

AT A JOINT MEETING OF THE JAMES CITY COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, THE WILLIAMSBURG CITY COUNCIL, AND THE WILLIAMSBURG-JAMES CITY COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD, HELD ON THE 17TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2009, AT 9:07 A.M., 2007 LEGACY HALL, 4301 NEW TOWN AVENUE, COUNTY OF JAMES CITY, VIRGINIA.

A. WELCOME

Ms. Emanuel, School Board Chair, greeted everyone and clarified that no raises are in the FY 09-10 budget for any employees. The superintendent's car allowance was combined with his salary, which some mistook as a raise. Ms. Emanuel also thanked Mr. Wanner for suggesting the topics for the joint meeting, as these important discussions needed to take place.

B. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kennedy called the Board of Supervisors to order at 9:07 a.m.

James G. Kennedy, Chairman, Stonehouse District
Mary Jones, Vice Chair, Berkeley District
Bruce C. Goodson, Roberts District
James O. Icenhour, Jr., Powhatan District
John J. McGlennon, Jamestown District

Sanford B. Wanner, County Administrator

Ms. Emanuel called the School Board to order at 9:02 a.m. Present from the School Board were Dr. John Alewynse, Ms. Elise Emanuel (Chair), Ms. Ruth Larson, Ms. Mary Ann Maimone, and Mr. James Nickols. Mr. Joseph Fuentes was absent, due to his attendance of the sea trials of the USS George H.W. Bush. Ms. Denise Koch was absent due to a family medical situation. Also present were Dr. Gary S. Mathews, Superintendent and Clerk of the Board; Ms. Janet Cerza, Deputy Clerk of the Board; Dr. Robert T. Becker, Assistant Superintendent for Operations; Dr. Scott Burckbuchler, Assistant Superintendent for Finance/Interim Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; staff, press, and the public.

Ms. Zeidler called City Council to order at 9:08 a.m. and Mr. Tuttle called the roll. Present from City Council were Mr. Bobby Braxton, Ms. Judy Knudson, Mr. Paul Freiling, and Ms. Jeanne Zeidler (Mayor.) Mr. Clyde Haulman was absent due to a trip out of town. Also present was Mr. Jack Tuttle, City Manager.

C. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Future Construction and the Impact on the 4th Middle School and James Blair

Dr. Becker noted that the 4th middle school is currently under construction and reviewed the capacity information and enrollment projections as of September 30, 2008. If all four middle schools are on line in the fall of 2010, there is a projected excess capacity of 775 students. If only Toano, Berkeley, and the new middle school are on line in the fall of 2010, the effective capacity is 2,570, which could house the middle school population through 2013.

Dr. Becker reviewed the parameters of the feasibility study: administration never thought to do a wholesale gut of James Blair; utilize James Blair as central office, including student services, records management, and the Academy for Life and Learning (ALL) Academy, using an open office concept. By following this plan James Blair could be returned to a middle school if necessary. Administration did not want to remove students totally, but wanted to have the ALL Academy there so that the students would have a cafeteria, gymnasium, and outside facilities for exercise. This would also eliminate the rent that is currently being paid for the student services building and two of the ALL Academy trailers (the other two trailers are owned by Williamsburg-James City County (W-JCC)).

There was discussion regarding the economics of opening the two new schools, specifically, Option No. 4 in the memo dated February 10, 2009, from Dr. Burckbuchler to Dr. Mathews in the agenda. Mayor Zeidler asked if moving the programs and reconfiguring space costs had been calculated. They have not. Dr. Mathews stated that they understood there are other costs, but that the \$1.8 million staffing cost is the most difficult to obtain. It was also important to maintain the ALL Academy, which could grow to accommodate 150 or so students in the middle school that are struggling learners.

Mr. Goodson asked if James Blair could be used as an elementary school and the annex could be used for the ALL Academy. This could be done. Mayor Zeidler asked if it made more sense to use the new middle school instead of James Blair. Dr. Becker responded that the new middle school has a larger capacity, which would allow more time in the building before the need for more space. The capacity of James Blair, as calculated by Moseley, was discussed. Mayor Zeidler suggested moving special education students from James Blair to increase capacity. Ms. Larson responded that special education students have the right to go to their home school.

Mr. Wanner noted that there has been a parallel tract running for a new central office and a new home for the All Academy and student services. The new Capital Improvements Program (CIP) had an alternative site for these offices/programs until this current dialogue started. If this happens at James Blair, then the need for permanent housing would sit in the CIP until further out and at such time as enrollment rises and James Blair reverts to a middle school.

