



**School Construction Committee**  
Maine State Board of Education  
Minutes of the November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Meeting

The School Construction Committee met in Room 500, Cross Building, 11 Sewall Street, Augusta. There was also a remote attendance option.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Fern Desjardins (Chair), Kristin Bishop, Edmond Morin

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Valerie Chiang, School Construction Coordinator, Department of Education  
Laura Cyr, Legislative Specialist, Department of Education  
Nathan McIvor, School Facilities Staff, Department of Education  
Sandra Bourget, Office Specialist, State Board of Education  
Scott Brown, Director of School Facilities, Department of Education  
Martha Witham, Chair, Augusta School Board  
Sharon Littlefield, Superintendent, RSU 53  
Shawn Knox, Director of Operations, RSU 53  
James Anastasio, Superintendent, Augusta Public Schools  
Donald Bresnahan, Senior Vice President, BIMS  
Paula Gravelle, Director of School Finance, Department of Education  
Ann Pinnette, School Facilities Manager, Department of Education

Chair Desjardins called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

Motioned by Bishop, seconded by Morin, and voted unanimously by those present to accept the October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023 minutes as written.

Chair Desjardins introduced Laura Cyr and asked her to provide an update on Chapter 61 Rulemaking. Cyr reported that the public hearing for the rule revisions was held on November 21st. Two people provided comments. The public comment period will close on December 1st. Cyr then reviewed the remaining process including legislative and governor approval.

Chair Desjardins then requested Cyr to provide an update on the Study for LD 1415, Resolve, Chapter 462, An Act to Expand Access to School Construction Funding. Cyr stated that the draft report is complete and that it includes information about how other states fund school construction

as well as possible options for funding Maine school construction projects. It also describes the possible creation of a new commission to further examine school construction funding methods and develop recommendations.

Chair Desjardins then introduced Paula Gravelle and asked her to provide an update on School Finance & Debt Service. Gravelle presented information on the debt service process and provided an analysis of the capacity of the current debt ceiling to accommodate new projects.

After several questions on debt service, Chair Desjardins asked Scott Brown to introduce the exhibit Major Capital School Construction Program: Additions to the Approved Projects List for the 2017-2018 Rating Cycle. The Commissioner is recommending adding projects #8 and #9, RSU 53's Manson Park School and Augusta Public Schools' Lillian Parks Hussey School, to the 2017-2018 Approved Projects List. Motioned by Bishop, seconded by Morin, and unanimously approved by those present, that this exhibit be placed on the December 13, 2023, meeting agenda and that the State Board of Education approve the attached Approved Projects List for the 2017-2018 Rating Cycle.

During the Miscellaneous Agenda Item, the Committee discussed amending the earlier motion on the Approved Projects List to include mention of statutory authority. Move by Bishop, seconded by Morin, and unanimously approved by those present, to amend the earlier motion for the Approved Projects List so that in accordance with Chapter 61, Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects, Section 5, Approved Projects List, the School Construction Committee recommends that this exhibit be placed on the December 13, 2023, meeting agenda and that the State Board of Education approve the attached Approved Projects List for the 2017-2018 Rating Cycle. The Committee further recommends project #8 RSU 53/MSAD 53 Manson Park School be designated for Concept Approval in calendar year 2025 and project #9 Augusta Public Schools Lillian Parks Hussey School be designated for Concept Approval in calendar year 2026.

Desjardins adjourned the meeting 10:24 a.m.

The next committee meeting will be on Friday, December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 500.