

Jeffco Facilities Usage Committee- Meeting Notes

Meeting held November 30, 2009 from 3:30 to 6:00 pm.

Opening of Meeting

Justin opened the meeting. At tonight's meeting the committee will be reviewing the public feedback. They will then be working in small groups again to discuss the options in light of the community input and reporting back to the larger group. At the end of the meeting they will discuss next steps.

Review of Public Comment

The majority of committee members were able to attend at least one public forum. Feedback was received from the public through many sources that committee members can access including: 1) note cards which were given out to everyone who attended a forum; 2) sound files from the forum speakers and the individual videos; 3) emails; and 4) letters. There is over three binders' worth of this material, the e-mails are organized by articulation area. All comments were reviewed and tallied as being in favor or against an option.

A committee member said that they need to be careful not to go by biggest and loudest crowds and instead consider all opinions. They need to be sensitive not just to the squeakiest wheel, but to the community as a whole.

Another committee member thanked the staff and co-chairs for all of their hard work during the forums.

A committee member said that she was able to attend three sessions and found people to be very passionate but also very courteous; she said comments were very interesting and often touching.

Justin added that it was interesting that the vocal comments did not necessarily match with the written correspondence that was received; there were instances where there was a very vocal opposition to an option, but the majority of written comments were then in favor of that same option. He also said that in the materials there was a letter from Vicki, one of the committee members, in which she had reviewed all of the options and provided her opinion on them and provided additional data. Committee members were asked to read through this later.

Philip said that at the forums they tried to make it clear that all feedback would be given equal weight, not just the loudest. He encouraged committee members to consider all feedback carefully and have their filters in place so that they can make objective decisions. He concluded by saying that the forums could not have run more smoothly and that they were very well organized thanks to the efforts of staff.

A committee member asked how many community members had attended the forums. Cheryl said that the four forums had around 3,200 attendees (estimate based on fixed seats, those

standing, and overflow). At the previous rounds of forums (which asked for comment on the criteria) there were less than 100 attendees, with one of the first forums probably only having 30 attendees. This was not unusual; the staff expected more public engagement once options that sited specific schools were created.

Justin said that at the next committee meeting on December 14th, there will be a draft report available that will be everything up to the point where the committee makes final decisions. Tonight, they will be talking about how to prioritize and narrow the number of options, including what number of options should be presented to the board. He said that they will be looking to have a general consensus, and not necessarily total agreement. At the next meeting they will finalize the options (ideally 10-15) that will go forward to the board.

A committee member asked whether it was a bad decision to send so many options out to the community at the forums. Justin said that he thought it was good to send them all to the community because there were examples where the committee had low support for an option, but that the community was in favor of it, so the end result was able to show both the committee and the community opinion.

Philip said he believed that they might have sent out too many, but the counter point was made that the community would have thought they were holding back, not sharing everything. He would have liked to have more focused conversation on fewer options, but at the same time he believes with transparency issues it was better to show all the options. He is ultimately still conflicted about the matter.

One committee member said that she heard from some attendees that they were concerned with the low cost savings associated with some options, so she was concerned that they had aggravated certain groups for little money savings. Some committee members seemed to agree that they would have liked to see options with minimal cost savings removed from the list before going out to the public.

A committee member asked about two options specifically, 15 and 23, which had no cost amounts assigned to them. This was because these were not fully fleshed out options so they could not be costed out.

Committee Expectations

Philip said that he expected the committee to consider the return on investment for each of the options. They need to determine a cut off point for what an acceptable payback period is; he suggested 4 or 5 years because anything more than that is well beyond what can be accurately looked at. He also asked that they think about it from the Board's perspective and the possible implementation schedule for the options. He would like to see the list narrowed down to 10 to 15 viable options that the Board can work with more easily. If the committee did this tonight, staff would have the next two weeks to compile in-depth information on each of the options. He added that there was concern in the community about the implementation timeframe of the options. Not every option would have to be implemented for Fall

2010. He said that while decisions on each option will likely not be unanimous, he hoped that by the time they have a consolidated list that committee members will believe that they have done their due diligence. So while they may not agree with every option, they at least believe that they have done enough. Philip then asked for any comments on the proposed payback period of 4 to 5 years.

Bob said that in business he never considered anything beyond 3 years. He also said that he believed that the current situation could improve by the end of that period. When looking at closing and selling buildings, he said that he was not a big fan of selling a building because they cannot guarantee that a building will sell. He suggested that they could mothball buildings instead. He thought that they should be looking for temporary solutions, i.e. closing and mothballing buildings, which could be reversed if needed in the future.

