

Pre-K Through 5 And Eagle Academy School Pre-Referendum Building Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 28, 2026
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The Pre-K Through 5 and Eagle Academy School Pre-Referendum Building Committee held a meeting on January 28, 2026 at Enfield Town Hall, 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, CT.

1. CALL TO ORDER The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Tina LeBlanc

2. ROLL CALL
MEMBERS PRESENT

Tina LeBlanc, Christine DeBonee, Lauren Andrews, Bob Cressotti, Janet Cushman, John Dague, Danielle Girard, Steve Moccio, Marie Pyzner, Scott Ryder, Jaclyn Valley, Jeff Wyszynski, Antonia Ciaverella, Chris Cykley

ALSO PRESENT
John Santanella

MEMBERS ABSENT

Randy Daigle, Gina Cekala, Kate Flanagan, Justin Hopkins, Kelsey McGuire-Bruce, Amanda Pickett, Charlotte Riley

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
None

4. ARCHITECTS PRESENTATION

Jeff reviews handouts. I spent a lot of time with the team developing detailed project budgets for each of the projects, a cash flow projection, the cost to Enfield and cost in the state reimbursement. It goes from now until 2032. We are trying to get a meeting scheduled with Town Finance early next week. I'm hoping that document will be helpful to them to see when things hit from a project perspective so we can manage the finances. Where we are in our process, work related with the options planning. February we need to start getting real with grant applications and activities related to that. We prepared a Q&A sheet that we'd like to hand out at the community conversation. We took the liberty and added a few more questions that were asked in-between those meetings. It covers questions asked about the attendance zones, enrollment projects, where did you get those numbers, funding commitment, reimbursement rates, grant process, did you look at fixing what you have. If you could look at this in the next couple of days and let us know if there is anything missing. Ideally, we should have everything covered on the front and back of this document.

Tina states if you see anything tonight that stands out let us know. But as far as a deadline, could you let Randy know by 3:00 PM on Friday and that will give Tecton time before Wednesday. If we're going to be handing this out, I'd like to hear from the Town Council and Board of Ed liaisons. I'm hoping this is the community conversation that we can get everyone pulled in.

Scott states I'd like to make sure Steve an the school side is happy with these answers.

Tina asks Mr. Moccio if 3:00 on Friday works for him?

Steve Moccio states yes.

Jeff states he will circulate the PDF digitally.

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Scott states to mark it as a draft in case it gets out and everyone know this is a working document.

Jeff states the bottom half of the slide shows everything that happens with the grant application. After we have our meeting with finance Chris and I will work to get a more detailed To Do list, when things need to be published, when things need to be inserted because I know there is a lot of dates and schedules.

Christine offers to go to the finance meeting is Randy is unavailable.

Jeff states we will speak to the appropriate parties that are responsible for the authorizations. Biggest ones are ed spec vote from board of ed, authorization from town council. In regards to special legislation, I'll get you some language from other projects as examples. You'll need it for all 5 projects. That provides surety to the community for reimbursement. Grant applications filed in 2027 there's a 5% add, there might be an ask to have that retroactive. Right now we are not contemplating that. We're only contemplating the 15% for pre-k and 15% for Eagle.

Steve states March 2nd or April 7th is listed for presentation to the Board of Education, and you'll need the minutes approved and that is what we're submitting. I'd like to block them off now. Whatever you need, I'd like to book it.

Jeff states we have a lot of work to do between now and then. We will develop a draft that can be circulated to the board of ed prior to a first meeting. We can explain the content and answer questions. We can go to another meeting and they can take a vote. It can be 2 or 3 meetings.

Chris stated with the board of ed, we could do a special meeting for just the ed specs.

Steve states in April we normally have just one meeting because the 2nd meeting is during April vacation.

Jeff states I pulled together some other community examples I can circulate. As a goal for deadline perspective, we can have a draft by the end of this week or next. At our last meeting we were asked to describe threshold for when is the commitment from the State locked in. When you submit a grant application prior to June 30th you lock in your reimbursement rate, the size of your building, cost of the project, and type of project, new or renovate as new. Then the State looks at it from June 30 to December 15th. They start calling around November asking questions about summary paragraph about each project. On December 15th there is a priority list that gets released and that will describe all of the completed grant applications and their priority on the list. This past years priority list didn't have A, B or C. In years past they've had priority A is first, B is second and so on. Once you get your project on that list, that is a good sign that your grant application is complete and they're sending it off for approval. Anything we had on that list has gone through and has been approved.

Tina states when that is presented to the superintendent it all has to be decided, the site, everything. We only have meetings in March so that means we have between now and the end of March. Before the end of March we would need to establish the site, cost.

