

Town of Southborough, Massachusetts
Neary Building Committee – Communications Subcommittee
March 27, 2025
8:00 AM
Virtual Zoom Meeting

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, An Act Relative to Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency, signed into law on June 16, 2021, this meeting will be conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance by members of the public will be permitted.

Neary Building Committee:

Members Present: Roger Challen, Denise Eddy, and Jason Malinowski

Members Absent: None

Ex-Officio

Members Present: Kathleen Valenti, Neary School Principal

Members Absent: Stefanie Reinhorn, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

Also Present: Gregory Martineau, Superintendent of Schools

I. Call Meeting to Order

Jason Malinowski called the NBC – Communications Subcommittee meeting to order at 8:02 am.

II. Approval of March 12, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Jason Malinowski asked for a discussion and a vote.

Jason Malinowski moved, Denise Eddy seconded, and it was unanimously voted by roll call, “To approve the March 12, 2025, meeting minutes as presented.”

MOTION TO APPROVE
MEETING MINUTES

Roll Call

For: Denise Eddy, Roger Challen, and Jason Malinowski

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

III. Review and release of FAQs

The Subcommittee covered several key topics, including the review and release of FAQs, discussions on documents, and finance-related questions. The group debated how to handle current and future Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) responses. A lingering question about why the fifth grade being relocated to Trottier Middle School was not

considered by a prior Subcommittee is now being delegated to the administration. They reviewed two key documents: one summarizing options considered and another compiling community questions. Discussions clarified differences between options, leading to a suggestion to add a key for better understanding. The role of the School Research Subcommittee that informed the District's MSBA application was also discussed. Finance updates included adding a finance tab on the Neary School Building website and preparing for an upcoming MSBA reimbursement meeting. Specific FAQ questions were addressed, such as concerns over publicly discussing safety details, the relocation of portable classrooms, and how to frame responses regarding the decision-making process for school facility upgrades. Discussions on the Finn school's MSBA application process highlighted uncertainties in funding eligibility and the reasoning behind prior decisions. The meeting concluded with proposed edits, clarifications on funding sources, and ensuring that responses remain aligned with the Committee's perspective.

IV. Discussion of approach to replies to community questions

Jason Malinowski suggested that the Subcommittee notify him about the need to add something to the website in response to a request. He stated that if a member feels it's appropriate, they may respond with the caveat that their response reflects their individual perspective as a member of the Committee and has not been fully vetted.

If there is a situation that the Committee has never discussed at a Neary Building Committee meeting or Subcommittee meeting, that should warrant calling a meeting to order. When a member receives a question and is aware that the information is already available, they should feel free to address it. If the information needs to be presented more prominently as an FAQ item, that can be done without calling a meeting. Any inquiries that genuinely question educational policy should be referred to the school administration, with assistance from Roger Challen, as he is a member of the Southborough School Committee, if needed. The objective is to direct people to the website for answers within 24 hours. Once the final questions are received, an email will be sent out once everything has been updated.

V. Public Comment (None at this time)

VI. Meeting Schedule – To be determined.

VII. Other business that may properly come before the Committee (None at this time)

VIII. Adjournment

Jason Malinowski requested a motion to adjourn.

Jason Malinowski moved, Roger Challen seconded, and it was unanimously voted by roll call, "To adjourn."

MOTION TO
ADJOURN

Roll Call

For: Roger Challen, Denise Eddy, and Jason Malinowski

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Jason Malinowski adjourned the meeting at 8:34 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Mariana Silva, Central Office Administrative Assistant
Office of Superintendent

List of documents used at this meeting:

1. NBC – Communications Subcommittee Agenda of March 27, 2025
2. NBC – Communications Subcommittee Agenda of March 12, 2025
3. Options – NBC
4. FAQ Document

Town of Southborough, Massachusetts
Neary Building Committee – Communications Subcommittee

March 27, 2025

8:00 AM

Virtual Zoom Meeting

May be watched or may participate in the meeting remotely with the meeting link at: <https://ma-southborough.civicplus.com/674/Virtual-Meetings>

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, An Act Relative to Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency, signed into law on June 16, 2021, this meeting will be conducted via remote participation. No in person attendance by members of the public will be permitted.

