

COUNCIL MINUTES

March 13, 1997

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Joint Meeting with the Mesa Unified School District No. 4 Governing Board, in the Apache Room of the Rendezvous Center, 263 North Center, on March 13, 1997 at 7:30 a.m.

MESA CITY COUNCIL

PRESENT

Pat Gilbert
John Giles
Dennis Kavanaugh
Wayne Pomeroy
Jim Stapley

MESA CITY COUNCIL

ABSENT

Mayor Wayne Brown
Joan Payne

STAFF PRESENT

C.K. Luster
Wayne Balmer
Mike Hutchinson
Lars Jarvie
Barbara Jones
Wayne Korinek
Ellen Pence
Jan Strauss
Mike Whalen

GOVERNING BOARD

PRESENT

Beth Coons
Suzanne Davis
Wayne Gardener
Mike Hughes
Tom Rhodes

MESA SCHOOL DISTRICT

STAFF PRESENT

Charlie Baker
Joan Conner
Debra Duvall
Dave Eagleburger
Chuck Essigs
Paul Mohr
Ray Rafford
Janice Ramirez
Fred Skoglund
Judi Willis
Jim Zaharis

1. Welcome and introductions.

Vice Mayor Gilbert welcomed those present and advised that Mayor Brown's schedule required his attendance at a meeting with Governor Symington and the State Legislature. Vice Mayor Gilbert relayed Mayor Brown's apologies to the members of the Governing Board and the Mesa School District staff for his

absence. Vice Mayor Gilbert stated the opinion that joint meetings with the Mesa Public Schools Governing Board are extremely productive and expressed appreciation to the members of the Board and the School District's staff for their attendance. Vice Mayor Gilbert requested that those present introduce themselves.

2. Discuss possibility of modifying boundaries of Mesa School District to include area south of Baseline Road and east of Power Road.

Community Development Manager Wayne Balmer referred to copies of a map distributed to the group which showed the school districts located within Mesa's planning area. Mr. Balmer stated that this agenda item discussion would focus on the area east of Power and south of Baseline Roads. Mr. Balmer noted that the area is primarily undeveloped and contains only two subdivisions. Mr. Balmer pointed out that development interest in the area is increasing and commented that approval of the current proposed subdivisions could result in the development of approximately 8,000 buildable lots in the relatively near future. Mr. Balmer informed those present that this development would significantly increase the demand for schools and stated that while many of the proposed new subdivisions are located within Mesa's City limits, several of the proposed projects are actually located within the Gilbert School District. Mr. Balmer commented that we may want to initiate discussions to explore the feasibility of modifying the School District's boundaries and transferring this area from the Gilbert School District to the Mesa School District. Mr. Balmer stated that the Mesa School District may be in a better position to develop the required schools when in the near future demand for the facilities arises. Mesa School District Superintendent Jim Zaharis provided information on the current status of Mesa Public Schools' construction and development and stated that bids for construction of a high school located on Crismon Road between Broadway and Southern will commence in May or June 1997. Mr. Zaharis commented on the difficulties associated with meeting increasing demands for schools in this area and added that although the problem affects the City of Mesa and the Gilbert School District, the Mesa School District is willing to lend assistance in resolving the dilemma.

Governing Board President Wayne Gardener discussed the feasibility of revising current legislation or obtaining approval of the voters to realign school boundaries. Mr. Zaharis Expressed the opinion that voter approval may be difficult to obtain, briefly discussed problems associated with this proposal, and commented on the Mesa School District's bonding capacity, which is sufficient to build and sustain the schools that may be needed to service the area in the future.

3. Update on joint School/City programs.

Community Services Manager Wayne Korinek highlighted the collaborative programs entered into by the Mesa Public School District and the City of Mesa.

Mr. Korinek pointed out that the sharing of resources in the development of these programs has proven beneficial for both entities. Mr. Korinek briefly highlighted the following joint programs: (1) an after school sports/leisure program, which provides six sports-related activities; (2) a summer school recreation program, which provides educational activities, crafts and sports programs to 200 youths at each site, four days a week; and (3) golf courses, which provide practice sessions for youths at both Dobson Ranch and Riverview Golf Courses.

