

**WATERTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WATERTOWN, MA**

**RICHARD E. MASTRANGELO
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
149 MAIN STREET**

**MONDAY
OCTOBER 30, 2017
5:30 P.M.**

MINUTES

I. Roll Call

Mr. John Portz, School Committee Chairman, called to order the October 30, 2017 meeting of the School Committee. Present were School Committee members Mr. Mark Sideris, Dr. Guido Guidotti, Ms. Kendra Foley, and Ms. Elizabeth Yusem. Also present were Superintendent Dr. Deanne Galdston and Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations Ms. Mary DeLai. School Committee member Ms. Eileen Hsu-Balzer was not in attendance.

II. Public Forum – Session I

No member of the public spoke.

III. Presentation, Discussion, and Action Items

A. Presence and Remediation of Asbestos at Watertown High School

The Superintendent said that the District had partnered with EFI Global to inspect all of Watertown Public Schools' buildings for compliance with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). Dr. Galdston explained that AHERA is a law requiring the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to promulgate regulations that require local educational agencies to inspect their school buildings for asbestos-containing materials, prepare asbestos management plans, and perform response actions to prevent or reduce asbestos hazards. Dr. Galdston presented the following findings of the buildings' AHERA reports:

- Lowell Elementary School – None detected
- Hosmer Elementary School – All in good condition
- Cunniff Elementary School – Two areas in basement require remediation
- Phillips Administration Building – One area in maintenance room requires remediation
- Watertown Middle School – One area in custodial closet requires remediation
- Watertown High School – Multiple areas require remediation, including:
 - a) Damaged plaster in thirty-three areas; to be fixed by encapsulating nicks and dings
 - b) Significantly damaged plaster in seventeen areas; to be fixed by encapsulant or sheetrock/joint compound
 - c) Floor tiles in two areas; to be fixed by replacement of tiles
 - d) Peeling ceilings in twenty-two areas; to be fixed by scraping paint or encapsulating with proper product
 - e) Boiler room pipe; to be fixed by applying wet wrap encapsulant

Dr. Galdston reported that the next steps in the remediation process were to procure a contractor to complete the work, create a work plan supporting the educational process, and complete the work within 3-4 months beginning with the most damaged areas. She said that air quality tests would be completed incrementally to ensure safety for students and staff. She said that rooms would be inspected for possible compromise due to water infiltration and any additional concerns would be addressed should they arise. She said that the District was planning for surveillance in six months and re-inspection in three years.

Dr. Galdston said that air quality tests had indicated all schools were safe for students and staff.

The Chairman opened the discussion for public comment.

A member of the public asked to know more about air quality testing procedures. Dr. Galdston responded that air quality testing was done in the areas where there was the most damage; the air that was sampled came back ten times lower than the EPA guidelines for safe air. Dr. Galdston said that air quality testing would continue through the remediation process.

A School Committee member asked who will complete the asbestos inspection post-remediation and who will “sign off that the building is safe.” Mr. Sean Cassidy of EFI Global said the contractor and the consultant or project monitor would both sign off on the responsibility.

A School Committee member thanked the administration for finding a problem and bringing forward a possible resolution. He suggested more testing than just at the six month and three year marks. Mr. Cassidy clarified that surveillance would occur every six months with a full re-inspection in three years.

A School Committee member thanked the administration and EFI Global for their quick work to problem-solve. She asked Mr. Cassidy if there was a plan for remediation should water infiltration at the high school exacerbate the asbestos issue. Mr. Cassidy said that water infiltration issues at the school likely come from both roof and façade leaks, the latter of which would likely be difficult to repair. He said that two rooms in particular have shown leaks and would need to be watched closely. The School Committee member asked if during remediation, some rooms would need to be cleared of students; Dr. Galdston responded that in some instances, students and staff may be displaced short-term.

A School Committee member asked how much time had been taken to address this issue. Dr. Galdston said that the administration had focused much of their time and energy on this issue in recent days.

The Chairman said quotes would be sought in a bid by firms to complete the remediation process.

A School Committee member asked how the District would ensure quality work if hiring the lowest bidder. Ms. DeLai responded that regulations require a licensed project designer to hire a Massachusetts licensed contractor. She said that the hired firm would be paid a prevailing wage.

A motion was made to approve the administration to proceed with soliciting quotes and contracting with an asbestos abatement contractor to complete the appropriate asbestos remediation activities at Watertown High School and report back to the School Committee at their November 13, 2017 meeting with an update on the process.

Ms. DeLai said she hoped to have a contractor hired within the next two to three weeks.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously with one School Committee member not present for the vote.

IV. Public Forum – Session II

No member of the public spoke.

V. Next Meeting

The next School Committee meeting was said to be scheduled for November 13, 2017.

VI. New Business

No new business was discussed.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 PM.

Meeting Documents:

[Phillips Administration Building AHERA Report](#)

[Cunniff Elementary School AHERA Report](#)

[Hosmer Elementary School AHERA Report](#)

[J.R. Lowell Elementary School Report](#)

[Watertown Middle School AHERA Report](#)

[Watertown High School AHERA Report](#)

Minutes submitted by Christie Fisher, Administrative Assistant to the Central Office.