



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council School Building Facilities and Maintenance Special Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 10, 2025

6:00 PM

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

The meeting took place remotely via Zoom and was called to order at 6:01 PM by Chair Davis and adjourned at 7:56 PM on a roll call vote of 3 in favor (Councilors Sait, Clingan and Davis), none against and none absent.

Others present:

Commissioner Jill Lathan – DPW, Director Rich Raiche – Infrastructure and Asset Management, SPS Personnel Laura Pitone, Leiran Biton, Dr. Sarah Phillips, Chief of Staff Amara Anosike, and Danielle Berry - Facilities Transportation and Safety Coordinator. Also present were Chief Fire Engineer Charles Breen, Yasmine Raddassi – Legislative Liaison, and Peter Forcellese – Legislative Clerk.

The Committee recessed from 6:02 – 6:03 PM to allow the SPS Committee to be called to order.

Roll Call

Present: Ward Six City Councilor Lance L. Davis, Ward Four City Councilor Jesse Clingan and Ward Five City Councilor Naima Sait

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [25-0780](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the School Building Facilities and Maintenance Special Committee Meeting of April 14, 2025.

RESULT: **ACCEPTED**

AYE: Ward Six City Councilor Davis, Ward Four City Councilor Clingan and Ward Five City Councilor Sait

2. Order (ID # [25-0604](#))

By Councilor Pineda Neufeld and Councilor Wilson

That the Commissioner of Public Works install appropriate soundproofing materials in the Arthur D. Healey School cafetorium.

The Committee discussed the longstanding request for soundproofing at the Healey School cafetorium. Although this issue was not prioritized in school building walkthroughs, steps are now being taken to address it. City officials and school representatives, including Director Raiche and Ms. Anosike, acknowledged the delay and committed to consider soundproofing options, referencing successful acoustic treatments at another school. The matter is being escalated for immediate attention. Ms. Pitone noted there was a prior commitment to do sound proofing at Healey in 2021 and it looks like it fell through the cracks.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

3. Order
(ID # [25-0989](#))

By Councilor Clingan, Councilor Wilson, Councilor Burnley Jr., Councilor Davis, Councilor Ewen-Campen, Councilor Mbah, Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Sait, Councilor Scott and Councilor Strezo

That the Commissioner of Public Works appear before the Special Committee on School Building Facilities and Maintenance to discuss the recent break-in at the Winter Hill School building and the measures being taken to secure the building.

Commissioner Lathan stated that a door alarm malfunctioned on May 9th and until it was repaired, DPW personnel performed daily checks of the building and discovered the smoldering fires on May 12th. DPW and SFD staff extinguished the fires and the door was repaired on May 13th. The building is used by Food Services personnel for storage and they have been advised to make sure the door is closed when leaving the building. Councilor Clingan is satisfied that building is secure now and he was told that motion detectors were turned off because of an issue with Verizon.

Councilor Sait asked for more info about food services, e.g., frequency of use, and Ms. Anosike said that they will stop using the building at the end of the summer. Director Raiche stated that the new food kitchen at the Argenziano will be complete in a couple of weeks and any equipment/supplies will be moved from the Winter Hill building. Ms. Pitone inquired about the status of the building and Director Raiche explained that there are no occupancy issues related to the food services area. And that the school is not an unsafe building from a life safety perspective. Ms. Pitone confirmed her understanding that the building is still under the purview of the School Department and she wants to verify that after food services vacates their space there, no one can use building without School Department permission.

Chief Breen said he was asked why the fire alarm system did not notify staff of the fires and he explained that the sizes of the fires in the building were not large enough to trip the sensors.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

4. Order
(ID # [25-0987](#))

By Councilor Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Wilson, Councilor Clingan and Councilor Mbah

That the Commissioner of Public Works provide an update on preventative maintenance plans for all school buildings, and progress on providing the public with tools to view preventative maintenance plans and actions.

Ms. Pitone noted that the individual who created a database for this purpose no longer works for the district and she would like an update as to what is being done to make it more public facing. Liaison Raddassi will get an update and she noted that weekly meetings are held with stakeholders about school buildings. Mr. Biton pointed out that the focus of the database was for preventive maintenance and tracking and not for 311 requests, prompting Director Raiche to say that the city is in the process of procuring software, which will interface with QALERT, for 311 requests and generating work orders based on preventive maintenance. He reported that 22 submissions to provide software have been received and are being reviewed to narrow the list down, noting that it's expected to be a lengthy process. Funding and staff to work on this has been allocated in the FY26 budget. Commissioner Lathan stated that the DPW has building and systems managers and will be supporting IAM to make a broader system.

Councilor Sait referenced a conversation in the fall of 2024 and asked how it relates to the construction liaison positions and if those positions were filled and assigned to work on reporting dashboards. Director Raiche replied that the position was filled and that the focus is for large capital projects and not day to day PM. Councilor Sait pointed out that the request was to have a project website for school buildings and she stated that she is making the request again and Director Raiche commented that there is a site for the Winter Hill, but in terms of broader things, that's still on the horizon. Ms. Pitone, informed that it would take about a year to stand this up, suggested that the committee follow up with Director Raiche then. Dr. Phillips explained that constituents need to understand how much is being spent for school maintenance and Ms. Pitone added that the School Committee gets reports on what was done over the summer and what is planned, and she will ask that the City Council be included in the distribution list.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

5. Resolution
(ID # [25-0587](#))

By Councilor Mbah

That the Administration work with the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management and Commissioner of Public Works to accelerate maintenance schedules, invest in preventative repairs, and develop a clear contingency plan for school displacement.

Mr. Biton highlighted prior discussions on contingency planning and Dr. Phillips expressed urgency about having a displacement plan ready before schools reopen in the fall, prompting Liaison Raddassi to commit to checking on a timeline. Dr. Phillips requested that a motion for the committee's fall meeting be submitted to review the city's emergency plan for school closures during the 2025-2026 school year, which Mr. Biton agreed to prepare.

Liaison Raddassi mentioned that the MOU for the warming center was still being drafted

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

6. Resolution
(ID # [25-0933](#))

By Councilor Davis

That the Administration work with Somerville Public Schools and the Commissioner of Public Works to effectively budget for and fund current equipment maintenance costs, including but not limited to air compressors and ovens, at the High School Career and Technical Education (CTE) program, and develop plans to include CTE equipment maintenance needs in future budgeting and funding cycles.

The committee discussed topics related to the city's contingency planning and equipment maintenance within Somerville Public Schools, specifically related to equipment maintenance for the High School Career and Technical Education (CTE) program. Liaison Raddassi highlighted ongoing discussions about shifting maintenance costs from the school budget to the city side, with funding adjustments anticipated in future budget cycles. Councilors Clingan and Sait raised questions about the timing and impact of such decisions, while Ms. Pitone noted the heightened maintenance requirements for equipment in newer buildings.

Chair Davis underscored the committee's role in addressing maintenance issues to prevent failures, praising the leadership at Somerville High School for their attention to these matters. The CTE program has grown by 48% since 2021, bringing with it substantial expenses, according to Ms. Anosike.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED