



**Gloucester School Committee Ad Hoc Communications
Sub-Committee Zoom Meeting
THURSDAY, August 6, 2020
5:00 pm**

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

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AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER/Statement of Mission

II. REPORTS/DELIBERATIONS/DISCUSSIONS

A. Continuing work on the East Gloucester/Veterans' Memorial School Building Project

III. ACTION

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The listing of matters is those reasonably anticipated by the Chair, which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

THE FUTURE OF GLOUCESTER'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Gloucester's aging school buildings, especially the East Gloucester Elementary School, are failing. The world of education has changed since many of us were in school. Our school buildings were not built or designed to meet our current educational programs, standards, or to support the number of staff/students. Current educational standards require inclusion, small group work, and use of technology, standards our current schools are struggling to meet. That's why the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) awarded Gloucester the chance to build a new school with millions of dollars in support from the Commonwealth.

For more information on the decade-long history of this project, go to: xxxx

If Gloucester votes YES:

- Gloucester will have a brand new, joint East Gloucester/Veterans Elementary School Building by the fall of 2023 (?), with spaces and facilities to give our children a 21st century education
- Appropriate educational spaces will be available for teaching and learning, special education, etc that meet current state requirements.
- Planning space will be available for teachers.
- Carefully designed spaces for safe pick up and drop off of students.
- School safety improvements will keep our kids and staff more secure
- The MSBA will reimburse at x% — adding up to XX million dollars

If Gloucester votes NO:

1. Attempt to maintain four substandard buildings (including Beeman Memorial Elementary and Plum Cove Elementary) as opposed to two (East Gloucester and Veterans) that have —

- Substandard HVAC, plumbing, heating systems, with leaking roofs, and sagging modulars (heating systems are 60+ years old, parts are no longer available)
- Inadequate spaces for learning, resulting in children being taught in hallways
- Antiquated fire and building security
- Poor working conditions for staff

Bringing these buildings up to basic working conditions, will cost:

Capital Improvements to major systems to East Gloucester and Veterans only - no improvement to program space—

- **\$18 million per school, equalling \$36 million dollars with no reimbursement.**
- Anticipated timeline: 10 years, as work must be completed during the summer months.
- Capital improvements to Beeman and Plum Cove not yet assessed.

Renovations with no additions — minimal space and program improvements

- **\$31 million per school, equalling \$62 million dollars, with no reimbursement**
- Anticipated timeline — 4-5 years per school, 10 years total. Work must be completed in the summer to avoid swing space.
- Capital improvements to Beeman and Plum Cove not yet assessed.

2. Try again to build a new school building —

- Get back in line at the MSBA, and hope they would give us another chance.
- Best case, we wouldn't have a decent school for Gloucester's kids for another 7-10 years.
- **We would pay AT LEAST 5% more, per year, for each year we delay, as building costs increase (the cost would go from \$66.7 million now to at least \$85 million if the money is even available)**

Additions:

- Intentionally haven't done major improvements, because of goal to rebuild school
- Impact of all this decision on other school buildings (incl Plum Cove and Beeman)
- E Gloucester considered one of highest priority schools for replacement in Commonwealth (# in state)
- Buildings in 40s not built for this # of students/teaches -- #s of staff students when built
- Which school would come after E Gloucester in terms of capital improvements??? -- Improvements will be decided on an as needed basis by DPW.
- If this doesn't pass, still a cost to the city -- for more info on how your taxes will be affected, go to....



Stephanie Delisi <sdelisi@gloucesterschools.com>

Additional info for packet for Ad-Hoc Comms 8/6

1 message

Laura Wiessen <lwiessen@gloucesterschools.com>
 To: Stephanie Delisi <sdelisi@gloucesterschools.com>
 Cc: Ben Lummis <blummis@gloucesterschools.com>

Wed, Aug 5, 2020 at 5:46 PM

Hi Stephanie,

Below are the answers to some informational questions the Ad-Hoc Communications Committee asked the East Gloucester/Veterans School Building Committee. This information is for use in our continuing work on creating a fact sheet on the building project.

Laura,

Jonathan and I touched base on these questions. He has so much historical information and I wanted to make sure my facts were correct.

1. As for work "intentionally not done", I would characterize it as "delayed" since maintenance has been able to keep aging systems afloat for now, trying to extend the life expectancy instead of replacing. Examples include:

- repairing instead of replacing heating systems
- maintaining the aging modulars
- cleaning air vents

Roofs were put on four elementary schools and the middle school in 2010 to protect the shell of the buildings knowing that we were in the early stages of a new WP and the remainder of the buildings would have to last until they were rebuilt.

2. I think I recall that you were getting at if this vote doesn't pass. It would mean continued costly maintenance and repairs on all schools, including the risk of system failures (e.g. heating at EGS) -- and pushing a new building solution for Beeman and Plum Cove back even more years - likely 15+ before Beeman would be addressed. Beeman has 8 or 9 modulars, a significant % of the classrooms, that would need continued maintenance or need to be replaced before a new or renovated solution could be completed. The same applies to Plum Cove which has 6 modulars. All expenses with no or little educational program impact.

3. East Gloucester - In February 2017, East Gloucester School was one of 17 projects (out of 90) chosen by the MSBA to move forward with exploration of a renovated or new school building.

(Laura, I can not find a listing / ranking of MA schools. I don't know where the comment came from that there was a ranking of all school buildings except for a very old MSBA ranking which showed WP among the 15(?) worst buildings in the state. I can't find that report.

3. As part of the wave of construction of our 5 existing elementary schools in the 40s, 50s and early 60s, the schools were built to provide cafeterias for the first time and provide a classroom per grade to avoid mixed grade classrooms. Archives talked about 16/17 elementary schools before they started building EGS and WP, by mid-60s there were 5 new elementary schools and the smaller "two-room school houses" were closed. EGS was built for one classroom per grade, including a kindergarten room (total of 6 classrooms). EGS added a second wing in the early 80s or late 70s as the population grew.

One could conclude that the growth in population had the impact of losing teaching spaces such as a music room, art room, a gym / cafeteria that now serves at least twice as many students and teachers as it was built for, and the additional now required for today's education needs, etc..

4. In the 2014 Master Plan, Beeman was determined to be the next school building to be addressed after EGS based on the condition of Beeman.

5. Taxes can only go up with a Proposition 2 1/2 override. The impact of significant maintenance costs on our aging schools would mean less funding for city services or staff across the city, without improving the substandard

educational facilities (undersized, lack of specific classrooms (music, etc.), site circulation, safety, etc). John Dunn is the best person to speak to this.

Although not one of your questions, I wanted to remind you that a new combined school would have some excess capacity for intradistrict choice, providing relief for overcrowding at other schools.

I'm happy to discuss this. Let me know if you have further information needs.

Kathy

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Laura Wiessen

Secretary

Gloucester School Committee

"Our mission is for all students to be successful, engaged, lifelong learners"

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