

## **Jeffco Facilities Usage Committee- Meeting Notes**

Meeting held May 18, 2009 from 3:30- 6:00 pm.

### **Opening/Review of Previous Meeting**

Bob West opened the meeting. Justin then presented the agenda which was not in this week's materials, though posted on the overhead. The agenda topics:

- Overview of Previous Meeting, Questions, Future Meetings
- Review of Report District-wide Master Plan Community Meetings
- Mission & Charge, Budget Needs, Norms
- Consolidated Key Information – Criteria Discussion
  - Enrollment Trends
  - Choice
  - Capacity
  - Building Cost Data
- Sample Analysis / Determine Topics for Next Meeting

Justin concluded by asking for questions/rumors:

A committee member asked if staff members were going to prioritize recommendations for the committee. Committee staff said that committee members will work together to determine criteria, then staff will run data showing what is outside of these criteria, and then the committee will discuss each option. In short, recommendations will come from committee members not staff.

There is a rumor that a community is being redistricted and that they will be forced to go to another local school. Justin said he will be working on the talking points and frequently asked questions on website to address questions like this. There is now a link on the district's website to the facility committee website.

Bob also shared another rumor about APEX Parks and Rec wanting to take over Arvada Middle School. Bob said that he responded by saying that was the first he heard of that. Another committee staff member added that there is likely going to be some confusion because there are many different activities being done in the district right now by different groups.

### **Review of Master Plan Public Meetings**

Carolyn Staskiewicz presented on the public forums that were held as part of the district's facilities master plan development. These meetings were publically advertised. She said there was not a large turnout, but that she felt that they did get a lot of good input. In this week's materials there is a handout titled "District Wide Facilities Master Plan Overview" that shows the three activities going on in the

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district as part of the district's facilities master planning: Capital Asset Planning, Facility Usage Committee, and the Statewide Financial Assistance Priority Assessment.

Several committee members attended these public meetings. One committee member highlighted that in the write-up from that meeting, all comments were included regardless of whether they were factually correct. Carolyn agreed that this was true.

Three questions were asked at these meetings:

- (1) What are the major issues or needs district-wide? Comments in this area primarily focused on equity and wanting to keep communication open.
- (2) What are the major issues or needs in your area of the school district? Concerns in this area included overcrowding, boundary changes, duplicating successful programs, old facilities and wanting smaller class sizes.
- (3) What should be the outcome of the Facilities Master Plan? Suggestions included spending dollars wisely, involving community in decision making, communicate results to stakeholders, creating an objective plan vs. subjective plan, and ensuring the district is held accountable.

The list that follows in the materials is a record of all comments shared.

Carolyn asked for questions and comments:

Philip raised the question about how they could have more community input in the Facility Usage Committee's community meetings. Justin said that information about the Usage committee's community meetings will be advertised much earlier and that the staff will be creative about the language they use in the advertisements to encourage citizens to participate that does not scare them and is interesting and not boring.

One committee member had been told that people did not like that there was not a meeting held centrally. Justin said the Facilities Master Plan meetings, which include 8 Facilities Usage Committee meetings, will be in different sites for each series of meetings so this will hopefully be a wide enough range of locations. Cheryl said decisions about where meetings were held were based on availability of facilities but that some people read into this.

Another committee member emphasized how important it was to have early warning, especially since her neighborhood was so concerned about redistricting.

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### **Review of Charge, Budget Needs and Norms**

#### *Committee's Charge*

Justin reviewed the committee's charge, these were also posted on white boards (which can be found at the beginning of committee members' binder), and involves reviewing relevant data to make recommendations about facility usage.

Over the next couple meetings the committee will be using this data to determine criteria. The goal is that by August the committee will have developed a framework to evaluate the facility usage- such as a capacity figure that would be appropriate, condition of building, etc. Today the committee will start discussing how things interact and to decide what information needs to be included in the discussion. The point of making facility usage efficient and keeping as much money as possible directly in the classroom is balanced by the reality of budget reductions.

