



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council School Building Facilities and Maintenance Special Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 28, 2023

6:30 PM

Joint Meeting with the School Committee's Finance and Facilities Subcommittee.

This meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order by Chair Gomez Mouakad at 6:48 pm and adjourned at 8:11 pm with a roll call vote of all in favor (Councilor Davis, Councilor Clingan and Chair Gomez Mouakad), none opposed, and none absent.

The meeting started late due to technical issues with Zoom.

Others present: Neha Singh – Mayor’s Office, Laura Pitone – School Committee, Emily Ackman – School Committee, Sara Dion – School Committee, Sean Callahan – Somerville Public Schools, Rich Raiche – IAM, Jill Lathan – DPW, Stephanie Widzowski – Clerk of Committees.

IAM and DPW published a written response to agenda items, which informed the discussion. It is attached to the agenda as “2023-06-28 Joint CC-SC School Building Cmt Response 2023Jun28”.

Roll Call

Present: Chairperson Beatriz Gomez Mouakad , Vice Chair Jesse Clingan and Lance L. Davis

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [23-0723](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the School Building Facilities and Maintenance Special Committee Joint Meeting of May 1, 2023.

RESULT: ACCEPTED

AYE: Chairperson Gomez Mouakad, Vice Chair Clingan and Ward Six City Councilor Davis

2. Resolution (ID # [23-0972](#)) By Councilor Clingan, Councilor Burnley Jr., Councilor Davis, Councilor Ewen-Campen, Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Scott, Councilor Strezo and Councilor Wilson

That the Administration expedite the planning, design and construction of the Winter Hill Community Innovation School to ensure the re-opening of said school as soon as possible.

Dir. Raiche reviewed the written response from IAM and DPW, talked about recent and upcoming meetings with school staff to assemble an integrated team, and noted that the Senior Project Manager has already started work. Chair Gomez Mouakad noted that there had been requests for more data in the study, which Dir. Raiche said that staff are now addressing. Ms. Pitone

asked about possibilities for furthering data and bringing in a consultant. Dir. Raiche said that could be possible, but they are still determining if the work can be done internally. Chair Gomez Mouakad also asked if there will be community engagement in the planning process. Dir. Raiche said they will start the engagement process once there is a better understanding of the scope of work, likely in the fall. Councilor Clingan asked if there are ways not to use MSBA funding, which Dir. Raiche said is too early to call one way or another.

Councilor Davis asked about “medium-term” plans for the Winter Hill community, which led to a discussion of whether the existing building would fit the needs of the community if renovated. Dir. Raiche said that the Edgerly building will be used starting at the end of August, and because staff are trying to avoid moving students during the school year, students will likely be at the Edgerly for a minimum of a year. Dir. Raiche said that they are not ruling out alternatives for the following school year.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

3. Order
(ID # [23-0984](#))

By Councilor Gomez Mouakad
That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management and the Commissioner of Public Works present to this City Council, the building failures that took place in the Winter Hill Community Innovation School and a plan for assessing those failures.

Dir. Raiche presented on the plan for addressing failures in the Winter Hill school and said that the next step is to run more intensive tests that will take some time to complete. He noted that the stress testing and the evaluation process as a whole justifies the expense to the MSBA and to the insurance company. Ms. Pitone added that this investigative work is important for taxpayers as well, given that the project will likely exceed \$100 million. Chair Gomez Mouakad noted that the inspection was purely visual and asked when additional work will take place. Dir. Raiche said that they are doing that work concurrently with work on the Edgerly building, and added that the city has a DCAM waiver that will allow for an expedited procurement process.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

4. Order
(ID # [23-0985](#))

By Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Councilor Clingan and Councilor Wilson
That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management dedicate full time staff and/or create new position(s) to the planning, design and construction process for the Winter Hill Community Innovation School and the Benjamin Brown School and include this position in the FY 2024 budget.

