City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council School Building Facilities and Maintenance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 30, 2026 **6:00 PM**

Joint Meeting with the School Committee's School Building Facilities and Maintenance Committee

This meeting was held virtually via Zoom and was called to order at 6:03 pm by Chair Link and adjourned at 7:08 pm with a roll call vote of 3 in favor (Councilors Scott, Sait and Link), 0 opposed.

Others present: Leiran Biton - School Committee Member, Laura Pitone - School Committee Member, Elizabeth Eldridge - School Committee Member, Richard Raiche - Infrastructure and Asset Management Director, Amanda Nagim-Williams - Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Eric Weisman - Commissioner of Public Works, William Fisher - Director of Emergency Management, Amara Anosike - Somerville Public Schools Chief of Staff, Delaney Fisher-Cassiol - Clerk of Committees

The committee entered recess at 6:03pm and returned at 6:04pm on a roll call vote of 3 in favor (Councilors Scott, Sait and Link), 0 absent.

Roll Call

Present:	Ward Two City Councilor Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott, Ward Five City Councilor Naima Sait and City Councilor At Large Jon Link

1. Committee Minutes (ID # **26-0503**)

Approval of the Minutes of the School Building Facilities and Maintenance Committee Meeting of March 23, 2026.

RESULT:	**ACCEPTED**
AYE:	Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Five City Councilor Sait and City Councilor At Large Link

2. Resolution (ID # **26-0063**)

By Councilor Link and Councilor Wheeler

That the Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of Engineering explore the feasibility of establishing a teen center at the Cummings School, accessible via School Street, considering current building uses and provide this Council with an analysis on space availability, operational considerations, community impacts, and potential next steps.

AMENDMENT: That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management ~~Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of Engineering~~ explore the feasibility of establishing a teen center at the Cummings School, accessible via School Street, considering current building uses and provide this Council with an analysis on space availability, operational considerations, community impacts, and potential next steps.

AMENDMENT: That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management ~~Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of Engineering~~ explore the feasibility of establishing a teen center at the Cummings School, accessible via School Street, considering current building uses and provide this Council with an analysis on space availability, operational considerations, community impacts, and potential next steps.

Richard Raiche, Infrastructure and Asset Management Director, reported that a consultant was brought in to conduct an evaluation, which has now been completed. He noted that there are numerous code and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) upgrades required to make the building functional. Draft concepts and associated cost estimates have been reviewed, and they would like to wrap up this phase by May. Councilor Scott expressed appreciation and asked about the estimated cost. Director Raiche explained that the Cummings School consists of two separate buildings, and that the concepts under consideration include renovating either one building or both. He stated that renovating the older building is estimated at approximately $10 million, while renovating both buildings would cost around $30 million, and that a full report will be available in May. In response to a question from Chair Link regarding ADA improvements, he noted that the building's façade is separating and that there is no elevator in the building.

William Fisher, Director of Emergency Management, reported that a planning team has been established and has been meeting weekly since the beginning of the year. The team is working to identify resources and staffing at each school and to develop a plan to ensure continuity of services if a school needs to be relocated. He added that they will conduct a simulated school disruption to inform the development of a comprehensive plan, which is tentatively expected to be completed in August.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

3. Resolution (ID # **26-0491**)

By Councilor Davis

That the Administration update this Council on plans to upgrade electrical and air conditioning equipment for the gym and cafeteria at the Edgerly School.

Richard Raiche, Infrastructure and Asset Management Director, noted that there will be limited updates on the electrical upgrades until next fall or spring, and added that coordination with Eversource will be necessary due to insufficient electrical capacity in the building and surrounding area, requiring the installation of an additional transformer. Eric Weisman, Department of Public Works Commissioner, reported that he has been in communication with the school and identified high temperatures in the kitchen and cafeteria as the primary concern. He shared that a 5-ton industrial air conditioning unit has been procured to cool the space for food service staff and cafeteria occupants, and that it is expected to arrive within four weeks.

Amara Anosike, Somerville Public Schools Chief of Staff, noted that the A.I.M. (Adapt, Include, Motivate) program operates in the space during the summer and that it has been difficult to provide food service when the cafeteria is too hot for cooking, and she expressed appreciation for the efforts to address the issue. School Committee Member Leiran Biton expressed interest in adding a future agenda item to track the temperature differential after installation of the unit and to receive an update.

NOTE: after the meeting was adjourned, a correction was issued and the committee was informed the AC will only cool the kitchen area and not the general cafeteria.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

4. Resolution (ID # **26-0521**)

By Councilor Sait

That the Commissioner of Public Works address the radiator dysfunction in one of the Kennedy School classrooms.

Eric Weisman, Commissioner of Public Works, reported that the issue in Classroom 209 involved an unusual configuration, as the corner room is served by two separate systems. He noted that there had been a valve issue on one side and a control issue on the other, both of which have now been addressed, and that the space should be responding as expected.

Councilor Sait shared that a parent had reached out regarding the issue, and that she contacted Commissioner Weisman, who addressed it promptly, expressing appreciation for the response. Commissioner Weisman added that the issue had also been reported multiple times through 311.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

5. Resolution (ID # **26-0709**)

By Councilor Davis

That the Administration report to the School Committee and this Council, on indoor air quality conditions at the Kennedy School, specifically regarding mold and humidity levels, and outline steps being taken to address them.

Eric Weisman, Department of Public Works Commissioner, reported that he was not previously familiar with the issue and was unable to locate related 311 reports, but noted that his department has been meeting with the School Department on the matter. He emphasized that, with respect to water and humidity concerns, it is critical to respond to leaks and potential mold conditions as quickly as possible by removing moisture and any standing water, though he stated that he did not have a specific update at this time. In response to a question from Chair Link regarding how mold and humidity are measured, Commissioner Weisman explained that humidity levels can be measured directly, while mold testing would require an outside vendor.

He added that such vendors typically assess visible signs and odors, as there is no single standardized process.

School Committee Member Laura Pitone noted, in response to a question from Chair Link, that moisture and potential mold had been identified in a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) room that was formerly a closet. School Committee Member Leiran Biton added that during budget season, the School Committee meets with Somerville PTAs, which provide updates on successes and concerns, and that the Kennedy School PTA had shared that educators raised concerns and inquired about future remediation plans. Commissioner Weisman suggested creating a more formalized process for reporting and follow-up, and stated that the next immediate step will be to conduct an investigation into the reported concerns.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

6. Resolution (ID # **26-0241**)

By Councilor Link and Councilor Mbah
That the Administration provide the Committee on School Building Facilities and Maintenance with regular updates on the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) process for the Winter Hill and Brown Schools.

Richard Raiche, Infrastructure and Asset Management (IAM) Director, reported that preliminary designs have been submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) and are currently under review. He noted that the MSBA had requested additional information, including a condition assessment of the Brown School, which IAM had anticipated and was able to provide immediately, avoiding months of delay. He added that the project team is continuing to develop schematic designs and conduct community outreach. Director Raiche also reported that a well-attended community workshop focused on sustainability was held, and that an additional workshop was conducted specifically for younger children as part of the engagement process.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

7. Officer's Communication (ID # **26-0266**)

Director of Infrastructure & Asset Management conveying the Strategic Asset Management Plan report.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

8. Order (ID # **26-0135**)

By Councilor Sait
That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management update this Council on when the school buildings maintenance project website will be available.

Richard Raiche, Infrastructure and Asset Management Director, shared that there is no update at this time due to other competing priorities.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Referenced Documents:

- SBFM - 2026-04-30 Memo (with 26-0521)