



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council School Building Facilities and Maintenance Special Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 1, 2023

6:00 PM

Joint Meeting with the School Department.

Others present: Laura Pitone – School Committee, Emily Ackman – School Committee, Sara Dion – School Committee, Chad Maza – School Department Interim Assistant Superintendent, Susana Hernandez Morgan – School Department Interim Chief of Staff and Strategy Operations, Rich Raiche – Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management, Dave Goodridge – Chief Information Officer, Melissa Woods – Director of Capital Projects, Marc Hamel – Superintendent of Buildings, Jill Lathan – Commissioner of Public Works, Andy Rieder – Preventative Maintenance Manager, Aneesh Sahni – Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Hannah Carrillo – Legislative Liaison, Neha Singh - Legislative Liaison, Peter Forcellese - Legislative Clerk.

The meeting took place virtually via GoToWebinar and was called to order at 6:03 PM by Chair Gomez Mouakad and adjourned at 8:30 PM on a roll call vote of 2 in favor (Councilors Davis and Gomez Mouakad), none against and 1 absent (Councilor Clingan).

Roll Call

Present: Ward Five City Councilor Beatriz Gomez Mouakad and Lance L. Davis
Absent: Ward Four City Councilor Jesse Clingan

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [22-1700](#)) Approval of the School Building Facilities and Maintenance Special Committee Minutes of September 28, 2022.

RESULT: **APPROVED**
AYE: Ward Five City Councilor Gomez Mouakad and Ward Six City Councilor Davis
ABSENT: Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

2. Committee Minutes (ID # [22-1898](#)) Approval of the School Building Facilities and Maintenance Committee Minutes of October 26, 2022.

RESULT: **APPROVED**
AYE: Ward Five City Councilor Gomez Mouakad and Ward Six City Councilor Davis
ABSENT: Ward Four City Councilor Clingan

Feasibility Study

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3. Order
(ID # [22-1528](#))
- By Councilor Gomez Mouakad and Councilor Strezo
That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management provide an update on the status of the School Building Systems Feasibility Study.
- Director Raiche gave a summary regarding the heating and cooling systems feasibility study. Dir. Raiche noted construction documents for the Kennedy School chiller will be completed in March and the work is expected to be completed Spring 2024. Temporary Chillers will be installed again for this cooling season and Chair Gomez Mouakad requested that the school, the school committee and herself be notified when these temp chillers are projected to be installed. For the Healy and the West work is in progress and construction documents are projected to be ready for bid Summer of 2023. Repairs will be sequenced so as to not interrupt operations of the schools (Replacement of cooling equipment in heating season and replacement of heating equipment in cooling seasons) and any disruptive work will be performed during weekends.
- RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**
4. Order
(ID # [22-1527](#))
- By Councilor Gomez Mouakad and Councilor Strezo
That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management provide an update on the status of the School Building Feasibility Study.
- See the attached memo.
- Director Raiche reported that work is progressing and that the enrollment study is about 2 months behind schedule. Walk throughs have been completed to assess classroom capacity. Director Raiche explained that this “space analysis” provides long term data for space needs to determine the number of classrooms needed throughout the city. A ‘deep dive’ on building conditions and cost analysis to bring building systems up to code and perform necessary repairs will be performed for the Winter Hill School. A similar study was already completed for the Brown School.
- Director Raiche stated that at this time, any MSBA application would be speculative, however, Ms. Pitone commented that there are 2 schools of thought regarding when to submit the MSBA application and said that the School Committee requested that the Superintendent of Schools recommend when to submit the application to MSBA.
- Director Raiche explained the process of moving through the design phase. Chair Gomez Mouakad asked when community engagement should happen and Director Raiche said that the input data has to be completed first. Ms. Pitone stated that it appears that the School Department is not on the same page as the city.
- RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**
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5. Order By Councilor Gomez Mouakad
(ID # [22-1121](#)) That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management report on the status of the 1895 building.

Liaison Carrillo told the members that the Administration does not have an update at this time.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Maintenance

6. Order By Councilor McLaughlin and Councilor Gomez Mouakad
(ID # [22-1927](#)) That the Commissioner of Public Works provide the current noise readings of the mechanical systems on the roof of the East Somerville Community School and verify that they are in compliance with Noise Control Ordinance regulations.

See the attached memo.

Commissioner Lathan reported that the noise was assessed while the unit was running, and the decibel reading was within the normal parameter of the city's volume control ordinance. There was a small amount of metal on metal noise, most likely from the fan which was repaired. DPW has called in the HVAC company, JCC, to have the unit investigated further. As of this memo, JCC is continuing to look into this matter. Ms. Ackman asked if the noise assessment was performed at night, since neighbors had complained about noise during the evening hours. Superintendent Hamel will verify that the repair has been made and he will recheck noise readings during the evening hours to ensure they comply with the Somerville Ordinance Code.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

7. Order By Councilor Gomez Mouakad
(ID # [22-1715](#)) That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management and the Commissioner of Public Works provide an update on preventive maintenance plans for all school buildings.

