2016-09-22 LAG

Town of Reading
Meeting Minutes

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Permanent Building Committee   Killam School Building Committee

Date: 2025-09-08   Time: 7:00 PM

Building: Reading Town Hall   Location: Conference Room

Address: 16 Lowell Street   Session: Open Session

Purpose: General Business   Version: Final

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Pat Tompkins, John Coote, Chris Haley, Kirk McCormick, Shawn Brandt, Greg Stepler, Nancy Twomey, Carla Nazzaro, and Ed Ross.

Members - Not Present:

Others Present:

Chief Finantial Officer Sharon Angstrom, Colliers Project Director Mike Carroll, Colliers Project Manager Justin Ferdenzi, LBA Project Manager Jenni Katajamaki, LBA Architect Leigh Sherwood

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Harani Kumaresh

Topics of Discussion:

This meeting was held in-person in the Town Hall Conference Meeting Room and remotely via Zoom.

Call to order:
Chair Carla Nazzaro called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Roll call attendance: Pat Tompkins, John Coote, Chris Haley, Kirk McCormick, Shawn Brandt, Greg Stepler, Nancy Twomey, and Carla Nazzaro.

Public Comment:
No reports.

Liaison Reports:
Jenni Katajamaki reported that the team had presented to the Community Planning and Development Commission (CPDC) two weeks ago. The CPDC chose to hold a special hearing dedicated to the two major projects in town due to a full regular agenda. The hearing lasted approximately two hours and focused solely on the KES project. At the conclusion of the session, the CPDC voted to approve the site plan review without requesting a continuation, allowing the design team to move forward without delay. Committee members commended the design team for an excellent and professional presentation, noting that it received positive feedback from attendees. Jenni also reported that the team received comments from the MSBA on the Design Development (DD) submittal, describing them as relatively light compared to previous rounds of feedback.

Jenni further provided an update that the geothermal test reports had been received. Carla Nazzaro asked when the response to the MSBA would be due, and Justin Ferdenzi confirmed the reporting period is 14 days.

Chris Haley inquired whether the findings confirmed that the geothermal system would perform as anticipated given the limited number of wells. Jenni explained that the project engineers are still analyzing the data to determine the impact on the design and the number of wells required. The report primarily provides information on the thermal capacity of the wells, and preliminary indications suggest that performance is likely to meet expectations due to the well-established thermal characteristics of the region's geology. The report also noted the presence of a water zone encountered at mid-depth during drilling, with no additional water found at deeper levels, which will need to be managed logistically but does not present major concerns.

CPL Financial Review*

Justin Fredenzi presented a detailed overview of the updated project budget. He noted that the current construction budget remains at $101,152,521, which will stay unchanged until contractor and general contractor bids are received and submitted to the MSBA for the PFA bid amendment. He then reviewed the budget adjustments, noting that there are none for the month of August. Similarly, the commitment tab shows no committed costs for the month.

Justin presented the expenditures to date, including an invoice for services provided in July, along with two Gienapp Architects invoices covering July and August. John Coote inquired whether these invoices concluded Gienapp's involvement; Justin responded that the contract is not yet closed and that the remaining balance will be confirmed.

Next, Justin presented the cash flow sheet and accompanying graph. He noted that the cash flow is currently slightly low, but it is expected to align as the 60% DD submissions are received. The trend is upward, and construction costs are projected to ramp up in May and June of 2026.

On a motion by Nancy Twomey, seconded by John Coote, the Killam School Board Committee voted 8-0-0 to approve the Colliers Invoice #862025 in the amount of $36,660.00 for J. Warren Killam Elementary School Project.

Roll call vote: Pat Tompkins – Yes, Shawn Brandt – Yes, John Coote – Yes, Chris Haley – Yes, Kirk McCormick – Yes, Greg Stepler - Yes, Nancy Twomey – Yes, Carla Nazzaro - Yes.

On a motion by Nancy Twomey, seconded by John Coote, the Killam School Board Committee voted 8-0-0 to approve the Geinapp invoice #682.29.6 in the amount of $13,125.00 for J. Warren Killam Elementary School Project.

