

QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

SCHOOL FACILITIES and SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, April 11, 2012

A meeting of the School Facilities and Security Subcommittee was held on Wednesday, April 11, 2012 at 4:30 pm in the 2nd Floor Conference Room at the NAGE Building. Present were Mayor Thomas Koch, Mrs. Kathryn Hubley, Ms. Barbara Isola, Mrs. Emily Lebo, Mrs. Anne Mahoney, and Mr. David McCarthy, Chair. Also attending were Superintendent DeCristofaro, Mr. James Kilraine, Mr. Anthony Maldero, Mr. Sean Martin, Mr. Jim Mullaney, Mr. Kevin Mulvey, Mr. Kevin Murphy, Mr. Keith Segalla, and Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk.

Mr. McCarthy called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm and explained the order of the agenda and the materials that had been provided for review, including meeting minutes from previous discussions of this topic in 2004 and 2008, and the Memorandum of Understanding executed between the Department of Public Works (DPW) and Quincy Public Schools (QPS).

Mayor Koch presented a handout of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 37M, along with a listing of all public buildings and a proposed organizational structure. He stressed the role of the Public Building Department in the school organization and noted that school-related construction projects (new Quincy High School and new Central Middle School) and the capital improvements at the schools are the majority of the department's current projects. He cited the Parks Department taking over the management of school grounds as an example of a change that went smoothly. The fields are always ready for school athletics, school maintenance is a priority within the constraints of the budget. He also mentioned the current collaboration of the City and School IT groups as another example. His proposal is the merge the Maintenance staff into the Public Building Department; Mr. Walter MacDonald overseeing capital construction and improvements and Mr. Kevin Murphy retaining his role as the manager of Maintenance employees. The Maintenance workers' budget would be moved to the Public Buildings Department budget; additional staff will be moving from the Department of Public Works. This merger does not affect the food services drivers or the bus mechanics. Schools will continue to be the priority; as the School Committee chair, the Mayor is responsible for the overall management of the schools. The new structure will allow for better deployment of resources during the day, when work cannot often be performed as students are in class. All staff members could work on school projects during the summer. The Mayor is also proposing a new location for the Maintenance department and bus yard in a garage behind Squantum Gardens (property to be acquired). He is currently in discussion with the Council on Aging

about fixing the roadway and enhancing the outdoor area of the Council on Aging building; this will involve mitigating flooding issue in the area. Overall, the new structure is a good plan for both the school system and the city.

Maintenance Department staff member and union representative Mr. Sean Martin recounted a recent meeting with the Mayor, where the staff members' questions were answered. The Mayor assured the union that the contract would be honored and any impact bargaining would be handled as needed. The union feels as long as the Mayor is willing to honor the contract, any increases in workload can be negotiated.

One union concern is about the "Adopt a Project" option and adherence to this process to avoid grievances. Mr. Martin clarified that this is not a constant problem, but there have been recent examples where the approval process was not followed. Ms. Isola suggested that the Adopt a Project process be put into the Policy Subcommittee for review and then the information can be shared with PTOs. Mr. Martin clarified that the issue has arisen when painting has happened without a request being filed for approval; a Maintenance worker is supposed to supervise the volunteers. The union is comfortable with the process as long as it is followed. Dr. DeCristofaro suggested that there was a revised form that doesn't require School Committee approval, but Mr. Martin clarified that this was never ratified by the union.

Mr. Martin inquired about the bus mechanics and food service workers, if they stay on the school budget, could they stay under the same contract and in the same union. The Mayor felt that this could be addressed through bargaining, all are city employees. Mr. Martin clarified that the bus mechanics also maintain the Maintenance vehicles and generators and small engines (i.e., snowblowers).

