



CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING WITH MISD BOARD

MARCH 21, 2024

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

School Board President Deborah Lurie called the joint meeting to order at 5:00 pm in the MISD Administration Building Board Room located at 4160 86th Ave SE Mercer Island, Washington.

Mayor Salim Nice, Deputy Mayor David Rosenbaum and Councilmembers, Jake Jacobson, Wendy Weiker, and Ted Weinberg were present.

Councilmembers Lisa Anderl and Craig Reynolds were absent.

JOINT MEETING BUSINESS

President Lurie noted that Police Chief Ed Holmes is retiring and thanked him for his many years of service to the City.

Interlocal Agreements

Superintendent Fred Rundle spoke about the interlocal agreements between the City and District. President Lurie acknowledged the City's contribution toward providing counselors in District schools and highlighted the benefit of other partnerships, such as cooperation with playfields on the Island. Vice President Glowitz added comments acknowledging how unique the partnership is with respect to the counselors. Mayor Nice thanked the MIYFS Foundation for their efforts in generating funding in support of MIYFS.

Director Kuhn briefly touched on grants providing funds for the Mary Wayte Pool and noted that he has been working closely with Chief of Operations Jason Kintner on updating the interlocal agreements. President Lurie made comments around the change in open enrollment policy last spring permitting nonresident students of eligible City employees to attend District schools and expressed enthusiasm over seeing more families enroll.

Long Range Facility Planning, Design, and Bonds

Mayor Nice provided an update on the closing of City Hall last year and options under consideration for a new City Hall. He discussed the decision the City Council made to direct the City Manager to provide a plan for a Public Safety and Maintenance building in Q2 of 2024 and to look at other options on the island for a civic functioning portion of City Hall to accommodate the customer facing aspects of City business.

Mayor Nice noted that City Council meetings are currently being held at the Mercer Island Community & Event Center. He noted that the City is currently in the midst of its periodic update of the Comprehensive Plan, including an update to the housing element. Mayor Nice discussed how new housing can contribute to increased enrollment in the District.

President Lurie reviewed the 2019 and 2023 facilities planning processes and the need for improvements to several buildings. She commented further that the Board has directed the superintendent to contract with architectural firms to improve facilities at the high school and middle school levels to better meet the educational needs of students.

The District anticipates proposing a bond in April 2025 to fund these projects with the intention of providing very specific goals tied to concrete figures. President Lurie acknowledged that they recognize that the City will require funding for projects as well. She commented further on the recent restructuring of District bonds, saving taxpayers \$1.5 million.

Vice President Glowitz discussed the fact that school districts often stack bonds, explaining that it is common to go out for multiple small bonds rather than a single large bond. He commented further on a bill that was under consideration during the last legislative session that would have provided tax relief by waiving sales tax

on school construction projects with the exclusion of a handful of districts, including Mercer Island. The hope is that a revived bill in the next session will be more equitable. Mayor Nice offered the City's support in advocating for this.

Fleet Electrification

Superintendent Rundle asked Director Rock to elaborate on the EV infrastructure of the District, noting that the District now has two electric buses and expects delivery of two more in August. Current infrastructure supports these buses; however, any further expansion would require updating the infrastructure. The District is currently in the process of determining cost and the most effective plan to move forward.

Councilmember Weinberg inquired about the plan to replace gas-powered buses with electric buses. Superintendent Rundle offered comments on the possibility of replacing not just buses but other vehicles as well, such as vans used to transport students. The District is hoping for funding assistance passed by the legislature to aid in this process and touched on a possible transportation levy.

Additional Topics of Interest

Councilmember Weiker asked for a high-level overview of the current issues facing the District. President Lurie highlighted the fantastic accomplishments of our students, Mr. Henry's promotion of these accomplishments on social media, and the high level of participation of District students in extracurricular activities. Director Tucker and Vice President Glowitz offered comments as well.

Councilmember Weinberg suggested that, as the District undergoes investigating how to supply electrification to a larger fleet of vehicles, there may be an opportunity for collaboration with the City on facilities that might service electric vehicles for both entities. Superintendent Rundle commented that the District expects to be pushing this decision off until it is needed, but a conversation could be had. He is not sure if it would begin as a smaller City-District leadership discussion or a larger discussion between the Board and City Council. Mr. Weinberg indicated that the City will be electrifying its fleet likely at the same time as the District given the statutory requirements due in 2035 and asked when this conversation might need to be started. Superintendent Rundle indicated that the District doesn't have a timeline at this point but notes that a partnership is of interest and could be addressed at a later date. Director Tucker advised that, as the District looks at renovations at the middle and high schools, it might be prudent to investigate whether there could be an opportunity to add electrification at these sites during this time.

Councilmember Jacobson asked what the benefit is to the District in opening enrollment. Superintendent Rundle discussed the fact that, as enrollment declines, the real advantage is programming. It could potentially allow the District to retain higher level courses as well as "singletons," courses with only one section.

ADJOURNMENT

The Special Joint Meeting adjourned at 6:04 pm.

Salim Nice, Mayor

Attest:

Andrea Larson, City Clerk