

BOND REIMBURSEMENT & GRANT REVIEW COMMITTEE

Wednesday, March 17, 2021 – 3:00 p.m. – 4:31 p.m.

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Committee Members Present

Heidi Teshner, Chair
Senator Roger Holland
Randy Williams
Dale Smythe
James Estes
Kevin Lyon
David Kingsland
Branzon Anania

Staff

Tim Mearig
Lori Weed
Wayne Marquis
Sharol Roys

Additional Participants

Rachel Molina Lodoen, Anchorage SD
Don Hiley, SERRC
Scott Worthington, BDS Architects
Ruby Steedle, AK Council of School
Administrators
Malan Paquette

March 17, 2021

CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL at 3:00 p.m.

Chair Heidi Teshner called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Roll call and introduction of members present. A member from the House of Representatives had not been appointed at the time of this meeting. Quorum was established to conduct business.

CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

Chair Teshner welcomed new members Kevin Lyon and Branston Anania, and guests were recognized and welcomed.

AGENDA REVIEW/APPROVAL

Dale Smyth **MOVED** to approve today's agenda, **SECONDED** by Kevin Lyon. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

PAST MEETING MINUTES REVIEW/APPROVAL – February 25, 2020

The minutes from the February meeting were not included in the packet and will be considered for approval at the April meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

A public comment period was offered, and no public testimony was provided.

NEW MEMBER WELCOME AND ORIENTATION

Chair Teshner introduced the orientation for new members which is in the packet on pages 3 through 16. Tim Mearig addressed the history of the committee and its members. He mentioned that over the years, a more programmed approach to committee assignment and terms had evolved. The duties of the committee are set out in statute, and Tim pointed out that they are remarkably stable since there has been only one substantive change since 1993.

Chair Teshner discussed the meeting structure and mentioned that since the pandemic all the meetings have been virtual. Lori Weed discussed the packet contents and procedure and asked the members if they had a preference for which platform was used for the virtual meetings. Two

members expressed preference for anything except WebEx, two members were more familiar with Zoom, and the others had no preference between Zoom, Teams, and WebEx.

Dale Smythe commented that one of the things the committee does not do is score applications. Tim Mearig explained that the department has a robust process for scoring and evaluating capital improvement project applications with department staff. The work is guided by the application materials approved by the committee.

Chair Teshner discussed the general meeting schedule and procedures, and Lori Weed talked about the packet contents and procedures.

BR&GR WORKPLAN REVIEW & UPDATE

Tim Mearig stated that the department uses the committee's input to develop an annual work plan that gets tweaked throughout the year. The department also has a master work plan, which has not been amended since 2017. Typically, this document would be edited by the department and then updated by the committee, and both documents should reflect the committee's duties as listed in the statutes.

Dale Smythe asked how proposed changes for consideration are brought to the attention of the department. Tim replied that ideas for changes could be proposed by anyone, including a constituent or stakeholder, and then could be forwarded to the chair to make its way onto the agenda as a special item. Also, the committee can ask the department to do research on any item.

Tim explained that some of the changes to the annual work plan are strictly administrative, such as changing dates to reflect the current year. The rest of the proposed changes focus on criteria for cost-effective school construction. Many of the proposed changes are a result of the work of subcommittees that were established in 2017.

The changes in section 3.4 relate to the Design Ratio Subcommittee. Previously the Commissioning Subcommittee had action items in this section but it completed its work last year. Tim noted that the successful closure of a subcommittee should, hopefully, encourage anyone to join and participate in another subcommittee. A communication had been sent to the committee regarding the need to re-establish leadership on some subcommittees. The work of the Model School Subcommittee shows adjustments to the dates for the publication of a handbook for standard for design and construction of schools that have been pushed back to the latter part of 2021.

Section 4 on prototypical school design deals with having a standard school plan that can be used repeatedly to save money on planning and construction. A study on this subject was completed in 2015 and is available on the department's website. That study concluded that there are opportunities when multiple schools are being built at the same time, but there are also some limitations that make it challenging to use the same plans across the variety of school sizes and geographic and climate areas in the state of Alaska.

The dates in Section 5, the grant application and ranking section, have been changed to reflect the annual cycle. Also, the department is working on the space allocation section and some other

challenging areas that might be included in the state's prioritization process or project evaluation process.

Section 6 discusses the processes and recommendations regarding ranking capital projects and how those are funded as well as making sure that the costs are in line with cost-effective school construction. It also includes non-construction costs such as a percent for art, school equipment, and other ancillary elements for new schools or additions. The 13 publications that the department manages are addressed in this section of the plan.

There is no new information for Section 7 regarding energy efficiency standards. Action on this section was finished last year and has passed into regulation, and now the need for commissioning both new and existing buildings in school districts to enhance energy efficiency is recognized.

