



The Association for the Advancement of Education, DBA, The Hawbridge School
Board of Directors Meeting
Special Session

Date: Wednesday, January 13, 2021

Location: Virtual Meeting

I. Call to Order – 6:01 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Attending Board Members: Todd Nicolet (Chair), Natalya Barker (Vice Chair), Dawnya Bohager (Treasurer), April Williams (Secretary), Kathryn Brown, Matt Buckmaster, Christina Fisher, Dianne Ford, Renee Lynch

Attending Executive Director and Faculty/Staff: Mya Ciccotti (Executive Director), Jonathan Farmer (Faculty Representative to the Board), Daryl Feldman (Assistant Director of Student Services), Emily Martin (School Counselor), Jennifer Shelton (Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction)

Other Attendees: Jason Imhof and Ben Culp (Aspire Construction Management)

III. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved unanimously.

IV. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

V. Unfinished Business

A. Hawbridge Expansion Update (Little Diversified and Aspire Construction)

- a. Issue with subcontractor – Despite the USDA's issue with one of the subcontractors, construction has continued without interruption. Grading has been ongoing since the start of the project. CT Wilson has a new subcontractor lined up and anticipates an easy transition.
- b. CT Wilson – CT Wilson has a trailer on-site now, but there is no power yet; they are working off a generator instead but are working with Duke Power to get permanent electricity going. Also working on retention ponds now, and Friday they have a meeting with the concrete contractor.

- c. Schedule – No major schedule delays foreseen now; CT Wilson will be issuing a new schedule update soon.
 - d. Electricity – Duke Energy will set up a temporary transformer for construction soon; hope to get a permanent transformer there as well, not sure about date.
 - e. Traffic – There has been no update from the DOT. Mya attended two meetings of the Saxapahaw Traffic Committee. All interested parties contributed to a Google slideshow, which will become a virtual presentation to Rep. Riddell tomorrow. Mya will send Hawbridge’s slides to the board regarding pedestrian traffic safety.
- B. Groundbreaking ceremony – The groundbreaking committee met on Monday in a meeting with Mya and Jason
- a. Topping-out ceremony in lieu of groundbreaking – Given the recent stay-at-home order by the Governor due to COVID, the fact that the site would need gravel to be accessible, and the chance for inclement weather, the committee has decided to cancel the in-person groundbreaking ceremony and will instead host a topping-out ceremony in April, which will include having the land donors and other key figures sign the final beam to be placed in the building. While we are all saddened by the need for such precaution, we are committed to putting the health and safety of our community first.
 - b. Press release – Kathryn and Natalya are working on drafting the press release to share with the board before sending out to media contacts. The press release is a key component to getting the word out about the new school and will include an image of the architectural rendering.
 - c. Testimonials – The committee is grateful for Jonathan Farmer’s work collecting testimonials from students and faculty; the responses have been overwhelmingly positive and a joy to read. Jonathan will share those documents with the entire board.
 - d. Banner – Ms. Cornette feels confident that the students should have time now to create a banner that can be used for the topping-out ceremony and that will go in the lobby of the new school building.
- C. Renovation budget
- a. Aspire’s Order of Magnitude – The board reviewed the “Hawbridge School Renovations” document (dated January 13, 2021) from Aspire. This document is *not* a proposal or a budget, but an “order of magnitude,” anticipating a tentative price range for the renovations based on broad understandings of the scope of the project (as determined by the walk-through with Mya, Daryl, and the Renovations Committee back in November). Aspire needs to get the architect involved to nail down actual pricing—not sure which architect, not necessarily Little; they can get plans from two other architects in addition to Little and share with the board to compare.
 - b. Classrooms – Discussion included looking at the lottery numbers to anticipate classroom needs, in particular more space for kindergarten. Currently, there are 80 kindergarteners in the lottery but only one section of kindergarten, just 17

seats. To optimize enrollment, we will likely offer another section of kindergarten, which means the need for another classroom and in-classroom bathroom. We may potentially eliminate a section of fourth or fifth grade. We anticipate fluctuating section numbers for the elementary grades for the next few years. Lottery numbers fluctuate daily.

