

Committee Members  
John Foley, Chairman  
Donna Colorio, Vice Chairman  
Tracy O'Connell Novick

AGENDA #6  
F/O  
8-16-13  
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A C T I O N S

The Joint Meeting of the Standing Committee on Finance and Operations and the City Council's Subcommittee on Education met at 9:31 a.m. on Friday, August 16, 2013 in Room 410 at the Dr. John E. Durkin Administration Building.

There were present:

School Committee Members: Ms. Colorio, Ms. Novick and Chairman Foley

City Councillors: Mr. Economou and Chairman O'Brien

There was absent: Ms. Rivera

Representing Administration was: B. Allen

Others in attendance: J. Bedard, T. Goyette, Deputy Commissioner Moosey, J. Reis and D. Rushford

Ms. Rivera arrived at 9:35 a.m.

gb #3-209 - Ms. Novick/Mr. O'Connell (July 17, 2013)

To consider the City of Worcester's FY14 Capital Budget.

Foundation Budget

Mr. Allen, Chief Finance and Operations Officer of the Worcester Public Schools, stated that the City is about \$177,000 short of spending in the required categories to reach the minimum level of spending the state sets for it. He anticipates that when the free cash is finalized by the City, the City Manager will add the \$177,000 to the total for the Worcester Public Schools which includes \$80,000 – \$90,000 from McKenney Vento.

Ms. Novick requested that the Administration explain what the differences are between what was projected and what was passed in reference to the McKinney-Vento Act.

Mr. Allen indicated that the amount that is contained in the State Budget provides total reimbursement to all communities based on FY13 expenses. The Senate will provide about \$89,000 - \$90,000 more in funding than the House.

gb #3-209 (continued)

Summer Capital Budget Projects

Paul Moosey, Deputy Commissioner, provided an update on the following MSBA projects:

- new boilers at the New Citizens Center and Jacob Hiatt Magnet School
- new windows at the New Citizens Center, Lakeview School, May Street School and Chandler Magnet School (2 year project)

The MSBA invited the system to participate in more accelerated projects for the FY15 which involve:

- an eligibility period,
- a feasibility stage and
- an approval in January 2014 The participating schools would be:
  - Columbus Park Preparatory Academy (new windows and boiler)
  - Tatnuck Magnet School (new windows)
  - Worcester Arts Magnet School (new windows)
  - Worcester East Middle School (new windows, boiler and a roof) which will be a multi-year project.

Ms. Colorio made the following motion:

Request that the Administration ask the City administration to provide to the Joint Committee on Finance and Operations and the City Council's Subcommittee on Education a report giving the estimated cost savings that the Worcester Public Schools will realize as a result of the installation of the new windows.

On a voice vote, the motion was approved.

Nelson Place Replacement School

- Paul Moosey, Deputy Commissioner, indicated that in April the MSBA Board voted to allow a feasibility study for the Nelson Place Replacement School which will be paid for in part by the board.
- The first step was to select an OPM (Owner's Project Manager) and the subcommittee of the Nelson Place Building Committee selected Tishman Construction and submitted the name to the MSBA who approved it on August 5, 2013.

gb #3-209 (continued)

- The architect will be selected by the MSBA and the RFP was sent to the MSBA which has 10 days to review it prior to an advertisement.
- Proposals from architects will be discussed at two separate meetings, one will be to review and short list the applicants and the other will be to interview those selected and make a decision.
- The feasibility study period that the MSBA has allotted ends in May 2014. Between then and now, a screening process will take place to find potential sites in the general area or to reuse the existing site.
- A design of the new school will be drafted, followed by construction.

Councilor Rivera asked the Administration what its plans are for some basic maintenance and repairs to other schools, similar to what was done at Chandler Elementary School, and requested that the focus be University Park Campus School and Goddard School of Science and Technology.

NEASC Report

In response to the NEASC report, Mr. Allen responded that short term projects for both the University Park Campus School and Goddard School of Science and Technology for the Fall 2013 could possibly include the repointing and recaulking of the some of the brick.

Other long-term projects for these schools would involve a study of how to leverage state dollars or other resources to address these problems.

- In terms of the Goddard School of Science and Technology, the Administration anticipates that it would be one of the next candidates for a roof and a boiler as part of the accelerated repair type projects. This school has already received some funds for interior renovation projects such as new restrooms and some painting.
- The University Park Campus School is going to require some careful deliberation with the School Committee and the City in terms of how we may address the needs at the school whether it be with funding from the MSBA or other sources.

gb #3-209 (continued)

Chairman O'Brien asked if the Administration had developed a list of the needs at University Park Campus School.

