

COUNCIL MINUTES

JOINT MEETING WITH MESA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

April 21, 2014

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 Services Center, Building 2, 549 North Stapley Drive, on April 21, 2014 at 7:43 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT	STAFF PRESENT	MESA PUBLIC SCHOOLS ATTENDEES
Alex Finter Chris Glover David Luna Dennis Kavanaugh Dave Richins	Chris Brady Marc Heirshberg Beth Huning Kari Kent Ian Linssen Kathy Macdonald Charlotte McDermott	Dr. Michael Cowan Bruce Cox Dr. Suzie DePrez Arlin Dumand Helen Hollands Pete Lesar Mike Nichols
COUNCIL ABSENT	Dee Ann Mickelsen John Pombier	Steven Peterson Bobbette Sylvester
Scott Somers	Debbie Spinner	Michelle Udall Holly Williams

1. Welcome and Introductions.

Mr. Michael Hughes, Governing Board President asked everyone in attendance to introduce themselves.

2. Review of Mesa Public Schools and City of Mesa Long Standing Partnership.

Dr. Michael B. Cowan, Superintendent of Mesa Public Schools (MPS) and City Manager Christopher Brady provided an overview of the long standing partnerships of the two organizations and the collaboration on various projects over the years.

City Manager Christopher Brady stated that one of the first things he was told when he came to the City of Mesa was about the long-standing relationship the City had with MPS. He added

that he is always looking for ways to utilize the joint assets of each organization and that many times, taxpayers are not aware that these are two different organizations.

Dr. Cowan explained that both organizations are always exploring opportunities to sustain and enhance the relationship, new ways to partner using the assets of both organizations and that he looks forward to continued engagement with the City. He outlined just a few of the partnerships: School Resource Officers, shared pool facilities, and Mesa Counts on College.

3. Presentation on City of Mesa Projects on Mesa Junior High School, Mesa Education Center and Mesa High School Sites.

Director of Parks, Recreation, and Commercial Facilities Mark Heirshberg thanked MPS for their partnership and support. He explained that Mesa is quickly becoming known as an aquatics mecca and added that construction of the Mesa Aquatics Center at Mesa High School will begin this summer with new amenities such as lap lanes, a lazy river, and shaded seating. He added that this facility will be more focused on community events and needs. He explained that the lazy river will feature walls with jets and areas that will serve as lesson space. He indicated that this pool will open in the summer of 2015 and will replace Taylor Junior High pool, which will be demolished.

He provided an update on the Mesa Education Center (former Powell Junior High); that two more ball fields were in the planning stage; that lights at the park will be relocated to better facilitate evening use; that all of the fields will have bull pens and increased lighting to allow for softball and little league use; and that additional parking will be installed.

He explained that part of the agreement with Mesa Junior High is that some of the buildings and gymnasium would be retained for community recreation, and the remainder would be demolished.

He provided an update on Desert Arroyo Park at McKellips and Ellsworth Roads, which abuts to Zaharis Elementary. He explained that this park will feature a desert park for environmental education, a learning center with outdoor classrooms and will share a driveway and parking with Zaharis Elementary. He added that there was a recent site dedication that involved 1000 students from Zaharis Elementary and that each child went home with a desert plant.

4. Discussion of Collaborative Efforts Toward School Safety and Security.

Mr. Brady explained the importance of security on our school campuses and the longstanding relationship between the City of Mesa and MPS in providing School Resource Officers (SRO). He added that an additional six SROs will be added to MPS in FY 14/15 for a total of seven SROs covering seven Mesa high schools, six SROs for 10 Mesa junior high schools and four SROs for Gilbert Public Schools that serve Mesa residents. He indicated that MPS has received a multi-year grant and that the City will pick up the cost difference. He explained what a huge success this is for both entities.

Dr. Cowan explained that the grant will cover most of the SRO cost and will place more full-time officers in our school system.

Dr. Cowan added that first responders are an important part of the partnership between the City of Mesa and MPS and that in the event of an emergency, the first responders in the schools would be the ones to provide direction and communication.

