

SOMERVILLE NEW SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT

SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

Virtual Meeting

Monday, May 4, 2026

Via Zoom

4:30pm

Members (15) – Present in bold:

Emily Grandstaff-Rice (Chair)

Jake Wilson, Mayor

Rich Raiche

Ruben Carmona

Courtney Gosselin

Ed Bean

Chris Ames

Daniel Grayton

Eric Weisman

Andre Green

Kathleen Seward

Jesse Clingan

Suraj Rajbanshi

Courtney Koslow

Rich Heidebrecht

Guests Present:

Khin Mar (CoS)

Magdalena Gomez (CoS)

Ralph Henry (CoS)

Sean Burke (PMA)

Nick Masse (PMA)

Lisa Pecora (PE)

Robert Bell (PE)

Dan Arons (PE)

Matt Hoffman (PE)

- **Call to Order – 4:31pm**
 - The Chair called the meeting to order
 - Roll call attendance was had.

- **Meeting Minutes**
 - Approve meeting minutes from April 6, 2026.
 - Rich Raiche motions to approve as presented. Daniel Grayton seconds the motion.
 - Discussion: none.
 - VOTE (roll call): 13 yes, 0 no, 1 abstain, 1 not present
 - Yes: Emily Grandstaff-Rice, Mayor Jake Wilson, Rich Raiche, Ruben Carmona, Courtney Gosselin, Ed Bean, Chris Ames, Daniel Grayton, Andre Green, Kathleen Seward, Jesse Clingan, Suraj Rajbanshi, Rich Heidebrecht
 - No:
 - Abstain: Courtney Koslow
 - Not Present: Eric Weisman

- **New Business**
 - Review Project Schedule & Workplan
 - PE and PMA congratulated the City and the committee on their PDP submission to the MSBA.
 - PE did an overview of the project timeline and workplan, showing where the project is at and what is ahead of us. PE highlighted the milestones within the project schedule.
 - PE noted that they have begun soil characterization process and will soon be doing borings at the Winter Hill site soon.
 - Set Upcoming SBC Meeting Schedule
 - The committee came to a consensus to have our next SBC meetings on the following dates: 6/8, 7/6, 8/3, and 8/17. All meetings will continue to be held virtually and at 4:30pm.
 - The August 3rd meeting will be the committee’s selection of the Preferred Solution. On August 17th it will be the committee’s approval of the PSR Submission.
 - Preliminary Options Update
 - PE updated the community that the MSBA required us to add an option at the Brown School, which was presented to the committee. The project team needed to pull this together in short order for the MSBA, and it is basically a high rise building that doesn’t fit the programming needs for this project.
 - Committee member asked if this is advantageous and what they asked for in regards to Brown. PE responded that because of the language the MSBA/City have, it requires us to study the two enrollment options at Brown School.
 - PE noted that additionally, the MSBA asked us to add 1B for Addition/Reno at 925, and 2A for 690 New Construction.
 - Committee member asked about the nomenclature of the options and what the MSBA’s clarification requested is. PMA responded to the committee member with the reasons that we are adding a couple options and the others were previously voted on to submit to MSBA.
 - PE presented a more in depth design of the layout of the spaces within the inside and outside of the building. They presented on the options of the 925 student enrollment (2B and 4), as that was the City’s CAG recommendation.

