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amined. Rene reviewed a long list of concerns in no order of importance:

The electrical wiring is 40 years old. National Electrical Code suggests replacing wiring after 20 years. Forty years isn't even on the charts.

The school needs a sprinkler system. Proctor Academy has upgraded their system, and Andover may be able to tap into that infrastructure to get the necessary water pressure.

In order to protect the building envelope, a fire wall needs to be constructed between the old 1934 building and the rest of the school. This would prevent the rapid spread of fire throughout the building. This is not a student safety concern, as the students are able to vacate the building very quickly. The concern is for times when the school is unoccupied, and the building needs to be protected.

The fire alarm system is dated but it works. Tests have shown that there are minor, sporadic failures in the system, but overall what we have is adequate.

The communication system definitely needs addressing. In the world of fire fighting, all firefighters can communicate with each other, which is crucial for safety. In our school, there is currently no way to operate the public address (PA) system except from the office. Any teacher should be able to activate the PA system to ensure communication from classroom to classroom. The Task Force feels strongly that this

system needs to be updated.

There are two stairways that don't meet code. The staircase in the old building leading down to the art room is too narrow for safe evacuation. This is a project that should be engineered out.

The location of the kitchen adjacent to two classrooms poses an imminent threat to student/staff safety in the event of a kitchen fire. The only egress from the two second story classrooms is past the kitchen/cafeteria. This must be engineered out.

Rene presented information from Jane Hubbard, who was unable to attend, about the school's use as an emergency shelter for the community. Jane has provided the school with information about obtaining an emergency generator, both for the school's purposes, and as a way to ensure water, heat, and lights for the community in the event of an emergency.

Educational Space Issues

The final presenter was AE/MS principal Jane Slayton. Jane explained that enrollment appears to be holding steady and the school has an adequate number of regular education classrooms, although we would need one more classroom to have two for each grade.

The school staff has been good about sharing space when appropriate. For example, health education and German can be held in classrooms which are vacant for a class period. The middle school wing is fine with classroom sizes that meet code.

Space for special education is of particular concern. Our current space is limited and substandard. There are two core special education classes in our school. The room designated for Kindergarten through fourth grade is shared by reading recovery and the speech and language paraprofessional. The room also houses the main electrical panel for the building.

The core special education room for grades five through eight is on the lower level with no windows, no ventilation, and inadequate space for the number and age of the students. Neither room offers privacy or freedom from distraction.

Occupational therapy takes place in the former physical education closet. Speech and language services are offered five days a week and take place in hallways, sometimes near fire exits, and in the old physical education storage closet.

Title One services, which provide academic support in reading and math, are provided in a corner of the library, the backs of classrooms, or in the hallways. Counseling must also share space with speech and reading services. Jane noted that the most distractible students are having to learn in the busiest, most public areas of the school.

Conference space is needed which is confidential and quiet. Currently, parent/staff conferences are held either in the front half of the assistant principal's office or in an empty classroom with limited time.

Handicap accessibility to the build-

ing is awkward. A person arriving in a wheelchair must approach the doors to the gym lobby, ring the buzzer, and hope that someone hears. The wait to be let into the building can be awkward and uncomfortable. The Task Force finds this disrespectful to parents and community members with physical disabilities.

The teachers' work and lunch room is currently occupying a corner space in the custodians' office and storage room. They must eat alongside the lawn mower and cleaning supplies. There is no private space for a teacher to return parent phone calls.

Paul Fenton thanked the presenters and called for questions or comments from the public. Gary Peters commended the Task Force for their difficult and thorough job. There were no other questions or comments from the floor.

Next Steps

At the next regular School Board meeting on November 7, the Board will vote on whether or not to accept the Task Force recommendations. If the Board accepts them, they go to the architect and engineer, Banwell Associates, to be turned into an appropriate plan.

On November 21, the Board hopes to vote on the architects' recommendations, and on November 29, the Board would review everything with the Andover Budget Committee.

If everything stays on track, watch for public meetings in January and February to explain and build public support for the plan.

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