Bruce Cox, Associate Superintendent of Mesa Public Schools indicated that SROs also deliver lessons, are an integral part of the campuses they serve, and build relationships with staff and students. He added that the presence of SROs is a great comfort to parents and staff.

5. Presentation on School District Technology Integration Plan.

Ms. Bobette Sylvester, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Support Services provided an update on wireless access points at all MPS locations for guests, update of 24,000 computers, and the increase in bandwidth service to one gigabit.

She added that a variety of devices have been funded utilizing various resources, and that the use of digital resources would be expanded to facilitate their use at home or school. She explained that this will enable teachers, staff and students to collaborate more across the classroom, the district and the world.

In response to a question from Councilmember Richins, Dr. Suzan DePrez, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, explained that content would be managed through the use of ID's specific to the individual student with filtered access. She added that if students bring their own device, there would be no way for content to be filtered. She stressed the importance of engaging students about their responsibility in using electronic resources and about being good citizens of digital content.

Ms. Sylvester explained that beginning in the 2014/2015 school year, all seventh graders will be required to take a computer essentials course and learn how to use the tools and be responsible users of technology. She added that they will take a certification test at the end of the course.

6. Discussion on Items on the 2014 Election Ballot.

Mr. Brady indicated that the City Council will call the August 26 Primary Election at their next meeting and that three Council seats and the Mayor will appear on that ballot. He added that if the Mayor is elected in August, the winner will take office sometime in early September, at which time, Mayor Finter will return to his District 2 Council seat. He explained that the winners of the three Council seats will take office in January 2015.

Mr. Brady advised that the November 2014 General Election will have several critical issues on the ballot: the General Plan, voted on every 10 years, Home Rule, which allows the City to set its own budget based on the revenues received, and Utility Bonds to accommodate the economic growth in southeast Mesa, which includes the Apple facility and the Eastmark development, which has placed increasing demand on City infrastructure and the need to build a water treatment plant to service that area, which will take three to four years to build. He added that this will likely be the largest issuance of utility bonds the City has had.

Dr. Cowan outlined several vacancies on the MPS Governing Board with Mike Hughes retiring and Michelle Udall stepping down to run for the State Legislature. He explained that MPS is currently in the process of meeting with community representatives regarding candidates that would run for the Governing Board. He added that another issue under consideration is the continuation of the current budget override; that the override is an increase of 10% over the revenue control limit of the budget; that the override allows funding for additional teachers, security, instructional supplies, employee compensation, and technology trainers; that a decision on an override election would be made in late June or early July; and that a citizen committee will meet to make a recommendation.

7. Mesa Counts on College Collaborative Efforts.

Dr. Cowan advised that Mesa Counts on College began with a grant provided by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the National League of Cities. He added that it was a collaborative effort between MPS, the City of Mesa, and Mesa Community College to allow more under-represented youth to finish high school and continue their education through some form of higher education and/or certification program, emphasizing the need to strengthen our community.

Discussion ensued among “break-out” groups regarding the partnership between MPS and the City of Mesa, the economic future of our community, what we are doing in classrooms to strengthen our community, and the value and quality of education that leads to economic success in the community.

8. Close.

Mayor Finter stated that he is excited about the City’s relationship with MPS, and that there are great efficiencies in their joint successes. He thanked City and MPS staff for their efforts and continued collaboration.

Mr. Hughes explained the importance in these joint meetings in helping to forge a strong relationship between the two organizations. He added that the future of the community depends on the quality of the education available and that we should continue to build our partnership. He concluded by saying how very rare it is to find this kind of partnership in other communities.

Without objection, the Joint Meeting between the Mesa City Council and the Mesa Public Schools Governing Board adjourned 9:01 a.m.

ALEX FINTER, MAYOR

ATTEST:

DEE ANN MICKELSEN, 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 21st day of April, 2014. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held.

DEE ANN MICKELSEN, CITY CLERK