Mr. Korinek mentioned that cooperative efforts have also been illustrated in the design and development of athletic facilities. Mr. Korinek explained that the lighting of ballfields, tennis courts and racquetball courts has allowed evening sports activities to occur. Mr. Korinek added that Shepherd Junior High School's aquatic facilities represent another example of successfully sharing resources. Mr. Korinek commented that the Shepherd pool maintains the highest amount of participation among any of the schools and serves as a prototype in the design and construction of pools for the future. Mr. Korinek reported that approximately 400 youths participate in swimming lessons at the Shepherd pool facility.

Mr. Korinek advised those present that a public hearing will be held this evening at Stapley Junior High School relative to the possibility of constructing a swimming pool at that site.

Mr. Korinek commented that Mesa is one of the few cities containing two excellent museums, the Southwest Museum and the Arizona Museum for the Youth. Mr. Korinek discussed the Museums' strong attendance and popularity and reported on the Southwest Museum's expansion.

Mr. Korinek announced the opening of the new Hohokam Stadium and reported that in addition to being utilized by the Chicago Cubs, two high schools will be conducting ball practice on the fields during the month of April.

Mr. Korinek briefly highlighted the Summer Reading Program and commented that this extremely active, Statewide program was initiated at the three Mesa libraries and continues to reflect an increase in schools' participation. Mr. Korinek noted that this year eighteen schools participated in the program.

Mesa School District Boardmember Tom Rhodes stated the opinion that Keno and Shepherd Junior High Schools' design should have included an elevated area or bleachers to accommodate spectators at the schools' aquatic sporting events.

Mesa School District Superintendent Jim Zaharis advised those present that the Mesa School District has received requests to consider modifying school calendars which would not extend the school year but would provide additional breaks throughout the year. Mr. Zaharis expressed the opinion that should the proposed calendar adjustments be initiated, the City of Mesa may be required to reevaluate their schedules for various programs and events.

4. Update on a joint gymnasium project at Jefferson School.

Community Services Manager Wayne Korinek provided background information on joint efforts to develop a gymnasium at Jefferson Elementary School. Mr. Korinek stated that in researching various funding sources, it was determined that a portion of the City's financial contribution was eligible for block grant funding.

Mr. Korinek reported that the cooperative project, which will cost approximately \$1,500,000, is presently in the design stage. Mr. Korinek briefly outlined the construction schedule and noted that the project will commence in October and is tentatively scheduled for completion by early June 1998. Mr. Korinek distributed handouts illustrating the site plan, floor plans and project elevations.

Mr. Korinek emphasized the positive financial benefits derived from this type of joint project. Mr. Korinek stated that the City of Mesa anticipates that sufficient funding will be allocated in the next fiscal year's budget to ensure the completion of the project.

Mesa School District Governing Board Clerk Mike Hughes suggested that the Boys and Girls Club be explored as a potential third partner to assist in financially supporting joint projects.

5. Discuss proposed Downtown campus.

Mesa School District Governing Board President Wayne Gardener announced that the East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT) has obtained its own campus and relayed concerns relative to the status of the downtown campus. Mr. Gardener explained that the Mesa School District is considering offering enhancements to assist in rejuvenation efforts in the downtown area.

Mesa School District Superintendent Jim Zaharis detailed a joint conceptual proposal which targets education as an important component of future downtown redevelopment efforts. Mr. Zaharis outlined properties necessary for the project and stated that the proposal includes a three-story preparatory-type high school, a two-story building for seventh and eighth grades, a major aquatic center and a science and technology center containing a multi-use auditorium with approximately 350 seats.

Mr. Zaharis commented that the School District has appropriated approximately \$18-\$20,000,000 from a previous bond issue for exploration of an enterprise involving educational opportunities. Mr. Zaharis stated the opinion that the aforementioned proposal may be the appropriate project for utilization of the funds.

Discussion ensued relative to feasibility of sole City funding of the proposed aquatic center and sole Mesa School District funding of the proposed auditorium.

6. Update on DARE and GREAT programs.

Assistant Police Chief Jan Strauss provided those present with a brief overview of the DARE and GREAT programs and advised that 13 Mesa police officers are currently undergoing cross-training in an effort to enhance the effectiveness of the programs. Assistant Chief Strauss reported that both programs are in effect at 47 of the 49 elementary schools and in 11 of the 12 junior high schools in Mesa.

