



COUNCIL MINUTES

October 18, 2006

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Joint Meeting with Mesa Public Schools Governing Board at the Mesa Public Schools Curriculum Center, 549 N. Stapley Drive, on October 18, 2006 at 7:30 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Keno Hawker, Mayor
Claudia Walters, Vice Mayor
Rex Griswold
Kyle Jones
Scott Somers
Mike Whalen

MESA PUBLIC SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENCY

Dr. Debra Duvall, Superintendent
Dr. Michael Cowan
Jill Benza
Hector Benitez
Susan DePrez
Dr. Janice Ramirez
Linda Rottman
Dr. Ken Salas
Dr. David Shuff

STAFF PRESENT

Chris Brady
Debra Dollar
Linda Crocker
Bill Follette
Jack Friedline
Heidi Gast
Jim Huling
Kari Kent
Lisa Quedens
Bryan Raines
Trish Sorensen
Paul Wenbert
Dave Zielonka
Others

GOVERNING BOARD PRESENT

Elaine Miner, President
Lynn Burnham
Rich Crandall
Cindi Hobbs
Michael Hughes

MESA SCHOOL DISTRICT STAFF PRESENT

Kathy Bareiss
Joan Conner
Bruce Cox
Dennis Gearhart
Steve Hogen
Mike Kalember
Ron Latko
Rick Michalek
Dr. Joe O'Reilly
Tom Pickrell
George Ziegler

1. Meet & Greet/Interactive Getting to Know You/Breakfast.

Governing Board President Elaine Miner thanked everyone for their attendance. She referred to a container containing various items placed on each of the tables and requested that the individuals seated at each table select an item and, over breakfast, relay to the others at the table a story about how the item(s) selected "connects" with their lives.

2. Welcome and Introductions.

Mayor Keno Hawker introduced the members of the Mesa City Council present at the meeting. He stated that while focus is being placed on the ASU Polytechnic and the Mesa Community College downtown campus, the Mesa Public School District remains the “heart and soul” of Mesa as far as making it a place where people want to live. He said that the City of Mesa and the Mesa Public School District would continue to work together to make Mesa a great place to live.

Governing Board President Elaine Miner stated that it is her pleasure to be at the meeting and thanked the members of the Council and City staff for their attendance. She added that they look forward to receiving input from the attendees and getting to know everyone better. President Miner introduced the members of the MPS Governing Board.

3. Overview of City of Mesa/Mesa Public Schools Partnerships.

Vice Mayor Claudia Walters addressed the attendees, introduced this agenda item and stated that she has had the privilege of serving as a member of the Mesa Public Schools Governing Board. She said that one of the reasons why Mesa is so incredibly strong is the partnerships that the City has with segments of the community, and she emphasized that a strong “sense of community” exists in Mesa. She added that as a result of various experiences over the years, she has learned that Mesa’s strong, partnering relationship with the School District is a result of the unique, cooperative situation not experienced by many other communities, and she discussed the benefits of such a relationship. Vice Mayor Walters introduced Dr. Michael Cowan, Associate Superintendent of Mesa Public Schools, and stated that he would present a brief presentation on this topic.

Dr. Cowan echoed Vice Mayor Walter’s comments regarding the excellent, pro-active relationship that exists between the City and the District. He noted that the District is the 46th largest District in the nation (74,000 youths) and said that when he talks to others in the field about the partnership that exists, they are shocked that the District and City leaderships interact so well with one another and share what he calls the “Three P’s – People, Places and Programs.” He provided various examples of that partnership and sharing concepts that exist today. He noted that they share a number of swimming pools as well as the Webster and Jefferson gyms that are used during the day for school programs and in the evening for Parks & Recreation after school programs. He said that the entities have entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement that allows them to flex and expand options for the facilities (for administrative meetings, Parks & Recreation programs, after school sporting events, etc.). He introduced members of staff who work with the City on a variety of programs and events. He said that their efforts help to blend services to ensure collaborative and cooperative activities. He expressed his appreciation to the City of Mesa for its willingness to participate in the worthwhile partnerships with the District and said that the District looks forward to maintaining the relationship in the future.