#### *Budget Needs*

Administration presented on budget realities into the future. They said the committee was created to address what can be done in the district when facing these future reductions by answering whether there could be any savings in facilities. They believed there could be savings, but that it was difficult to know whether these savings were worth the problems presented by solutions. By closing a school you save on fixed costs- such as building maintenance costs and administrative salaries- but not costs that move with the students, like teachers' salaries. The district knows that they cannot continue to function as it has and that changes need to be made. The committee should be creating realistic options that address this budget problem. Staff has not developed its own options; instead they are very curious as to what the committee thinks.

A committee member asked if reconfiguring is an option. This is an option. An example of where this would be logical, but there are also emotional reactions to consider was presented to the committee. Justin said that the committee will be coming up with the filters to address all 150 schools. He said there is a range of options to be considered including programs that they may want to address in the future. The district is open to all options, but would prefer ones that do not increase expenditures. She added that the district is in a budget crisis, but that they are dealing with that and will remain functional.

Another committee member was concerned with outlier schools, specifically she asked about schools like Coal Creek K-8 that are very small because they are so isolated. Justin said that schools with unique circumstances would be

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part of the discussion the committee would have and would be considered carefully.

Another committee member asked about what the committee was empowered to do. She was concerned that the committee has not been presented any comparative data from outside Jeffco. She also asked whether they would they be able to change the grade configurations of all schools. Administration said the district has found that grade configuration does not affect student achievement. More important is what is going on in the school and in the classroom. If the committee came back and said that all schools should all be K-8s, she said that does not address the budget issues and that would be more of a long term suggestion. It would also be a major bond issue. It was then asked if the committee could suggest changing schedules. The committee's charge is focused on facilities, so it would have to relate to the charge.

Someone asked how the district reconciles choice in and choice out. A committee staff member said that the information is through conversation not hard data.

Another committee member asked what the committee should do about issues like this that do not show up in the data. Justin said that first the committee needed to create a body of evidence that creates a way of looking at all schools regardless of their stories and personal interests.

No matter what the committee recommends, there will be disagreement from the community. There are a million factors that make this an emotional, volatile issue.

Another member asked what the savings were for closing a school. Administration said this would range from about \$300,000 to \$500,000 for an elementary school and between \$500,000 and \$1 million for a middle or high school.

Finally, a committee member asked if they could recommend creating more choice programs. Administration said that they needed to balance the interests of all groups.

### *Committee Norms*

The committee members were directed to review the committee norms found behind tab 3 in their binders. Justin highlighted a few key norms: (1) they should be considerate of all opinions and questions, (2) they should presume positive

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intent, and (3) that there is no such thing as a dumb idea or comment. Tracie added that the committee should brainstorm freely.

In the next meeting committee members will be discussing facility criteria in smaller groups to get people talking with others and get them outside of their comfort zone.

### **Consolidating Key Information**

Committee members then looked at a spreadsheet that included consolidated data. The committee members were told that they should articulate if there is other data that they think would be really important to include.

Suggestions given by committee members included information about academic performance trends, adding in English Language Learner and free and reduced lunch counts. Justin said it was important to first determine what the best measure of academic performance to include was and suggested that there should be a small group of volunteers to determine this. Another committee member asked for the counts for each special program. This is on the spreadsheet in the green columns.

A committee member was concerned about old buildings having remodels that are not accounted for. This is somewhat covered by the effective age of the building which is done on a square footage basis, however, the current capital asset planning, being completed by Jacobs, will address facility needs much more fully.

Another committee member asked what the maintenance rank was. The higher the rank, i.e. number one, the better which indicated school's with lower costs per square foot to maintain.

The question was raised as to what research said about the best school size. Justin said that research found that between 300 to 500 students for elementary was effective and efficient. He said he could bring the committee more information on this.

Justin then presented enrollment trends for the district at the elementary, middle and high school level; these summary tables are in the slide presentation handout. Statistics given include mean, range standard deviation and the coefficient of variation.

A committee member asked which elementary was over 1,000; this is Bear Creek K-8.

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Another committee member asked if they will get the enrollment update that they were promised. This will hopefully be prepared for next meeting. Tracie pointed out that this won't make a big difference in most cases.