Mr. Allen indicated that, after the NEASC report came out in the Spring, the Administration started to go through it to put things into different buckets and suggested that the topic regarding repairs at the University Park Campus School could be discussed at a future meeting.

Ms. Novick requested that Deputy Commissioner Moosey provide periodic updates via e-mail on the meetings with the MSBA regarding the Nelson Place Replacement School.

Deputy Commissioner Moosey indicated that the City is still working on the same time schedule that was initially provided.

Chairman O'Brien requested that Councilor Economou and Mayor Petty work with the Superintendent to have a letter sent home to the parents of students at Nelson Place School to provide an update on the building project.

Deputy Commissioner Moosey indicated that the Mayor is planning to meet with the PTO of Nelson Place School to provide an update.

Chairman O'Brien indicated that the City Manager has authorized \$400,000 for a facilities study and that the committee should be providing some guidance to the City Manager and the team that will be developing the RFP or RFQ for the study.

Mr. Economou indicated that the Administration should determine why parents are not sending their children to the Worcester Public Schools for high school and questioned whether it is due to the condition of the facilities.

Chairman O'Brien asked for information as to what type of renovations surrounding communities have made to their high school buildings.

Mr. Economou would like to know why students are opting to attend West Boylston High School and indicate whether or not it is due to a significant investment in technology.

Ms. Novick wants to make sure that the proposed Master Plan takes into account the various academic programs that are provided in each school.

gb #3-209 (continued)

Ms. Colorio made the following motion:

Request that the Administration put together a CD publicizing the great things that are happening in the Worcester Public Schools and distribute it to our local community, realtors or whoever wants to know what is happening in our schools.

On a voice vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. Economou indicated that he wanted to make sure that the Administration seeks input from the community and the schools to determine what the needs are and suggested that a Task Force be created to develop a Master Plan.

Councilor Rivera echoed the same sentiments relative to concerns of having the report come from administrative heads not from the people and supported the formulation of the Task Force to develop the Master Plan.

Chairman O'Brien said that the recommendations are very important and should be made into motions on the city side to be forwarded to the City Manager and should also be included as part of the official minutes.

City's FY14 Capital Budget

Chairman O'Brien requested that the Administration provide a single page report on the investment the Worcester Public Schools has made in technology over the past 4 or 5 years.

Ms. Novick stated that she has reviewed the backup and couldn't find in it where it lists the funding for the Master Plan. She requested that the information be provided at the City Council meeting.

Chairman O'Brien stated that Mr. Economou would bring up Ms. Novick's concern regarding the \$400,000 for the Master Plan.

Mr. Economou made the following motion:

Request that the Administration provide a report, as part of the report of this subcommittee, to come back at the next council meeting to include a summary of what the expenditures of the school capital budget would be and an additional explanation of the \$2.6 million.

On a voice vote, the motion was approved.

gb #3-209 (continued)

Ms. Novick stated that she is concerned about where the funds are going to come from for repairs to our playgrounds.

Ms. Novick stated that some of the Worcester Public Schools' buildings do not qualify for MSBA reimbursement for repairs because they do not house students and at some point they are going to need necessary repairs.

Chairman Foley made the following motion:

Request that the Worcester Public Schools' Administration and the City's Administration develop specifications and send out an RFP for a Strategic Plan on the Future Capital Expenditures in Worcester public school buildings.

On a voice vote, the motion was approved.

\$75,000 Study on Transportation Costs

Chairman O'Brien requested that the \$75,000 be broken into two parts to do a specific transportation study. He first indicated that he would make a recommendation on the City Council side to fund a transportation study and ask that the City Auditor work with the school department and the appropriate person on the city side to develop a RFQ for a transportation study. The second part would be, in concert with the City Auditor, to make a request that the remainder of the \$75,000 be used to do a deeper analysis of the expenditures on the school department side looking at administrative expenses, grants, classroom supplies and technology to determine what the investments are on the city side and how they compare to surrounding communities and other gateway cities.

Mr. Foley stated that the specifications should be done quickly in order to get the RFPs out and get the report back to the joint committee before December 31<sup>st</sup> so that an analysis could be completed prior to next year's budget process.

Mr. Foley made the following motion:

Request that the City Council authorize that the utilization of the \$75,000 be split up and ask for an RFQ on transportation as well as expenditures for the public schools compared to our peer urban areas.

On a voice vote, the motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.