



## COUNCIL MINUTES

February 16, 2005,

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Joint Meeting with Mesa Unified School District No. 4 Governing Board at Carson Junior High, 525 N. Westwood, Mesa, AZ, on February 16, 2005 at 7:30 a.m.

### COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Keno Hawker  
Rex Griswold  
Kyle Jones  
Tom Rawles  
Janie Thom  
Mike Whalen  
Claudia Walters

### STAFF PRESENT

Debra Dollar  
Joe Holmwood  
Barbara Jones  
Eric Norenberg  
Terri Palmberg  
Bob White

### GOVERNING BOARD PRESENT

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

### MESA SCHOOL DISTRICT STAFF PRESENT

Debra Duvall  
Kathy Bareiss  
Hector Benitez  
Jill Benza  
Joan Conner  
Mike Cowan  
Steve Hogan  
Jane McGee Rafal  
Joe O'Reilly  
Janice Ramirez  
Linda Rottman  
Ken Salas  
Steve Smith

### 1. Brief tour of Carson Junior High School.

Mesa Public Schools (MPS) Governing Board President Hughes welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated that the meeting would commence with a tour of Carson Jr. High's swimming pool area and facilities.

(Tour from 7:39 a.m. to 7:50 a.m.)

Parks and Recreation Administrator Terri Palmberg distributed a concept plan that delineated various improvements to the existing pool and its surrounding areas. She stated that the proposed improvements would transition the six-lane pool to an eight-lane competitive pool similar to the development at Brimhall. Additionally, Ms. Palmberg pointed out that the area surrounding the pool in the proposal is designed for additional parking and includes a circular flow of traffic for student drop off and pick up. Ms. Palmberg stated that the plan also provides for a designated bus access area.

Ms. Palmberg pointed out that Mesa Jr. High is Mesa's oldest school, constructed in 1959, and Carson Jr. High erected in 1960. She reiterated that because the current pool contains only six lanes it does not meet the current depth requirements for competitive diving. She stated that the existing pool also does not have any recreational amenities that are now very popular, such as zero depth slides, grass areas for parents to lounge or adequate spectator seating that is shaded from the elements.

Ms. Palmberg emphasized the fact that funding has been identified to cover the cost of the proposed improvements to Carson Jr. High's current swimming facility.

MPS Director of Athletics Steve Hogan discussed the National Federation of High School Associations requirements that state diving pools must contain a minimum depth of 5-feet and stated that currently Mesa does not have any facilities that accommodates competitive swim races. Mr. Hogan commented on Mesa's great youth swim programs and the fact that Mesa has the best diving program in the country through Mesa Parks and Recreation but emphasized the need for additional facilities. He pointed out that last year the region meet was held in Tempe since Mesa could not provide the type of facilities necessary and stated the opinion that a City of 400,000 citizens with the best programs in the State should be capable of hosting such events.

Mr. Hogan stated his appreciation for the City's willingness to improve to Mesa's pools and recommended that the development of partnerships continue to be explored for the benefit of the community. He stated the opinion that a joint venture developed in concerts with Mesa Community College, the City and Mesa Public Schools could involve the development of a 6,000 to 8,000-seat arena compared to the current 2,000 seats available in high school gyms.

## 2. Welcome and introductions.

Mr. Hughes indicated that this year represents his 11<sup>th</sup> year on the Board and stated his appreciation for the long-standing relationship that exists between the City and Mesa Public Schools. He emphasized the fact that this relationship is unique throughout the country and that both entities have historically worked very well together.

At the request of Board President Hughes the Mesa Public School Board and Staff introduced themselves and members of the Mesa City Council and Staff also introduced themselves.

## 3. Update on City and School District partnerships.

MPS Superintendent Debra Duvall stated her appreciation for the support the school district has received from the City and the many project partnerships that have been developed over the years. Ms Duvall advised that Mesa Public Schools and the City of Mesa have a shared employee position that serves as a planner for both entities. She commented that Bill Winfield has been working in that capacity for approximately twenty years and emphasized that this shared position has proven to be a tremendous asset particularly regarding growth issues.

Ms. Duvall referred to an additional cooperative effort regarding the Police Department funding for School Resource Officers for Junior High Schools. She stressed the importance of these positions in assisting with ensuring the safety and security of students. Ms. Duvall pointed out that these officers spend approximately ninety hours in the classroom teaching law related education to students as well as providing information regarding their careers as officers.

Ms. Duvall commented on the fact that the Schools invite Mesa Police Officers and Fire Department personnel into classrooms to share with students programs such as "Stranger Danger and Fire Safety" along with the "Life Safety and Wearing of Helmets" program presented by the Fire Department.

At the request of Ms. Duvall, MPS Associate Superintendent Mike Cowan, provided information relative to a recent mock drill which involved sixteen to eighteen key staff who were challenged with an exercise (an emergency crisis situation) that required evacuation of students, notification to parents, communication with Police Department and other key City personnel, communication with the media, and an assessment of basic needs such as food and transportation. He commented that following the drill a performance evaluation was provided that included a written review of recommendations for any future improvements along with positive comments regarding the exercise.

Ms. Duvall also touched on the informal relationship that exists between the City of Mesa and the School District when an incident occurs during after school hours or on weekends. She stated that communication with the Fire Department, takes place typically with Mary Canelli, who alerts the Schools that an incident has taken place and recommends that the Schools have their crisis team on campus the following day.

Deputy City Manager Debra Dollar commented on the ten member School/City team that meets approximately every other month. Ms. Dollar advised that discussions include everything from school crossing traffic issues to the "Take Your Child to Work Day Program". She pointed out that these organizations are very beneficial in resolving issues.