Assistant Chief Strauss discussed the curriculum for both the DARE and GREAT programs; summer programs such as the GREAT Summer Day Camp which is attended by approximately 100 junior high school students; the fact that the Summer Day Camp is the result of a cooperative effort between the Mesa Police Department and the Parks and Recreation Department, and the Safety Town Program, which commences the first week in July and is designed to prepare kindergarten age children for school.

Assistant Chief Strauss encouraged those present to attend the upcoming DARE Concert to be held on April 21st and 22nd and noted that the two-day event is attended by approximately 2,500 students each day.

In response to a question relative to funding for the DARE and GREAT Programs, Police Chief Lars Jarvie emphasized that the City of Mesa is committed to continuing these worthwhile projects and added that funding for the programs is in place.

Vice Mayor Gilbert stressed the importance of continuous input from both the Mesa Police Department and the Mesa Public Schools relative to the positive impacts of both the DARE and GREAT Programs on the City's youths.

7. Campus security.

Mesa School Superintendent Jim Zaharis expressed appreciation for the City of Mesa's support in providing crucial resources, such as bicycle and patrol officers, to maintain security on school campuses during daytime hours. Mr. Zaharis noted that statistics for the past year reflect a decrease in weapon violations at the various school facilities.

Discussion ensued relative to the feasibility of utilizing portable metal detectors at schools to detect weapons being brought on site by students.

Assistant Police Chief Mike Whalen commented that the Mesa Police Department's Bicycle Patrol officers have significantly benefitted the community but added that scheduling difficulties associated with the officers' four ten-hour work days combined with costs to provide this specialized service have limited the number of bicycle patrol officers currently employed by the City of Mesa.

Assistant Chief Whalen briefly discussed a recent incident which occurred at Westwood High School and stressed the importance of maintaining open communication between the Mesa Police Department and the Mesa Public Schools in order to address concerns.

Mesa School Assistant Superintendent Ray Rafford informed those present that the override bond election has provided funding for expanding the schools' security department and added that additional security personnel will be hired. Mr. Rafford stated the opinion that the Mesa Public Schools' security personnel will greatly benefit from the excellent training they receive in conjunction with the Mesa Police Department's bicycle officers. Mr. Rafford commented on the cost effectiveness of sharing resources.

8. Update on performing arts center.

Assistant City Manager Mike Hutchinson reported that the Mesa City Council has authorized engaging the services of a consultant to conduct a feasibility study relative to a performing arts center in Mesa. Mr. Hutchinson stated that interviews with various community leaders will be conducted and added that a final report on the issue will be presented to the Council in May 1997. Mr. Hutchinson advised that the Council will address issues including facility size and costs, financing, and actual site selection. Mr. Hutchinson expressed the opinion that the development of a performing arts center would positively impact the City of Mesa.

Mr. Hutchinson informed those present that the Voit Companies remains involved in City of Mesa redevelopment plans and commented on the Company's participation in various independent projects in the downtown area.

9. Update on school finances issues.

Mesa School Assistant Superintendent Chuck Essigs briefly discussed proposed legislation and stated opposition to a capital funding bill which proposes that all school districts receive equal amounts of capital funding regardless of current size and potential growth. Mr. Essigs expressed the opinion that the proposed legislation would unfairly penalize the school districts and explained that school districts' capital projects vary and must be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Essigs also reported that although operational funding for school districts has not been adequately funded in the past, proposed legislation indicates that the legislators are now willing to assist in funding operational costs. Mr. Essigs noted that the funding will provide a considerable measure of relief to the school districts.

Mr. Essigs commented on the positive relationship which exists between the City of Mesa, the Mesa Public Schools' Governing Board/School District and current legislators and added that the cooperative efforts and interaction positively impact the City as a whole.

10. Adjournment

Mesa School District Governing Board President Wayne Gardener expressed appreciation to everyone in attendance for their input and stated the opinion that the meeting was extremely productive and worthwhile. Mr. Gardener emphasized the importance of implementing ideas and actions discussed at the meeting.

Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 9:14 a.m.

PAT GILBERT, VICE 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 Breakfast Meeting with the Mesa Unified School District No. 4 Governing Board and the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 13th day of March, 1997. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this 11th day of April 1997

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK