

Capital Improvements Subcommittee Minutes
Wednesday, March 10, 2021
4:00 PM-5:20 PM
Remote via Zoom

Capital Improvements Subcommittee Members present: Helen Charlupski (Chair), Andreas Liu, Mariah Nobrega, and Barbara Scotto.

Other School Committee Members present: Jennifer Monopoli and Suzanne Federspiel.

School Staff present: Matt Gillis, Michelle McGlone, and Robin Coyne.

Others present: Advisory Committee member Carla Benka.

1) Approval of Minutes

On a motion of Dr. Liu and seconded by Ms. Nobrega, the Capital Improvements Subcommittee voted unanimously (by roll call) to approve the February 9, 2021 minutes.

2) Update on Preparations for Returning Grades 2-5 and Middle School to Full-Time In-Person Learning

Director of Operations Matt Gillis provided an update on preparations for returning Grades 2-5 and Middle School to full-time in-person learning. The district is on track to be ready for the return of Grade 2-5 students. Individual school needs vary depending on factors such as classroom size, enrollment, and availability and size of other spaces. Mr. Gillis has ordered additional individual desks and 3,400 plastic barriers for use in classrooms and during lunch. The district has purchased 100 portable floor desks (ten for each school) as a pilot. Ms. Monopoli commented that the portable floor desks could be used in classrooms after the pandemic. She has used them in her classroom, and they have worked out well. It was suggested that the district also consider purchasing seating pads that could be used indoors and outdoors. Mr. Gillis commented that the district may accelerate the purchase of furniture for the new Brookline High School Science Wing (moveable triangle desks). It is his understanding that PTOs have purchased some microphones for teachers.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has issued guidance on distancing during lunch. Mr. Gillis and Remote Task Force 4 members have visited schools to consider which options might work best at each school. Options includes lunch outside (best option, but weather dependent), lunch at six-foot distancing with enhanced ventilation, and lunch at three-foot distancing with enhanced ventilation and barriers. It was noted that students sitting in every other row could eat lunch at the same time. The Subcommittee discussed possible outdoor space for lunch at Brookline High School (Mr. Gillis will check on the possibility of using Lowell Road and whether the Cypress Field playground area will be under construction) and Driscoll School (the playground area will still be open).

Mr. Gillis and the Subcommittee discussed whether it makes sense to use the district's limited resources to rent tents. The cost to rent one tent is approximately \$5,000 to \$6,000, while the cost to purchase one barrier is approximately \$20 to \$40. The tents were not used as much as expected during the fall, and were generally not used for instruction. There was general agreement that the funds could be better spent on other measures.

3) Summer Programs Update

Mr. Gillis provided an update on summer programs. Planning is underway. The proposed FY 2022 Budget includes an additional \$150,000 for summer programs, which is double last year's budget. Senior Director of Programs and Remote Learning Academy Principal Meg Maccini and Brookline High School Associate Dean Brendan Kobus will be providing an update on summer school plans during the March 16, 2021 Curriculum Subcommittee meeting. Ms. Monopoli will request additional information, including impact on the budget, any possibilities for Federal and State funding, capacity, and criteria for participation. Mr. Gillis will prepare a space plan for summer programs, for review on March 16, 2021.

4) Brookline Adult and Community Education (BACE) Program Return to In-person

BACE Director Michelle McGlone provided an update on BACE's plan to return to in-person programs. In April 2021, BACE plans to offer an in-person SmartVacations program. BACE will work with School and Public Health staff, and expects that approximately 50-75 families will participate. BACE just distributed its spring catalog. Most of the offerings will be online. BACE is planning for in-person programming this summer (may continue to offer some remote options). BACE will ensure that programs align with the district's health and safety protocols. Subcommittee members expressed support for BACE's plan to return to in-person programming in school buildings, but asked that staff monitor the transition and keep the Subcommittee updated, particularly if any issues arise.

Ms. McGlone provided an update on BACE's March 22, 2021 to March 27, 2021 Festival of Learning, which will offer more than 40 classes for one set price. Members suggested ways to help publicize the event, and suggested emphasizing that this is a fundraising initiative that will help support the program.

5) New Business

Ms. Nobrega requested an update on the FY 2022 School Capital Improvements Program (CIP) request. The Advisory Committee will be discussing the request on March 12, 2021. The request includes funds for the Brookline High School, Driscoll, and Pierce Projects, and funds for leases. The Director of Public Buildings has a separate budget for Repairs and Maintenance. The Town Human Resources Board approved Mr. Simmons's request to upgrade three HVAC positions. Mr. Simmons will repost the positions. The April 13, 2021 Capital Improvements Subcommittee meeting will include an update on Repairs and Maintenance.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 PM.