The committee members were reminded that they should set parameters first, and then figure out the unique situations of outliers to see if the parameters are being applied to schools appropriately. Philip said parameters should not be set by individual situations. Once schools are identified by the parameters, then the committee could dig deeper on this smaller school set.

A committee member requested to see enrollment subtotals for all elementary, middle and high school, as well as for special programs.

A committee member commented that the numbers are not really relevant because it is over too limited of a time period and schools are pretty much fixed. Justin said this is an issue of how fast change can happen; some districts make change in a year or two, or it can be phased in over time.

It was also requested that school costs be presented on a per student basis.

The committee then reviewed data about school choice. Center programs both choice and mandated, are not included in these calculations. Someone asked whether choice in and out have to add up and they do not.

Next the committee reviewed capacity. Jeffco is using 91% of its permanent design capacity in elementary schools, 72% in middle schools, and 87% in high schools. Capacity figures do not include temps. It was suggested that the committee look at schools that are not using their permanent capacity and are instead using temps.

Finally the committee reviewed building cost information. One committee member asked what was going on with Bear Creek K-8's energy usage. Cheryl said that they were still trying to work this out. She said that the district believes that Xcel energy was looking at and combining two separate meter readings- one at the new site and one at the old- so the figure is higher than it should be.

### **Initial Discussion**

Tracie and Justin then asked the committee members to brainstorm their initial ideas.

Committee members had the following suggestion, concerns and questions:

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- Would like information put together about age of buildings; this may piggyback on the comment about schools using portables when not above capacity.
- The committee needs to look at capacity first. Would like percent capacity; look at both high and low. Would like current and future capacity figures.
- Would like information about planned, funded remodels that are in the current bond program as well as a list of projects that are phased, therefore have a future project that has been committed..
- Would like to see schools ranked by size in each articulation areas or by reasonable area, like the four geographic areas we have looked at before. Another committee member said she would specifically like this for articulation areas at the elementary level.
- Would like to see number of kids in special programs that would be impacted if they decided to move a program.
- Concern again about program enrollment figures still being wrong.
- Would like information about the buildings listed in the last bond. Staff pointed out that the District has decided to go a different way, so this is not an accurate reflection of the district's plan moving forward. The committee member said that it was really important to look at buildings in need. Justin explained that the committee needs to start setting those parameters, of which a parameter could be set around how much capital need a school has. The results of the capital asset planning will provide an index measure that compares costs of repair vs. replacing the school.
- Would like capacity on a classroom level. It was also asked as to how much flexibility a principal have over this; principals have to stay within ranges.
- Requested that groups be made by articulation area to have background knowledge. The concern with this is that some would fear ownership and that it might not be objective.
- Asked if percent capacity included program enrollment. Capacity includes all students, choice in choice out does not.
- Requested that data put on ibackup, currently in PDF form, could it be in Excel instead. Concerns about this by staff; it was decided that they could lock cells so they can just be sorted but not altered.

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- Would like groups to have various representatives from each group (those representing principals, teachers, and maintenance staff) to benefit from their knowledge.
- Asked whether the committee was expected to come up with savings to meet budget reductions. No, there is no target; the committee can come up with a range of options.
- Wanted to applaud efforts of staff.

Justin said that the committee should be moving towards setting parameters and be thinking about what the parameter should be in these categories, or others, then will be discussing these things in small groups next time. The committee does not need to set these now. At the next meeting, committee members should bring ideas that they would be comfortable with and then they will discuss these options. Additionally, at the next meeting committee staff will share what parameters other districts have come up with; the committee staff did not want to start by sharing these parameters so the committee would develop their own ideas independently, but that these are helpful to look at to see if they are in a similar range. Finally, the committee was shown an example of one scenario based on different criteria to show how criteria could be applied and how schools would then be compared individually after they were identified by the criteria.

### **Closing**

The next meeting will be June 15<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 pm. At this meeting the committee will be having small group discussions. The following meeting will be from 1- 5 pm on July 13<sup>th</sup> before the interim report is written.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 pm.