



MINUTES

Charlottesville City Council/School Board Joint Work Session January 10, 2024 (5:00 PM) Walker Upper Elementary School Cafeteria

1.1 Call to Order: School Board Chair Lisa Larson-Torres and Mayor Juandiego Wade called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. and introduced staff members in attendance.

2.1 Roll Call:

The following School Board Members were present:

Ms. Amanda Burns	Ms. Shymora Cooper
Ms. Emily Dooley	Mr. Dom Morse
Mr. Chris Meyer	Ms. Nicole Richardson
Ms. Lisa Larson-Torres	

The following School Staff Members were present:

Dr. Royal Gurley	Dr. Katina Otey
Ms. Kim Powell	Ms. Renee Hoover
Ms. Beth Cheuk	Ms. Carolyn Swift
Ms. Leslie Thacker	Mr. Pat Cuomo
Ms. Julia Green	Ms. Denise Johnson

The following City Council Members were present:

Mayor Juandiego Wade	Vice Mayor Mr. Brian Pinkston
Ms. Natalie Oschrin	Mr. Michael Payne
Mr. Lloyd Snook	

The following City Staff Members were present:

Mr. Riaan Anthony	Mr. Garland Williams
Mr. Mike Goddard	Ms. Kyna Thomas
Mr. Jacob Stroman	Ms. Krisy Hammill
Mr. Sam Sanders	

3.1 Approval of Proposed Agenda: Mr. Morse made a motion, seconded by Ms. Dooley, to approve the proposed agenda. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Morse, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Larson-Torres, voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

4.1 Charlottesville-Albemarle Technical Education Center (CATEC) Update: Kim Powell, Chief Operations Officer, presented an update on the CATEC transition.

Information presented included:

- Transition Items Completed
 - Closing (July)
 - Individual Employee Transition Meetings (October)

- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with ACPS for continued CATEC participation
- Slot Reservation & Tuition Payment Process
- Tuition Information
 - CATEC Total Actual High School Expenses for Prior Year
 - Less all prior year utility costs
 - Less all prior year contracted maintenance service costs
 - Less all prior year property insurance costs
 - Less actual CATEC state & federal revenues for prior year
 - Add percentage increase for salaries based on prior 3-year average budgeted increase
 - Apply current VRS rate to the projected salaries unless the VRS Board of Trustees October recommendation is higher
 - Add percentage increase for health insurance based on prior 3-year average budgeted increase
 - The resulting dollar total is divided by the number of total reservable slots to determine the tuition cost per slot.
 - 24-25 tuition \$7,743 - ACPS initial slot reservation for the 24-25 school year is 254
 - Items In Progress & Next Steps
 - Partnership with Virginia Career Works (VCW)
 - CATEC Advisory
 - Data/Telecommunications Transition
 - Brightspeed switch
 - WANRack private fiber network
 - New Signage/Branding
 - Still CATEC
 - Charlottesville Area Technical Education Center

Mr. Pinkston expressed his appreciation for the smooth transition at CATEC.

Mr. Payne inquired about the impact of the new Albemarle Center 2 on CATEC enrollment, and received clarification from Dr. Gurley that discussions with Dr. Haas, the superintendent for Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS), included assurance that Center 2 will not offer programs already available at CATEC.

Mr. Payne inquired about the possibility of Capital Improvement Program (CIP) requests for CATEC and their expected arrival time. Ms. Powell clarified that CATEC's CIP is already under the City's control, and the existing Advisory Committee plays a role in guiding those funding requests.

Ms. Oschrein sought clarification on the allocation of enrollment slots for CATEC. Ms. Powell explained that each student represents a single slot, and currently, Albemarle County Public Schools holds 300 out of the total 400 slots available at CATEC.

4.2 [Knight School Introduction](#): Dr. Royal A. Gurley, Jr., Superintendent, and Lamont Trotter, Program Administrator at Lugo-McGinness, presented an update on the Charlottesville City Schools' Knight School.

Information presented included:

- Why Knight School
- Who are the students
- Days and hours of operation
- Knight School Staff
- Knight School / Student resources
- Instructional programming
- Transportation
- Next Steps

Mr. Snook inquired about the students' daytime activities. Mr. Trotter responded by outlining a flexible approach. Ideally, students would participate in internships secured through the Charlottesville Community Attention Youth Internship Program (CAYIP). These internships would provide valuable work experience and fill a significant portion of the daytime schedule. However, the Knight School team also acknowledges that internships might not be a possibility for all students. To address this, they're exploring asynchronous learning opportunities. This would allow students to complete schoolwork independently, outside of a set classroom time. Ultimately, the core objective remains connecting these young people with job opportunities. The Knight School strives to act as a bridge between students and potential employers, ensuring they graduate with the skills and experience needed to thrive in the workforce.

Mr. Pinkton inquired about the program's size and enrollment. Mr. Trotter's response confirmed 14 current students with a target and capacity for 30. He also noted that this program also supports students who might not flourish in the traditional academic setting..

Ms. Larson-Torres invited council members to tour Lugo-McGinness and highlighted the potential for partnerships and the need for growing the program to support students and families.

Mr. Payne inquired about the potential demand for the Knight School program. Dr. Gurley acknowledged the current space limitation of 30 students. However, he believes with additional staffing, the program could effectively serve up to 60 students during the day. This highlights the significant unmet need, further evidenced by the long waitlist from the high school, which previously had 35-40 students and continues to grow.

Dr. Gurley emphasized the program's broad reach, encompassing not only struggling students but also those who thrive in smaller settings or have experienced mental health trauma. He even mentioned the potential to support new mothers and students struggling with substance abuse, highlighting the program's ability to address diverse needs.

Ms. Oschrin inquired about the program's goals for students and if transitioning back to traditional school was the primary focus. Mr. Trotter clarified that the current group will attend Knight School for the rest of the school year. Dr. Gurley elaborated that Knight School is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Students may transition back to the traditional setting, Lugo-McGinness Academy (LMA), the WALK program, or even other suitable programs depending on their individual needs.

Dr. Gurley shared that the implementation of the Knight School Program was scheduled for the second semester but unforeseen circumstances caused the acceleration of its introduction. He also shared that the current program operates with some vacant positions left unfilled and other cost-saving measures. However, to fully support students and embed more programs, additional funding will be crucial for the Knight School's long-term success.

4.3 [Pre-K Center](#): Dr. Royal A. Gurley, Jr., Superintendent, shared that the January 4, 2024 Facilities Update to the School Board did not include a CIP request for the Pre-K Center and asked for direction from the City around next steps.

Ms. Larson-Torres asked what needs to be done to get the Pre-K Center on the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) list to begin holding a spot for funding allocation. Mr. Wade responded that the Pre-K Center item came up at the work session held with the Planning Commission the night before. .

Mr. Sanders shared that a key next step is for Council to provide direction on including the Walker/Pre-K project in the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan). He stated that it won't be scheduled for funding unless city staff has the go-ahead from Council. Mr. Sanders introduced Mike Goddard, City Facilities Development Manager, and Krisy Hammill, Director of Budget and Performance, who shared an update on cost estimates and potential grant funding opportunities.

Mr. Goddard provided an update that the Pre-K center has already been designed at a conceptual level, and that he will share that information with council members. He added that the designs haven't been finalized for construction yet, as it's more efficient to wait until construction is a confirmed next step. The estimated cost for

the pre-K center is between \$25 million and \$30 million, factoring in potential price increases by the projected start date in fiscal year 2027. The Buford Middle School construction is on track for completion by August 2026 despite some minor setbacks. The first new building will be ready for student occupancy by summer 2025, followed by renovations in the existing buildings. Preschoolers will relocate to the Buford campus in the 2026-2027 school year, requiring temporary adjustments as the current space isn't designed for them. Funding for these preschool adaptations is secured in the CIP, separate from the Buford Middle School budget. The Walker project ideally would begin design in fiscal year 2027, but a decision from Council on its inclusion in the CIP is needed first.

Mr. Meyer asked about City Facilities staffing capacity and if a staffing request is needed to allow for more than one project to run simultaneously. Mr. Goddard responded that it's not as simple as a budget to ask as much as the right team and team structure.

Ms. Hammill highlighted the financial challenges impacting the Walker Pre-K project. She noted that the Buford Middle School's construction significantly outpaced initial estimates, even with grant funding and school board surplus contributions. The current CIP already faces strain due to rising debt service and upcoming regional projects. While the council has the ability to incur more debt, prioritizing affordability remains critical. Grant money and school board contributions will be directed towards Buford, potentially freeing up some bonding capacity for Walker.

Mr. Sanders clarified that there's no opposition to the Walker Pre-K project itself. However, the challenge lies in finding the right timing and allocating resources effectively. Several factors complicate this such as the Jefferson-Madison Regional Library (JMRL) renovation, rising operational costs, collective bargaining and compensation. While these aren't directly related to the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), they impact debt capacity and debt service.

Mr. Meyer suggested exploring the possibility of installing rooftop solar panels alongside the roof replacements. By entering into Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs), the generated solar energy could bring in revenue to help offset the cost of the project. This approach might also achieve additional benefits beyond just saving money, such as environmental advantages. Mr. Meyer requested that staff investigate the feasibility of this combined approach to potentially reduce the CIP budget and achieve multiple goals at once.

Mr. Goddard responded that facilities staff are actively involved in exploring these possibilities, collaborating with the Office of Sustainability and a financial advisor to examine tax credit programs.

Ms. Larson-Torres expressed gratitude for the opportunity to discuss budgetary and capital project issues with the Council. This preliminary meeting allowed for initial talks and brainstorming before delving into more complex budget decisions. They anticipate receiving the Superintendent's proposed budget soon, which will be the basis for further collaboration. The speaker reiterates the School Board's availability and appreciates the Council's contributions. Ms. Larson-Torres shared the board's vision for a full service preschool center with wrap-around services to meet the needs of students and families.

5.1 Comments from Members of the Community: There were none.

6.1 Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

A video of the March 7, 2024 meeting can be located at:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Wn6Xktn2Jm4ZU0Dle6R29nbVkreZkG2Y/view?usp=sharing>