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Minnesota Department of Education

Capitol Square 550 Cedar Street Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101

TO: Cabinet Members
Managers
Supervisors

FROM: *Jim Sauter*
Jim Sauter, Deputy Commissioner
Planning and Operations

DATE: May 14, 1991

RE: Capitol Square Building Update

On March 5, 1991, Commissioner Mammenga sent a memo to the Commissioner of Administration, Dana Badgerow, outlining the Capitol Square building problems and requesting support for resolving those problems as quickly as possible.

On March 22, 1991, I followed up with a memo to Assistant Commissioner Jim Pederson, who has been directing the Department of Administration's efforts to resolve our building problems, requesting a meeting to discuss an action plan for the repairs that had been agreed to. In a subsequent phone call, Jim Pederson indicated that a plan was in place to proceed with work on the Capitol Square building.

Attached are copies of the March 5 and 22 memos and of the response received on May 7, 1991 from Jim Pederson. This response sets out the activities currently in progress and those planned.

Please share this information with your staff. As repairs are accomplished and more information becomes available, another informational meeting will be held for staff. Please continue to report any new problems to the Office of Administrative Services so they can be addressed in this effort.

We will continue to work with the Department of Administration toward accomplishing these activities to improve our building environment as quickly as possible.

JES/MLM/jma

Attachments


MINNESOTA 1990

Minnesota Department of Education

Capitol Square 155 Cedar Street Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101

TO: Dana B. Badgerow, Commissioner
Department of Administration
FROM: Gene Mammenga, Commissioner *Gene Mammenga*
Department of Education
DATE: March 5, 1991
RE: Capitol Square Building

This is to inform you of the serious building problems that exist in the Capitol Square building which houses the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). For over six years, problems have been recognized by MDE employees and by Department of Administration staff who have responsibilities for the provision and maintenance of office space for MDE in Capitol Square. To focus on the specific and recent events that describe the current state of the problem in Capitol Square, a listing of the problems, actions taken to date and unsolved questions and issues is attached for your information and reference.

In short, the Capitol Square building has documented fungal contamination as a result of years of water leakage from the roof and from wind driven rains through walls and window spaces. This contamination of various laboratory identified microorganisms is present in the inside air and present in wallboard, ceiling and carpet materials in varying degrees on floors 5-9 of the building.

One result of this contamination is a persistent moldy, musty odor in many locations throughout the building. In addition, a number of first injury reports by employees submitting that they are experiencing a range of symptoms due to the airborne fungus have been filed. In addition to the formal injury reports, general complaints of physical reactions to the odor and contaminated air quality from employees are numerous.

A second major problem is that the HVAC (heating, ventilation, air conditioning) system in the building is inadequate. Carbon dioxide levels above the generally accepted level have been measured on floors 5-9. This results in insufficient ventilation and many consistent and continuing employee complaints of headaches, fatigue, and discomfort due to "stuffiness". While all floors occupied by MDE are experiencing these problems, they are at a critical level on 9th floor.

In June 1990, a petition was signed by staff housed on ninth floor, which is the floor experiencing the worst air quality and the most associated problems, calling for action on the part of management to get the problem of the "sick building" environment solved. The attached history of activities recounts the steps that have been taken with the cooperation of Department of Administration. However, the problem is not resolved. The problem is extensive; and solutions are complex, expensive and take a considerable time commitment.

I believe MDE staff should be provided with a healthy and reasonably comfortable work environment. There seems to have been general agreement between MDE and DOA that the long range solution is for MDE to leave the Capitol Square building. MDE has been told that DOA will request planning money for this purpose from the 1991 Legislature. However, even if successful, this solution is 3-5 years in the future. Some immediate resolution is needed; and the action to implement short term solutions to improve the air quality in the Capitol Square building appears to have become stalled.

It appears that MDE and DOA are not entirely in agreement regarding which problem to address first on the ninth floor (removing contaminated building materials or addressing the inadequate ventilation). MDE is requesting that an immediate study of air distribution on 9th floor be conducted to determine the cause of so many complaints of discomfort and to assure that a sufficient level of improvement in air ventilation can be achieved on ninth floor before investing the resources and effort necessary to removing contaminated materials.

MDE employees continue to call for responsible action and discuss initiating informational picketing. Rain, heat, and humidity will soon exacerbate the air quality and ventilation problems. There must be a solution for the 9th floor before this occurs.

I am requesting you, as Commissioner of Administration, to address this situation and provide leadership to this matter so that the resources available can be brought to bear on resolving this problem as quickly and as effectively as possible.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to working cooperatively in its resolution.

GM/MLM/jma

Attachments

3/05/91

Capitol Square Building

Air Quality and Ventilation Problems
History of Actions Since June 1990

<u>Problems</u>	<u>Action Taken</u>	<u>Current Status</u>
1. Strong, moldy odor, high humidity/lack of ventilation in selected areas on on floors 5-9 but especially on 9th floor (ongoing).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">. 9th floor MDE employees petitioned for action.. MDE request to DOA for air quality testing and investigation of the cause of problems on floors 5-9.. DOA Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, and Directors and the MDE Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and Director of Administrative Services held an MDE employee meeting (7/27/90) to discuss the problems and actions to resolve the problems.. First injury reports filed with DOER by employees (10 to date); Memos of health complaints also filed (13 to date).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">. Laboratory testing completed (8/90).. Report (9/5/90) by DOER Industrial Hygienist submitted documenting airborne fungal contamination, contaminated building materials and elevated CO₂ levels.. Report recommends: eliminating water leaks (roof and windows); removing and replacing wall and ceiling materials that are sources of fungal contamination; consider occupancy limits for each floor to maximize fresh air ventilation.
2. Roof leaks and wind driven rain leaks through exterior walls and windows on floors 5-9.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">. DOA had the Capitol Square roof repaired (10/90).. DOA had windows on the northwest corner of the building caulked; also some on the southeast corner (10/90).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">. Initially leaks ceased, but multiple water leaks re-occurred through the ceiling on 9th floor on 12/28/90.. According to DOA Building Construction Division, the source of 12/28/90 leaks was condensation on metal components in the roof pent-house walls, and measures need to be taken to stop this leakage. No work to resolve this has been conducted to date.

