



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

June 30, 2022

REPORT OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE SPECIAL COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Beatriz GomezMouakad	Chair	Present	
Lance L. Davis	Vice Chair	Present	
Jesse Clingan	Ward Four City Councilor	Present	

Others present: Rich Raiche - Capital Projects, Jill Lathan - DPW, Marc Hamel - DPW, Andre Green - School Committee, Laura Pitone - School Committee, Hannah Carrillo - Legislative Liaison, Peter Forcellese - Legislative Clerk.

The meeting took place virtually via GoToWebinar and was called to order at 6:04 PM by Chair Gomez Mouakad and adjourned at 7:43 PM on a roll call vote of 2 in favor (Councilors Davis and Gomez Mouakad), none against and 1 absent (Councilor Clingan).

Chair Gomez Mouakad explained that future meetings of this committee will be held jointly with the School Committee or one of its committees. Noting that the City Council oversees all city buildings, Chair Gomez Mouakad said that the purpose of the committee is to get everyone on the same page with respect to school buildings. School Committee member Laura Pitone spoke about sharing the work and increasing transparency and accountability to ensure that the proper resources are available. The School Department has assigned John Callahan as the Director of Facilities Management for school buildings. DPW Commissioner Jill Lathan pointed out that Mike Bowler, from the DPW, is the Facilities Manager for all city buildings, including school buildings. Chair Gomez Mouakad mentioned several of the problems being experienced in the schools and said that she would like to perform crisis management without disrupting any classroom instruction.

School Buildings - Parks

213071: That the Executive Director of the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development provide an update on the status of work and finances of the Community Preservation Act grants of 2018 for the Brown School and West Somerville Neighborhood School playground designs and the continuing plans for the projects.

Councilor Davis inquired about the status of the schoolyard at the Brown school. Director Raiche replied that an update from project manager Arn Franzen, who was unable to attend this meeting, was forwarded to the School committee. Chair Gomez Mouakad Chair reported that an RFP has gone out for the project and construction is expected to commence in August/fall of this year. Councilor Davis noted that the workings of local government are moving at a slow pace and he commented on the need for a plan to minimize disruptions and provide for an outdoor space for students during construction.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

School Building - Maintenance Systems and Staff

213114: That the Commissioner of Public Works identify, and provide the information requested within, staff who are designated to school building maintenance and management.

Discussed with 213115.

Superintendent Hamel stated that a member of his staff is cataloging HVAC systems in the schools and identifying potential problems. Not counting major repairs, the repairs and maintenance that need to be performed will cost approximately \$700,000. Andy Rider, the city's Preventive Maintenance Manager, has created a database to catalog all HVAC devices in the city, including their parts, e.g., valves. Superintendent Hamel reported that there will be 39 custodians for the schools and that he has enough staff to handle small carpentry, electrical and plumbing repairs. He told the committee that a balance needs to be reached when contracting out repairs.

The elevators at the Winter Hill and East Somerville Schools need repairs and a new elevator vendor was brought on board as of a month ago under a 1-year contract. Because there are up to 5 different elevator manufacturers used in the system and the elevators are of different ages, Superintendent Hamel has requested that the same technician be assigned to all elevator calls in the city to provide consistency.. Director Raiche said that the contract between the DPW and Cannistraro, the mechanical contractor, is different and far more robust than the one it had with Honeywell.

Councilor Davis commented that he did not see a vendor for composting at the schools and he asked Liaison Carrillo to follow up on this.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

213115: That the Commissioner of Public Works identify vendors contracted for school building maintenance and the scope of their contracts.

Discussed with item# 213114.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

212962: That the Commissioner of Public Works report on all school building deferred maintenance projects completed following the ventilation system assessment, proposed completion dates, and strategies to assess needs for future deferred maintenance projects.

Commissioner Lathan said that the DPW has been working with IAM and needs more time to address the issues.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

213889: That the City Solicitor review the design issues related to ineffective shades and placement of projector equipment in the high school auditorium and seek recovery for costs to the city or other legal recourse available.

Councilor Davis explained that the cost to correct these problems, which seem to be the result of a poor design, is about \$30,000 and he would like someone other than the city to incur the cost.. Director Raiche stated that Solicitor David Shapiro will be submitting a formal response on this matter. Director Raiche said it's important to understand recourse in matters such as this and went on to explain that designers are not expected to be perfect - they're expected to perform their job with a general standard of care. It's understood that there will be errors that will require some design changes as well as errors of omission. The high school project is at about 2% in errors and the percentage for filing a lawsuit is around 5, therefore, he doesn't think there is a legal recourse to recoup any money for these problems.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

213892: That the Administration respond to educator and parent concerns regarding building maintenance and capital improvements for the Winter Hill School.

Superintendent Hamel told the committee that his team is working with Director Raiche's team and that they're in the process of making a list of mechanical repairs needed at the Winter Hill School. The smaller repairs will be handled by the DPW while larger ticket items will be processed through Capital Projects. Director Raiche reported that funding is available to perform a district wide assessment of school buildings. He also said that the Winter Hill School will be evaluated for potential renovation. The previously installed Honeywell equipment needs to be replaced and that will take some time to accomplish. Long term resolution could involve replacing some systems since parts are no longer made. Superintendent Hamel explained the failure of the school's air conditioning system saying that as the chiller was being charged, multiple leaks were discovered and repaired. There was then a seal failure and although an overnight shipment of the seal was promised, it took 2 weeks to receive it.

Chair Gomez Mouakad requested that a more detailed list of problems be provided at the next committee meeting.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

213898: That the Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management report on all major repairs and work orders for the Winter Hill Community School and the Brown School over the past five years.

Councilor Davis stated his surprise that some of the bigger problems weren't included on the list. He spoke about past problems at the Brown School, e.g., the roof collapse during a snowstorm as well as roof leaks over the course of many years. He noted that there was no central method of monitoring problems and repairs over time, saying that maintenance programs need to be implemented to avoid future problems. Chair Gomez Mouakad commented that the intent is to understand what happened in the past so that future problems can be prevented.

Director Raiche said the list is not complete due to a division of labor between IAM and DPW. Despite the multiple roof repairs at the Brown School, the leaks have persisted. Data is now being centralized and efforts are underway to implement a robust system to capture all maintenance and repairs across all assets, with buildings being the most complex. A report is provided to the mayor on a bi-weekly basis to keep the visibility of the importance of this matter.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

213897: That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management report on the status of the 1895 building.

Director Raiche said that a presentation was made to City Council in Nov of 2021 and is available here: <https://www.somervillema.gov/buildingmasterplan>. The 1895 building is not suitable for educational purposes but is suitable for office space. School Committeewoman Pitone pointed out that the building has not been released by the School Department to the city and is being considered for use by SCALE. She noted that there is no space to house students in the event that current class space is not able to be used.

Chair Gomez Mouakad asked if the administration has any plans for the building and Director Raiche said that the city has infinite needs and finite resources. He stated that a decision needs to be made on the future of the building soon. Chair Gomez Mouakad noted she would bring this item back to committee in a few months to provide proper follow-up as this is a Somerville Public Schools Building and as per School Committee Member Pitone it is still unclear what school services could remain in the building to support school functions.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Reference Material:

- PSUF response to City Council Request (with 213071)
- CC Response 2.24.22 Submitted 3.16.22 (with 213114, 213115)
- CC Response 5.16.22 PUPW Final 5.12.22 (with 212962)
- WH Brown (with 213898)