

## **Open Session Meeting**

### **Strategic Planning Committee (Thursday, August 17, 2017)**

Present: Dr. David Lever, consultant, Dr. Jeffrey Grotzky, Richard Kalter, Joseph Harding, Francoise Sullivan, Tracey Williams, Joseph Wheeler and Dr. Karen Couch. Absent: Shelley Heller. Also, in attendance Brenda Rose, Principal Garnet Elementary. Also in attendance were Joel Gallihue, AIP and Joe Griffiths, representing the Maryland Department of Planning, who will be providing technical support for the committee.

#### **1. Order of Meeting**

A. Meeting Called to Order at 4:31PM

B. Dr. Couch welcomed the committee noting Shelley Heller was unable to attend the first meeting due to a prior commitment.

C. Committee members provided brief introductions.

D. Dr. Lever welcomed the committee

#### **2. Tour of H. H. Garnet Elementary School**

Brenda Rose conducted a tour of the building for all the committee members and community members in attendance.

#### **3. Background and Purpose of the Strategic Plan**

A. Dr. Lever reviewed the handout summary sheet for the Strategic Planning Committee. He reviewed the enrollment projection data stating unless something dramatically changes, it paints a very clear picture of the future of the school system. Mrs. Sullivan questioned whether the district uses census or historic data in these projections. Dr. Lever noted for this purpose we use historic data. It's a cohort survival live birth method that, essentially looks at past years and determines grade succession. He added, we also used the county wide projections developed by Maryland Department of Planning as our touchstone for accuracy; however, not every county or jurisdiction uses this information. The summary sheet also provides information on the current and future demographic profile of the county, on school utilization, and on the age of facilities, all of which support the need for a long-term strategic plan.

Dr. Lever acknowledged Joe Griffiths, Maryland Department of Planning, noting they have very generously offered to help us with this effort (another MDP planner may attend in Mr. Griffiths place in the future). He noted that we need to figure out what data they have that will be helpful to us as we work through these issues. We know Economic Development, Housing, and Transportation changes in adjacent areas and within Kent County may affect future enrollments.

Dr. Lever introduced Joel Gallihue, stating he has extensive experience in a number of relevant areas in planning. Mr. Gallihue will be working with the enrollment figures and also will be in contact with the planning departments in the towns and County to talk about the development possibilities and their impact. All of these numbers have to be studied and tested.

Facility utilization was discussed noting Galena and Rock Hall will be utilized at a comfortable range of utilization. Garnet is projected to be somewhat lower in 2021. The high school and the middle school are significantly underutilized; however, Dr. Lever emphasized that these are paper numbers. He added that when you look at actual building plans and talk to the staff, we often find a very different picture. Meaning all rooms may not be vacant as they could be utilized for other efforts such as special education and pullout programs. In addition, small class sizes in required courses will still require the same number of classrooms needed in a school with larger class sizes.

The Dixon development was discussed noting it could significantly impact the population and enrollment at Garnet Elementary in subsequent years. Mr. Harding stated the County's Comprehensive Plan is being rewritten and he wondered whether there was a component that the school district provides. Dr. Couch responded that she submitted comments and suggested revisions to ensure it was aligned with district data.

The aging of school facilities and the challenge with school funding and underutilization were reviewed. Dr. Lever stated there are presently no exceptions for rural counties with one high school and one middle school. He added when you look at all the data for Kent County, particularly the current and projected utilization of the facilities, it becomes evident that further consideration of right sizing needs to be considered. We need to keep in mind the County's budget is limited and will most likely be limited in the future, so that needs to be considered as we move forward with our recommendations.

Dr. Lever stated that looking at the buildings in reference to master plans, there are renovations that need to be considered. For instance, at Galena the expansion of their cafeteria should be considered. All of these considerations should be reviewed in terms of what might happen in the future and how it will impact a building. Dr. Lever affirmed we are also considering central office in this discussion, including the need for district storage since there is no longer availability for storage in the elementary schools. At present, there are some areas that were used as storage that in the future might be needed for instructional spaces, impacting the district's ability to store important equipment and instructional materials. Dr. Lever briefly discussed ADA accommodations noting that we need to ensure all our schools provide adequate accessibility to instructional spaces, adding technical compliance does not always translate into real compliance.

The goal is to create a stable, long term plan for the district. The document that is created will provide guidance for the future when members of the board of education and/or county government change.

If further consolidation were to be considered, then attention needs to be given to separating age groups as necessary. Capital improvements need to be considered as well as community partnerships that could be encouraged to use underutilized portions of the schools. The reuse and surplus potential for the schools that remain behind must also be considered, noting the two main drivers are educational adequacy and budget. Mrs. Sullivan asked whether there was a time limit to surplus a building and whether the district was on the hook for the operating costs. Dr. Couch noted the district is responsible for the

operating costs until a building surplus occurs. Dr. Lever noted that the State utilizes a formula to determine the outstanding debt that if 10 percent or more of a building is not used for educational purposes for more than five years. If there is no State debt in a facility, the State has no interest in what the school district does with the building. At that point, it would simply become a local matter as to whether the district would keep it, moth ball it, reuse it, lease it to a non-profit to generate additional revenue, or surplus it back to the County. The Board of Education has title to the buildings; however, is not authorized to sell the building (it must be transferred to the County first, which disposes of it). Dr. Lever also noted Board of Public Works approval is still needed to surplus a school building.

In terms of process, Dr. Lever stated we are conducting background research and looking at subdivision development plans. As soon as the September 30<sup>th</sup> numbers are in we will look at those numbers and use them to update the student enrollment numbers. The idea is to have community meetings at the end of September. In mid-November after this group hears recommendations, you will determine what we will recommend to the Board of Education. We will then take those recommendations out to the community and get community input and feedback.

#### **4. Affirmation of Chair of the Committee**

Dr. Couch presented Dr. Jeffery Grotsky as her recommendation for committee chair.

#### **Action: Motion to affirm Dr. Grotsky as the Chair.**

Motion by Joseph Harding, second by Richard Kalter

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Dr. Jeffrey Grotsky, Richard Kalther, Joseph Harding, Francoise Sullivan, Tracey Williams, Joseph Wheeler and Dr. Karen Couch.

#### **5. Proposed Planning Process and Schedule**

Discussion on the proposed schedule of meetings was reviewed with the committee to determine whether there were any conflicts or changes that needed to be addressed, including a discussion on meeting location.

Dr. Harding noted he understood the purpose of the public meetings and seeking input; however, he asked for clarification on the work of this committee. Dr. Lever stated the work will be to debate and question the findings and recommendations presented by the Superintendent, consultants and staff. In other words, he clarified that there will be several options for consideration and the committee will help determine which ones are reasonable and feasible, while considering capital improvement budgets. In essence, the deliverables of this committee will be the recommendation that will be brought forward to the Board of Education.

#### **6. Strategic Planning Committee Meetings**

Discussion on the proposed committee meeting scheduled was discussed. It was agreed that the committee meeting scheduled for 6:00 p.m. September 29<sup>th</sup> would be changed to 4:00 p.m. at KCMS in order to accommodate schedules. The meeting will include a tour of the school building.

#### **7. Community Meetings**

Discussion on the number of community meetings was reviewed. Mr. Kalter wondered whether consideration should be given to adding an additional meeting in order to solicit as much input from the community as possible. The committee agreed to another community

meeting on Monday, September 25<sup>th</sup>. All community meetings will be scheduled at 6:30 p.m. The agreed dates and locations are:

Community Meetings (all followed by a tour of the school):

- Central: September 25, 6:30 p.m., Kent County High School
- North: September 27, 6:30 p.m., Galena Elementary
- South: September 28, 6:30 p.m., Rock Hall Elementary

Strategic Planning Committee Meetings:

- September 29, 4:00 p.m., Kent County Middle School (includes tour of school): Discuss observations from the three community meetings.
- October 26, time and location TBD: Presentation of Superintendent/Consultant recommendations to the Committee.
- November 9, time and location TBD: Decisions on recommendations to be presented to the Board of Education on December 11.

In addition, there will be a tour of the Administration building in Rock Hall prior to the regularly scheduled BOE meeting on Monday, October 9.

## **8. Open Meeting Act Requirements**

Dr. Couch noted this committee falls under requirements for Open Meetings Act. Mr. Harding stated members should be mindful that a quorum of committee members meeting to talk about these recommendations would be a violation of the Open Meetings Act. Dr. Couch added that the information from the committee would be organized under the Strategic Planning Committee tab on the District website. All meeting announcements, committee information, and minutes will be posted for review by the public.

Mr. Harding also requested email addresses for all committee members.

## **9. Adjournment**

Mrs. Sullivan made the motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kalter. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

### **Action: Motion to adjourn**

Motion by Joseph Harding, second by Richard Kalter

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Dr. Jeffrey Grotzky, Richard Kalther, Joseph Harding, Francoise Sullivan, Tracey Williams, Joseph Wheeler and Dr. Karen Couch.