The upcoming applications for the FY '23 process will be reviewed at the April meeting, formalizing those with the committee, and then getting those approved for the department to issue after the meeting. The districts can then start preparing their applications so they can meet the September 1st deadline.

The July meeting is tentatively scheduled to review the progress that the department is making in publications and standards. Items that are listed on the annual work plan have been included in both the July and September meetings. The September meeting takes place just before the department gets busy evaluating CIP applications. Tim requested that the committee clarify that those are work items they want to do and that they can support those timeframes.

Due to time limits, Tim did not discuss the master work plan. He only pointed out that the publication section has some specific dates in mind to reflect the desire to have the publications updated at a minimum of five-year intervals so that they do not become out of date and unhelpful.

Availability of the members to attend a July meeting was discussed, and most members will be available, but a date certain will have to be decided. This meeting would be primarily for committee review of the Design and Construction Standards Handbook, which Tim had wanted to be available for public comment by July, but that date will have to be extended to September.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Design Ratios

Dale Smythe reported that the subcommittee had developed realistic ratios to use and the logic behind each. He hopes to prepare a summary this month to forward to staff.

School Space

Dale Smythe is interested in this new subcommittee concerning efficiency of school space standards. Even with meeting current space guidelines, there are unintended consequences that affect items such as wall thickness, envelope size, and potential R value. He is looking for members to join and participate.

Chair Teshner invited the new members to join any subcommittee that interested them and also pointed out that a chair is needed for the Model School Subcommittee since Don Hiley is no longer a member.

Tim Mearig commented on the design ratio process, how to measure a building to see if it's an efficiently designed building. He requested that Dale Smythe explain to the committee in April what was considered and how the recommendations came to be. He also would like the committee to consider if more background data is needed before sending it out for public review.

Scott Worthington offered to help in an advisory capacity to bring in the A4LE point of view. He is specifically interested in the space allocation subcommittee.

Tim Mearig reminded everyone that the committee acted in the past to authorize any subcommittee chair to gather members from any sector to provide information and assistance, whether for a specific subject or as a full member. The subcommittees never implement standards but rather refer and recommend to the full committee for action.

PUBLICATIONS

Construction Standards – Part 3 (final draft)

Construction Standards - Part 2 Design Guidance (progress)

Tim Mearig reported that the cover memo is a good overview of this project and its status. He would like to receive direction from the committee on the five bulleted points on page 2 of the memo, especially whether the level of detail is appropriate. He is also looking for people to help fill in gaps in the publication primarily on infrastructure standards and school equipment.

There are two new systems in this version: furnishing and equipment (starting on page 120 of the packet) and the following section dealing with unique systems such as packaged units and whole buildings. These two sections were prepared recently and have not been reviewed by the committee, and all comments regarding those are welcome.

One question brought up in staff review was how much the state is willing to invest in library-type furnishings. The description in the handbook is fairly traditional now, but he raised the subject of media spaces and how media is delivered and what is acceptable as part of a school. David Kingsland mentioned that his wife is a former school librarian and is now the director of the Seward Library and Museum, and he volunteered to ask her to review this section.

Tim also is concerned about duplication of information. For example, specific equipment for CTE is listed in part 3, and in part 2 there are some generalities about that particular type of instructional space.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Dale Smyth stated that he had a lot of comments on the construction standards, and he would submit those by e-mail. He went on to say that he thought it was too specific and that there was some overlap. To him it looks a lot like an ed spec, and he would like to see it get back to the basics of what the state is doing to limit budget and space and then not have so much control on those things that should be covered by some other type of standard. If that approach is used on

the whole document, it would take out of lot of the elements that someone could get bogged down in.

Dale also mentioned that he thought it would be important to note what the state is having to consistently spend money on within existing schools. If there are issues that arise repeatedly, the standard priorities could be directed at those first, so the cost benefit analysis is more balanced.

Dale had a question about the new energy recording standards that have just gone out and how that affects the preventative maintenance document.

David Kingsland had no comments except for saying he has put his wife on the hook.

James Estes welcomed the new members and looks forward to working with them. He also said that he thinks the department is doing a great job with the preventative maintenance and new energy standards.

Randy Williams apologized for being late to the meeting. He is hoping to get involved in one of the subcommittees.

Branson Anania thanked the committee for welcoming him. He would like to participate and help out but needs to look a little further to see where he would fit in best.

Kevin Lyon said he could probably contribute to the model Alaska school subcommittee and could help with some of the design and school construction standards. He agrees with Dale that a more basic approach would be preferable to the ed spec format. He thanked the members for having him on the committee.

Senator Holland looks forward to joining the meetings and seeing how he can offer any assistance.

Chair Teshner thanked Senator Holland and Kevin and Branson and stated that if they wanted to have a one-on-one meeting with the department, that could be arranged.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Chair Teshner **MOVED** to adjourn, **SECONDED** by Dale Smythe. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**, and the meeting adjourned at 4:31 p.m.