

Report to SC on School Building Facilities and Maintenance Special Committee 1/6/2023

To: Somerville School Committee

From: Laura Pitone, Ward 5 SC Representative and Co-Chair of Joint School Committee and City Council Committee on School Building Maintenance

Regarding: Summary Report on first meetings of the Joint Committee (June 30th 2022, September and October 2022)

The School Committee members: Laura Pitone, Co-Chair, Sara Dion, Vice-Chair and Emily Ackman. The City Council Members: Beatriz Gomez-Mouakad, Co-Chair, Lance Davis and Jesse Clingan. Meetings included City representatives such as Jill Latham Director of DPW, Rich Raiche Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management (IAM), and Mark Hamel, Superintendent of School Buildings (DPW). Moving forward Chad Mazza, SPS Assistant Superintendent for Operations, will represent SPS.

The meetings are structured as a City Council (CC) meeting following their rules and protocols, with Co-Chair Beatriz Gomez-Mouakad facilitating the meeting. Although other formats for the meeting were discussed, the CC was advised to follow their traditional format.

Want to publicly acknowledge the commitment and collaboration of DPW and IAM to address building concerns and collaborate on a future vision for investing in and maintaining School buildings. New roles and systems to track the status of buildings including preventative maintenance are in the works. This committee has provided an integrated view of DPW and IAM to SPS, CC, SC and the community and hope that the IT perspective is incorporated too.

This joint committee was established to bring both SC and CC members together, as the City oversees and budgets for school building maintenance and improvement, while the School District utilizes the buildings under the authority of the School Committee. All look forward to working together to solve problems, create systems and invest in our facilities. Want to avoid duplication of efforts and streamline communication, increase viability and accountability.

In the October meeting the following was shared to clarify the scope of the committee: *The purpose of the Joint CC and SC Building Maintenance Committee is to clarify and make public the current state of school buildings, their maintenance and capital improvement needs and plans, and to ensure this work is sufficiently funded and executed. The joint committee brings the complimentary responsibilities of the two elected bodies together in the interest of enhancing educational quality and safety for students and staff, as well as facility sustainability and longevity. This work will serve as input to the School Committee and District Leadership to develop long term school facility strategies in collaboration with City Leadership.*

The following topics were discussed and summaries included, meeting dates noted when important (most topics are covered in multiple meetings).

Staff responsible for buildings (6/22)

DPW manages smaller repairs while capital projects facilitate outside contractors for larger improvements that cannot be handled by DPW due to expertise or time commitment.

Jill Latham, Department of Public Works (DPW) Commissioner

Mike Bowler, Facilities Manager (for all city buildings, including the school buildings)

Marc Hamel, Superintendent of Buildings (reported 39 custodians and there is staff to handle small carpentry, electrical and plumbing repairs.)

Any Rieder, Preventative Maintenance Manager

Rich Raiche, Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management (IAM)

Somerville Public Schools: Chad Mazza, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, Sean Callahan, Director of Facilities Management for SPS

Cannistraro has replaced Honeywell as contractor for mechanical systems and has a much more robust contract.

New elevator vendor (issue with elevators at the ESCS and Winter Hill)

Requested status of composting at school vendor

Status of Community Preservation Act grants of 2018 for the Brown and West Somerville Neighborhood School (June Meeting) - Although rehabilitation work on the outside space at the Brown was originally planned for the Summer of 2022, it has been rescheduled for the Summer of 2023 due to contractor availability. There are no plans for a larger project due to the feasibility study of the building. Asked for an updated on the timeline for the WSNS

HVAC and Mechanical System Concerns - IAM is creating a list of HVAC systems reaching near the end of life to create a list to replace (DPW can no longer repair), this may take several months. Additionally, the controls for those systems will also need to be migrated off the obsolete Honeywell system. A database of all the HVAC systems in the city and their parts is being created in order to identify potential problems. Discussed Kennedy chiller and temporary solution. Request for timeline for replacements, plan to report back in future meeting.

Status of the School Building Feasibility study:

Per IAM, expect that with mechanical upgrades, schools will be in good shape for the next 25-50 years, with the exception of the Brown and WHCIS. All school (except for the Brown and WSNS) feasibility studies are focused on the systems/equipment. Healey and West are the largest concerns regarding systems, followed by the Kennedy. Expect findings in January.