Roll call vote: Pat Tompkins – Yes, Shawn Brandt – Yes, John Coote – Yes, Chris Haley – Yes, Kirk McCormick – Yes, Greg Stepler - Yes, Nancy Twomey – Yes, Carla Nazzaro - Yes.

On a motion by Nancy Twomey, seconded by John Coote, the Killam School Board Committee voted 8-0-0 to approve the Geinapp invoice #682.29.7 in the amount of $2,625.00 for J. Warren Killam Elementary School Project.

Roll call vote: Pat Tompkins – Yes, Shawn Brandt – Yes, John Coote – Yes, Chris Haley – Yes, Kirk McCormick – Yes, Greg Stepler - Yes, Nancy Twomey – Yes, Carla Nazzaro - Yes.

CPL Schedule Update

Justin presented an updated project schedule, DD package has been submitted, and comments from the MSBA will be addressed shortly. The 60% CDs will be ready for estimating on October 9, with reconciliation from October 29–31, XLT review on November 4, and SBC approval on November 10. The 90% CDs will follow with estimating from January 16–30, reconciliation from January 30–February 3, XLT review on February 4, and SBC approval on February 9.

Early Package 1 (switchgear and generator) will be ready for SBC voting scheduled for December 12. Early Package 2 (earthwork) will be ready on November 10, with bids due on December 15. Justin suggested adjusting the late-January SBC meeting to coincide with the December 15 bid review to streamline the process.

John Coote inquired if prequalification are required for the early bid packages, Justin and Jenni confirmed that early bid package will be under $10 million and therefore does not require pre-qualification under Chapter 30B procurement rules.

The committee discussed whether early procurement of the switchgear and generator remains necessary given improving lead times in the market. While early procurement can mitigate potential delays, it may reduce pricing leverage typically held by electrical contractors and introduce some risk to the owner if equipment delivery or installation issues occur.

The committee reviewed the early procurement decision timeline. The SBC is scheduled to vote to approve the early package documents on December 8, and then to approve the received pricing on January 12. Members agreed to continue monitoring market conditions to balance cost, schedule, and risk before finalizing the early procurement approach.

Chris Haley asked for perspective on the cost impact of this decision, wondering whether the difference at stake was on the order of tens of thousands of dollars or several million. Mike Carroll highlighted a comparable situation on the Whitman project, where the generator and switchgear package totaled approximately $825,000. If an electrical contractor could achieve a 10% better price, that could translate to savings of around $80,000, whereas a smaller pricing advantage of 2% would save approximately $16,000. However, it was acknowledged that these savings cannot be guaranteed and would only be realized if contractors indeed secure better rates.

Greg Stepler emphasized the importance of continuing to reassess the market, noting that in 2022 some projects faced significant delays due to unavailable equipment like rooftop units and chillers, even when orders were placed at project start. While market conditions have since improved, ongoing diligence is needed to balance cost, risk, and schedule considerations.

Greg reported that the current market remains volatile due to tariffs, with fluctuating lead times and pricing. He noted that large buyers have leverage, but local subcontractors typically do not. For standard equipment, lead times have improved; for example, a recent 600-kW generator required only one week for submittals and a 20-week lead time.

The committee agreed to continue evaluating market conditions and defer a final decision on early procurement until December, when more up-to-date information on lead times and pricing will be available.

Justin noted that a peer review process required at 90% Construction Documents (CDs). Both MSBA and building codes require a steel peer review, along with additional code reviews. He mentioned that the 60% CD set will be used to provide scope for soliciting RFP pricing, with the 90% CD set to be issued to the selected. The goal is to have pricing ready for approval at the February SBC meeting. The draft RFP will be prepared and provided to the Town and XLT for review.

John inquired about the scope of the earthwork package, Mike clarified that initial plan involves cutting down to remove unsuitable soils, then backfilling as needed to approximately 4 feet below grade. Preliminary review suggests most cuts will be around 6 feet, with some areas slightly deeper or shallower. The civil engineer and SBA are refining these estimates. John noted that a significant area at the center of the site, previously a depression or pond before the original Killam School was built in 1968, had been backfilled. This section will require a deeper cut of 12–15 feet to remove the historic fill and reach stable soils. Once excavation is complete, the general contractor will prepare the subgrade and place soil under the slab.

Emergency Generator*

Jenni Katajamaki summarized the he generator sizing for the project. She noted that the original design included a **700 kW generator** to allow partial building operation—including heat, kitchen, and shelter-in-place capacity—in case of an emergency. Following the decision to use the Senior Center as the community's primary emergency shelter, the Fire Chief advised reducing the generator size at Killam. The building still requires backup power to maintain essential functions—such as minimal heating, refrigeration for kitchen food, and critical IT systems—during power outages. The design team recommended a 400 kW generator, which is sufficient to protect the building and its systems. The change is estimated to save approximately $500,000.

On a motion by Pat Tompkins, seconded by Chris Haley the Killam School Board Committee voted 9-0-0 to direct the design team and project team to continue with the design with the 400-kilowatt generator as requested by the fire department, for the J. Warren Killam Elementary School Project.

Roll call vote: Pat Tompkins – Yes, Shawn Brandt – Yes, John Coote – Yes, Chris Haley – Yes, Kirk McCormick – Yes, Greg Stepler - Yes, Nancy Twomey – Yes, Carla Nazzaro – Yes, Ed Ross – Yes.

Establishment of a Finance Working Group.

Carla Nazzaro revisited the proposal to establish a Finance Working Group to streamline the review of financial matters—such as contract awards, amendments, commitments, and invoices—prior to full committee meetings. The goal is to avoid slowing down regular meetings Pat explained that the working group would meet in advance of KSBC meetings to review materials in greater depth, raise any questions with the project team, and bring recommendations to the full committee. This approach, which mirrors the process used on the Recal project, would allow the KSBC to focus on decision-making rather than troubleshooting during meetings.

Kirk volunteered to serve again, citing his prior experience on the Recal group. Phil, as the School Department's Finance and Operations representative, also volunteered. Sharon confirmed her interest in participating, and Kevin expressed his willingness to join as well.

Mike Carroll mentioned that the group would be a working group rather than a subcommittee. As such, it would have no decision-making authority; its role is to review and recommend. All approvals would continue to be made by the full KSBC at open meetings. The OPM and the design team will continue to serve as the primary reviewers of change orders and contractor claims, ensuring technical and contractual issues are thoroughly vetted before recommendations reach KSBC.

Kirk agreed to serve as the chair of the committee and will coordinate with the project team to establish an appropriate meeting schedule. The timing will likely depend on project milestones and the readiness of recommendations from the OPM and design team. with detailed financial discussions while ensuring thorough due diligence.

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes (08/18/25)*

The committee reviewed the draft minutes from the August 18th meeting and noted corrections regarding attendance and voting. Couple of members, including Ed, were incorrectly listed as having voted to adjourn despite being absent, and some members were recorded as present when they were not. The corrected number of attendees for the meeting is five members.

On a motion by Kirk McCormick, seconded by Ed Ross, the Killam School Building Committee voted 9-0-0 to approve the meeting minutes of August 18, 2025 as amended.

Roll call vote: Pat Tompkins – Yes, Shawn Brandt – Yes, John Coote – Yes, Chris Haley – Yes, Kirk McCormick – Yes, Ed Ross – Yes, Greg Stepler - Yes, Nancy Twomey – Yes, Carla Nazzaro – Yes.

Future Agenda Items & Next Meeting Dates

Carla Nazzaro discussed future agenda items and confirmed upcoming meeting dates: Tuesday, October 14th (adjusted due to a holiday on the 13th), Wednesday, November 12th (to accommodate Town Meeting), and the December 8th meeting moved to December 15th. The next agenda will include the reorganization of chair and vice-chair positions. Additionally, the committee will review exterior material samples for the building at the October 14th meeting, with interior materials planned for January.

Adjourn*

On a motion by Kirk McCormick, seconded by Pat Tompkins, the Killam School Building Committee voted 9-0-0 to adjourn at 8:30 pm.

Roll call vote: Pat Tompkins – Yes, Shawn Brandt – Yes, John Coote – Yes, Chris Haley – Yes, Kirk McCormick – Yes, Ed Ross – Yes, Greg Stepler - Yes, Nancy Twomey – Yes, Carla Nazzaro – Yes.