Jeff states we can schedule more meetings. Most of that is already decided. We know the cost. The larger list is the ed specs, cost estimates.

Tina states we haven't nailed down all the sites yet, correct? I know we looked at different sites, but I don't know if we've been honing in on sites.

Jeff states we have. We should probably review that.

Christine states I believe we are building them all on school grounds.

Jeff states in June they will send you a letter. That letter is then signed by the superintendent and returned. That is the grant commitment letter that will have the state project number and reimbursement. That commitment once signed you have to put a shovel in the ground by 2 years. If the project is further out, you can ask for extensions. You likely, depending on the town's finances bonding anything close to summer of 2027. Once you start into construction which is not until 2028, in the fall would be my guess. I have that identified in the cash flow when those numbers hit. I was thinking of including that in the community conversation. I will show you a spreadsheet I created for town finance. Every project now has a detailed budget from construction to soft costs like FF&E. Top right it shows by month/year and when you would be spending money on design, construction and FF&E. It is divided into cost to Enfield, reimbursement by the State. This should help with the management of the tax impact.

Marie asks what is the number under 1 that has the big circle?

Jeff states \$18 million.

Danielle asks if this is included in the presentation?

Jeff states we will simplify it.

Marie states a lot of people are saying 'my kids moved out of town'. This has to do with our property values, our legacy we are leaving behind. They need to understand this is what we get if we do the new, and do the comparison of what it is going to cost us for 5 schools to what we paid for Enfield High or JFK.

Christine states JFK and EHS were done pre-inflation construction costs.

Marie states we are still getting a bigger bang for our money.

Chris states in that scenario you are right. The reimbursement rate for all 3 of those scenarios is the same, between 70 and 75. With the help of the extra 15% for each of the 5 projects that now pushes it into a much bigger bang.

Marie states I agree, I think this is the way we are going to sell this and we have an older population that votes.

Tina states the nay-sayers are not even going to look at the bottom line numbers that show the \$20 million, \$19 million, even with the Enfield High project and the JFK project they like to go to that one number without state reimbursement. It will be our job to push the narrative, the truth, the facts that it's only a fraction, \$18 million, \$20 million. Those people are going to hang on to that very large number of the total project cost.

Danielle asks what is the band aid number if we don't do this?

Steve states the population you're speaking of needs to understand this is what it is going to cost you if you do nothing. It's still going to cost you this much money. The buildings are falling apart. You're going to be spending whatever millions of dollars to put lipstick on a pig. As soon as you start fixing problems, you're going to find more problems. Or, you spend the same amount of money and you get 5 new buildings. They're going to be spending money. Do you want to spend money on something that is going to last or do you want to spend money that's a band aid? You have been band aiding for so many years that we now in this spot.

Chris states when we did JFK, I think it was over 15 years it showed maybe \$100 more in taxes per year based on that median home value. It's a big number but in reality it's about \$150 a year. Those are pieces we will have when we meet with finance.

Marie asks what would you think if there was a presentation at the Senior Center on this?

Bob states it would be worthwhile.

Chris states I don't know if the building committee could do this, the PAC could.

Marie states it would be advantageous to have something. Seniors are not going to come out for a 6:00 meeting at Enfield High. It will be advantageous to us to reach out to that population.

Scott states there will be several of these off-shoot meetings. We will go to the Senior Center, sit outside Stop & Shop. I would also include Seniors for Education which is another group in town.

Tina states we will make sure when it's time we will go to the Senior Center, we were trying to brainstorm other places like daycares.

Bob states there is a group of people who are pro-education that are our age in our 70's, that they need to see the big difference of what it is going to actually cost if the referendum passes compared to the band aid effect and it's more money to taxpayers. We need to show them the amount of money that is going to be saved. It'll be a big sell. In previous referendums we have gone to different areas and put up boards so they could see the visual.

Tina states it would be beneficial to have another community conversation.

Christine asks if we could do one at the Senior Center?

Chris states the PAC has more ability. Someone could set up a TV and stream the community conversation. And, as Scott said we are not quite there yet.

Jeff states we have a streaming link that will be put on the flyer.

Christine states I'm hoping to get one slide that says this is how much it is going to cost with band aids and this is how much it is going to cost for us to build new schools. One slide, right next to each other. I think that is the most important slide. Make it as simple as possible, people don't want their taxes to go up.

Jeff states we did an analysis of replacement of all the building systems, basically just fixing the building. No programmatic improvements. Then we did an analysis because some of those like roofs, now building HVAC are eligible at a reduced reimbursement rate. You are going to have a lot of ineligibles. The cost out of pocket is around \$211 million plus.