A general school building feasibility study will be done on both the WHCIS and the Brown to answer questions regarding efforts to renovate versus rebuild, including code compliance, ADA, costs and zoning concerns. Stated it would be realistic to be shovel ready within five years to address a school, whatever solution is proposed and depending on funding.

The findings from the feasibility studies, the enrollment study, and decisions about district programming will feed into decisions regarding facility futures. Plans will be based on understanding the purpose of buildings, including the population that they will serve.

Enrollment study in progress, which is the foundation of the planning work. The feasibility study work will continue through January, and results shared then strategy development will begin. Request to understand how the MSBA process (state school building funding body) will merge with this effort.

Status of shade and projector placement in SHS auditorium - Shades do not block light, as specified. The projection from the projector does not fit the screen. It will cost 30K to correct. Director Raiche shared contractors are expected to perform their job with a general standard of care. It's understood that there will be errors that will require some design changes as well as errors of omission. The high school project is at about 2% in errors and the percentage for filing a lawsuit is around 5, therefore, he doesn't believe there is a legal recourse to recoup any money for these problems.

Seeking comprehensive list of past repairs on the Brown and WHCIS - In progress between DPW and IAM. In the past, a comprehensive report was not provided due to the split of efforts between DPW and IAM. Data is now being centralized and efforts are underway to implement a robust system to capture all maintenance and repairs across all assets, with buildings being the most complex. A report is provided to the mayor on a bi-weekly basis on this project to keep visibility on the importance of this matter.

Response to Parent and Educator concerns regarding the Winter Hill Community Innovation School:

The obsolete Honeywell Control Equipment for the HVAC needs to be replaced in several schools, including the WHCIS. Several repairs were made on the WHCIS HVAC. Winter Hill part of the school building feasibility study (currently being implemented) and will determine what it would take to renovate the building. Elevator concerns addressed, as well as others.

Request made for formal response from the City to the letter from Parents and Educators. It was also noted that the PTA and Mayor were to meet and that would be another opportunity to communicate but it was noted that that meeting may not include educators.

Status of the 1895 Building - In the City building master plan, the 1895 is designated as the new city hall for city services, while the old city hall will be the "seat for government". The School Committee has not released the 1895 building to the city; it is still considered a school building and district asset. Original planning for the 1895 building by a cross functional task force including representatives from the CC, SC as well as city staff and architectural consultants included utilizing the 1895 for city administration and to move the SCALE adult education from the rented TAFT building (from Tufts) and allow access to the new SHS and resources. Since

the dissolution of the task force, the City has updated plans, removing SCALE from the future 1895. Additionally, "swing space" (open space to utilize in the event that a school building is unable to be occupied) at the Edgerly is now occupied by district staff who were removed from Cumming School as well as the Recreation department and a new teen space. Note that the former "swing space" at the Edgerly have been utilized three time in the last 10 years to accommodate students - including after the fire at the ESCS, the roof collapse at the Brown and during the pandemic as some schools were not brought back online due to ventilation concerns and SHS not completed on schedule. The district does not have available swing space.

Request for quarterly report to the joint committee from DPW on major repairs and 311 work orders in the buildings. - In development

East Somerville Community School Facade repairs (9/22 meeting) - Determining if this work can be handled by DPW or needs to be contracted out. It is not believed it is under warranty (contractor materials) but this will be looked into.

Report on power outage at WSNS 9/22 and temporary and permanent repairs -
Unfortunately the backup generator was offline and being worked on when power outage happened. Source of the outage was water infiltration; the switch box has since been replaced (believed that deterioration around the original switch box was the source.)

WIFI and Cell Phone Service issues

Reported that improvements to Cell Service at WHCIS are in process (short term Verizon solution, long term generic extenders).

Inconsistent access to WIFI is a problem in several schools. It is believed that more WIFI access points are necessary. Not clear on timeline or source of funding. Questioned why infrastructure expenses are not in the City budget. David Goodrich is the city's Chief Information Officer and John Breslin is the SPS Director of Technology. Requested clarification of the roles and responsibilities, as well as budget allocation for IT between the City and the district.

Requested documentation of work done on school buildings during COVID pandemic, specifically ventilation.

Request DPW 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. - More time needed to complete