4. Update on Swimming Pools.

Trisha Sorensen, Interim Community Services Manager for the City of Mesa, addressed the members of the audience and referred to a handout that provided highlights of a brief slide presentation, entitled “City of Mesa Parks and Recreation – Aquatics Program Update.” She also advised that an estimated Aquatic Rehabilitation Project Schedule has been provided for the audience’s review.

Ms. Sorensen discussed the strong relationship that exists between the City and the District and commented that their mutual cooperation allows Mesa Parks & Recreation access to school facilities during non-instruction periods, and allows Mesa Public Schools the use of various City golf courses, lighted sports fields, recreation centers, pool, tennis courts and other facilities. She noted that since 1986, the City of Mesa and Mesa Public Schools have shared financially in the construction, development, maintenance and operation of public swimming pools. (The City of Mesa uses pools after school and on weekends from May to September; provides year-round access to a few pools; operates and maintains pools year-round; and finances a majority of construction costs. The Mesa Public Schools uses the pools from September to April during school hours; pays for utilities year round; and provides some financing for construction.)

Discussion ensued relative to Quality of Life funding available for pools and the proposed distribution of the funds; the deterioration of the Rhodes, Taylor and Poston pools; the fact that based on discussion that occurred at the September 21, 2006 Council Study Session, construction of the proposed outdoor competitive pool has been deferred and the Council requested that alternatives be explored for the new pool that would accommodate more spectators/seating/events; the fact that an RFQ for design work on the rehabilitation of Rhodes and Kino pools has been issued and bids are due by November 2nd; and that options for the new pool include obtaining updated cost estimates from Versar; identifying space requirements for pool layouts (50 meter stretch/stretch 25, etc.); identifying available sites in East Mesa that meet space requirements; and obtaining population density data for possible site locations.

Ms. Sorensen emphasized the importance of creating a synergy to maximize the combined City and School resources and to achieve “the most bang for the buck.” She also noted that frequent meetings are held between Park’s staff and Mesa Public Schools regarding park programs, etc., and she reported that the communication process is extremely strong and beneficial.

Ms. Sorensen advised that timing equipment, such as scoreboards, are not included in the cost estimates. She also commented on the fact that due to current low staffing levels in the City’s Engineering Department, the process may be delayed. She added that staff is working with Development Services Manager Jack Friedline relative to this issue and that plans also include discussions with the school.

Superintendent Duvall acknowledged the presence of additional attendees and clarified that the Mesa Governing Board is willing to do “whatever it takes” to accommodate a competitive sized pool on the Smith campus.

Ms. Sorensen provided an update on the Carson Pool project and said that the work is on schedule and on budget and that the pool opening is scheduled in April 2007. She briefly discussed the “brick sale” promotion sponsored by the Parks & Recreation Department to generate funds. She encouraged anyone requiring additional information to contact her.

5. Overview of Emergency Response Crisis Management Grant.

Dr. David Shuff, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, MPS, addressed the audience regarding the Emergency Response Crisis Management grant that was recently received from the U.S. Department of Education for the purpose of emergency preparedness. He said that MPS staff has been meeting on a monthly basis with City of Mesa staff, and the Police & Fire departments to consider the management of a large scale emergency should one occur in the City of Mesa and the roles to be played by the various parties. He stated that over the next 17 months, he, Superintendent Debra Duvall and their colleagues will continue to work with the Mesa Police and Fire departments and others to ensure that they are prepared for an emergency such as a school shooting or an infectious-disease pandemic.

Dr. Shuff discussed “PODs” (Points of Distribution) and explained that they are part of the State’s emergency response plan. He noted that most people know the location of the nearest high school and that those facilities would serve as Points of Distribution for information and medical support. He further stated that plans are in effect to activate a POD at the Westwood campus and to identify an “exit strategy.” He said that students would be released from classes about ten minutes earlier on the date of the event and added that press releases have been sent out to inform people that the activity will be a practice in order to limit concerns. He added that several PODs will be identified and established, and he advised that Mike Kalember would present a brief excerpt from a video that highlights the importance of utilizing certain facilities and identifying various assets.