A committee member said that she would prefer to see a five year cut off, because she did not want the payback periods to be a deciding factor. She would rather look at longer payback period than decide using other factors. She would also like to see options with minimal savings dropped from the list.

Review of Information Available for Group Discussions

Justin said that behind the agenda in tonight's materials, there is a memo from the person that went through all of the comments and created key themes and tallies for/against options.

Cheryl then explained the reports in the materials. In the first report, "Key Data on Options," for each option the following is given: a short description, original committee voting, net savings, one-time costs, payback in years, total comments on, the number for, the number against, and the percentage of comments in favor of that option. Also, options are highlighted that had a payback period of over 4 years or were not viable. The additional pages show the options sorted by: 1) committee support; 2) net annual savings; 3) payback period length; and 4) community support.

Additionally, at each small group table there are one page cost estimates for each option and a spreadsheet with the tally of comments for or against by method (speaker, email, letter, video). The cutoff date for comments was Friday, November 20th, so anything beyond that not included. Each signature from a petition counted as separate votes for or against an option.

Summary of Small Group Discussion

Justin summarized Group 1 discussions. They decided that any options with savings of under \$25,000 should be removed unless they were needed for another option to work. They only kept options with savings of \$25,000 to \$50,000 if there was a high level of community support. They also excluded any options that had longer than a five year payback. They were in support of eliminating temps and having schools live in their permanent design capacity; this should be a district level policy.

Tracie then summarized Group 2 discussions. They discussed that they would 1) prefer mothballing to selling facilities, 2) like to see 6th grade moved up, initially by articulation area, then district wide, 3) focus on Title I schools being properly vetted, 4) like to consider how programs could be moved and

what the impact would be on enrollment, especially if the school borders another district and is drawing students in. They looked at options sorted by highest cost savings first, then trying to balance community input and look at early data again before they decided if they agreed with an option moving forward.

Cheryl summarized the discussion of the Group 3. She said that they discussed the implementation timeline for options and that they did not assume implementation would have to be fall 2010. They agreed with a 4 year payback cutoff. They also recommended that facility usage be reviewed at every three years because it is ongoing issue that should be analyzed regularly. As a group they also went through each of the options and decided yes or no to forward to the Board.

Cheryl then presented the votes for each option from the three groups. This is not a final list, but is instead meant to show how the groups were thinking and to compare their decisions. At the next meeting they will be making final choices. Please refer to the group voting summary that was emailed to the committee on December 1st.

Next steps/Closing of Meeting

Justin suggested that if an option received all yes or all no votes, they do not need to discuss it at the next meeting. The committee agreed. He said that they should focus on reviewing the options that received mixed votes in light of the public comment and refer back to the original data for each of these options. For the next meeting the committee will look at this list and focus on the mixed votes. However, they can still address one of the other options that received unanimous group votes if they feel strongly about it.

Also, at the next meeting the draft report will be available and that options will be added to that draft following the December 14th meeting. They will also be discussing how to present options and whether they will be presenting them independently, as packages or as ranges of options (from easiest to most difficult). He added that they will try to streamline the next report as compared to the first one.

It was also mentioned that the board has requested that staff submit options as well. Justin said that as long as the committee is ok with that, they will move forward with the options that have created and reviewed by the committee and vetted by the community and keep the staff recommendations separate from the committee's work.

A committee member requested that they receive copies of these recommendations. This can be done.

Another committee member said that it would be unfair if the board chose to go with the options the staff recommended and threw out all of the committee's work.

Someone then asked when these options would be made and Cindy responded that articulation area meetings (principals) are starting tomorrow. She said that staff will be working from what has already been done and not starting over. She said that this was being done to ensure that principals were involved and to see if there was anything they could agree on.

Another committee member asked why the board wanted this done. Cindy said that the board just wants to make sure they are not overlooking another way of looking at this issue. It's a matter of framing and reframing the issue. The board just wants to have all the available data to make sure they are considering everything to make difficult decisions.

It was also asked whether this was a request of the new or the old board, and Cindy said this came from the new board.

Justin asked for any additional comments.

Vicki then stood up and explained that in her letter she tried to look at all of the options and data in different ways. She said that if they could not read through everything she suggested that they look at the last page which shows schools sorted by how much over capacity they are. She said that there were a lot of schools at the top of this list that are not anywhere in the options so that should be considered.

Justin added that if anyone else wants to put something together to share with the group like Vicki did, they are welcome to do so.

The committee's next and final meeting will be on December 14th from 3:30-6:00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 6 pm.