

**Salem Public Schools  
Salem School Committee  
BUILDING & GROUNDS SUBCOMMITTEE  
Meeting Minutes  
September 18, 2023**

On September 18, 2023 the Building & Grounds Subcommittee held its regular meeting using a hybrid model, connecting via the Zoom on-line meeting platform and convening in-person.

**Members In Attendance:** Ms. Mary Manning and Ms. Veronica Miranda

**Members in Attendance Virtually:** Mr. Manny Cruz

**Others in Attendance:** Superintendent Dr. Stephen Zrike, Ms. Elizabeth Pauley, Mr. Zissis Alepakis, and Ms. Elizabeth Golden

**Call of Meeting to Order**

Ms. Miranda called the meeting to order at 5:30pm. Agenda items to be discussed are preparations for the heating season for Salem Public Schools.

Mr. Alepakis notes the intention for the building and services department is to ensure all SPS buildings and facilities are safe, clean, accessible and welcoming. Ms. Alepakis plans to effectively communicate and enforce safety protocols in all facilities, schools, and outdoor spaces. Also to provide continuous access to safe, quality play spaces through implementation of Salem's playground master plan. The last audit of the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems was in 2021 led by Leftfield. At this time, up to six boilers will likely need to be replaced within the next 2-5 years; at this time, the remaining 13 boilers do not appear to need replacement for 5+years.

Mr. Alepakis gives a review on how the boilers work and how they are operated. Each heating system is rated as good, fair, poor, and failed. The current challenges are two boilers completely offline at Horace Mann and Collins Middle School. There are also older boilers approaching the end of their lifespan. Repair parts are very hard and impossible to purchase. There is a significant cost for repairs; 75-85% of the annual Building Maintenance budget line is spent. In Spring 2023, there was an estimated \$1,000,000 needed for HVAC Capital needs. Right now we are looking to ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) for potential additional support.

Mr. Alepakis notes the immediate priorities are to get the two offline boilers online at Horace Mann and Collins Middle School as well as rent an alternative heat source for the auditorium which would cost \$1700 monthly. The near term priorities are preparing for the 2024 cooling season, working with the City of Salem to expand HVAC capacity with an external mechanical contractor, and looking for grants to do an assessment of all HVAC equipment and systems.

The longer term priorities are to replace boilers at Bates, HMLS, and WHES and repair the Glycol feeders around the district. Other related considerations include developing a plan for replacing roofs and a plan for replacing generators district wide. The next steps as of right now will be to address the urgent priorities noted. For all schools, starting on October 15th when the heat is turned on each school will be inspected to address what needs to be done in classrooms and all spaces for the heating season. Also, establish a contract with a back-up boiler company and track ongoing projects through Operations Hero.

Ms. Manning asks why we stopped using a third party for maintenance needs?

Ms. Pauley notes we are looking to use a third party again; instead of the building services staff.

Dr. Zrike asks how concerned are we for the boilers failing?

Mr. Alepakis notes we are worried for the Horace Mann boilers at this time. He has looked into renting a boiler.

Ms. Pauley notes the two most urgent matters are Horace Mann and Collins Middle School.

Ms. Miranda notes in terms of sustainability - is that an option for any of the buildings?

Mr. Alepakis notes we want to take sustainability into consideration.

Dr. Zrike notes we do need to engage the city as well. There needs to be more preventative maintenance. This is an opportunity to create better efficiencies that should be shared across the schools and the cities. There should be a joint relationship around it.

Mr. Alepakis notes the future plans and will be looking into energy efficiency units as well as looking for grants to update assessments.

Ms. Manning would like to hear back on additional heating concerns and how to solve the bigger picture on how to get ahead of the game.

First is a discussion with the mayor and city and then it is a budget issue. We have to be firm on what we want to do jointly.

Dr. Zrike notes it would be best for someone to give us some direction. This larger comprehensive look on the portfolio. These are major long standing issues.

Ms. Miranda makes a motion for a roll call vote. Mr. Cruz makes a motion and seconded by Ms. Manning. A roll call vote is taken.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Miranda	Yes
Motion carries	3-0

Meeting adjourned at 6:44pm

Respectfully submitted by,

*Krista Perry*

Executive Assistant to the School Committee and Superintendent