

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES COMMITTEE

TOWN OF LEXINGTON



REPORT TO THE SPECIAL TOWN MEETING, March 21, 2016 (STM 2016-3)

Released March 14, 2016

Submitted by:

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Warrant-Article Explanation and Recommendation

<i>Article 2: Appropriate For Middle Schools—Additions and Remodeling</i>	Fund Authorization Requested	Funding Source	Committee Recommends
	\$62,197,000	GF (Candidate for Debt-Exclusion Vote)	Approval (5–0)

“To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money for constructing, originally equipping and furnishing additions to the Clarke and Diamond Middle Schools and for remodeling, reconstructing and making extraordinary repairs to the existing Middle Schools, including original equipment and furnishings, and for the payment of all other costs incidental and related thereto; determine whether the money shall be provided by the tax levy, by transfer from available funds, by borrowing, possibly contingent on a referendum pursuant to MGL c.59, §21C, or by any combination of these methods; determine if the Town will authorize the Selectmen to apply for, accept, expend and borrow in anticipation of state aid; or act in any other manner in relation thereto.

“DESCRIPTION: It is anticipated that there will be two parts to the motion for this article. The first part will seek an appropriation for renovation work at Clarke and Diamond Middle Schools (Phase 1) that, due to existing enrollment, it is imperative that the work be completed this summer, before the beginning of the 2016/2017 school year. The second part will be for the design and construction of renovations and additions to Clarke and Diamond Middle Schools (Phase 2) to address anticipated school enrollments. Phase 2 work will be completed over the next 18 months for the Clarke School and 30 months for the Diamond School. While it is anticipated that both Phase 1 and 2 of this project will be included as part of a Debt Exclusion question submitted to the voters later this spring, the Phase 1 work needs to be completed in time for the 2016/2017 school year. The contract for this work, therefore, will need to be signed the first week of April, before the likely debt exclusion vote. The contract for the Phase 2 work will go forward only if the debt exclusion vote is approved.”

[Town of Lexington Warrant for the Special Town Meeting 2016-3”, February 1, 2016, Page 5]

The dollar amount of this request is based on the latest total-projects-cost estimate (released this March 7th) totaling \$66,615,000 less \$4,418,753 from two previous appropriations for these projects (\$2,467,753, a portion of the \$4,080,000 appropriation at the March 23, 2015, STM #1, Article 2, and \$1,951,000, a portion of the \$5,386,000 appropriation at the November 2, 2015 STM #1, Article 2). (The net amount is rounded up to the nearest thousand dollars as this is proposed for debt financing which is issued at the thousands level.) Of the requested amount, \$4,104,940 is for the Part 1 prioritized scope; \$58,091,307 is for the Part 2 completion of scope. This Committee is pleased that the recommended value-engineering and peer-review processes were undertaken to look for cost savings and validation of the design. The current cost estimate reflects the benefits from both efforts.

The space needs at the Middle School level are well documented. For this Committee’s previous, extensive, reporting on these projects, please see the CEC Report to November 2, 2015, STM #1, available at <<http://records.lexingtonma.gov/WebLink8/0/doc/246498/Page1.aspx>>. For graphics of the physical changes to be made to both schools as of the Design Development stage, you will find them at <<http://www.lexingtonmultipleprojects.com/projects/lexington-middle-schools/home/>>. (There, click on one of the schools and on the next page, click on the “Design Development” link.)

The two Middle Schools are currently overcrowded and the enrollment is expected to continue to increase. (Lexington Public Schools (LPS) projections based on the Enrollment Working Group methodology) The current capacity, given the need for general education, special education, music, art, cafeteria and other space is based on the number of teams and the desired size of the teams. DiNisco Design Partnership., contracted by the town to assist in the planning-and-design phase of the project, puts the capacity at nine teams in each school for a total of 18 teams. The School Committee has not taken an official position on the desired team size, but the working assumption is 86 students per team. This results

in a total capacity of 1,548 students and a space deficit for 98 students in the current year. The LPS has taken non-general education space to make a half team at Clarke, adding capacity at the expense of other programs. The average team size has risen from 82 students in 2009 to 89 students even with this extra half a team. The deficit, if no additional space is added, by the school year 2019–2020 used in planning, is projected to rise to 237 students using the median projection or 297 students using the high projection. Clearly additional space is required.

To address this need, as well as space needs at the Pre-K and Elementary level, the LPS put together an Ad Hoc School Master Planning Committee in May, 2014. The planning continued through numerous public meetings with the School Committee, Department of Public Facilities, Board of Selectman, Appropriation Committee, Capital Expenditures Committee, and Permanent Building Committee. The projects to be funded by this Article are part of the results of this long, public, process.

These projects will increase the capacity of the two Middle Schools to 21.5 teams (10.5 at Clarke and 11.0 at Diamond) which, at 86 students per team, provides adequate space for 1,849 students which is greater than the median projection of 1,785 students in the 2019–2020 school year, and just enough capacity for the high projection of 1,845 students. Note that these construction projects include some much-needed renovations and replacement of systems at end of life such as the heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning (HVAC) system at Diamond, as well as creating additional cafeteria and other spaces. (Clarke: 2 science rooms, 3 art/music/drama or engineering rooms, increased special-education space. Diamond: teacher planning space, 3 science rooms, 3 art/music/drama or engineering rooms, increased special-education space including the Intensive Learning Program (ILP), increased cafeteria space).

This table recaps the enrollment and capacity situation:

Middle Schools Projected Enrollment and Capacity					
		School Year			
	Current Year	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Median projection	1,646	1,723	1,753	1,779	1,785
High Projection		1,753	1,793	1,829	1,845
Current Capacity	1,548	1,548	1,548	1,548	1,548
After Renovation			1,849	1,849	1,849

These projects, if approved by Town Meeting and the voters, will be funded primarily by 30-year bonds. (The early design funds will be financed for 4 years.) Fortunately, the Town's Aaa bond rating and the current low-interest environment will allow the Town to borrow at very favorable rates. A model for the anticipated debt service added by this request is being prepared and will be presented at the Meeting. (That increase is just for the total debt being sought for these projects and, therefore, does not reflect the increases that are likely to occur in subsequent years as the in-levy base under Proposition 2½ increases.)

The Middle schools are currently overcrowded. The children that will shortly be in the Middle schools are already in our Elementary schools, and thus we know with very high confidence that the overcrowding is going to increase significantly if we do not embark on expanding our Middle school capacity in a timely fashion. This particular set of projects has been chosen by the School Committee after many months of planning and review by outside consultants, the Department of Public Facilities, other Town staff, and Town Committees and Working Groups. This Committee trusts that continued review and oversight by the Department of Public Facilities, the Permanent Building Committee, and the School Committee will ensure that these much-needed projects are carried out in a cost-and-schedule-efficient manner. These are important projects to help ensure the continued excellence of our schools and delay would be very detrimental to that mission. This Committee unanimously supports approval of both parts of the Motion.