

## **A BRIEF NARRATIVE HISTORY OF SBC EXPENDITURES (12/12/05)**

Since the Annual Town Meeting in May of 2002 when it was first formed, the School Building Committee has spent or has authorized spending roughly \$180,000 on planning, studying, and reviewing options for capital improvements to Stow's elementary schools. In addition, the SBC has expended close to \$484,000 managing interim remedial construction projects at Pompo and Center. While the total amount of funding currently available to the SBC exceeds its outlays by about \$125,000, this sum is not currently approved for all elementary school planning and pre-construction purposes.

Calculating the amounts that the SBC currently has available to spend is complicated by the fact that different Town Meetings granted the Committee funding for different, but specific, purposes. Subsequently, a number of transfers between funding accounts were approved in order that the SBC could complete all aspects of its primary assignment: **to develop a long term solution to the infrastructure needs of Stow's elementary schools.** The purpose of this SBC Spending History is to trace the various funding appropriations and transfers, and then show broadly how these sums were spent. A flow chart depicting this History graphically is set out at Addendum A, while an expense summary detailing the SBC's expenditures more precisely is contained at Addendum B.

### **Original Appropriations**

On May 13, 2002, the ATM creating the Stow SBC and tasking it to evaluate Stow's elementary school needs placed \$125,000 at its disposal for these purposes. (Article 28 Funding). Included in its original mission, the SBC was directed to review

long range enrollment projections and conceptual evaluations, study the feasibility and costs of remodeling, renovating and repairing the Pompo and Center schools, as well as preparing a plan to meet Stow's long range elementary school needs. In the course of the January 2003 Special Town Meeting, upon the recommendation of the Capital Planning Committee, the SBC received an additional spending authorization in the amount of \$60,000 to explore the possibility of building an entirely new school and to resolve water and septic issues that might be involved in renovating the Center School. (Article 4 Funding).

While the SBC's planning work continued, infrastructure and overcrowding problems at Stow's existing grade school structures worsened. Therefore in May of 2003, ATM voted to expend an additional \$595,000 to address health and safety concerns at Pompo and Center, and then charged the SBC with managing and overseeing disbursements on this construction project. (Article 26 Funding). The following year, Town Meeting raised and appropriated an additional \$100,000 to construct six new classrooms out of the existing amphitheatre space at Pompo, again directing the SBC to manage this work.<sup>1</sup> (Article 35 Funding). Accordingly, the total amount appropriated for the SBC's use between 2002 and 2004 for each of the various purposes outlined above was \$880,000.

### **Appropriation Transfers**

The SBC did not expend anything near this total sum, however. For example, by April of 2003 the SBC authorized total payments to its consultants of \$75,682 for preparing a Feasibility Study, but there was more than \$70,000 still available in the Article 28 and 4 Funding accounts. Moreover, the entire remedial

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<sup>1</sup> In May of 2004, ATM also adopted the SBC's recommendation to spend \$230,000 to acquire modular classrooms for use at Pompo, but this purchase and its subsequent installation were not supervised by the SBC.

construction work the SBC had responsibility over was completed in August of 2004 substantially under budget, by over \$211,000.

Rather than request the raising and appropriating of additional funds to continue its work, the SBC petitioned the Town at the 2004 ATM to transfer certain of the remaining sums to different purposes where there was the need. While more efficient and economical, transferring monies between purposes in this fashion was and continues to be highly challenging from an accounting standpoint. But the SBC has painstakingly matched up its outlays to the appropriate funding grants -- both original and amended -- in order that its expenditures remain true to the will of the voters as expressed at the successive Town Meetings.

At the ATM in 2004, the voters authorized the transfer of \$35,000 from Article 28 and 4 Funding for the purposes of preparing conceptual plans and cost projections for a new pre-k to 5 grade school (Article 30 Transfer). At this same Town Meeting, another \$35,000 was transferred from these same accounts for the purpose of finding a site to build a new elementary school (Article 34 Transfer). Currently, there is \$931 remaining in the Article 28 and 4 Funding accounts.

By the beginning of 2005, the SBC had settled for the most part on recommending that the Town build a new elementary school at a new site, and it approached the Board of Selectmen to help it consolidate more of the sums made available to it previously in one account in order to accomplish the work necessary to finalize this recommendation. On February 22, 2005, the Board of Selectmen agreed to the SBC's request to transfer up to \$150,000 from existing accounts to continue work on eight specific planning related projects. The Selectboard-approved transfer came from all of the \$65,431 remaining in the Article 30 and 34 Transfers and \$84,569 out of the Articles 26 and 35 Funding appropriations, or the remedial construction accounts.

The Board of Selectmen's action left a balance of \$126,971 in the remedial construction accounts, but at ATM this past May, the voters agreed to the SBC's proposal to return \$96,971 from these sources to the Town to help fund capital repairs at the Pompo and Center schools urged by the Nashoba Regional School District, leaving the remaining \$30,000 to be transferred and dedicated to investigating the Future Electronic site and to evaluating land acquisition and conducting preliminary conceptual planning that the SBC deemed necessary to make a formal recommendation to the Town for constructing a new school on a new site. (Article 36 Transfer). Following these transfers, the SBC had approximately \$180,000 on hand to spend on its more focused direction, \$30,000 of which, the Article 36 Transfer, was dedicated solely to planning for its expected recommendation of a new school on a new site

### **SBC Expenditures Since the '05 Transfers**

Over the past 11 months, the SBC has paid invoices for an independently conducted enrollment study, evaluation of the suitability of the Future Electronics site (in conjunction with the Town of Bolton), and appraisals and costing work necessary to study the development of the Center school and Kane property sites, along with miscellaneous expenses such as copying, publishing legal notices, legal bills and seminar expenses, in the combined amount of approximately \$29,000. Another \$5,225 was been authorized by the SBC for determining the suitability of the Cushing/Corzine property.

Most recently, the SBC authorized spending \$9,300 to appraise the Minuteman property in light of potential mixed and single purpose uses. In addition, the SBC voted expenditure in the amount of \$5,225 to initially evaluate this site. Finally, the SBC spent \$16,610 to prepare conceptual plans and cost estimates relative to this site which were used in presenting this latest

recommendation at the Special Town Meeting on December 12, 2005.