Mr. Freiling asked if W-JCC was looking to grow the ALL Academy program. Dr. Mathews replied that there are students who could take advantage of an alternative education program (about 150 or so students). His intent is to grow the alternative education program for alternative learners, which would free up space in other middle schools. It would be a voluntary program. Ms. Larson stated that if we had space at James Blair, then the community would expect a plan for expulsion students also.

Mr. Icenhour asked if the elementary schools still have excess capacity and if the capacity numbers include the pre-K classrooms? Dr. Becker responded that the capacity was computed using K-5 grade classrooms only. The pre-K classrooms were moved to four elementary school sites. There was discussion on how the pre-K program would grow (there is built-in growth room for the pre-K).

Mr. Icenhour asked if any consideration had been given to stretching out construction one more year for the two new schools - it would buy \$2.5 million as well as \$1.8 million. Dr. Becker responded that he would have to go back and look at the contracts, as the schools are due to open in July 2010. Dr. Mathews noted that both D. J. Montague Elementary and Stonehouse Elementary Schools are stacked up and a new elementary school is needed.

Ms. Emanuel asked if it would be possible to delay the 4th middle school only. Dr. Becker responded that he would have to look at the contracts. The middle school need is more critical from the capacity standpoint. Mr. Goodson stated that they did not need to stretch construction, but outfitting the schools and redistricting could be delayed. The two schools do not have to be used when they are delivered.

Discussion followed on redistricting. Dr. Becker stated that he would be bringing the James Blair feasibility study to the School Board for action on March 3, 2009. The redistricting discussion would begin afterwards. Dr. Mathews stated that if the schools open in 2010, the School Board would like to have its decision made six months prior to the opening of the schools.

Mr. Kennedy asked what would happen to the current buildings if the central office moved to James Blair. Dr. Mathews responded that W-JCC would stop renting the building on Midlands Road; abandon the Eastern State Hospital site that houses the ALL Academy (W-JCC owns two of the four trailers, rental of the other two is \$34,000 plus \$2,700 for utilities); and return Building D to the County. In eight years or when needed, they would decide whether to build another school or build or rent central office.

Transportation costs were briefly discussed. Dr. Becker stated that all of the James Blair students would probably not be rezoned to the new school. Currently 15 students walk to James Blair (out of the 640 enrolled at the school this year.)

Dr. Becker reviewed what the parameters of the feasibility study were: asking a firm to look at physical layouts of the central office, records management, student services, and the ALL Academy; and giving suggestions on how the space at James Blair could be used to accommodate these offices/programs (perhaps a School Board meeting room and cost estimates to do so).

Mr. McGlennon commented that the ALL Academy program sounded like a middle school program only. If it was also a high school program, it needed to be resolved because it would affect the James Blair decision. Dr. Mathews noted that W-JCC is currently in a shared-services arrangement with other local jurisdictions and the students are being served including those in grades 9-12. The discipline side of alternative education could be brought to the ALL Academy or could continue being served at Enterprise Academy. Research shows that you have to catch students in grades 5-6 and 8-9 or they will dropout in 9th grade. The current alternative education program is for 7th and 8th graders. The Board needs to make this decision as to whether there will be a discipline component located at James Blair.

Ms. Maimone stated that the timing of the feasibility study was to use as a tool for gathering information that the Board would use to make its decision. This was an unanticipated opportunity due to the James Blair renovation and the slower than anticipated growth. It is also an opportunity to move the ALL Academy program to a better location.

Ms. Emanuel stated that the School Board has not come to a resolution on how it wants the ALL Academy program. It wants the middle school program, but there are some youngsters that they are not serving that are not egregious and perhaps fit into the alternative program. She was concerned about sending some children to Enterprise Academy. There are two levels of discipline that they are hearing and they haven't addressed the middle level yet.

Dr. Alewynse asked if the governing bodies had any additional things to add to the feasibility study.

There was discussion on when public engagement would occur with the feasibility study. Some felt that it should occur before the feasibility study was completed and others felt that the feasibility study should be completed first to have the information to share and discuss with the public.

Mr. Goodson stated that no one has offered anything alternative from these Boards regarding the reuse of James Blair. Who's going to fund keeping it (James Blair) open, if we have four middle schools open - the city?

Mr. Freiling suggested having open-ended parameters so that the answers from the consultant are suggestions on how to accomplish end goals.

Ms. Jones stated that it made sense to consolidate the administrative offices at a central office. She did not think a wide-open study was needed, just a general direction. She encouraged the School Board to move ahead with the feasibility study and to continue with the intent to reopen James Blair down the road as a school. In alternative education, it's important to capture a child in middle school. She gave strong support for an alternative education program in high school and a discipline program in the community. Also, the James Blair gym could be used as an auxiliary gym, which has been in the CIP for years, and possibly the auditorium and cafeteria.

