

**Rechenbleitner, Peter**

**From:** Frederick Van Magness [vanmagness@ahtbi.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 09, 2002 9:05 AM  
**To:** Reading Selectmen (E-mail); Peter Mechenbleitner (E-mail)  
**Subject:** School Project - New High School

I understand that at Tuesday's BOS meeting, you will be asked to have a special election for the schools. Since I will be tied up at a CAB 2003 Budget meeting in North Reading at the time of your session tomorrow, I wanted to get my comments in to you in advance. I strongly urge you to REJECT the recommendation for an early election for the following reasons:

1. First and by no means the least, the Town cannot afford the cost. This is evidenced by last Fall's budget discussions, etc. The money realistically is just not there, even though I'm sure we can fiddle around finding some funds. And the BOS has taken the position in the past that these types of activities should not result in a Special Election.
2. By the invoices from Flansburg (the Architect), as of the end of September, they were already 50% done with the schematic designs. They were already 65% finished with all their activities by the end of September. This is now almost the end of December and I would think they are mostly done with everything.
3. Don't be influenced by the architect's phasing charts that were in the Chronicle on Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>. Look at them VERY CAREFULLY. For example:

Item #9 - Develop RFQ...under the Feb election timetable, it is a 3 week activity in January. Under the April election, it is pushed out to Mid February to early March. Why??? It has nothing to do with when the election is held, by their own admissions under the February election timetable. If it can happen before an election in January, then it can stay on the exact same timetable for the April election...in other words, it can stay as a January activity.

Item #10 - Proposal Period...under February election, it is scheduled for January and ends in late February. Under the April scenario, it starts in early March and ends in early April. Again, no reason why this activity cannot stay as planned under the February election timetable.

Item #11 - Central Register Add appears....under Feb. election, it is scheduled for early February...before the election. Under the April election scenario, it is pushed out to Mid March. Pay close attention to the why's of these slips....

By doing these things on the February election timetable, the SBC/SC will gain at least 3 weeks on their April election timetable. We are only talking about a total difference between an April and February election of about 5 weeks. I have already shown 3 of make-up. I do not see the problem is not a serious scheduling issue.

I am assuming that the funding for all these activities will come from the current funds allocated. The architect/school folks will argue that the timetable for the grant application will be shortened appreciably. I would argue that they can still do all their activities as planned under the February election timetable even if the election is not held until April Town Election. Ask the real question...if the election is held in April as planned, what is the probability that the SBAB proposal will NOT be submitted by the time it is due. I bet the answer is ZERO %.

Another reason to hold off...on big decisions like this, it is imperative that the entire Town have the chance for input into the process and the final decision. Having a Special or Early election could significantly disenfranchise a number of voters who may be out of town...surely that would not be in the best interests of the town and the BOS must try and avoid this pitfall. I see this request as scheduling an election while a portion of the potential voters..."Snowbirds"... may be away in Florida. You can be sure that a special election date would not happen during February School Vacation week.

Again, I urge the BOS to not spend money the town doesn't have by scheduling an extra election in February. There is no way that the School Committee or the School Building Committee will let the proposal to SBAB happen late, regardless of when the election is held. You can rest assured with that. The charts prepared to show a timetable are tilted to show one side of the story. Very nice chartmanship by the architect but not exactly accurate in my opinion. Just one persons view. Good luck with the decision.

Fred  
Frederick Van Magness