Preventative Maintenance Manager Rieter gave a presentation on a new PM tracking database, aka the 'tool', that was built, in-house, to track a variety of information about school and city building assets, e.g., HVAC, plumbing devices, backup generators, fire pumps, etc. School assets are being inventoried now and the next inventory cycle will cover city buildings. A third cycle will expand to roofs, etc.

The tool will be used to drive PM and assist in planning and budgeting. At this time, the city's maintenance contractors do not interface with the tool.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

8. Order
(ID # [22-1716](#))
- By Councilor Gomez Mouakad
That the Commissioner of Public Works and the Chief Information Officer provide an update on ongoing issues with Wi-Fi services for all schools.
- See the attached memo.
Chief Information Officer Goodridge explained the responsibilities of the School Department and city IT staffs, saying that School Department IT staff, under the direction of SPS IT Director John Breslin, is responsible for its own Wi-Fi services. Superintendent Mazza noted that he reached out to principals to assess any Wi-Fi problems and he believes that there are issues in 3-5 buildings. The recent problem at the Winter Hill School was caused by a cellular issue that has since been corrected by having Verizon install a cellular network extender at the school. That particular fix is only a stop gap measure that benefits Verizon users only. Mr. Goodridge thinks that as part of any renovation project, the installation of agnostic cellular network extenders should be considered. With regard to funding, the city pays for network infrastructure in the schools and the School Department purchases its Wi-Fi equipment. There's a plan to replace all network equipment in the schools and the timetable depends on when the equipment is received. Ms. Pitone said this will need to be discussed during budget discussions and she thinks there should be an increase in the school budget for this one time expense. Chair Gomez Mouakad indicated that she would support such an increase.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
9. Order
(ID # [22-1417](#))
- By Councilor Gomez Mouakad
That the Commissioner of Public Works provide quarterly reports to the School Building Facilities and Maintenance Special Committee on any major repairs and 311 work orders in school buildings.
- See the attached memo.
Superintendent Hamel reviewed the memo and explained that the enclosed charts will be updated and available quarterly for meetings of this committee. Ms. Pitone asked that the quarterly report be distributed to various school staff.
- RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**
10. Order
(ID # [22-1418](#))
- By Councilor Gomez Mouakad and Councilor McLaughlin
That the Commissioner of Public Works report on planned repairs for the East Somerville Community School facade failures.
- Superintendent Hamel reported that the city is awaiting 3 quotes for the material to repair/replace about 55 blocks and is considering having the

repairs done in-house this spring. He commented that failures would happen again and suggested that bollards be installed for protection in the loading zone area.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

11. Order
(ID # [22-0186](#))

By Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Councilor Davis, Councilor Wilson, Councilor Clingan and Councilor Kelly

That the Commissioner of Public Works report on all school building deferred maintenance projects completed following the ventilation system assessment, proposed completion dates, and strategies to assess needs for future deferred maintenance projects.

Director Raiche stated that a memo was provided in December regarding this matter.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

12. Resolution
(ID # [22-1116](#))

By Councilor Scott, Councilor Clingan, Councilor Wilson, Councilor Burnley Jr. and Councilor Davis

That the Administration respond to educator and parent concerns regarding building maintenance and capital improvements for the Winter Hill School.

Liaison Singh commented that the Administration will be sending an update in few days.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

13. Order
(ID # [23-0144](#))

By Councilor Gomez Mouakad and Councilor Wilson

That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management provide an update on issues with the High School Field House track flooring material and bleachers.

Liaison Carrillo noted that this matter is also being discussed by the School Committee and she thinks it best to keep the discussion in one place. Councilor Davis stated that he believes that it is appropriate for this committee to discuss the matter, as well. Chair Gomez Mouakad asked that the Administration provide a full report at the next meeting of this committee.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

14. Order By Councilor Gomez Mouakad
(ID # [23-0145](#)) That the Director of Public Space and Urban Forestry and the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management explain the selections of surface materials for school parks and playgrounds.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

15. Order By Councilor Gomez Mouakad
(ID # [23-0146](#)) That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management provide an update on the status of the Cummings School, and the potential for future occupancies and uses.

Director Raiche explained that the cost to repair the west wing roof is more than the city is willing to pay. The boiler has been replaced but there is still a problem with the temperature control, so the east wing is occupiable. The clothing exchange is still operating at school and part of the building is being used for storage of musical equipment. The long-term disposition of the building will be included in the school building master plan, however, there are no plans to use this building in future. Director Raiche pointed out that the building is not ADA accessible, so any type of use would have to be on an emergency basis. Ms. Pitone asked about having a document characterizing the condition of the building and Director Raiche said that something will be put together to that end.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Referenced Documents:

SBFM - 2023-2-1 CC C19 Improvements Summary 2022Nov22 (with 22-0186)
SBFM - 2023-2-1 DPW Response (with 22-1927)
SBFM - 2023-2-1 IT Response (with 22-1716)
SBFM - 2023-2-1 Kennedy & Retro Timelines (with 22-1527, 22-1528)
SBFM - 2023-2-1 School Building Maintenance Summary (with 22-1417)