

Keefe Auditorium Commission
Thursday, June 4, 2026
City Hall, Room 208
4:30 PM

The Keefe Auditorium Commission met on the above date in Room 208 of City Hall, called to order by Chairman Dennis Schneider at 4:30pm. In attendance were Shawn Smith, Dennis Schneider, Carl Daniel O'Donnell and Joseph Olefirowicz. Also in attendance was Amy DeRoche, Tim Cummings, Mark McKevez (Icon Architects) and Joe Mobelia (Icon) joined the meeting via remote connection.

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

Approval of Meeting Minutes of May 7, 2026. Motion by Daniel O'Donnell, seconded by Shawn Smith, to accept minutes. So Voted 3-0 with one abstaining.

MEETING OVERVIEW

Mark McKevez reviewed multiple renovation and redevelopment options for the theater, ranging from minimal upgrades to nearly new construction, with costs spanning from \$16.8 million to \$94 million.

Option 2A and 2B are viable midpoints.

- Option 2A includes expanded backstage spaces, rehearsal rooms fitted to proscenium specs, loading corridors, and minor demolition, totaling approximately \$34.5 million including soft costs.
- Option 2B is more compact, with less demolition and smaller multipurpose spaces, costing around \$32.5 million, about \$2 million less than 2A.
- Both options keep the second floor mostly unchanged and provide improved backstage access and functional spaces for users.
- The key difference between 2A and 2B is the footprint and extent of demolition, with 2A providing larger spaces and more renovation.
- Option 3 involves significant new construction including a second floor, elevator, and structural reinforcement, increasing cost by about \$20 million over options 2A/2B. New seating is only included starting in option 3, adding roughly \$1 million.
- Option 4 proposes a new building retaining the existing facade, with a projected cost near \$94 million, representing a full replacement rather than renovation.

- Option 1 is minimally viable but of limited use. It is code compliant but not attractive for larger or touring productions. It primarily supports existing small community users, with limited revenue potential. Major expenses are HVAC, electricity, plumbing and fire protection, since existing utilities will be cut off when the old Elm Street school is demolished.

In general, the differences in options reflect trade-offs between cost, usability, and potential to attract larger productions.

Cost Estimates and Pricing Updates

- All current options have been repriced to reflect updated construction costs and program changes.
- The estimates are expressed in 2028 dollars and include trade costs, markups, and soft costs.
- The commission agreed that the small cost difference between 2A and 2B makes them roughly comparable in value for the program delivered.

Presentation Strategy and Commission Recommendations

The commission plans to present a clear status update to the Board of Aldermen, focusing on a rational cost range and footprint options without overwhelming detail. This will include the four main options with a column of simple comments summarizing feasibility, usability, and attractiveness.

- Emphasize that Option 1 offers basic code compliance but limited appeal and utility.
- Highlight that Options 2A and 3 offer increasingly usable and attractive facilities for community and touring productions.
- Avoid technical minutiae and focus on conveying the range of investment and outcomes.
- Avoid overloading with fundraising and operational details.
- The presentation will not include fundraising strategies or detailed operating models.
- The commission will request guidance on next steps, potentially including schematic design funding and further research.
- Keep the presentation focused on what has been accomplished and what remains to be decided.

Chairman Dennis Schneider will provide the presentation to the Alderman. Tentatively this will occur at their meeting on Tuesday, June 23, 2026.

Action Items

Mark and Project Team

- Share updated presentation materials including bullet points for each renovation option and clarify cost inclusions and exclusions.

Dennis Schneider

- Prepare a concise PowerPoint presentation for aldermen summarizing the four main renovation options, their costs, and usability in bullet points.
- Submit finalized presentation materials by June 17th to meet the scheduled alderman presentation date on June 23rd.
- Coordinate with city staff to ensure the commission is placed on the alderman agenda and confirm the presentation timeline.
- Arrange one-on-one discussions with commission members to review and refine presentation content prior to submission.

Commission Members

- Attend the aldermen meeting on June 23rd or 24th to support the presentation and respond to questions.
- Review and provide commentary on PowerPoint presentation drafts before the June 17th submission deadline.

Next Meeting: Thursday, July 2, 2026 at 4:30pm in room 208 of City Hall.

Motion to adjourn by Joseph Olefirowicz, seconded by Shawn Smith. Meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Shawn M. Smith, Auditorium Commission Secretary