



DRAFT Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting of the
School Building Projects Advisory Council
September 11, 2024, at 10:00 AM (held via Microsoft Teams)

Meeting video:

[SBPAC Regular Meeting-20240911_100254-Meeting Recording.mp4 \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Members Present:

Alice Pritchard, Chair
Angela Cahill
Louis Casolo
Paul Hinsch
Antonio Iadarola
Julia McFadden
Don Poulin
William Turner

Members Absent:

Lance Hall
Chlo Anne Bobrowski
Omarys Vasquez

Departmental staff present:

Eleanor Michael, DAS
Laurence Spekterman, DAS
Nicholas Ross, DAS
Ella Sun, DAS
Brian Green, DAS
William Turley, DESPP

1. Call to Order by Dr. Alice Pritchard at 10:03am. Chair Pritchard called roll and confirmed the meeting quorum and thanked the Council members for their attendance. In addition, she welcomed the members of the public and state agency partners who joined the meeting.
2. June 5, 2024, meeting minutes were discussed. Lou Casolo noted that the meeting minutes indicated that cost effectiveness and fiscal topics would be on the agenda for the September meeting, but the topic was changed. Chair Pritchard agreed and noted that cost data would be shared as part of the September agenda but that further discussion would take place at the December meeting. The meeting minutes were approved unanimously with a motion to adopt by Don Poulin and seconded by Lou Casolo. Julia McFadden abstained due to her absence from the June meeting.
3. Discussion of School Building Projects Grants program challenges and opportunities
Chair Pritchard noted that in June, the Council heard from the DAS team about the school building project grant program and the work of the plan review and grants offices. Today's agenda includes further discussion with some additional information provided by the DAS team and then time dedicated to hearing from Council members about challenges and possible solutions/opportunities to address those challenges. Chair Pritchard introduced Deputy Commissioner Eleanor Michael and Laurence Spekterman who led the presentation focused on the history of DAS's Chapter 173 grants program, and recent improvements in organizational structure, process improvements, and communication, as well as a review of priority list cost data. She noted the formation of two internal working groups focused on statutory and regulatory changes and internal program administration as well as continued efforts to improve data collection and analysis.

See links to slide deck for the full presentation as well as a pre-read deck provided to the Council.

<https://preview.ct.egov.com/-/media/das/office-of-grants-administration/school-building-projects-advisory-board/agendas-and-minutes/2024/grants-plan-review-audit-overview-slides.pdf>

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/das/office-of-grants-administration/school-building-projects-advisory-board/agendas-and-minutes/2024/presentation-slides-for-9-11-24-school-building-projects-advisory-council.pdf>

Following the presentation, Chair Pritchard called on members of the Council to share their feedback on program challenges and opportunities.

a. Council members discussed the SBPAC mission statement

The mission of the Connecticut School Building Projects Advisory Council, created under Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-292q, is to provide recommendations and establish standards and guidelines for achievement on all major capital school construction, renovations, and alterations projects. [Regulations \(ct.gov\)](#)

b. Council members discussed the following challenges:

- Outdated statutory language referencing the State Department of Education
- Letters required in statutes which are not applicable to all projects (example: natural light requirements)
- Space standards requirements that do not consider adjustments for special ed populations
- Outdated cost per square foot guidance
- Statutes that are geared towards school districts and not state's technical high school system
- The quantity of outdated and aging buildings in the state
- The lack of clarity for specific rate bonus criteria
- The lack of clarity on the elections and legislative process
- Need for building maintenance support and staff that can handle complex, green mechanical systems
- Variation in building commissioning quality
- Growing use of special legislation
- Substantial time and cost needed to develop construction contracts

c. Council members discussed the following opportunities and proposals:

- Involvement of the State Department of Education in the grants program
- Tracking new bills brought before the legislature
- Tying cost data to square footage to get comparable metrics
- Leveraging the groups expertise on the nuances of school construction legislation
- Developing a working document that lists program issues to be addressed at SBPAC meetings
- Supporting upskilling of maintenance staff to keep up with evolving job requirements
- Developing standard forms or models for construction contracts

4. Next quarterly meeting: December 4, 2024, at 10am.

Chair Pritchard reminded members of the December meeting and that she will share a quarterly meeting calendar for 2025 at that meeting for Council approval. She noted ongoing work on the school safety infrastructure criteria and hopes to bring those changes to the Council in December for consideration. She thanked those who are assisting in that important revision process. Chair Pritchard also indicated that the cost effectiveness and fiscal topics planned originally for the September meeting would be on the next agenda as well.

5. Adjourn

With no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Don Poulin and seconded by Julia McFadden and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:01am.