example of a bus storage facility that is in Buckingham County Public Schools.

Mr. Powell reviewed the existing layout of William Monroe High School and the revised layout of William Monroe High School that included the proposed dining/media renovation. Mr. Powell stated the proposed dining/media renovation would allow an increased dining capacity, reduce lunchtime congestion, larger flexible space for school and community events, expand and update the media center, create flexible and adaptable classroom typologies, and start to create a new identity for the high school. Mr. Powell showed Discovery Elementary in Arlington, Virginia and Buckingham County Elementary in Dillwyn, Virginia as examples of this concept.

Mr. Powell explained other proposals to William Monroe High School, such as an auxiliary gym addition and infilling the exterior courtyard. Mr. Powell explained that infilling the exterior would make use of under-utilized space without expanding on site; enclose with a glass roof to avoid losing daylight in surrounding classrooms, and have flexible space for satellite dining, education breakfast and project space, and medium scale meeting room for school and public use.

Next Mr. Powell reviewed the proposal of relocating the Agricultural Shop. Mr. Powell explained that by relocating the greenhouse and agricultural program will allow the potential to create open outdoor space for middle school use, such as PE, sports, and learning. The relocation would also allow the opportunity to create some additional classroom space that is not within the main school buildings.

Mr. Powell presented the proposal for the Technical Center, which included a technology hub and the addition of classrooms. Mr. Powell explained this proposal would add classrooms to overall high school portfolio to accommodate increasing enrollment; create student-focused technology and gathering space; possibility of space to be used as dining to relieve pressures on high school cafeteria; incorporate student presentation and break out space, which would create more community within the building; and include general finish and daylighting upgrades in the corridors.

Mr. Powell presented the existing layout of William Monroe Middle School and a layout of the middle school showing the new dining/media area plus the relocation of building administration. Mr. Powell stated the proposals for the middle school include:

- Update the media center. A solution to this update would include a new roof to bring natural light into the space.

- Expand the corridors in high congestion areas. This expansion could double as pre-function space for events held in the cafeteria.
- Opportunity to utilize some space in/around renovated Media Center for additional dining space
- Relocate and update administration suite. The update would include sufficient meeting, conference, and professional space.
- Enhance building identity, by providing clearer sense of entry. The relocation would include entry to the east side of the building off the main road.

Mr. Powell presented another solution for the middle school by presenting layout of a vertical classroom addition. Mr. Powell showed Fauquier High School in Warrenton, Virginia as an example of a school that has vertical classrooms.

Mr. Powell presented the proposal of a new elementary school. Mr. Powell stated there have been many questions related to building a new elementary school, such as date needed, size and capacity, and the location.

Another proposal to the elementary schools on the Stanardsville campus that Mr. Powell presented included combining Nathanael Greene Primary and Elementary into one school. Mr. Powell presented a layout of the Stanardsville elementary campus that showed a building built between the primary and elementary schools. Mr. Powell reviewed the data that showed in three years the student population will be 410 students over capacity in the elementary schools.

Mr. Powell presented layouts of the schools showing corridor expansions and extended learning options in the buildings. Mr. Powell stated the improvement of student life and interior environment provide the following:

- Spatial relief in congested corridors.
- Break up long corridors with connection to the outdoors
- Create unique student and class gathering and breakout spaces.
- Locations could also be converted to teacher centers.
- Strategies could apply at all facilities.

Mr. Powell provided various examples of improved student life and interior environments from school divisions around Virginia, such as Fauquier High School, Buckingham Elementary, and Discovery Elementary School.

Mr. Moje reviewed the suggestions for the next steps in the process and school board meeting dates. Mr. Moje stressed that is important to have a plan and process in place for this type of project.

Dr. Kibler requested comments from the other board members.

Mrs. Mack requested additional information on the Central Kitchen concept and what opportunities would it provide. Mr. Moje responded that there is a cost savings to a centralized kitchen, which can result in keeping costs down at the schools. Mr. Powell stated the Central Kitchen concept is more efficient and can be maintained with fewer employees.

Mr. Daniel questioned if the Central Facilities would be completed in increments. Mr. Moje state yes, the Central Facilities could be completed in increments as had been presented earlier in the presentation. Mr. Daniel requested a cost analysis of the Central Facilities at the next school board meeting.

Mr. Daniel questioned how much land would be needed for a new elementary school. Mr. Moje stated approximately twenty acres would be needed for a new elementary school.

Mrs. Paladino commented that she is intrigued by the idea of possibly making the primary/elementary campus into “one” building.

Mr. Daniel requested a cost of the proposed demolition of the agriculture and maintenance shop.

Mr. Frydl, who served on the Facilities Study Committee, commented that the process started with establishing the needs of the school division and come up with a master plan. Mr. Frydl commented that there are no easy answers to the priority of needs for the division. Mr. Frydl commented that he has heard comments from the community on the best way to carry out the process and in the most cost effective way.

Mr. Collier commented on parking in regard to building a vertical parking deck. Mr. Moje state structured parking is three to four times more expensive than surface parking.

Mrs. Mack commented that she encouraged community members and school division staff to continue with sending feedback. Dr. Whitmarsh echoed Mrs. Mack’s comment.

Dr. Whitmarsh presented superintendent’s report #11-174, Superintendent’s Comments. Dr. Whitmarsh stated that the wireless connections are in the process of being upgraded in the buildings. Dr. Whitmarsh stated on the consent agenda there was a list of projects that had been done by the maintenance staff during the summer. Dr. Whitmarsh thanked the maintenance staff for their hard work with completing the list of projects.

Dr. Whitmarsh announced that William Monroe High School was awarded the Claudia Dodson VHSL Sportsmanship Ethics and Integrity Award over the summer. Dr. Whitmarsh explained that this award recognizes schools that have policies and procedures that make sportsmanship a priority. Dr. Whitmarsh stated there were thirty-nine high schools in the state that received this award and William Monroe High School was one of them.

Dr. Whitmarsh announced a list of upcoming happenings in the division, which are as follows:

- August 11th from 12:00 pm until 7:00 pm the Open Houses will be held at the schools
- August 12th is the Instructional Fair form 9:00 am until 3:30 pm and Convocation at 10:00 am
- August 14th the School Board Retreat from 4:00 pm until 7:00 pm at Lydia Mountain

There were no comments from the school board.

Dr. Kibler adjourned the meeting.

Chairman

Clerk