3. Wallboard, ceiling tiles and carpet are holding fungal growth in various areas on floors 5-9.

. DOA agreed to remove and replace materials (wall, ceiling, carpet) in designated areas on 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9th floors.

. DOA began removal of wallboard, ceiling tile with offices 711 and 712 (1/91).

. DOA developed drawings and estimates to remove water damaged carpet inside the fire-tower doors on each floor to be replaced with vinyl and to replace door sills (11/6/90).

. This removal and replacement of contaminated materials has been completed in two offices on 7th floor. (711 and 712)

. No work conducted to date on carpet or door sills.

. No other work is in progress on 5, 6, 8 or 9th.

4. Inadequate ventilation and elevated CO₂ levels on floors 5-9.

. MDE requested an occupancy study to determine the maximum number of occupants per floor (5th-9th) (9/13/90).

. DOA conducted an analysis of HVAC capabilities for Capitol Square Building (12/2/90).

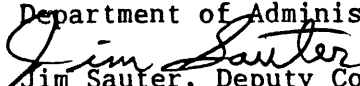
. DOA analysis did not look at actual air distribution. A study of air distribution is needed.

MDE

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Capitol Square 550 Cedar Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101 612/296-6104

TO: Jim Pederson, Assistant Commissioner
Department of Administration

FROM: 
Jim Sauter, Deputy Commissioner
MN Department of Education

DATE: March 22, 1991

RE: Capitol Square Building

As you know, on January 15, 1991 you and I met along with a number of Department of Administration staff and the MDE Administrative Services Director regarding the problems in the Capitol Square building. Specifically, we discussed short-range plans to address the removal of contaminated wallboard and ceiling tile materials from floors 9,8,6 and 5; the replacement of fire tower door sills and adjacent carpet on all floors; and the actions to be taken to stop the recent leaks on 9th floor which your staff determined to be from the roof penthouse walls.

Also discussed was the continuing problem with inadequate ventilation especially on 9th floor, which MDE asked be pursued with a study of air distribution on that floor.

It was my understanding at that meeting that a general plan of action was agreed upon. Basically, Department of Administration agreed to continue the removal of contaminated materials; to do repairs on the fire tower doors; to fix the roof penthouse to prevent further water leaks on 9th floor and to work with MDE on the air distribution problem on 9th floor. I recall that it was agreed the next step would be to have a group of Department of Administration staff and MDE Director of Administrative Services convene to walk through the 9th floor and then develop a plan of action to begin immediate correction of the problems.

To date, none of the activities we agreed upon on January 15 have been addressed. No further repairs or corrections to these Capitol Square Building problems have occurred.

MDE employees continue to call for action and discuss initiating informational picketing. These problems need to be addressed now. We are already into the Spring season and warm weather, rain, and humidity will increase the air quality and ventilation problems.

I would like to set a meeting at your earliest possible convenience to resolve whatever is preventing the repairs and activities necessary to resolve the Capitol Square building problems from proceeding immediately.



Please call if you have questions or wish to discuss the arranging of a meeting. Otherwise, I will ask Mary Lynne McAlonie, Director of Administrative Services to contact your office next week to arrange a meeting date.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter. It is a matter of importance that the MDE administration is committed to bring to resolution.

I look forward to working cooperatively with Department of Administration in doing so.

JES/MLM/jma

cc: Commissioner Gene Mammenga
Commissioner Dana Badgerow

DEPARTMENT : OF ADMINISTRATION

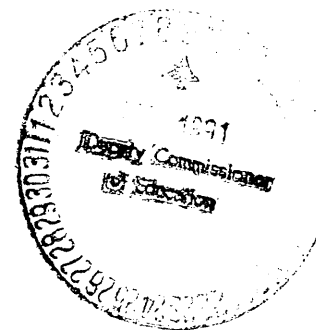
STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office Memorandum

DATE : May 7, 1991

TO : Jim Sauter
Deputy Commissioner
Department of Education

FROM : James L. Pederson *James L. Pederson*
Assistant Commissioner



PHONE : 296-6852

SUBJECT : Capitol Square Building

Please forgive me for being so tardy in responding to your letter of March 22. This memo is a follow up to the telephone conversations we have had and an update on Administration's plans for remedying building problems.

We did submit a request to the Governor and the Legislature for planning funds for a replacement building for Capitol Square. The Governor supported the request and \$400,000 is included in the House state department's bill. This morning, certain capital budget items were included in a senate bill (SF 1182), but the planning funds were not among them. At least there is hope that some planning funds may survive in conference committee.

All the roof leaks have apparently now finally been stopped.

Condensation problems that also caused moisture during alternately cold and mild weather are being attacked by insulating the affected areas.

Earlier this week, we received a price quote to caulk and tuck point all exterior face brick and windows and entrance doors and apply a water repellent sealer to all masonry walls.

Exit door sills that permit water penetration will be repaired.

The above steps should finally make the building water tight. Ceiling tile and plaster board walls damaged or contaminated by the water penetration will be removed and replaced after the above steps to make the building water tight are completed.

Air distribution problems are being studied further by an outside engineering firm at the request of the Building Construction Division.

Thank you for your understanding and patience with our attempts to deal with this particularly vexing building problem.

JLP:nb

c: Commissioner Dana B. Badgerow, Admin
Commissioner Gene Mammenga, Education