Agenda (all items may have one or more votes taken to the extent action is required):

- I. Call Meeting to Order
- II. Approval of March 12, 2025 Meeting Minutes
- III. Review and release of FAQs
- IV. Discussion of approach to replies to community questions
- V. Public Comment
- VI. Meeting Schedule
- VII. Other business that may properly come before the Committee
- VIII. Adjournment

Jason W. Malinowski, NBC Chair

Town of Southborough, Massachusetts
Neary Building Committee – Communications Subcommittee
March 12, 2025
9:00 AM
Virtual Zoom Meeting

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, An Act Relative to Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency, signed into law on June 16, 2021, this meeting will be conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance by members of the public will be permitted.

Neary Building Committee:

Members Present: Roger Challen, Denise Eddy, and Jason Malinowski

Members Absent: None

Ex-Officio

Members Present: Stefanie Reinhorn, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, and Kathleen Valenti, Neary School Principal (arrived at 9:11 am)

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Gregory Martineau, Superintendent of Schools

I. Call Meeting to Order

Jason Malinowski called the NBC – Communications Subcommittee meeting to order at 9:01 am.

II. Approval of February 28, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Jason Malinowski asked for a discussion and a vote.

Jason Malinowski moved, Roger Challen seconded, and it was unanimously voted by roll call, "To approve the minutes as presented."

MOTION TO APPROVE
MEETING MINUTES

Roll Call

For: Roger Challen, Denise Eddy, and Jason Malinowski

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

III. Debrief of office hours feedback

Jason Malinowski shared that the office hours held a few weeks ago on a Saturday had a significant turnout. A wide range of topics was discussed, with continued focus on the cost of living in Southborough. He mentioned that the community is still using cost

estimates from August, as the revised costs have not been officially presented yet. He noted that they received valuable suggestions for sharing information with the community, which will need to be vetted by the council before publication. The community expressed a desire for information in easily digestible segments. There was also more emphasis on alternative options, highlighting that the presented option is the one that will be taken to the Town Meeting. Additionally, there were questions about the relocation of fifth-grade students to Trottier Middle School, but no education professionals were present to address those concerns.

IV. Communication Plan Update

Jason Malinowski shared that the Neary Building website is being organized to better address community feedback, making it easier for users to find information within one or two clicks. He also announced that they will be scheduling three types of sessions over the next month, with open public meetings posted for each session.

The first session will focus on the project's costs and will be led by Jason Malinowski and Kathryn Cook. The second session, centered on education, will be led by Superintendent Martineau and Assistant Superintendent Stefanie Reinhorn. The third session will concentrate on specific site details, led by Mark Purple, the Town Administrator, Bill Cundiff, the Department of Public Works Superintendent, and Tim from Parr. There may also be a fourth session that provides an overview of the topics covered, serving as a preview of what the Town Meeting presentation will entail.

These sessions will be held both virtually and in-person. While cost information is prepared, it needs to be organized into a shareable format. The goal is to include a paragraph about the administrative team's work and a separate paragraph on costs. Once the Committee receives further information from the monitor, they can start working on the presentation, particularly since they will need to know the presentation's time restrictions. Jason noted that most of the presentation will likely involve Q&A and listening to community feedback.

Additionally, Roger Challen will hold office hours at the Senior Center on March 24th, while educational office hours will take place on March 8th and March 10th.

V. Review and release of FAQs

Superintendent Martineau announced that the frequently asked questions section on the Neary Building Project website has been reorganized. Jason and Kathryn Cook will be responsible for crafting and posting answers to the questions about tax impacts. Jason Malinowski encouraged Committee members to check the website whenever they have questions. If they find that their questions are not adequately addressed or are missing, they should send those questions to Superintendent Martineau and Jason Malinowski. This way, they can categorize and inventory the questions and draft clearer answers that are easier to understand.

VI. Public Comment (None at this time)

VII. Meeting Schedule – March 21, 2025

VIII. Other business that may properly come before the Committee (None at this time)

IX. Adjournment

Jason Malinowski requested a motion to adjourn.

Jason Malinowski moved, Roger Challen seconded, and it was unanimously voted by roll call, "To adjourn."

MOTION TO
ADJOURN

Roll Call

For: Roger Challen, Denise Eddy, and Jason Malinowski

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Jason Malinowski adjourned the meeting at 9:31 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Mariana Silva, Central Office Administrative Assistant

Office of Superintendent

List of documents used at this meeting:

1. NBC – Communications Subcommittee Agenda of March 12, 2025

What options were considered by the Neary Building Committee?

The Neary Building Committee (NBC) considered twelve options before narrowing it to the preferred option, which the Massachusetts School Building Authorities (MSBA) required as part of its process. Ultimately, NBC narrowed the options and selected a preferred option of a new elementary school, grades two through five, located on the current Neary Elementary School campus. Below is a table of the options that were researched during the process. The options were discussed, reviewed, and vetted at the Neary Building Committee's open meetings.

