

Joint Assembly School Board Facility Planning Committee
DRAFT MINUTES – REGULAR MEETING
Zoom Webinar
February 3, 2023

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:04 p.m.

Members Present: Chair Michelle Hale, Maria Gladyszewski., Christine Woll, Deedie Sorenson, and Brian Holst. Will Muldoon joined the meeting at 12:05 p.m.

City & Borough of Juneau Staff Members Present: Katie Koester, EPW Director; Rorie Watt, City Manager; Breckan Hendricks, Administrative Officer;

School District Staff Present: Bridget Weiss, Superintendent; Cassee Olin, Director of Administrative Services, joined the meeting at 12:24 p.m.

Media: None

B. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Chair Hale read the Land Acknowledgement

C. ROLL CALL

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

No objection, Agenda approved.

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. April 7, 2022 – Regular Meeting

No objection. Minutes approved.

F. ITEMS FOR ACTION

None.

G. INFORMATION ITEMS

2. Roles and Responsibilities: Charter Review (13.8 & 13.9)

Ms. Koester directed members to the meeting packet to page 4 excerpts from CBJ Code and Charter that reference the role of the Assembly and School Board and their defined roles in the Joint Assembly and JSD Committee.

Chair Hale read from the Charter, “The Assembly and the School Board will deliberate in formulating plans and recommendations relative to school facilities.”

Ms. Hale stated that she would summarize her role and asked members to do the same.

Ms. Hale explained that in her role, she is responsible for facilitating conversation and incorporating the work that the JSD is already doing while incorporating recommendations from the JSD through the Committee. She also acknowledged that a large part of her role and for the community, is to learn about the process and what's going on with Juneau schools and enrollment.

Mayor Weldon shared her goal to ensure more communication occurs between the boards. She stated that the pandemic has gotten the group off track. She noted that the Capital Improvement Projects and Legislative Priorities have become more inclusive and requested money for facilities are starting to make it through all of the City.

Ms. Sorensen, a member of the school board, explained her role is to look at student population and building usage with consideration to how that plays out now and in the future.

Ms. Gladyszewski shared that goals echoed the Mayor in her role as Deputy Mayor.

Mr. Holst shared that this was his ninth year with the group. He provided a brief explanation of the relationship between the City who owns the facilities and the School District who operates within the facilities.

Ms. Woll noted that it was her third year on the Assembly and that there were no shortages of new things that she needs to understand better. She shared her excitement to learn more about the process as the liaison to the School Board.

Mr. Muldoon explained his role as the Finance Chair of the JSD board of education and that he is also on the facilities committee.

3. State and Region Populations Trends

Ms. Koester spoke on the Presentation by Dan Robinson for employment (page 5 of the packet). She noted trends from an aging workforce and a decline in working age population. Ms. Koester explained that there is a relationship between the working age population and child bearing age population and the importance of this data when estimating enrollment trends.

Ms. Koester shared that the demographic amongst the entire state of Alaska shows that the population age turned age 65 and above is increasing and turned 18 year olds is declining (page 7 of the packet).

Ms. Koester shared that Alaska is experiencing a net migration and that more people are leaving the state than moving into the state.

Ms. Koester also shared the Southeast by the Numbers publication created by the Southeast Conference. School enrollment is up across southeast Alaska for the fourth time in 25 years. However, southeast Alaska has the State's oldest residents.

4. Enrollment Forecasting

Ms. Koester informed the Committee that the data remains unchanged from the materials in the April 2022 packet. She noted that updated numbers were anticipated later in the month.

Mr. Watt provided insight into local enrollment trends. He shared his experience working on School District Facility projects for the last 20 years. He acknowledged that CBJ has been watching this demographic trend coming for a long time. He stated that the analysis by Erickson is likely more accurate in the near term than the long term, but that it showed concerning trends. He expressed that the vitality of the JSD is a number one priority and is supported by the Assembly. However, in the past when Mr. Watt brought the concern of declining enrollment to the Assembly and JSD in 2015, the Assembly did not yet feel like action was necessary.

Mr. Watt explained that we can see a lot of the next 10 years in front of us by looking at K12. The data supports a declining high school senior population in 10 years. He shared that he had no strong feeling on what we should do, but wants to be helpful and wants to support a good process between the Assembly and the Board of Education on one of our number ones.

Ms. Hale requested the secretary pull page 24 of the packet and that Mr. Watt further explain the data and reenrollment projections.

Mr. Watt explained the projections for 2022-2032 enrollment projections using the chart provide by Erickson & Associates. He shared that Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 enrollment data was used to project Grade 10, Grade 11, and Grade 12 enrollment 10 years later. Mr. Watt pointed out that changes to these projections are only going to come from people moving into the region or that higher birthing rates will occur. He pointed out that given our population is older, that does not seem likely.

Ms. Gladziszewski asked for updated numbers for enrollment actuals like they are presented on page 24 of the packet by grade.

Ms. Cassee Olin provide actuals for 2022 (school year of 2021-2022) being 4,231 and 2023 (school year of 2022-2023) being 4,228.