Mayor Zeidler agreed that the gym was not the only facility that could be used by the community.

Mr. Nickols responded that the company doing the study has done this type of work. Of course, the opportunity for costs to be added for study would increase the cost of the study.

Ms. Knudson suggested public participation early - reminding everyone of the Bruton Heights debacle.

There was discussion about how the capacity at James Blair dropped from when Moseley did its study in 2005 to the current data in August 2008. Was this because some of the classrooms were converted? Dr. Becker responded that some were converted to special education classrooms and visions classrooms - programmatic changes.

Mr. Tuttle suggested that it might be an opportunity to bring school training meetings back to the school division.

Dr. Mathews noted that from a management standpoint, James Blair is very important to making the fiscal picture work. There was discussion regarding the Stimulus Plan that appears to be one-time monies. The details of the plan and how much will be available to W-JCC are unknown at this time. It does look like there will not be a second round of K-12 education cuts, and depending on how special education monies can be used, the \$4.8 million reduction may become a \$2.8 million reduction. Unless W-JCC can use the special education monies as it chooses, it may still be short \$4.8 million unless other stimulus dollars are at hand from the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund.

The Boards recessed from 10:15 a.m. to 10:27 a.m.

2. Snapshot of Enrollment

Dr. Burckbuchler stated that W-JCC used DeJong-Healy, internal estimates, and UVA for enrollment projections. He reviewed the Enrollment History and Forecast Summary in the agenda. It was noted that a 1.1 percent increase is projected for the next year and a 1.4 percent increase is projected for the next four years. The 2008 actual enrollment number for Matthew Whaley was incorrect; Dr. Burckbuchler stated that he will correct the number after researching the error.

The declining high school projections were discussed. Members of the Board of Supervisors questioned the projections, stating that there had been new growth in the County this year and asked if there had been an influx of parents taking their children out of private schools and enrolling them in W-JCC. Dr. Burckbuchler responded that he is not presently aware of any great influx. Mr. Kennedy stated that there had been a change in the birth rate which would show up in the coming years. Mr. Wanner suggested W-JCC get the data from the County on the building permits and certificates of occupancy for further enrollment information.

Mr. Kennedy stated that the message: "Enrollment numbers are not as robust as we anticipated, but they are not declining" needed to be sent out. Mr. Icenhour noted that the community demographics are changing. Weldon-Cooper's estimates have been 3.3 percent every year - solid growth projecting the need for capacity.

3. Redistricting

Dr. Mathews stated that the Board decided it wanted the redistricting process to be completed six months prior to the opening of the new schools, which would be March 2010. The Board will have to determine parameters so that a bid can be prepared, do task force solicitations, and the actual process can begin. Dr. Becker continued, the School Board, at its November 18, 2008, work session, suggested that the redistricting process be finished six months before the change is implemented to give the community ample time to become familiar with the new boundaries. The six months also allows time for the bus routes to be worked out. Each bus tier has over 100 bus routes and there are also intra-school shuttles.

Mr. Goodson asked when a decision was going to be made on either three or four middle schools. Dr. Becker responded that the School Board did not accept the proposed redistricting timeline. Dr. Mathews noted that school districts will be redistricting and closing schools due to the economic times. There may be a run on those companies that do redistricting. There was discussion on whether the School Board could lock in a company now. Dr. Becker stated that to do so, a clear understanding of the services it would be asked to provide and a tentative time frame would be needed.

There was discussion on why the school division could not do the redistricting. Dr. Becker stated that it is a very specific skill; W-JCC does not own the software to do this (Edulog). Ms. Larson suggested a community member could do it. Mayor Zeidler stated that in 1993 it was done with a community committee and software from transportation.

Mr. Nickols stated that milestones of when the School Board needed to make decisions, with objectives, were needed. Dr. Alewynse stated that the figures from next fall are also critical. Ms. Larson preferred to find someone to operate the software the school division has (Edulog). The issue of finding someone who is impartial was discussed. Dr. Becker stated that he believed that Edulog has an arm that does redistricting, which would be external, and that a person could be hired that knows that Edulog program. The person could be hired to do the redistricting and the bus routes, but the criteria are needed first. Dr. Mathews stated that he and Dr. Becker will review the current Edulog contract and report back to the Board.

D. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Goodson made a motion to adjourn the Board of Supervisors.

On a roll call vote, the vote was: AYE: Goodson, Jones, McGlennon, Icenhour, Kennedy (5). NAY: (0).

At 11:14 a.m., Mr. Kennedy adjourned the Board until 4:00 p.m. on February 24, 2009.

Sanford B. Wanner
Clerk to the Board

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