Option	Overview of Twelve Options Studied	# of Students	Notes
1.	Neary - Base Repair	305	Selected to Study Further
2.	Woodward - Base Repair	305	Not Selected
3.	Neary - Addition / Renovation (grades 4-5)	305	Not Selected
4.	Neary - Addition / Renovation (grades 3-5)	450	Not Selected
5.	Neary - Addition / Renovation (grades 2-5)	610	Selected to Study Further
6.	Neary - New Build (4-5)	305	Selected to Study Further
7.	Neary - New Build	450	Not Selected
8.	Neary - New Build (grades 2-5)	610	Selected to Study Further
9.	Woodward Addition / Renovation (grades 3-5)	450	Not Selected
10.	Woodward Addition / Renovation (grades 2-5)	610	Not Selected
11.	Woodward - New Build (grades 3-5)	450	Not Selected
12.	Woodward - New Build (grades 2-5)	610	Not Selected

*Finn was not studied as it was not part of the District's application to the MSBA's core building program submission. The Neary Building Committee did inquire with the MSBA, which responded by sharing that the Town of Southborough would need to withdraw its application and start from the application submission process. MSBA would consider the Town of Southborough's new application as beginning the process over and would not guarantee an invitation into its Core Building Program.

Neary Building Committee narrowed the ten options to its top three choices, as required by MSBA.

1.	Near New Build (grades 4-5)	305	Not Selected
2.	Neary - Addition / Renovation (grades 2-5)	610	Not Selected
3.	Neary New Build (grades 2-5)	610	Selected

Neary Building Committee narrowed the three options to its preferred option for schematic design, as required by MSBA

1.	Neary New Build (grades 2-5)	610	Preferred Option
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The Preferred Option will be presented at the May 10, 2025, Town Meeting for the citizens to vote. A two-thirds vote of the town meeting attendees is required. The approval of the bonding will be a ballot question on May 13, 2025.

- 1) Is there enough parking? Southborough Town Code requires one parking space per staff member. Using an estimate of 25 staff members per grade, there are enough parking spots per grade. Further study would occur in the next stage of design should the project proceed on the number of guest spots needed for special events at the school during school hours.
- 2) Where is the Superintendent's Office relocating to? This discussion is ongoing and there are multiple known options in other Southborough or regional district buildings. The Superintendent's Office will not be located at the proposed new school.
- 3) Is the glass throughout the building bullet proof? The building is being designed to meet all current school safety standards. If the project proceeds, a separate subcommittee will continue discussions with the Architect to finalize exact specifications to ensure compliance with these standards.
- 4) Where will the portable classrooms be located during the transition period? Insert answer from architect or OPM
- 5) What is the total project cost and how much of that is reimbursable from the state through the MSBA? Insert from finance committee deck that should be finalized on 3/27
- 6) What are federal incentives are you receiving from this project and how are they incorporated in the total project cost estimated for Southborough taxpayers? Insert from finance committee deck that should be finalized on 3/27
- 7) Why aren't you looking at the Finn School as part of this process? Finn was not studied as it was not part of the District's application to the MSBA's core building program submission. The Neary Building Committee did inquire with the MSBA, which responded by sharing that the Town of Southborough would need to withdraw its application and start from the application submission process. MSBA would consider the Town of Southborough's new application as beginning the process over and would not guarantee an invitation into its Core Building Program.
- 8) Why aren't we just renovating/expanding Neary? This was explored for a significant period of time during the feasibility period. Due to the age of the structure, the cost estimates ended up coming out to a greater cost to renovate as compared to building a new school.

9) Did you consider shutting Neary and consolidating to Woodward and Finn? Yes, this was considered as part of the original work by the School Research Subcommittee and was performed prior to seeking funds for a Feasibility Study. In summary, our current enrollment can not fit into these schools without modifications or modular classrooms. Even with these modifications, it will create space constraints for the delivery of the educational programming. A full summary of the report is located here. [Grade Configuration Evaluation](#)

10) How will the proposed dismantling of the Department of Education impact our local taxes and what impact does it have on the building project? Overall 2 % of the school budget is funded by the Department of Education, primarily related to required special education programs. The Neary Building project is not proposed to receive any funding from the Department of Education. The MSBA grant that has been referenced is already earmarked and funded through state sales tax collections.

11) Why didn't you just move Grade 5 to the Trottier School and Grade 4 to one of the other two elementary schools? District to provide educational and operational rationale re: grade 5