

## **Coleytown Middle School Building Committee (CMSBC) Update**

### **Background**

Coleytown Middle School (CMS) was closed by the Board of Education (BOE) in September 2018 following concerns reported by students and staff.

The BOE hired KG&D, an architectural firm, to assess conditions within CMS and to determine any repairs needed to reopen the school.

The KG&D report showed numerous areas requiring attention within the interior and the exterior of CMS. Repairs were estimated to take as long as three years.

The Town of Westport commissioned a peer review, or second opinion, of the KG&D report. The firm hired to conduct the peer review was Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. ("Wiss, Janney").

Wiss, Janney issued their peer review on January 18<sup>th</sup>. Their report also found considerable damage. However, the Wiss, Janney report showed a path to reopen CMS as early as January of 2020.

Based on these two reports with different timelines for remediation, both in extent and in duration, the BOE created a CMS Task Force. The task force was made up of Westport residents with extensive experience in construction, engineering and HVAC. The task force, chaired by Vanessa Valadares, issued their report on February 1<sup>st</sup>. They concluded that while a great deal of work was required, both inside and outside of CMS, including the purchase and installation of new equipment, the school could be safely opened by August 2020.

To move forward with the CMS remediation, the Board of Finance (BOF) and the Representative Town Meeting (RTM) appropriated \$400,000 for the initial Schematic Design and other Project Management costs to determine if it is cost effective to reopen CMS **and** if CMS can be reopened by August of 2020.

Wiss, Janney, the same firm that conducted the peer review, was hired to prepare the schematic design outlining the entire scope of work required to safely open CMS by August of 2020. Wiss, Janney will subcontract with Kohler Ronan, an engineering firm specializing in Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) for the schematic design of the HVAC system.

The schematic design prepared by Wiss Janney and Kohler Ronan will be used by a still to be hired Construction Management firm to determine the costs and the timeline required to carry out the design.

### **Project Oversight and the Coleytown Middle School Building Committee (CMSBC).**

Town officials and the BOE agreed that a dedicated building committee was needed to **safely** open CMS for the 2020 – 2021 school year.

On Tuesday, March 5th, the RTM established the CMSBC at the same meeting where the \$400,000 was appropriated.

The CMSBC is charged with planning and implementing the renovation and improvement of Coleytown Middle School. Its goal is to safely reopen the building no later than August 2020 by meeting the

following building objectives: 1) controlling humidity; 2) minimizing water incursion and air leakage; and 3) redirecting water away from the building.

A link to the RTM resolution establishing the CMSBC will be found [here](https://www.westportct.gov/index.aspx?page=518) (<https://www.westportct.gov/index.aspx?page=518>).

## **CMSBC Updates**

The first meeting of the CMSBC was held on Wednesday, March 6<sup>th</sup> in room 201 at Town Hall. The meeting was not televised. At this particular meeting, and in comments following the meeting, several points of safety, objective and transparency were raised.

The CMSBC responds with the following points:

- The CMSBC's top priority is opening the CMS by August of 2020. While that is a priority, speed will always take a back seat to safety.
- Meeting the August of 2020 target to safely reopen CMS may prevent the BOE from adding design changes to the charge approved by the RTM. The BOE will provide their input by April 1<sup>st</sup> in order for that input to be included, where possible, in the schematic design for CMS. Changes after April 1<sup>st</sup> have to be considered with an eye as to whether the changes represent a risk to the August of 2020 completion.
- During the meeting, the CMSBC met with project personnel from Wiss, Janney and Kohler Ronan. Members of the CMSBC instructed Kohler Ronan that the HVAC work must be largely new and sustainable.
- All future CMSBC meetings will be televised from either Town Hall or Staples High School. CMS does not have the infrastructure to allow video and live streaming on location, but the committee will attempt to meet at and televise from CMS when possible. All future meetings will be televised and available [here](https://www.westportct.gov/index.aspx?page=306). (<https://www.westportct.gov/index.aspx?page=306>)
- All CMSBC meetings will start with public comment on non-agenda items. Similar to many Boards and Committees in town, each agenda item will be discussed by the Committee members and then public comment will be invited with standard time limits.
- Meeting minutes and other important CMSBC updates can be found [here](https://www.westportct.gov/index.aspx?page=1226). (<https://www.westportct.gov/index.aspx?page=1226>)

## **Next Steps**

The CMSBC timeline that is tentatively in place calls for the schematic design and the cost estimates for remediation to be completed by the end of May. With the approval of the BOE, the CMSBC and the First Selectman will then present the costs along with the construction timeline to the Board of Finance and the RTM in June for approval.

Five Construction Management firms have submitted responses to a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) indicating their interest in being hired to manage the CMS rehabilitation and to assist in the rehabilitation construction estimate. The CMSBC will select the Construction Management firm before the end of March.

If during the May/June timeframe, the cost of remediation be determined to be too high relative to other alternatives, then other conversations must take place about the future of the building.