- Committee member asked if there should be more PreK students included within the new building. The Superintendent responded on more of the program and the strategy behind it.
 - Committee member inquired on the bathroom sizes, and PE responded that we will be above the minimum that code requires, but that we are still within feasibility and that things can still adjust.
 - Committee member mentioned that the theater teacher has requested if their space can be adjacent to the stage, and PE responded that they can look into improving that circulation.
 - The Chair noted that the success of Option 4 is getting a grade on one level, and that the public spaces and the access to them are great. The Chair explained to the committee that these updates are iterative and that the feedback is appreciated.
 - Multiple committee members were in favor of Option 4.
 - Committee member noted that out of school activity space seems more limited than ideally desired.
 - Committee member questioned the staggering of the classrooms in Option 4 and the hallway seems constrained, PE noted that they could provide a rendering or image that could better show the feel of inside the hallway.
 - Committee member mentioned that each grade having their own centralized bathrooms appear on what should be
 - Committee member questioned where the Nurse's suite is and what the spaces labeled Health were for educational purposes or not. PE responded and showed the committee member where the Nurse's offices are. The committee further discussed the needed space for Nurse's with this size enrollment.
 - Committee member questioned the adjacencies of grades and what he may believe could be beneficial, and what other communities may do. Chair and PE responded to satisfaction.
 - Committee member asked if there was a Newcomer Academy room, and wants to make sure they are only with grades 6, 7 and 8. The committee member asked about the corners in the building and if camera coverage can be sufficient and PE responded that yes, you will definitely be able to have sufficient coverage.
- Overview of MSBA PDP Review Comments
 - We have not received the MSBA comments yet, so we do not have anything to present as far as the MSBA's review comments to the submission. We included this agenda item in case we received them in advance of this meeting. We should have those review comments by the time of the next meeting.
 - Community Engagement Update
 - PE gave an overview of the most recent community engagement events that the project team participated in, as well as what is ahead for events that the project team will be attending to further inform the community of the project's status and receive feedback.
 - PE highlighted the Young Children's Event that the project team attended at the High School on April 16th. The votes amongst children's preference for playground theme is: climbing course, nature, and slopes/games.
 - Committee Member requested a Slice of the City event in Ward 5, and it could be an option for the project team if available. It was discussed that the event is tomorrow, and it may be too short of notice to attend, but will let the City know either way.
 - Sustainability Workshop Feedback
 - PE updated the committee on how the Sustainability Workshop with the community went. They stated it was a tremendous event and gauged the community on what their feedback is, as well as what best fits best for the project.

- It was a takeaway that the community workshop top preferences were: Energy Efficiency, Community, and Learning/Play Space.
 - Review of Traffic, Mobility, and Parking Concepts
 - PE presented proposals of site circulation and parking for the options of 2B and 4. PE did present the option of a parking garage, though explained the excessive costs for this option. PMA mentioned that the estimates presented on the options and the submission to the MSBA does not include the parking garage.
 - Committee member noted that he wanted to remind PE of some site adjacencies and site traffic controls that surround the property, and asked them to consider these adjacencies. He also mentioned access to the garage and loading dock for the amount of food that will be needed to deliver to this size school. PE responded about elevator access to garage, but for the loading dock it will need some more consideration and review.
 - Committee member asked about the soils there and it's characterization. PE mentioned that there are two buildings that are demolished in place, and the borings are expected to show us a lot about the site, and what may be needed for mitigation.
 - Committee member asked about Option 4 parking presentation, seeing if the traffic in this area can sustain the parking garage. Also asked for pick up/drop off or just for staff. PE mentioned it is proposed just for staff, but much more study has to be done for a parking garage and what that may mean for traffic studies.
 - Superintendent is in favor of the committee and the project exploring a parking garage, and believes the community would appreciate it as well.
- **Public Comment**
 - The Chair opened it up to the public to ask any questions or make any comments.
 - Ian Neill: As a current PreK parent, and mentioned that the existing waitlist would result in two PreK classrooms, and would be in favor of that because the other school does not offer PreK. He also has concern about amount of daylight into the Cafeteria, as well as the loading dock along a residential street. He also questioned that the bring back of option 2A for 690 students, further confuses the community.
- **Adjournment**
 - Vote to Adjourn
 - Rich Raiche motions to adjourn. Daniel Grayton seconds the motion.
 - VOTE (roll call): 13 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain, 2 not present
 - Yes: Emily Grandstaff-Rice, Mayor Jake Wilson, Rich Raiche, Ruben Carmona, Courtney Gosselin, Ed Bean, Chris Ames, Daniel Grayton, Kathleen Seward, Jesse Clingan, Suraj Rajbanshi, Courtney Koslow, Rich Heidebrecht
 - No:
 - Abstain:
 - Not Present: Eric Weisman, Andre Green

Minutes Signed by:

NAME: Nicholas Masse, PMA Consultants

DATE: 05/06/2026