

Becker College Leicester Campus

Questions and Answers

- Properties come with the purchase
 - Football and Soccer Fields
 - Veterinary Clinic
 - Dormitories
 - Houses
 - Classrooms
 - Former library
 - Town Common
 - Other

Questions:

1. Which ones will the town use? **It is too early to tell. The facilities and buildings that will likely translate into municipal use are the Campus Center, all fields, the Borger academic center, Marsh and Susan Knight halls, Swan Library, potentially the Vet Clinic and the Gymnasium.**
2. Plan for those we won't use? **They will be either leased or sold.**
3. Do we know what the market value is for the residential buildings which are in a historic residential district? **Not as of yet. We only have assessed value, which has not kept up with fluctuations in market value. We would likely sell them via auction.**
4. What can be done with the dorms? **The dormitories are the most challenging, as two of the three are small, with low ceiling heights. There potential reuse options are being explored with MassDevelopment, which is a state agency that promotes business and housing development.**
5. Will the classroom buildings need renovations for our use? – **In order to move an entire school to the property, additional classroom space will have to be created. The campus has a lot of space but is short on classrooms. MassDevelopment has architects on staff who can look at the property to determine whether there is enough existing space available to use as classrooms.**

At this point, this acquisition of the property is tied to the fact that it is the most historic part of the Town and includes the May House and the Town Common. The lighted turf field will benefit our student athletes, but discussion about the size and grade configuration of a new school on the campus is premature.

6. Will the school accept the properties for school use? – **The School Committee and Administration have stated in several public meetings that they are interested in using the property as a school site.**

7. What will the costs be to own these properties?
 - a. Insurance - **\$52,000 annually**
 - b. Maintenance – **Unknown as of this point**
 - c. Renovations – **To be determined – depends on what is being considered**
 - d. Utilities – **Projected at \$150,000 annually**

- 7a. What are the costs while the campus is mothballed?
 - a. Insurance - **\$52,000 annually**
 - b. Mowing/grounds work – **Estimated at \$100,000**
 - c. Snow removal – **Estimated at \$30,000**
 - d. Security - **\$37,856**
 - e. Utilities – **Estimated at \$100,000**
 - f. Stopgap maintenance – **Placeholder of \$30,144**
Total estimate \$350,000

8. If we look into other houses models will the town accept the changes to our town?
 - a. Homeless Veterans (mental health and substance issues)
 - b. Senior Housing with requirement for Mental Health and Disabled population
 - c. What services do we have to offer these populations?
 - d. Do we have the population that needs these services?

We would have to be careful in choosing a potential partner in this portion of the endeavor, as the dormitories are on the main portion of the campus. If we assume that there will be a school there at some point in time, we need to make sure that the campus area is safe and welcoming.

9. The school system has already demonstrated the inability to maintain properties we need a DPW that manages all town properties. What will this cost? How will we fund it? Will there still be a School Building Committee? **UPDATED - Both**

school and municipal departments have been failing in maintaining buildings and equipment, because there are no funds available in the operating budget for these purposes. Maintenance (for the most part) has been funded through free cash. If departments fund it through their operating budgets, they cut other services to do it.

This is a large campus with nineteen buildings (at the outset). The Town will be managing the Becker buildings and grounds. If at some point, the School Department moves into some of the campus buildings, they will be responsible for cleaning them, but the Town will continue to be in charge of building maintenance. At some point, there will be a need to discuss how to best fund these costs.

If there is a determination that construction or renovation of buildings on the campus is necessary, a School Building Committee will oversee the application and eventual construction/renovation process.

10. Who would oversee the process for the purchase and disposal of this property should this go forward? **The Select Board and Town Administrator would be responsible for acquisition of the property as well as the disposition of portions of the property that the Town has no use for. Approval at Town Meeting and a special election would be required to acquire the property, as well as dispose of portions of it. The authorization for both acquisition and disposal is part of the warrant article that will be considered by voters on September 14.**
11. Can we counter-offer for just those properties that we are interested in? **Becker is offering the property in its entirety to the Town to clear its books with one transaction. They may have been able to see for some pieces of the campus at a premium, but they likely could not sell all of it That gives them the incentive to wait on the Town's electoral process.**
12. I need clarification for the \$ 2 million that the select board is asking for us tax payers to pay please. Any documentation would be appreciated. **The \$2,070,000 is essentially a project contingency to fund items associated with the Becker purchase, such as legal fees, building studies, architectural costs, etc. The fund would also give us the ability to undertake repairs should they become necessary, such as boilers, roofing, mold remediation, HVAC etc. This fund would be different from the request for a transfer from free cash that you will also see at Town Meeting. That transfer would fund recurring operational expenses, such as mowing, utilities, security, and insurance. You cannot borrow funds for recurring expense.**

As you may recall, the Board considered an override to fund a DPW and a maintenance program but shelved it because some of the costs associated with Becker are speculative at this point. Without available funds for major repairs, should they become necessary, the campus will quickly degrade. That is the purpose of the additional funding.

13. Awesome event last night people seem to be very happy we have this opportunity. One person I was talking to said they had concerns of the kids walking across to the gym. Would we ever think of a foot bridge over the road? **Safety will be our first priority as we assemble a potential campus style school. We will consider all options to ensure that we have a safe crossing to the gymnasium.**