Tina states when we have that number up there do you think it would be good to add the \$211 million only to fix. It's only going to fix the bare minimum it's not addressing security, program needs.

Scott states it's not going to make any building bigger.

Jeff states the other challenge is fixing as you go you can't escalate it over 20 years.

Dean states if you're going to have these 2 numbers you need to say what we're not fixing and how much it will cost over the next however many years.

Jeff states this number on the screen is fixing the physical infrastructure of what you have.

Dean states this is a beginning number and the other is a complete number.

Tina states some of the systems are so old, we could start paying for it tomorrow.

Jeff states we had a meeting on the 21st to review refinements to the pre-k to 5 program. We spent a fair amount of time talking about Eagle Academy. We have some work to do there programmatically. We talked about space needs. It's still going to fix in Eli Whitney without any real modifications but it's going to be a little different with some of the programs. For instance, they don't need such a large cafeteria for a small program. We're going to refine that program and I don't think it's going to change the needle on the costs. We talked about adjusting the locations of the classrooms for elementary, middle and high school for a better flow in the building. We talked about outdoor areas in relation to the indoor program. We talked about the separate drop off access points and refining the core spaces, making modest adjustments to spaces for the high school programs like culinary. I think we will need one more conversation to focus on that program specifically. I think we're pretty much there on size of building for pre-k to 5 and how it gets carved up.

Danielle asks for the size of the schools and all the kids that will be in there, is one Art room enough?

Jeff states our experience with the proposed number of students with your current elementary school schedule is that the number of spaces with the efficiency factor works. We will dig in more with the ed specs to validate that. I am confident that we have the appropriate amount. We know these buildings are a little bit larger. We do have a good handle on the special education and support spaces, resource, OT, PT, speech. Those needs are above the State level. This program reflects what you have today. We're trying to build in flexibility in the program so the building can evolve over time. The cafeteria and gym are appropriate sizes. We will have a conversation with food service about all the support spaces so they function correctly. That is a summary of the programmatic conversations that we've had. The band aid approach is still eligible for some projects for State reimbursement, things like roofs, HVAC, windows. You can still get reimbursed for those. At the community conversation our goal is to get through the presentation in about 30 minutes. Ideally there will be a lot of Q&A. We are going to balance the information. Loud and clear on the band aid option, loud and clear on the reimbursement. That is the framework for this presentation.

Tina states the first and the last slide to stay up there is the comparison numbers. Also are we prepared to talk to people about the Stowe Early Learning Center at community conversation.

Bob states when you were talking about the two referendums, people are going to talk about what's going to happen to Stowe, Enfield Street School, Eagle and Alcorn. We have to have answers for all of them. Especially since we're getting to crunch time for referendum number 1.

Jaclyn states if people ask that question I feel I could not speak on behalf of ECDC.

Tina states I would expect you to talk at all about anything that is remaining. That is not for us to speak to because it's not the scope of this project. If the question comes up it needs to be specific to pre-k and integrated pre-k being part of this project.

Jaclyn states it would be all of our pre-k programs going into these schools, the logistics will be worked out. As it says we are on here to preserve that magic of the early learning center. It's not going to compromise the good work going on.

Tina states if this does come up in community conversation that what you just said is the perfect answer. And Lauren people may ask about Eagle Academy and you're in a very small space right now.

Lauren states people may ask what is happening with our current building. That was a hot topic a few years ago and if we're ready to talk about that it will be helpful.

Tina states how are we handling those questions, is it something we will get back to them? Is that something Jaclyn or Lauren could speak to? Have we thought about that?

Jeff states Randy can decide what direction we want to do. Historically, we try to answer the question.

Tina states we can talk to Randy. There might be questions about the board's budget that was presented last night. I don't know if there will be questions directed to the board of education or town council.

Danielle states one of the other topics that may come up is what is going to happen to the existing buildings or Eagle Academy when you move out.

Steve states we have some time. The Youth Center should be staying in that area, the population it serves is right there.

Jeff states I will pull out the graphics of what happens to all the schools. Jeff recaps the requests from the committee.

Tina states I appreciate your updates and talking about the community conversation ahead of time. We want this to go smoothly and successful as possible. Our other engagement efforts will be the PAC which Scott is running but we can't start until the numbers are finalized and approved.

Jeff states we talked about the draft survey at our last meeting. We will revisit after this community conversation.

Tina states next meeting is February 18, 2026.

5. COMMENTS

- a. Committee Member Comments**
- b. Liaison Member Comments**
- c. Good to the Order**

6. Motion to Adjourn

Motion to Adjourn made by Christine DeBonee
Seconded by Bob Cressotti
Motion passes by a show of hands

Adjourned at 7:17 PM

Submitted by Ellen Smith