Ms. Dollar discussed the 2003 Intergovernmental Agreement between the City of Mesa and Mesa Public Schools and said the agreement addresses issues such as the construction of pools, land, the sharing of facilities and the scheduling of pool activities. Ms. Dollar emphasized the benefits both entities receive from this type of an agreement and commented on the fact that this allows the School District and the City to share the financial burden.

Ms. Dollar also discussed the revenue received from the Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community through gaming proceeds. She explained that the tribal communities are required to provide 12% of their proceeds to government entities for public benefit and reported that Mesa has received approximately \$800,000 this past year. Ms. Dollar stated that in cooperation with the Schools, a determination has been made regarding the manner in which the money should be expended for the greatest benefit to the students and the community. She indicated that lighting for the ballfield at Powell Jr. High, electrical projects that tie into the overall master plan, and after school tutoring programs are identified allocations.

#### 4. Update on current School District issues.

Governing Board President Hughes discussed the budget override election to be held on March 8<sup>th</sup> and pointed out that this override equates to approximately 34 cents a day for the average homeowner

based on a \$100,000 assessed value. He stressed the importance of this election and stated that if the override election proves unsuccessful, Mesa Public Schools may face a severe budget crisis.

Ms. Duvall emphasized that Mesa Public Schools has been recognized for its high academic standards and the fact that the School District is very fiscally well managed.

Mr. Hughes stressed the point that the Mesa School District has one of the lowest administrative costs in the State and one of the lowest tax rates. He commented that Mesa residents should be confident that the education provided is accomplished in a very economical manner.

MPS Governing Board Clerk Elaine Miner discussed the current policy relating to open vs. closed campuses during students' lunch periods. Ms. Miner advised that a decision was made by the Board in 1999 to allow each high school site the flexibility to establish its own open or closed campus policy. Ms. Miner indicated that the Board is revisiting this issue because of the recent tragic accident involving students during their lunch hour. She emphasized that this issue has generated a large amount of controversy and therefore will require a great deal of study. Ms. Miner stated that any input received from the community through parent organizations will be presented to the Board for their consideration.

Ms. Miner also reported that each of the high schools that currently have open campuses have a one-hour lunch period. She commented that the one-hour lunch period provides the opportunity for extra curricular activities for students such as tutoring, mentoring or visiting the media center to utilize the computers. Ms. Miner also pointed out that consideration will also need to be given the inadequate issue of the current inadequate food service (cafeteria) should the current open campuses be closed in the future. She pointed out that a determination to close the high school campuses would incur costs that have been designated for other purposes such as facility repairs.

Councilmember Thom stated that after touring the facilities, it is evident that both Carson Jr. High and Keno Jr. High School are in need of swimming pool repairs in order to meet the County's requirements. She added that there are schools in her district, however, that do not have swimming pools at all.

#### 5. Update on current City issues.

Vice Mayor Walters discussed the incentive being proposed for Mesa Community College to ensure that the facility expands in downtown Mesa versus locating in the Town of Gilbert. Vice Mayor Walters stated that this issue will be discussed extensively with many key personnel and involved parties, including Larry Christianson.

Vice Mayor Walters also discussed the feasibility of a joint use of libraries between Mesa Community College and the City of Mesa. She pointed out that in order to accomplish this goal it would be necessary to expand the use of Mesa's downtown library facility of possibly sharing some of the available land located by the Convention Center/Centennial Hall.

Vice Mayor Walters said that many options are currently under study including the possibility of attracting the Nursing Program and Paramedic Training to Mesa's downtown area.

Councilmember Jones commented that at the time he served as Chairman of the Finance Committee, it became evident to him that the City could not continue to provide the current level of service in the future without a change in its funding methods.

Councilmember Jones advised that a Finance Committee was formed to review the City's budget, analyze City comparisons and their financial structure, review all City departments to assess their needs and projections and determine the financial impacts from Mesa's expected future growth. He discussed Mesa's loss of revenue as a result of decreases in retail sales and the fact that Mesa does not have a property tax. Councilmember Jones reported that there are many projects that have been delayed over the years and commented on additional problems that will occur should this practice continue. He stated that the Committee will be researching methods to improve efficiency and reviewing processes and programs for possible elimination. Councilmember Jones stated that residents have been invited to provide input as it relates to the items they feel are necessary and the manner in which to fund those needs.

Mayor Hawker commented on the Growing Smarter process that revealed the need to focus on the ratio between land use and employment as well as the development of a land use master plan that outlines a vision for Mesa at build-out. Mayor Hawker stressed the importance of this Council addressing Mesa's financial issues, including establishing its future capital expenditures and operations.

At the request of Mayor Hawker, Councilmember Whalen, displayed and discussed a map, which depicts Mesa's Enterprise Zone that was recently approved by the State of Arizona. Councilmember Whalen outlined the benefits gained as a result of the designation and explained that the Zone is designed to encourage private sector capital investment and employment opportunities.

Councilmember Whalen explained that these benefits are income premium tax credits and may be available to employers for net increases in qualified employment positions within the Zone under the following conditions: full-time employees with an hourly wage above the county average of \$9.30 and health insurance benefits of which the employer pays 50%. Councilmember Whalen pointed out that there may be property tax benefits available involving property reclassification for qualified manufacturing businesses locating or expanding their facilities. Councilmember Whalen stated that although there is an initial impact for schools when these improved businesses return to the tax rolls the long-term benefits are greater. He commented that according to the Department of Commerce, Enterprise Zones tend to stabilize and/or improve property values.

6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Joint Meeting between the Mesa City Council and the Mesa Unified School District No. 4 Governing Board adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

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KENO HAWKER, MAYOR

ATTEST:

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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 Unified School District No. 4 Governing Board held on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of February 2005. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

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BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

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