Danville School Board
Building Committee Meeting
Wednesday, March 22, 2023, 6:00pm
Held over Zoom Teleconference - Video Recording Available

School Directors Present: Clayton Cargill, Dave Towle, Melissa Conly, Molly Gleason

Planned Absences: Tim Sanborn

School Administrators & Staff Present: Elementary Principal Sarah Welch, Secondary Principal Dave Schilling, Facilities Director Shawn McNamara

Building Committee Members Present: Lance Horne (via Zoom), Kaity White, Mary Beattie, Bruce Melendy, Rob Balivet, Alison Despathy, Rhiannon Esposito, John Blackmore, Doug Pastula

Public Present: Karena Shippee (via Zoom), Hannah Cunningham

Agenda

1. **Call meeting to order:** Clayton called the meeting to order at 6:02pm

2. **Additions/Changes to the Agenda** - (*Proposed additions or deletions/Possible agreement):*

   None

3. **Discussion:**

   - Introduction of the moderator: Beth Kanell introduced herself and stated her goals for the meeting were to give everyone space to talk and to discuss a vision for the future. She facilitated a "looping" exercise to practice listening skills. Looping is learning how to listen to each other. She shared the following ground rules and conditions: 1) remain calm, 2) inclusivity, 3) space for everyone to be heard, and 4) tough problems have solutions.

   - Long-term plan for the school (*Consensus/Possible Action):*

   Visioning Exercise:

   Beth led the group through a visioning exercise, and committee members discussed what the school might look like in 50, 25, 10, and 5 years.

50 Years:
- There is a building
- Children are being taught to be resilient
- Students will listen to each other
- Sports, music, extracurricular activities
- High achieving school
- Human connection
- Regional high school in the NEK

25 Years:
- There is a flexible building
- Adequate staff to meet the needs of children

10 Years:
- Next generation of students and taxpayers
- Better picture of the regional public education landscape

5 Years:
- Vision matches money
- More energy efficiency
- New building or renovations to existing facility
- Space for all students and staff
- Migration of climate refugees
- Start of a baby boom
- More emphasis on tech ed
- Increased cost of building repairs affecting programs

Questions and comments that came up during the discussion:
- Difficult to know what it will be like in 50 and 25 years with the different factors influencing education (technology, economy, jobs changing, climate change, state requirements, changes in the approach to education, buildings and materials changing, deferred maintenance costs)
- Influence of technology and screens on students and losing connection to one other
- What does education look like in the future?
- Student-to-staff ratio might be lower and mandated
- Flexible building to adapt to changing needs
- Deferred maintenance is more expensive than building new

The committee took a break, and when they resumed, Beth facilitated a brainstorming discussion on stakeholders. She shared that the job of the committee is not to sell a plan but rather to gather supporters to move it forward.

The committee brainstormed the school's stakeholders: Parents, children, residential property taxpayers, non-residential property taxpayers, administrators, teachers,

community, bus drivers, retirees, cafeteria staff, businesses, other institutes, colleges and
trade schools, families in other towns who send their students to the school, guidance,
vendors, trade schools, donors, school board, hiring employers.

She asked the committee to think about ways to engage stakeholders and assigned
homework for each committee member to bring three ideas to the next meeting. Clayton
will send a reminder to the group.

Values Exercise:

Beth asked committee members to think about the following questions: 1) What are the
things you value? 2) What does the school value? She had bowls in the middle of the
room, and members wrote values in the bowls and then placed pennies in the bowls to
indicate which were important to them.

The following had the most pennies: Trust, strong work ethic, and service to the
community.

28 - Honesty
10 - Independent
14 - Strong citizens
17 - Compassion
22 - Globally aware
56 - Trust
16 - Intellectual curiosity
32 - Empathy
22 - Character
27 - PRIDE (polite, responsible, inclusive, determined, engaged)
14 - Good productive citizens for our community
26 - Critical thinking
41 - Service to the community
44 - Strong work ethic
29 - Kindness
26 - Contribute to society

Beth shared that the project will move forward if solutions match the community's
values, such as trust or a strong work ethic. She asked: "Does the community trust you?
Do the kids trust you? Are you teaching kids how to trust? How does the project support
a strong work ethic?"

Questions, comments, and ideas that came up during the discussion:
- The community needs to understand where taxes are going

- Discussion on tax credits and current use
- We need more information on what people can afford and what they want to invest in
- Develop a philanthropy fund. Are there other sources of revenue?
- Ask the community what they think. They need to be informed to make a decision.
- What are the greatest needs? Start small with a project that can be afforded and built upon, grow enthusiasm, and continue to grow the project. The greatest need is programming and deferred maintenance.
- The only way to find out what the community thinks is through a bond vote; it will give the answers, and the option presented for the vote will have to be a guesstimate. The recent vote on the Australian ballot issue at Town Meeting showed that a small portion of the community is voting. Will people show up to vote on a bond?
- Can't sell a plan; there need to be supporters and people to advance it before the vote.
- Some might vote, some might sit on a committee, and some might show up at a meeting.
- What is decided falls heavily on very few taxpayers in Danville.
- Vision vs realities that have to be addressed. There are issues at the school that need to be fixed, are expensive, and have to be addressed. How can we be economically efficient? Need to figure out a plan for those fixes.
- There will likely be more engagement with numbers and cost estimates.
- Tools to collect information from stakeholders: survey, organize focus groups, and gather feedback from a smaller segment of the community. Experiment with spending $45M instead of $70M, hold meetings throughout the community at different houses or go house-to-house to gather information, and ask, "What do you value? How much can you afford?
- The bottom line is cost.
- Come up with a plan with estimates to present to the community.
- Opportunity costs: If you don't do something, what happens, what do you lose? When? Present a reliable forecast to the community. What would you be willing to absorb on your taxes?
- With school choice, there's no community control, and it costs more.
- Hold a focus group with sending towns: how has having no high school impacted their town? Peacham, Concord, Kirby, Chelsea, and Walden were mentioned. Some towns like having school choice.

- Schedule of ongoing meetings / next meeting date

  The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 18, 2023, at 6:00pm.

4. **Public Input**

   Dave S. shared Karena Shippee's public comment in the Zoom chat.

5. **Future Agenda Items:**
   - Discussion on stakeholders, opportunity costs, strategies that involve other stakeholders, and building alliances with those who can help.

6. **Adjourn:**

   MOTION: Molly moved to adjourn at 8:06 pm, Melissa seconded, all in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Molly Gleason, Clerk, March 24, 2023