Ms. Olin the director of Administrator Services explained her role as the director of Administrator Services.

Mr. Holst explained that the Department of Labor does not add economic conditions and that this data is a zero growth projection. He shared that this is likely the worst case scenario and not necessarily the most likely scenario.

Ms. Gladziszewski explained that these projects are from Greg Erickson not the DOL.

Mr. Holst explained that it is heavily weighted on the DOL data. And provided some insight into Mr. Erickson's analysis.

Mr. Watt clarified that page 14 of the packet does give the district a mid, low, and high projection. Mr. Watt confirmed this graph is the mid case.

5. Enrollment Data for Individual Borough Schools

Ms. Koester directed the members to page 25 of the packet to review the Demographics of the Juneau School District by Facility.

Ms. Hale sought clarification on the years referenced in the Erickson report. Ms. Olin confirmed that the years referenced are the fiscal year. She confirmed 2022 is the 2021 – 2022 school year.

Ms. Olin presented on the Demographics by Facility data. Pre-K numbers are not included in enrollment numbers. Pre-K serves ages 3, 4, and 5 year olds. She touched on the different programs included in this category such as Integrated Preschool (IPK), Kinder Ready Program (KR), and Head Start (HS).

Ms. Mayor asked if the square footage includes the gyms and meeting spaces. Ms. Olin stated that she would need someone else to confirm that. She also explained that we also need to consider how space is used (office space, portable space, etc.)

Ms. Gladziszewski pointed out that the column header lists classroom.

Ms. Olin shared that some exterior spaces such as covered areas have been included incorrectly in these numbers, but again she would need to confirm these numbers from another source.

Ms. Hale asked that Ms. Olin confirm this before the next meeting.

Mr. Holst shared recent efforts to consolidate the JSD's footprint with the goals for all programs and operations to be housed within City owned properties. Ms. Hale explained that this would be discussed further at a later meeting.

Mr. Watt shared that AEYC Southeast has a congressionally directed grant in the amount of \$5 million and is looking for space to build a childcare facility.

Ms. Hale asked for the JSD staff to touch lightly on the funding formula and how it is weighted towards smaller schools.

Ms. Olin provided a brief explanation of the student based funding formula referencing page 28 of the packet.

Ms. Hale requested staff provide a more tabular/ graphic representation of this data showing facility maintenance needs versus funding formula. Possibly per facility. She explained this would help the Committee understand if we close a facility in the future, what would that do to funding and what would that do to the maintenance needs that the City has.

Ms. Gladziszewski shared her desire to better understand this formula. She wanted to specifically know when the space is utilized for multiple purposes, how that affects the formula.

Ms. Hale shared that she wants to put together a few members from the City and the Board of Education on a good way for presenting the information.

Mr. Muldoon shared that he recently read the report from Anchorage following the closure of one of their schools. It was reported that the \$4M facility that was closed only generated \$900,000 in savings, maybe less.

Ms. Hale wanted to discuss the Anchorage closing at the next meeting as an agenda item.

Ms. Mayor reminded the Committee that there's a bill in the legislature now to try and not penalize us to close a school because it currently would.

Ms. Mayor asked Ms. Olin for clarification on the formula for funding and if a smaller enrollment or footprint size would receive more funding. She inquired if we were to spread out students between schools would we receive more funding.

Ms. Olin clarified that a smaller enrollment size receives more funding, not facility size. She shared Juneau enrollment sizes for elementary schools fall between 250 - 400, middle schools and Juneau-Douglas High School between 400 - 750, and Thunder Mountain High School is over 750 in the formula. If you spread them out and get below the 250 mark they receive more funding, however it depends on how close they are to the next cap.

Ms. Hale quoted Ms. Weiss "We need a clear understanding about procedurally how decisions will be made, who makes decisions, and what core values drive decisions. She also reminded the Committee of the agenda item topic, how do we create a decision matrix that addresses enrollment.

Ms. Hale shared that the Committee needs to look at how they are requesting information with consideration to how short staffed the JSD is.

Ms. Woll shared support in helping prioritize the Committee's requests.

Mr. Holst asked for clarification on what questions we are trying to answer.

Ms. Hale provided examples of questions the Committee should hope to address such as declining enrollment, what do we do. Does this mean we need to remove a facility? Do we convert part of a facility to childcare? How do we know when it is the right time? What is the combination of factors that is going to tell this Assembly and School Board or future Assembly and future School Board that we need to close or combine schools?

Mr. Watt asked the question for the Committee, how and when do we strategically invest resources in school facilities. The longer we go without a State program to support renovation projects the harder this becomes.

Ms. Mayor shared that the Assembly and the JSD have historically not agreed with which facilities to invest funds into.

H. FUTURE MEETING DATES/ length of meeting

Ms. Hale stated that the next meeting would be March 30th from 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. with a tentative meeting to be scheduled in May.

Ms. Hale acknowledged appreciation for the group's efforts and participation.

I. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 12:58 p.m.