- c. Hiring – Mya reported that there are 18 interviews set up now for the next three weeks. We're hoping to attract new faculty for the lower school who have flexibility between grades, since we may need folks to move grades until sections stabilize.
- d. Security – We discussed the improvements to security that will be part of the lower school renovation. This includes converting glass doors at the back of the school into windows. The long entrance hallway at the front will be broken up by adding a vestibule and an office. From outside, visitors will have to be buzzed into the new vestibule, and then buzzed into the main area of the school. We will likely need a small office added to the vestibule space so that whoever works there can actually get work done, but how do we do that without cutting into the classroom space too much?
- e. Food service – The question was raised if there are any changes to the lunch service. The new plan does not include food service/cafeteria. We will continue our current plan with Dominoes to bring in pizza, and we anticipate the General Store will extend a lunch option to the lower school as they have with the upper school grades. We have a number of fridges and microwaves. We've talked about the lower school eating in their classrooms with their teachers vs. bringing everyone out to the commons (could get very loud with so many younger children), but we want to plan for these things with the new hires.
- f. Downstairs – Acoustics is the main issue of downstairs, along with how to improve the dismal basement feel of Daniel Ayers' window-less classroom. It is not a space anyone would want to have as their all-day classroom, so how do we use this space better? Maybe this is a specials room going forward, so that no one person sits in it all day. Aspire will help strategize how to improve this space as much as possible. It needs to be an environment that's conducive to learning.
- g. Outdoor spaces – The question was raised if we could add an outdoor classroom—how much of the outdoor space is ours? The Jordans own the land where the trailer is currently, but we anticipate they will continue to let us use it if we need to. The question was raised if we had any plans for a playground for the lower school. Right now, we anticipate more nature-based outdoor time (walking students to the park, using the trails, picnic tables by the water, blacktop area, etc.), though eventually would love to see a natural playground. Regarding the blacktop area, we may paint another section of Four Square (the kids love Four Square), an effort supported by PASTA. Purchased traffic barriers so that kids can't run out into the circle. We have the volleyball net. Dependent on the final lottery number and sections to find age-appropriate activities for that space. No funding is set aside to do anything drastic. A board member mentioned looking

into Impact Alamance, a \$50,000 grant that can go toward equipment, is community-based, and is geared more toward younger children.

D. Adjourn to closed session – 7:00 p.m.

E. Return to open session – 7:40 p.m.

F. Motion to approve new renovation budget

A motion was raised to increase this fiscal year's budget for renovations to the new lower school to \$300,000 (including furniture and painting), under the oversight of the Hawbridge Board Renovations Committee, with a target of coming in under \$250,000, per Aspire Construction Management's "Hawbridge School Renovations" order-of-magnitude document dated January 13, 2021.

- a. Discussion about thoughts over the amount—is it low, is it high? One member had concern that the number felt like a high estimate for the work. Another member shared that the cost seemed affordable, given his experience with other construction projects at other schools. Another board member raised the point that on past Hawbridge boards, the expectation had been around \$150,000 for renovations, but that was just for adding a single kindergarten classroom, not the scope of work that Aspire has laid out for us, which the school sorely needs. One member voiced that it is important that we provide a comfortable and welcoming learning environment for the new lower school families to retain and encourage enrollment.
- b. Board members discussed how it will be very important that we see a much more detailed line-item proposal from Aspire soon so that we know specifically where this large sum of money is going. Right now, the order-of-magnitude document Aspire has provided is as detailed as it can get until we speak with an architect and finalize certain priorities based on the ever-changing lottery numbers.
- c. A question was raised if, with this new proposed renovations budget, we should consider the possibility of going ahead and adding a second section of kindergarten and the additional classroom and bathroom it would require. Mya plans to bring Ben back into the building to see which classroom is the most cost-effective to make the second kindergarten classroom. By approving \$300,000 instead of the \$250,000 upper limit Aspire proposed, we can build in flexibility for this additional section, as they anticipate at this point a new kindergarten classroom addition being around \$20,000. Natalya raised an important point that by investing this money now, making it possible to add an additional kindergarten section, we will be investing in future enrollment, as we are likely to retain these students.

The motion was approved unanimously by the board.

VI. Adjourn – 7:57 p.m.