

Pre-K Through 5 And Eagle Academy School Pre-Referendum Building Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 18, 2026
Available on YouTube

The Pre-K Through 5 and Eagle Academy School Pre-Referendum Building Committee held a meeting on February 18, 2026 at Enfield Town Hall, 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, CT.

1. CALL TO ORDER The meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM by Randy Daigle

2. ROLL CALL
MEMBERS PRESENT

Randy Daigle, Christine DeBonee, Lauren Andrews, Janet Cushman, John Dague, Kate Flanagan, Danielle Girard, Dean Gousse, Steve Moccio, Charlotte Riley, Jaclyn Valley, Jeff Wyszynski, Antonia Ciaverella, Chris Cykley

ALSO PRESENT

Linda Allegro

MEMBERS ABSENT

Tina LeBlanc, Gina Cekala, Bob Cressotti, Kelsey McGuire-Bruce, Marie Pyzner, Scott Ryder, Justin Hopkins

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Christine DeBonee to Approve Meeting Minutes of January 7, 2026

Seconded by Dean Gousse

Motion passes by a show of hands

Motion made by Christine DeBonee to Approve Meeting Minutes of January 28, 2026

Seconded by Dean Gousse

Motion passes by a show of hands

4. ARCHITECTS PRESENTATION

Jeff reviews packet with committee members. The black and white handout is OGA checklist of items that we need to focus on. The last document is SCG-3520. This is the form that will need to be filled out for Eagle Academy. This is for informational purposes. We had community conversation number 3, it was a decent turnout. There was about 376 views online. The word is starting to get out. We had follow-up conversations with EPS about Eagle Academy and we fine tuned the program. We have a pretty good handle on what is needed there. We spent a fair amount of time and supporting the local representatives with texts regarding the legislation. We have a couple more meetings, March 11th and April 1st. We are for the most part solidified on the options. I've included the slide of planning options, scope, cost and schedule in your packet. Has anyone heard any feedback about the community conversation? Or any open questions?

Danielle states a lot of people are excited to see what goes forward. The question is what is it going to cost the taxpayers? I know it is something you are working on.

Randy states we are still waiting for Wilcox.

Jeff states we prepared a detailed breakdown of all the costs of every project and mapped it out against the schedule so you could see month to month, when and where those costs will apply. We are happy to work with the Town refining that.

Steve states he had a conversation with John and I don't know if this has any relation to the hang up, we received a communication last fall about the Enfield High School project being closed out and the audit had been completed and I have to sign off on it. I signed off and it got sent back the same day. They still have not released the money to the Town.

Randy states there hasn't been any follow-up phone calls to the State asking for the Town's money.

Chris will follow up.

Danielle states it's a huge piece. People want to know what it is going to cost them. Even though it won't come out of the tax bills until 2028, they still want to be prepared.

Dean states with re-evaluation, I'm not hearing people are against it, they are concerned they won't be able to afford it all.

Jeff states one other thing this group should be aware of the State is entertaining this session some modifications to the school construction grant program. The biggest one that will affect every community is putting a dollar per square footage threshold/cap on the construction costs. It's a different way of reducing your effective reimbursement rate. I don't remember what the cost was, I'm pretty sure they are below the current construction climate. For example, elementary schools at \$500/SF, we're seeing them at \$640 - \$650 SF. It hasn't been passed yet. I want this group to be aware it is on the table for discussion this session. The way it is currently written is that it would apply to grant applications of July 1, 2026, next year.

Christine states we need to make sure to get our grant application in.

Chris states these are going in this year.

Randy states everyone needs to be aware. We need to educate the public that there is no plan b and if this doesn't pass, this is another thing, not only do we lose our reimbursement for pre-k, now we're locked into maybe \$400 SF, as opposed to \$500-\$600 a SF. Indirectly, it changes our reimbursement. It's not a scare factor, it's the truth. One more reason we need to get this passed. If it doesn't pass, the repercussions are terrible. There's nothing good about it. When we are paying for all these repairs out of pocket with no reimbursement we could lose accreditation in some of the schools.

Danielle states what is the maintenance plan once these schools are built? We don't want this to happen in another 10, 15, 20 years.

Jeff states all of this information has been updated on the website. If you could promote people viewing this at the different boards, it would be very helpful. Slide shown of questions asked at the community conversation. A very good question was what does special education look like? As you move forward, what is included in the project and the reality of special education these days from an educators perspective would be good to pull some of that into the slide. The reimbursement at Stowe, I have spent some time looking at the different avenues. We are looking at different opportunities there. How did you determine what sites to use? That was based on the demographics and the density analysis. We talked about music and art. Maybe there should be a couple of graphics of what happens in these buildings. The maintenance of the buildings, we just spoke to. We will update the Q&A list to meet the response. Question about other presentations? We will leave that to the PAC. Demolition, is it included? Yes. The take away from us was to explain in an abbreviated way all of the things that are included. Occupied sites – we will walk through a diagram of phasing and logistics. We will do an animation of how that will happen safely. Play areas we can address with site plans. Good question on the space waiver, I have material on that later. The short answer is you're going to pay 100% out of pocket for anything over the allowable area. Priority one in special legislation, that is it. Success rate on grant applications? They've been complete, comprehensive and did not have any issues. The communication with the State is an important piece. Total amount in the

referendum? That is a TBD, how you're going to word it, independently? Group them together? We need the financial piece first. Other activities since our last meeting, we had a meeting on the program refinement at Eagle Academy. Think we are close, if not there on understanding of uses.

Kate asks when you update the FAQ's is it possible can we include when we are actually going to be responsible for paying this back? And, how much it is going to cost.

Randy states first we need the total then we can determine when each draw is going to be required for each of the buildings, depending on the phase of construction we set in place.

Christine asks what do we need to do? I will send an email.

Randy states the biggest thing we saw overall is communication. We can't go through the school system. Once we get these numbers, the PAC can start. What I'm hearing is people don't know where to get this information. How do we get this information to them? The PAC is the only way.

Danielle states I know we talked about community conversations, possibly do another one? Is this a good idea or wait until it passes and goes through the town council and board of education.

Randy states once we get more information out there we can do one because people will have specific questions.

Jeff states I've talked about the grant application but can provide more information on the components. 1). Ed specs are a priority. It starts high level, pedagogy, big picture, enrollment, programs, space. We think we have a pretty good structure with all the meetings we've had to get that together. You'll need one for each building. 2). Compilation of space planning worksheet, is basically district program. 3). Site due diligence is a big one. An environmental company has to come out and do some land due diligence and land record study, analysis on environment.

Randy states phase I is a big step we have to start doing. We need to solicit 3 bids from firms to go into the schools for testing. Once testing and exposed the state gives us one year to correct it. Once we expose we have asbestos here and PCP's here we have to get it all done before we can move head on the project. We have to ask the town for money to pay for a firm to go to each of the schools and do the inspection and report, we have to put a bid out to get the work done. The remediation has to get done. This is the next thing we need to get done.

Jeff states one of the alternatives that we talked about is we can streamline the process.

Randy states that is something I'd like to do. We'd like Tecton to go out and talk to 3 firms and get the criteria, scope of services we're looking for. Give us the numbers and we pick from there. It's streamlined and I'd love to have that direction followed.

Jeff states that way we can keep a better handle on schedules. We've already talked about 5). Renovation status. 6). Enrollment projections we already have 2 of them. 7). Unifomat estimates (cost estimates), the State wants somebody else to do it, not us. We had shown Gilbane as a CMR helping us with those components. 9). The resolutions and we've already talked about those. This is an abbreviated list but I wanted to focus on the ones that we need to start thinking about and get moving on.

Charlotte asks do you need council to approve paying for Phase 1 consultant?

Randy states I will be talking to Matt Coppler.

Jeff states the next few slides, we talked about the special legislation. What usually happens is they get put in the implementer bill at the end of the session. The biggest ones I want this group to be aware of are the space waiver,

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there is a new 5% incentive for housing but it doesn't apply until 2027 applications. When Representative Santanella was here he was asked to include that retroactive. I don't know how that would work, you're asking for something to be applied before it's effective.

Danielle states we're putting the application in on the 30th and they're going in July 1st. He said whatever he needs to do his plan is to push forward with it and try to get that 5%.

Randy states he is doing his due diligence.

Jeff states there is a 2 year period once you get your approval letter to put a shovel in the ground, if you're going after all 5 the last 2 in the 2nd phase are going to be out of that window. We provided this information to the Representatives and the Town Attorney reached out this week and I answered their questions. As far as next steps, we will work on the environmental piece to get that ball moving. We will do what we can do get the answer on the cost, how much. We got your other request on the boards. If there is a meeting with Finance we are happy to participate.

Charlotte asks does each school have to have a book?

Chris states yes.

Jeff states we want to make sure it's comprehensive. You get one shot at revising at the end. We are trying to put our best foot forward. That's why it's detailed.

Randy states they have been focusing on the Eagle Academy. We've had a tremendous amount of meetings and feedback from the end users. That is such a crucial building compared to a pre-k through 5 building. We are looking into the special ed part of it. I cannot commend the architects for the time they have put in. I am speaking for the Town, we appreciate you. We are going to be working on getting costs so we can get numbers to you and to the public. We are going to be working on getting Phase I started. I may have to do a presentation to the Council, but I will keep everyone informed, everyone is invited to everything.

Steve asks do we have a potential ball park date for the referendum? I thought we landed at September.

Randy states that is the target date we were discussing.

Charlotte states going up against the roads is going to be hard. When do we have to have that to council by?

Randy states we need numbers, we the wording.

Chris states at a minimum we need the Council to set the date by June 30th. As part of the grant application Council has to set the date.

Randy states anytime I've done referendums, it is for one building. We have 5 buildings, can we specify each of the schools and a dollar amount. Is there a way to say what the taxpayers portion is?

Chris states the way JFK referendum was written was the total cost which was \$84.4 million, with a town share not to exceed \$XXX number.

Dean asks if we could put the town share in bold print?

Chris states I don't know how you could print that on a ballot. It will be one question for all schools.

Randy states our next meeting is March 11th.

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 Linda Allegro

Motion passes by a show of hands

Adjourned at 6:57 PM

Submitted by Ellen Smith