Mike Kalember, Director of Security for Mesa Public Schools, presented a portion of the film and explained that this is just a part of the grant. He said that they are seeking to upgrade school facilities with regard to crisis management. He discussed how each of the entities will respond to emergency situations and noted that data is being made available to “first responders.” He referred to the video, which depicted guns being fired at Washington State’s Lewis & Clark High School during lunchtime, and he pointed out that a Rapid Responder Program had been pre-planned. He noted that floor plans and photos of the entire facility were stored in a computer program that was readily available. He said that within minutes “they were up and running,” and that the pre-planning enabled SWAT team members to arrive very quickly and to strategize their plan of action. He advised that the students were evacuated to ensure safety and the streets were blocked off. He further discussed the various data that was available and the benefits that resulted from the pre-planning. He reported that the incident ended within a half hour, the suspect sustained the only injury and school reopened the next day.

Additional discussion ensued relative to the fact that the software program provides a map of all school and government buildings including blueprints, utility connections, and the locations of hazardous materials; that the data is a critical component of the emergency plan; that the software ensures that first responders have useable information; and that the program emphasizes the importance of increasing school safety and improving “alert communications” to parents in an emergency.

Superintendent Debra Duvall noted that the District is also working on a communication system using e-mail or telephones to contact 50,000 people within a ten-minute timeframe. District officials are also reviewing the possible introduction of an emergency response curriculum from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Mr. Kalember advised that the project goals include the introduction of a new standard for district-wide, school-based emergency preparedness by developing a collaborative, comprehensive emergency response plan focusing on prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery that is supported by an up-to-date emergency response database; implementing targeted training for MPS staff, students, critical partners and the community; preparing a complete infectious disease and pandemic flu plan; equipping schools with basic supply buckets; building the capacity of MPS to effectively plan, develop, revise and annually update the District's Emergency Response Crisis Management (ERCM) by implementing infrastructure for emergency preparedness/crisis management that promotes ongoing, community-wide participation, planning and communication with all critical partners, MPS staff, parents and students; and developing resources that will assist special populations to understand emergency plans by overcoming barriers due to cultural differences, language, disabilities, etc..

Additional discussion ensued regarding the fact that plans address food and materials distribution, transportation and establishing perimeters; the fact that sufficient food is currently warehoused to take care of every school for up to 36 hours; and that consistency is important in the development of critical plans as well as utilizing a "common language" that everyone will understand.

Boardmember Hughes asked whether anything could be done to secure funding to reinstate the School Resource Officers (SROs) positions that were eliminated as a result of budget cutbacks. He said that the Officers play a very important role in the schools.

City Manager Christopher Brady responded that unfortunately seven additional SRO positions will be phased out when grant funding for the positions is no longer available. He added that the City does not anticipate that funding for the positions will be available in the budget due to a lack of resources, and he agreed that this is a challenging situation.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the District is expending effort to pursue grant funding for this purpose as well as others and that it is difficult to "statistically show the crises that didn't occur because the SROs were in place."

Superintendent Duvall commented that both entities, the District and the City, go through budget review processes. She said that the District will certainly look at the availability of all monies for a variety of needs and added that she is certain that the City will do the same.

Superintendent Duvall thanked the members of the audience for their attendance at the meeting and said that she looks forward to continuing and strengthening the cooperative partnerships that exist between the District and the City of Mesa. She invited the members to remain after the meeting to pose any additional questions they might have.

6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Joint Meeting between the Mesa City Council and the Mesa Public Schools Governing Board adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

KENO HAWKER, MAYOR

ATTEST:

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Joint Meeting between the Mesa City Council and Mesa Public Schools Governing Board held on the 18th day of October 2006. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

lgc