



School Construction Committee
Maine State Board of Education
Minutes of the October 24, 2022 Meeting

The School Construction Committee met in Room 110, Elkins Building, 19 Elkins Lane, Augusta. There was also a remote option.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Fern Desjardins (Chair), Wilson Hess (remote), Kristin Bishop

OTHERS PRESENT:

Ben Greenlaw, Superintendent, MSAD 01 – REGION I Aroostook County Superintendents Association
Chris Howell, Superintendent, RSU 14 – REGION VII Cumberland County Superintendents Association
Jeremy Ray, Superintendent, Biddeford/Dayton/Saco – REGION IX York County Superintendents Assoc.
Rhonda Sperry, Superintendent, RSU 64 – REGION II Penquis County Superintendents Association
Scott Brown, Director of School Construction Programs, Maine Department of Education
Sandra Bourget, Office Specialist, Maine State Board of Education

OTHERS REMOTE

James Anastasio, Superintendent, Augusta Schools–REGION VIII Kennebec Valley Superintendents Assoc.
James Boothby, Superintendent, RSU 25 - REGION IV Hancock County Superintendents Association
Dan Chuhta, Deputy Commissioner, Maine Department of Education
Eileen King, Executive Director, Maine School Superintendents Association
Paulette Bonneau, Vice Chair, Maine State Board of Education
Valerie Chiang, School Construction Coordinator, Maine Department of Education

Fern Desjardins called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. and asked all participants to introduce themselves.

Chair Desjardins then asked Committee members if there were any questions regarding the first order of business, *Approval of the August 26, 2022 minutes*. There were none. Motion by Kristin Bishop, seconded by Wilson Hess, and voted unanimously to accept the August 26, 2022 minutes as written.

Chair Desjardins then outlined the primary agenda item for the remainder of the meeting, *School Construction & Renovations Discussion with MSSA Representatives*. She reviewed communications and events leading up to this agenda item including the October 13, 2022 meeting organized by the Department where the regional superintendents expressed a number of questions and recommendations regarding the Department's school construction programs. Chair Desjardins further reviewed her notes and highlights of that meeting before turning the floor over to the regional superintendents and others present to continue those discussions.

All meeting participants contributed in making a number of suggestions for improvement or further analysis. Proposals included raising the \$1 million cap for School Revolving Renovation Fund (SRRF) projects; reducing the local contribution component for approved SRRF projects; increasing the amount of funding in the SRRF; creating a new construction program for small projects (\$10 million project size); develop a new school construction rule (Chapter 62.5) so that existing programs could remain the same while creating a new program to address declining enrollments and consolidation, improve culture & equity, and implement 21st Century Programming; raising the Statutory Debt Limit for Major Capital Construction; dedicated funding to address projects that would close and consolidate schools within districts. Eileen King offered to compile what had been discussed and then reach out to the Department to review possibilities of legislation.

The Committee moved to the next agenda item, *Correspondence from MSAD 33*. Chair Desjardins acknowledged the receipt of the RSU 33 correspondence and facility report prepared by WBRC Inc. After discussion it was agreed that the Chair would draft a response.

The Committee then discussed their upcoming meeting schedule and possible agenda items.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:02 p.m.

The next School Construction Committee meeting is scheduled for December 02, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.