

Facilities Safety and Maintenance Oversight Committee Meeting

September 11 2025 5:34 PM – 6:42 PM

2515 Ninth St. Berkeley, CA 94702

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order and Approval of Agenda

The meeting was called to order at 5:34 PM. The agenda was reviewed and approved without modifications.

Staff: Steve Collins, Sony Bhopal, Marcos Yoc-Cojon , Carlos Cil, Angel Hinojosa, Sofia Peltz

Committee Members: David Goldin Heather Chicoine Csilla Kenny , Terence Nicol

2. Introduction of New Members

New committee members were welcomed and introduced. Attendees acknowledged the value of new perspectives and expressed enthusiasm about the contributions the new members will bring to the work ahead.

3. Report from Maintenance Management

Grounds Maintenance Report

- Collins opened the maintenance summer list report by explaining that planning for the annual maintenance cycle begins each April. At that time, the team initiates the “summer list” — a working document of scheduled projects — which continues to evolve throughout the year.
- During the summer, leadership from Maintenance and Grounds departments meet weekly on Tuesdays to track progress and ensure timely execution of work.
- Angel Hinojosa, Grounds supervisor - provided an overview of major projects completed over the summer across various school sites.
 - The Grounds team focused on both aesthetics and functionality. This included planting flower beds at multiple schools, coordinating with students during Earth Day activities, installing 200 feet of blooming flowers in the high school’s landscaping to reflect school colors, performing major maintenance on our sports fields

- Hinojosa also noted that several bushes at various school sites were cleaned and trimmed. If plants were deemed salvageable, they were preserved and enhanced with fresh mulch.
- The overarching goal of these efforts was to improve curb appeal and reinforce a clean, welcoming environment for students and staff.
- Hinojosa addressed a question from committee member Goldin about fire mitigation at Cragmont. He clarified that fire cleanup is a priority at the start of every summer, although the fire department has not made a formal request for this work. Cragmont, unlike John Muir Elementary, is located in a designated fire zone.
 - Hinojosa also shared that he had previously met with the fire chief to maintain open communication on these safety measures.
- Goldin referenced the Bond Oversight Committee’s concern about Miyawaki Forest at a specific site, and Collins acknowledged that the concern is known but no major mitigation efforts are currently planned.
- Nichols asked whether any large-scale projects are on the horizon, to which Hinojosa responded that no significant capital work is planned at this time.
- Hinojosa also emphasized the structured approach the department takes during the school year. The crew is divided into two teams with four members each, with clearly assigned responsibilities and a rotational schedule to maintain consistency across all sites.
- Steve added that the Grounds Department is currently fully staffed, which helps support the ongoing workload.

Maintenance Day Crew Report

- Yoc-Cojon provided an update on the day crew’s accomplishments over the summer. In addition to managing the scheduled “summer list,” the team completed 127 separate projects and addressed numerous work orders (WO). When combining both tracked and untracked items, Marcos estimated the total project count at over 250.
- Preventative maintenance (PM) was a significant focus. The team performed PM’s on rooftop HVAC units, as well as classroom units, replaced filters and batteries in water fountains, and conducted regular plumbing and drain maintenance, particularly in response to clogged systems at multiple Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) sites.
- Carpenters completed several high-priority projects, including a minor renovation and move of the robotics room at Berkeley High School.
- In terms of operational systems, the Maintenance Department transitioned to a new work order tracking platform. Marcos shared that approximately **4,390** work orders have been processed since December
- Nichols asked if the new system was working effectively. Yoc-Cojon expressed that it has been “hit or miss,” with some technical or logistical challenges.
 - Collins noted that while the system provides similar access to the previous one, it lacks the same ease-of-use in certain areas.

- Collins also updated the committee on the district-wide fan installation project. The Maintenance Department began installing “Big Ass Fans” in classrooms about eight years ago, focusing initially on south-facing rooms. More recently, the Facilities Department took over and expanded the initiative to ensure that all classrooms and other spaces now have these high-efficiency fans.
 - The Ongoing maintenance and servicing of the fans will continue to be managed by the Maintenance Department.
- Csilla asked to see the complete summer project list.
 - Collins responded that there were 77 contracted projects and 248 completed by in-house staff.

