



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council School Building Facilities and Maintenance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 23, 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 7:33 pm with a roll call vote of 3 in favor (Councilors Scott, Sait and Link), 0 opposed.

Others present: Leiran Biton - School Committee Member, Committee Chair, Laura Pitone - School Committee Member, Elizabeth Eldridge - School Committee Member, Rich Raiche - Infrastructure and Asset Management Director, Danielle Barry - School Department Facilities, Safety and Transportation Coordinator, Amanda Nagim-Williams - Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Matthew Bennett - Superintendent of Buildings, Eric Weisman - Public Works Commissioner and Delaney Fisher-Cassioli - Clerk of Committees

The committee entered recess at 6:05pm and returned at 6:06pm with 3 members (Councilors Scott, Sait and Link).

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 # [25-1860](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the School Building Facilities and Maintenance Special Committee Meeting of December 8, 2025.

RESULT: ACCEPTED

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

2. Resolution (ID # [26-0102](#)) By Councilor Davis
That the Commissioner of Public Works provide to the City Council a full-time equivalent analysis and recommendations for custodial staffing at each Somerville Public School, including distinctions between day versus evening shifts, disparities between school size, usage, and current custodial assignments.

Eric Weisman, Interim Department of Public Works Commissioner, reviewed the attachment *SBFM - 2026-03-23 Memo (26-0102)*. Chair Link raised concerns about rodent issues in some older schools and emphasized the importance of addressing them. Commissioner Weisman noted that the floater custodians can help respond to additional cleaning needs as they

arise.

Councilor Sait and Councilor Scott raised concerns about custodial coverage at East Somerville High School, particularly after lunch and during the daytime given the school’s large student population. Councilor Scott asked for clarification on the role of floater custodians and expressed interest in additional daytime support. Commissioner Weisman explained that floaters are not assigned to a specific school and are deployed where needed, typically remaining in one building for the duration of a shift while also assisting with deliveries or special projects. He stated that he is not prepared to request an additional daytime custodian at this time, noting that this is the first time in a long period that staffing levels have been fully filled following prior vacancies. He added that he would prefer to evaluate needs under full staffing conditions before making additional requests and will review current needs, including options such as staggered scheduling.

Elizabeth Eldridge, School Committee Member, asked about resources to support custodial staff in their interactions with students. Commissioner Weisman noted that current training is primarily technical but expressed openness to additional guidance if recommended. School Committee Chair Biton questioned whether student-to-custodian ratios and square footage are meaningful measures of need, noting that East Somerville High School appears to be an outlier. Commissioner Weisman also noted ongoing negotiations with Local 3 to increase staffing flexibility and emphasized that enrollment is only one factor in determining custodial needs.

Chair Biton also expressed surprise that custodial services are contracted at East Somerville High School. Commissioner Weisman explained that for a school of that size, contracting helps ensure consistent coverage, as the vendor is responsible for filling any vacancies.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

- 3. Order (ID # [26-0107](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Strezo and Councilor Mbah That the Commissioner of Public Works update this Council on maintenance issues in the East Somerville, Capuano and Edgerly Schools.

Eric Weisman, Interim Department of Public Works Commissioner, reviewed *SBFM - 2026-03-23 Memo (with 26-0107, 26-0109)*. In response, Danielle Barry, Facilities, Safety and Transportation Coordinator noted that spring school building walkthroughs will be conducted soon with the Inspectional Services Department (ISD) and the Department of Public Works (DPW).

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

4. Order (ID # [26-0109](#)) By Councilor Davis
 That the Commissioner of Public Works provide a written update to this Council and the School Committee on the status of restoring hot water to all areas of the Capuano Early Education Center, including which areas are affected, actions taken, and an estimated timeline for full restoration.

Eric Weisman, Interim Department of Public Works Commissioner, noted that hot water has been restored to all areas of the school and reviewed SBFM - 2026-03-23 Memo (with 26-0107, 26-0109). Matthew Bennett, Superintendent of Buildings, explained that during the 1999 renovation, hot and cold water lines had crossed, causing hot water to be inconsistent throughout the building. Councilor Scott expressed appreciation for the thorough work put into all of the repairs, and Danielle Barry, Facilities, Safety and Transportation Coordinator, expressed gratitude for the ongoing communication and the completed repairs.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

5. Order (ID # [26-0134](#)) By Councilor Sait
 That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management and the Director of the Office of Sustainability and Environment provide a written report to this Council on updates to measures and practices taken to assess, monitor, maintain, and improve the physical environment in schools.

Rich Raiche, Infrastructure and Asset Management Director, reviewed the attachment SBFM - 2026-03-23 Attachment (with 26-0134) and shared that the School Committee receives this document on a semi-annual basis. Councilor Sait noted that the attachment included more information than was on the order, which Director Raiche confirmed was provided to best address the request. Councilor Sait expressed appreciation for the work on climate goals and decarbonization and interest in tracking both short- and long-term goals. Chair Link also expressed appreciation for the decarbonization and other climate-forward initiatives.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

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.

Rich Raiche, Infrastructure and Asset Management Director, noted that the next submission to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) is the Preliminary Design Program. This submission will include the educational program as well as the space plan. He explained that the next milestone to stay on the MSBA board schedule is the Preferred Schematic Report (PSR), which must be submitted by August and will include a set

enrollment number and layout.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

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

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

Rich Raiche, Infrastructure and Asset Management Director, noted that asset management is something the City has been working on for many years to bring Somerville into the 21st century. The City will be using OpenGov as a software vendor, allowing DPW and Water and Sewer staff to use iPads in the field and access asset databases. Chair Link asked if there is an opportunity to create a public-facing dashboard through OpenGov; Director Raiche shared that this is a goal once internal rollout is complete, potentially by 2027. In response to a question from Chair Link about inventorying mechanical equipment in schools, Director Raiche said it will be incorporated into OpenGov. Councilor Scott expressed appreciation for the work Director Raiche has done and asked about a detailed asset plan, which Director Raiche said he would find. School Committee Chair Biton also expressed appreciation for the honesty and transparency.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

- 8. Officer's Communication (ID # [26-0267](#))

Director of Public Space & Urban Forestry conveying information regarding the Kennedy Inclusive Schoolyard renovation.

Amanda Nagim-Williams, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, presented the *Kennedy School memo* on behalf of the Public Space and Urban Forestry team, who were unable to attend. Councilor Sait expressed appreciation for the administration, parents, and the school community's outreach efforts, a sentiment echoed by Danielle Barry, Facilities, Safety, and Transportation Coordinator, Chair Link, and School Committee Chair Biton, who also highlighted the strong coordination between Public Space and Urban Forestry, and the community. He further noted that the schoolyard will be the first of its kind in the city, designed to be inclusive for all users, with a final design that reflects robust community engagement. School Committee Member Elizabeth Eldridge echoed these sentiments and underscored the importance of creating truly inclusive spaces.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

Referenced Documents:

- SBFM - 2026-03-23 Memo (with 26-0102)
- SBFM - 2026-03-23 Attachment (with 26-0134)
- SMFM - 2026-03-23 Attachment (with 26-0241)
- SBFM - 2026-03-23 Memo (with 26-0107, 26-0109)