



CONNECTICUT Administrative Services

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Regular Meeting of the

School Building Projects Advisory Council

March 6, 2024, at 10:00 AM (held via Microsoft Teams)

Meeting video:

[SBPAC March meeting-20240306_100108-Meeting Recording.mp4 \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Members Present:

Alice Pritchard, Chair
Chol Anne Bobrowski
Angela Cahill
Louis Casolo
Lance Hall
Paul Hinsch
Antonio Iadarola
Julia McFadden
Don Poulin
William Turner
Omarys Vasquez

Members Absent: None

Departmental staff present:

David Barkin, DAS
Darren Hobbs, DAS
Barbara Fabiani, DAS
Nicholas Ross, DAS
Peter Zvingilas, DAS
Kermit Thompson, DAS
William Turley, DESPP

1. Call to Order by Dr. Alice Pritchard at 10:01am. She noted the meeting quorum and thanked the Council members for their attendance in today's meeting. In addition, she welcomed the members of the public who joined the meeting.
2. December 6, 2023, meeting minutes were approved unanimously with a motion to adopt by Don Poulin and seconded by Lance Hall.

3. Review of School Safety Infrastructure Criteria

Chair Pritchard noted that at the last meeting there was a discussion with state and private industry presenters sharing their perspectives on how the school safety infrastructure criteria could be improved and updated. David Barkin, the state's Chief Architect and his team have spent weeks reviewing the current criteria and Chair Pritchard asked Mr. Barkin to share their review process and provide an example of the format in which updates have been suggested and will be shared with the Council.

Mr. Barkin noted that his team including Barbara Fabiani and Nick Ross started with the original document in tabular form and then went through all the comments provided in the past with thanks to members Julia McFadden and Angela Cahill for their contributions. The team went through the entire document and noted their concurrence or suggested other language. They looked for redundancy across criteria and clarified language in terms of mandatory criteria versus criteria for consideration. They also identified items that SBPAC should discuss further and determine whether changes are needed such as what type of glazing is used in entranceways. Mr. Barkin provided an example of the criteria format with comments by the DAS team.

Chair Pritchard noted that once the working draft is ready, DAS will make the document available to Council members for review and will devote time at the June meeting of the SBPAC for further discussion. When the working draft is finalized and complete, it will be made available to the public. Should the SBPAC want to make any substantive changes to the criteria, it would be available for public comment. It was suggested that should public comment be sought, that a survey be developed to solicit specific feedback. Additionally, it was suggested that stakeholder groups such as fire marshals and school superintendents be given the opportunity to review in advance of finalization.

4. Discussion of future meeting topics

Chair Pritchard noted that she had the opportunity since the last meeting to talk with appointed members of the Council to gather their suggestions on what else the SBPAC should focus on beyond the school safety criteria. She shared her appreciation for the time taken for those calls and the great suggestions offered by the members. A brief slide was displayed with information below highlighting those ideas.

1. Roles and responsibilities of the DAS offices
 - Clarity on new structure
 - Where to go for technical assistance and questions
 - Recommendations for service improvements
2. Cost effectiveness and financing topics
 - Square footage maximum price
 - Eligible costs
 - Land acquisitions
3. Education topics
 - Energy
 - Sustainability
 - Other state approaches and lessons learned

In addition, members suggested a balance of virtual and in-person meetings and highly recommended at least an annual public forum with districts and other interested stakeholders to build relationships and offer opportunities for questions and feedback as well as education/new information.

The Council members shared additional topics for discussion and consideration and talked about the original charge of the Council to control costs, support districts in building projects, and provide transparency. Additional topics raised by members ranged from discussion of building spaces to support students' emotional health, the impact of tight guidelines on square footage on student services, the need to think strategically at state level about aging infrastructure, and impact of outdated cost guidelines on overall building project costs. Chair Pritchard noted these topics will be added to the list of items for DAS review and future presentations. She noted the first topic of DAS offices will be addressed at the June 2024 meeting.

In addition, the Council discussed ways to increase awareness and input on legislative bills. Concerns were raised that districts and other stakeholders don't know about bills in a timely manner and can't provide critical feedback on potential impacts. Members recognize the reactive nature of the legislative session but are eager to find ways to be proactive. Suggested that it might be helpful to have annual forum with legislators so they know about SBPAC and its expertise and also to review areas of special legislation that could identify issues that need further research and administrative solutions rather than established in statute. Chair Pritchard offered to share legislative update to members after the committee hearing process concluded so they know the status of bills of potential interest to SBPAC members.

5. Updates from Office of the State Building Inspector

Chair Pritchard asked the State's Building Official, Omarys Vasquez to provide a quick update on activities underway through her office that relate to the work of the SBPAC. She noted an Energy Summit planned for May 2024; new code amendment process with opportunity for public comment, and new staffing coming on board to provide technical assistance and services and address backlogs in service to districts and others. SBO Vasquez will share information on the May Summit and links to list serves to keep members informed of activities through her office.

6. Next quarterly meeting: June 5, 2024, at 10am.

Chair Pritchard reminded members of the June 5 meeting. She will poll members to determine interest and availability for an in-person or hybrid meeting rather than fully remote.

7. Adjourn

With no further business, a motion was made by Julia McFadden and seconded by Antonio Iadarola and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:52am.