Councilor Clingan asked about the Senior Project Manager and who the Committee will interact with going forward. Dir. Raiche said that the position was filled by internal promotion and becomes official July 1. He added that the Director will still report to the Committee. Chair Gomez Mouakad asked about the nature of the project manager's work.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

5. Order
(ID # [23-0986](#))

By Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Councilor Clingan and Councilor Wilson That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management work with the School Department to create milestones for the academic programming needed for the planning and design of a new school building or for retrofitting an existing school building, and create a parallel collaboration program, meeting weekly or bi-weekly, to move this work forward.

Dir. Raiche said that he is having many meetings with Somerville Public Schools staff at different levels, but it will be difficult to map out a plan until the data has been explored fully. Councilor Clingan suggested co-committees for programming and transportation. Ms. Pitone said that the School Committee wants to see a detailed plan with a timeline, and she is confident that the city and School Committee will make it happen.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

6. Order
(ID # [23-0987](#))

By Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Councilor Clingan and Councilor Wilson That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management explain what Request for Proposals (RFP) will be necessary for consultant services for planning and architectural services for any future school building programming and planning, and expedite those RFPs.

Dir. Raiche noted that an Owner's Project Manager (OPM) is required for a project of this size. Councilor Clingan requested this information in a visual format, and Dir. Raiche said that he would work on that, but it would not be ready before September.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

7. Resolution
(ID # [23-0988](#))

By Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Councilor Clingan and Councilor Wilson That the Administration work with the School Department to develop emergency plans for at-risk school relocation including, but not limited to, the Winter Hill Community Innovation School and the Benjamin Brown School.

Dir. Raiche reviewed the written response in the agenda attachment and said that arrangements for an alternative relocation space were left in place with

the Arch Diocese. Ms. Pitone requested a timeline for emergency plans.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

8. Resolution
(ID # [23-0989](#))

By Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Councilor Clingan and Councilor Wilson That the Administration create a permanent staff position for a Superintendent of School Buildings within the Department of Public Works to oversee all maintenance, repairs and assessments of school buildings, and include this position in the FY 2024 Budget.

Taken together with items 23-0990 and 23-0991. Commissioner Lathan reviewed the written response in the agenda attachment. Chair Gomez Mouakad asked about building capacity and for the status of the Building Superintendent position. Commissioner Lathan said that the position is open, but DPW is far along in the hiring process and expects to fill it soon. She added that the Building Systems Manager position created in FY24 will focus on systems.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

9. Resolution
(ID # [23-0990](#))

By Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Councilor Clingan and Councilor Wilson That the Administration evaluate the need to create permanent staff positions within the Department of Public Works for school buildings that address the highest needs of our school buildings including, but not limited to: mechanical systems, plumbing systems, fire alarm and electrical systems and exterior envelope and structural systems.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

10. Resolution
(ID # [23-0991](#))

By Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Councilor Clingan and Councilor Wilson That the Administration include in the FY 2024 budget, \$150,000 for an exterior envelope consultant to assess ongoing leaks in school buildings.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

11. Resolution
(ID # [23-0992](#))

By Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Councilor Clingan and Councilor Wilson That the Administration develop a five-year assessment plan for school building systems and structures for all schools over five years old, to ensure proper funding is in place for capital repairs and to ensure the safety and uninterrupted operation of schools.

Chair Gomez Mouakad stated the need for building envelope evaluations. Dir. Raiche replied that the city's focus is on HVAC first and other systems next.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

12. Resolution
(ID # [23-0993](#))

By Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Councilor Clingan and Councilor Wilson
That the Administration publish yearly on the city website, a list of ongoing school repairs and improvements, similar to that posted by Chelsea Public Schools, and provide a yearly report to the City Council of such repairs and improvements before and after completion.

Commissioner Lathan said that DPW is planning to update its website in the next fiscal year and would consider incorporating this feedback. Ms. Pitone mentioned a report received from DPW in January about maintenance work and asked whether there were plans to have that report shared quarterly. Chair Gomez Mouakad said that this would be a similar report intended for sharing with the public. Commissioner Lathan said that she would follow up on the status of those reports.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Referenced Documents:

- SBFM - 2023-06-28 Joint CC-SC School Building Cmt Response 2023Jun28