

Sheffield and Hillcrest Elementary School Building Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Date Wednesday, August 26, 2026

Time 4:00 PM

Location Remote meeting via Zoom

1. Call to Order / Roll Call

Present: Steve Ellis, Walter Ramsey, Marina Goldman, Greg Garrison, Tari Thomas, Joanne Blier, Allison Page, Kerry Heathwaite (4:15), Cindy Sheehy (4:19)

Absent: Cliff Spatcher, Pamela Reynolds,

Also present: Lesley Cogswell

A quorum was declared. Steve Ellis called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM following roll-call attendance.

2. Approval of Minutes - July 29, 2026

MOTION: Marina Goldman moved to approve the July 29, 2026 meeting minutes with the minor editorial amendments noted. Allison Page seconded the motion.

Recorded roll-call vote: Walter Ramsey - Aye; Marina Goldman - Aye; Greg Garrison - Aye; Steve Ellis - Aye; Tari Thomas - Aye; Joanne Blier - Aye; Allison Page - Aye. Motion passed, 7-0.

3. MSBA Process and Upcoming Milestones

Walter Ramsey reported that Special Town Meeting was planned for October 14, 2026. Committee members expressed concern that this date was too close to the October 6 election involving the six-town regionalization proposal and the Franklin County Technical School building project. Members discussed the risk that public information about the elementary school project could be lost or confused amid the October 6 matters. The Committee asked Walter to raise with the Selectboard the possibility of a later Special Town Meeting date or a second Special Town Meeting in November.

4. Feasibility Study / Schematic Design Cost and Scope

The Committee reviewed recent Feasibility Study/Schematic Design (FS/SD) budgets for MSBA Core Program elementary school projects with enrollment comparable to the anticipated 330-340 students.

Walter Ramsey reported information provided by Alan Minkus of Colliers Project Leaders regarding the Anna E. Barry Elementary School project in Chicopee, which had a K-5 enrollment of approximately 340 students. Its FS/SD budget totaled \$1,630,000:

- Owner's Project Manager (OPM): \$435,000
- Design Team: \$1,049,475
- Environmental/Site: \$100,000
- Other: \$45,525

For 2026-2027, Colliers Project Leaders recommended approximately \$1,750,000 as a reasonable FS/SD budget for an elementary school project of approximately 330-340 students. The proposed budget discussed by the Committee was:

- Owner's Project Manager (OPM): \$400,000
- Design Team: \$1,200,000
- Environmental/Site: \$100,000
- Other: \$50,000

This was consistent with Walter's report at the previous meeting that recent comparable project budgets generally fell in the \$1.5 million to \$2 million range. Greg Garrison reported that his independent review of MSBA projects supported the same overall budget conclusion.

Joanne Blier noted that the MSBA is expected to reimburse a portion of the feasibility study costs, but that it was too early to establish the final reimbursement rate. A reimbursement range of approximately 75%-78% was discussed.

The Town would expect to authorize borrowing for the full feasibility study amount and could consider other sources - including Capital Stabilization, GMRSD stabilization, and Sale of Real Estate receipts - to support the local share.

MOTION: Greg Garrison moved to recommend a Feasibility Study/Schematic Design budget request of \$1,750,000 to the Selectboard and to request that the Selectboard place the funding request on an upcoming Town Meeting warrant. Allison Page seconded the motion.

Recorded roll-call vote: Walter Ramsey - Aye; Marina Goldman - Aye; Greg Garrison - Aye; Kerry Heathwaite - Aye; Tari Thomas - Aye; Joanne Blier - Aye; Allison Page - Aye. Motion passed, 7-0.

5. Public Communication Strategy

The Committee discussed the need for a committee site tour, public site tours, a public information meeting, and informational materials. Steve Ellis will coordinate a meeting with school staff, as it was noted that they would like more information about the project. Additionally, Lesley Cogsell suggested that Fire Services would have important input to share with the committee. The Committee agreed to continue discussion of the public communication strategy at its next meeting.

6. Public Comment

None.

7. Next Steps and Future Agenda Items

- Next meeting: September 15, 2026.
- Facility tour at 4:00 PM, with a business meeting to follow at 6:00 PM.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.