



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

**KATJANA BALLANTYNE
MAYOR**

JILL LATHAN
DPW COMMISSIONER

ERIC WEISMAN
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Date: October 28, 2024
To: School Building Facilities and Maintenance committee
From: Commissioner Jill Lathan
RE: Items 24-1285, 24-1287, 24-1288, 24-1289, and 24-1301

Members of the School Buildings and Facilities Maintenance committee,

The following information from the Department of Public Works (DPW) is being provided to the members of School Building Facilities and Maintenance special committee in response to the above referenced items.

Item 24-1285: That the Commissioner of Public Works provide an update on efforts to eliminate rat infiltration in school buildings.

DPW is working continually to mitigate rodent activity in Somerville Public Schools (SPS) facilities and across the city. Waltham Pest Services provides a bi-weekly service for SPS. This includes exterior perimeter bait box checks for rodent activity and interior checks in know high activity areas such as the Kitchen, Cafeteria, staff break rooms, and any other areas reported. Please note the City no longer uses lethal bait such as Rodenticide. The technician will add sticky and snap traps were needed indoors. During the exterior checks of bait boxes, they look for unusual activity, such as burrows, entry points, etc. Additionally, when a 311 request is submitted, DPW immediately sends it to Waltham Pest for action. Waltham Pests investigates and diagnoses the issue as soon as possible, along with one of the building Supervisors who help inform Waltham Pest and their technicians to better understand the situation.

DPW provides sticky and snap traps were needed or requested due to activity. We also clean and disinfect areas of reported rodent activity and investigate the area for a cause for the activity, such as an entry point and food source.

Item 24-1287: That the Commissioner of Public Works provide an update about the functionality of public address, or PA, systems at multiple Somerville Public School buildings.

We have received requests from the school department for repairs or enhancements to our PA systems and are in the procurement process. Two vendors toured the schools in the week of September 16th and the week of September 23rd to provide quotes for repair. Quotes were received October 18th. Staff are working on the next steps for procurement.

Item 24-1288: That the Commissioner of Public Works provide an update on repairs to damaged play structures at the Capuano Early Education Center schoolyard.

Parts are on order for repair.

Item 24-1289: That the Commissioner of Public Works provide an update on the reliability and repairs of the elevator(s) at the Winter Hill and Edgerly Schools.

Rich Raiche, Infrastructure and Asset Management Director, provided the following summary.

The outage was caused by an incorrect wiring of the new power supply installed this summer by Eversource within a panel locked by Eversource. The DPW and IAM teams coordinated throughout the day on Friday and Saturday to diagnose this root cause and worked with Eversource to correct the issue by the end of the day on Monday. Certainly, this doesn't lessen the trauma felt by the Winter Hill community, but it is important to acknowledge this failure was caused by Eversource and not indicative of any shortcomings of the City's efforts to support the Schools or indeed associated with the age of the Edgerly.

In terms of technical details, the Edgerly has both 2-phase power that runs lights, computers, and regular appliances like you would see in a home, and 3-phase power that runs the elevator, HVAC system, and a few other industrial-grade pieces of equipment. The problem was with the wiring of one of the lugs on the 3-phase power current transformer that caused intermittent shorting out of one of the three phases. As a result of that partial and intermittent power failure, the elevator motor could not function, which was not immediately apparent to the elevator technician and required broader investigation by a larger team, and which ultimately required correction by the utility company.

A report from DPW on the maintenance and inspection of all school elevators has been shared in a separate attachment.

Item 24-1301: That the Director of Parks and Recreation and the Commissioner of Public Works update this Council on plans to minimize the timing impacts of future closures of the Ginny Smithers Sanders Pool for periodic maintenance.

DPW is responsible for maintenance at all Recreation facilities to provide consistency and ensure preventive maintenance standards are met. The best practice for pool maintenance is to close once a year for at least 30 days for regular maintenance, including but not limited to: cleaning and checking drains, cleaning and checking grouts and tiles, checking latter's, checking overall pool systems, mechanics, interiors, etc. Every two years additional deep cleaning with an acid wash is recommended. This 30-day closure is critical to preserving our pool systems and the overall efficiency of pool operations. The closure is usually mid-August to mid-September.

Delays with this year's closure are due to a few factors. First, prior to the scheduled closure, it was discovered that there were issues with the compressor, leading to closure prior to the scheduled DPW maintenance closure. Second, DPW immediately noticed some safety concerns with a mechanical closet. This necessitated immediate remediation to align with safety standards. These combined needs required more than the anticipated 30-days for remediation.

Thank you,

Jill Lathan
DPW Commissioner