



Massachusetts School Building Authority

Steven Grossman
Chairman, State Treasurer

Katherine P. Craven
Executive Director

April 28, 2011

Jeffrey Osuch, Executive Secretary
Town of Fairhaven Massachusetts
40 Center Street
Fairhaven, MA 02719

Re: Fairhaven Public Schools, Rogers Elementary School

Dear Mr. Osuch:

The Massachusetts School Building Authority has been pleased to work with the Town of Fairhaven since the MSBA Board of Directors invited the District's priority school, the Rogers Elementary School, into its capital pipeline for a feasibility study in November 2007. The MSBA is confused and troubled by the statements made in The Standard Times recently that the MSBA is "non-responsive". Since November 2007, the MSBA has been working with the District to better understand its needs and the existing conditions of its school facilities. The MSBA has understood from the District that the community faced a challenge to design a cost-effective project that would meet the educational needs of its K to 5 enrollment. The District has made clear that the proposed project would need to address both the divergent community opinions on maintaining neighborhood schools and the concerns regarding the restoration of the historical Rogers Elementary School. These challenges not only affect the options for a cost-effective capital project but also requires, as do all MSBA projects, a review of the operational budget for the proposed options.

For the last 12 months, and before the feasibility study had even begun, the District has repeatedly requested that the MSBA outright declare to Fairhaven two things: first, that the MSBA would only fund one project, not two; and second, that the MSBA would not support a proposed project for less than 300 students. The MSBA would never make a statement like that without having studied the options through a feasibility study-- the purpose of which is for the District to work with its consultants to study various options and provide the analysis necessary to inform the most cost-effective and educationally appropriate solution. If the feasibility study shows viability for two projects that represent the most cost-effective and educationally appropriate solution, the MSBA will discuss this result with the District. As your Owner's Project Manager undoubtedly knows, any feasibility study funded in part by MSBA must include a robust analysis of no-build, add-reno, and new options as required by the MSBA's regulations, the District's Feasibility Study Agreement with the MSBA dated August 12, 2010 and the Module 3 – Feasibility Study guidelines, published July 2010. The MSBA has strongly emphasized that the District's feasibility study needed to include an option which would

compare addition/renovation options for two schools (Rogers and Wood) to a new construction option as potential solutions to the District's issues. Options cannot be ruled out until the feasibility study is complete, and only with this information would the District be able to make a decision and vote to forward to the MSBA its recommendation for a preferred solution.

The District has presented to the MSBA a clear preference for a new building for many months, and the MSBA has not yet agreed to this solution because the complete feasibility study results have been only submitted to MSBA in the past ten days. The MSBA has a one-project-per-district rule, but in cases where a feasibility study has concluded that a multiple school solution is appropriate and cost-effective, this has also been considered. It is truly disappointing to see how much miscommunication has occurred regarding the study of this project. MSBA staff is reviewing the complete feasibility study submittal, which we received on April 15, 2011 after having received inadequate information from the District earlier in April, despite having met on March 25th to discuss the project and requirements for the feasibility study submission.

Only after a thorough review of this submittal will the MSBA be able to issue comments on the District's recommendation. We look forward to providing comments on the District's submittal.

In the meantime, however, the District must complete the local actions and approvals form sent on April 20, 2011 to illustrate the community outreach it has conducted to date. Also, the District and its Designer and Owner's Project Manager must present the feasibility study and recommendations at a Facilities Assessment Subcommittee, as scheduled by the MSBA. The District's presentation at a Facilities Assessment Subcommittee will be the first time the Board of Directors has an opportunity to see the preferred solution recommended by the District and provides an important opportunity for the District to present its educational program and the analysis of the preliminary alternatives studied as well as address any questions raised by the MSBA.

I look forward to continued collaboration with you as we advance the proposed Rogers Elementary School project through the MSBA process. Please feel free to contact me or your Field Coordinator, Brendan Melican, at (617) 720-4466 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Mary Fichetti
Director of Capital Planning
Massachusetts School Building Authority

cc: Senator Mark C. Montigny
Representative William Straus
Michael Silvia, Chair, Board of Selectmen
Robert N. Baldwin, Superintendent of Schools
Colin Vietch, Chair, School Committee
Chris Bunnell, Chair, School Building Committee
Paul B. Kitchen, Business Manager
Richard Marks, OPM
Pip Lewis, Designer

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