Maintenance Night Crew Report

- Cil, representing the Night Crew Maintenance supervisor, reported that his team had focused primarily on preventative maintenance over the summer.
 - This included replacing air filters with upgraded MERV-13 models and conducting extensive HVAC system maintenance.
 - Yoc-Cojon added that significant valve replacements and gasket work were done in boiler rooms to ensure heating systems were fully functional before the school year began.
- Cil also highlighted several painting projects, notably at Ruth Acty and Rosa Parks schools.
 - Additionally, a lighting upgrade at Willard Middle School resulted in the installation of approximately 20 new fixtures in classrooms and another 20 in the gymnasium.
- Collins responded to a staffing question from Goldin, confirming that the night maintenance crew currently has several vacancies.

4. Sustainability Report

- Peltz, Sustainability Coordinator shared their department’s summer efforts, which focused on evaluating waste management infrastructure across school sites.
 - The team assessed landfill, recycling, and composting practices, identifying locations that lacked proper bins and signage.
 - Their goal is to ensure all schools are fully equipped and properly labeled to encourage sustainable behavior.
- To address infrastructure gaps, the Sustainability team is actively seeking grant funding. The estimated cost per waste station — including bins and signage — is approximately \$700.

- Peltz is also supporting BUSD’s transition to reusable dishware. This shift involves both physical infrastructure (e.g., dishwashers) and change, requiring reeducation of staff and students.
 - Ruth Acty Elementary has a dishwasher installed but implementation is pending until December 1st 2025 .
 - Other schools, including Berkeley High School, are in line for installation.
 - Goldin questioned the delay in implementation, and Collins explained that cultural shifts and education need to be addressed first, as simply providing the equipment does not guarantee adoption.
- Collins confirmed the district’s goal to be 100% reusable by the beginning of the next school year. He also noted that ongoing accountability efforts, such as sustainability scorecards, are in place to support that transition.

5. Committee Discussions

- Collins gave a comprehensive explanation of how Berkeley’s Maintenance Department is uniquely funded. Unlike most districts, BUSD has a parcel tax that funds its maintenance operations — including staff salaries, tools, equipment, and supplies.
 - The initial parcel tax passed in 2000 and subsequent measures in 2010, and 2020 extended the funding through 2030. The parcel tax currently supports an annual budget of \$8.8 million, and the measure requires the district to maintain a citizen oversight committee and undergo regular audits.
- Despite the healthy budget, Collins reported that this year the fund balance has decreased significantly, and currently stands between \$600,000 and \$1 million. This drop is due to unforeseen expenses, including major roofing repairs and hazardous material cleanup during an unusually stormy winter.
 - Typically, the district spends around \$50,000 annually on hazmat services; however, the previous year that amount rose to approximately \$200,000.
 - Additional high-cost categories included elevator maintenance and plumbing repairs
- Collins noted that in his 19 years with BUSD, the department has never fully spent its budget, largely because it has never been fully staffed.
- Facilities and Maintenance frequently coordinate resources, balancing needs across departments as necessary.
- Nichols asked whether the sale of the Old Oxford site would ease budget pressure. Steve confirmed that it would, especially since maintaining the site is costly, requiring frequent graffiti removal and general upkeep. He also added ongoing challenges with theft and vandalism at the Russell Street facility which is another vacant property.
- Csilla inquired about the Annual Plan. Steve clarified that it primarily serves to inform the public about budget and staffing and does not represent a binding list of projects.

- Steve also reminded the committee that many COVID-related upgrades — including lighting and energy efficiency improvements — were funded through the bond program and fell under the Maintenance Department’s purview.
 - Finally, Steve distributed the proposed meeting schedule for the year and asked committee members to review it for potential quorum issues or conflicts.
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6. Compliance with the Brown Act

The committee briefly reviewed its adherence to the Brown Act, confirming compliance with transparency and public meeting requirements.

7. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

The committee identified two key agenda items for the next meeting:

- First Quarter Report
 - First Interim Financial Report
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8. Committee Statement to the Board of Education

The committee discussed the need to draft and approve a formal statement to the Board summarizing key outcomes from the meeting. This statement will be prepared before the next scheduled meeting.

9. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

There were no public comments on non-agenda items.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:42 PM

Enclosures:

- Summer Work Report
- Supervisor Introductions
- Future Meeting Schedule
- Full Project List for Summer Work