Ms. Isola asked Mr. Martin to confirm that the union does not object to the proposed restructuring. Mr. Martin said as long as there are adequate budgets, good leadership, and proper planning, this will work well. Mrs. Mahoney asked about the work that can be performed after hours under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the city; Mr. Martin stated that the work has been sporadic, mostly electrical and plumbing and some painting. Mrs. Mahoney asked about the current workload vs. the summer schedule; Mr. Martin clarified that the Maintenance department can be summoned during their regular workday in case of emergency to secure a situation; additional work to be performed after 4:00 pm or on Saturday at the city's expense.

Mr. McCarthy mentioned the responses to inquiries from the 2004 discussion; the questions have been the same each time the topic has been raised. Mr. McCarthy reviewed the 2004 discussion and the creation of the work order management system. Mayor Koch reminded the

Committee that this is a different proposal than in previous years, since it involves the Public Building Department rather than the DPW. He also suggested that if the Maintenance department has a work system that works, that is what would be used going forward. Mr. Murphy is very happy with the current work order system and the process has been modified to be sure that Senior Custodians know when work orders are finalized. Mayor Koch suggested that the MOU was probably not properly publicized; the other city departments have made do with the small number of maintenance workers and tradesmen on their own staff unofficially handling repairs. Mayor Koch objects to the overtime charges associated with the MOU, this is counter to what happened with the Parks Department assumption of the school grounds maintenance.

Mrs. Mahoney requested details about the number of current Maintenance workers; Mr. Murphy and Mr. Mullaney agreed that there is a total of 15 (not counting the food service drivers and bus yard mechanics): 2 painters, 2 electricians, 2 plumbers, 4 carpenters, 5 general laborers. Current city maintenance staff: 1 finish carpenter, 1 carpenter, 1 plasterer/painter, laborers as needed from DPW, outside contractors for other trades. Mr. Murphy expressed a concern about electrical; there is currently a backlog of projects. The DPW needs to replace an electrician/traffic controller, but this position will not be in the new department.

Mrs. Mahoney expressed her concern about the total number of employees and the workload doubling to manage 52 buildings. Mayor Koch reiterated that the schools are the priority and that as the city recovers economically, additional funds will be added to expand the Maintenance department, along with the school budget. The City has funded service contracts through the Public Building Department and absorbed costs.

Mr. McCarthy returned to the issues of 2004 and summarized the concerns that led to the adoption of the under-utilized MOU. In 2008, there was once again a proposal to merge School Maintenance with the DPW. Similar concerns were expressed about the schools not being a priority any longer, worries about communications, the motion was defeated 6-1. Mr. McCarthy then presented the summary of the MOU. He cited the transition to all-day Kindergarten as an example of the Superintendent's control of Maintenance working in the school department's favor. Mr. McCarthy reiterated his concern about whether the Facilities Subcommittee would still have the level of input it currently does.

Mr. McCarthy then moved onto the Summary and Additional Information portion of the agenda. Mr. McCarthy requested a list of the current city building needs for each trade and general maintenance. Mr. Martin clarified that maintenance on city buildings is less time-consuming since the wear and tear is much less of a factor. Mayor Koch stated that the Public

Buildings department is currently spending 75 to 80% of their time on school buildings. Mrs. Lebo agreed that it is clear how much time the Public Buildings department spends on school concerns. Mrs. Lebo also pointed out that the merger can be undone if it doesn't work (the provisions of the law allow for this). She feels that once the city sees the value of having craftspeople on staff and the cost savings from not going to outside resources, they will want to increase the size of the department. Mrs. Hubley asked who would determine the priorities in this new structure. Mayor Koch said that Walter MacDonald and Kevin Murphy would do this, with input from the Superintendent. He also said that he didn't anticipate City Council action to have happened so quickly; he had no desire to take any actions prior to School Committee decision. Mrs. Lebo mentioned the annual reporting to School Committee by the Parks Department, and noted she would want the same for Maintenance.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 pm on a motion from Mr. McCarthy and seconded by Mayor Koch. On a voice vote, the ayes have it.