



School Construction Aid Task Force
January 26, 2024, 1:00 p.m.– 2:00 p.m.

Per [Act 78 of 2023, section E131.1](#) (see page 196), a School Construction Aid Task Force is created to examine, evaluate, and report on issues relating to school construction aid.

Draft Meeting Minutes

Task Force Members Present:

Heather Bouchey, Secretary of Education
Mike Pieciak, State Treasurer
Bruce MacIntire, Vermont School Custodians and Maintenance Association
David Epstein, Gubernatorial Appointee
Chris Young, Vermont Principals' Association Designee
Jon Wilkinson, Gubernatorial Appointee
Jeff Francis, Vermont Superintendent's Association
Sue Ceglowski, Vermont School Boards Association
Martine Gulick, Senator
Michael Gaughan, Vermont Bond Bank
Eric Lafayette, EEI Services
Jeff Fannon, VT NEA
Ben Doyle, Preservation Trust
Peter Conlon, Chair, House Education Committee
Dave Weeks, Senator
Chris Taylor, Representative

Also Attending:

Ashlynn Doyon, Treasurer's Office
Jill Briggs Campbell, Agency of Education
Scott Baker, Treasurer's Office
Jeremiah Breer, Treasurer's Office
Bob Donohue, Agency of Education
Steve Wisloski, PRAG
Tom Huestis, PRAG
Julia Richter, Joint Fiscal Office

Call to Order and Opening Remarks:

While waiting for a co-chair to join, Ms. Doyon directed the Task Force's attention to the new funding/finance section pieces that were circulated the previous evening in the updated draft report.

Treasurer Pieciak called the meeting to order at 1:13 p.m.

Approval of January 8, 2024 Meeting Minutes:

Mr. Doyle moved to approve the meeting minutes from January 8, 2024. Mr. MacIntire seconded the motion. The Task Force approved the minutes unanimously with no additions or changes.

Public to Be Heard (Public Comment):

There were no public comments entered.

Approval of Draft Report for Legislative Submission:

Mr. Lafayette said that he felt that more time for the full Task Force to work collaboratively would be a benefit to the report.

Mr. Francis suggested that it is important to get the final report in front of the committee as quickly as possible in order for them to work on a bill in February. He also had a small language suggestion to make that he sent to Ms. Briggs Campbell via email.

Mr. Epstein agreed that the report should move forward and noted that there would be additional time during the legislative process for Task Force members to provide input.

Mr. Young suggested that the Task Force consider removing Act 46 as a focal point of the report – he expressed concern about what happens to schools if and when we put priorities in place and recommendations in place for school construction and what impact that might have, particularly on smaller rural schools.

Mr. Lafayette reiterated that he thinks there should be some type of money available to all schools or some type of minimum funding source available to everybody.

Mr. MacIntire reminded the Task Force that we are not dictating the details in this report and that there is further legislative discussion to be had.

Mr. Fannon noted that he will support the approval of the report, though he also felt rushed.

Sen. Gulick noted that she thinks that the legislative work will begin in the House and agreed that the Task Force needed to move the report.

Mr. Lafayette asked if it would be possible to submit a first draft of the report and continue working.

Rep. Conlon stated that the committee needs the final report in order to move forward.

Sen. Gulick noted that legislative discussions around the report will be streamed and open for participation.

Mr. Gaughan suggested that there be an increased emphasis on planning funds and potentially capital grants for the adaptive reuse of legacy social infrastructure.

Mr. Doyle echoed this sentiment, as did Mr. Epstein.

The Task Force agreed to add a sub-bullet on Mr. Gaughan's suggestion to the planning grant recommendation in the report.

Ms. Briggs Campbell had additional suggestions to Mr. Young's point, regarding highlighting equity/Act 60.

There was some debate over using the terminology "equally funded".

Mr. Wilkinson directed the Task Force's attention to his contributions to the appendix and the PCB recommendation. Mr. Wilkinson and Mr. Lafayette suggested including Mr. Wilkinson's PCB

recommendation in the body of the report. Other members of the Task Force disagreed and elected to keep that research piece in the appendix.

Sen. Gulick moved for Task Force approval of the final report.

Mr. Francis seconded the motion.

Members of the Task Force thanked the Treasury and AOE staff who worked on the development of the report, for their efforts.

There was no further discussion, and the Task Force approved the motion unanimously.

Adjournment:

The Task Force voted unanimously to adjourn at 2:12 p.m.