

JOINT MEETING: BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND THE SCHOOL BOARD

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** May 12, 2003, at 9:05, a.m., in the Palm Beach Lakes High School Media Center, 3505 Shiloh Drive, West Palm Beach, Florida.

1.A. **MEMBERS AND OFFICERS PRESENT:**

PALM BEACH COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS:

Chair Karen T. Marcus
Vice-Chair Tony Masilotti
Commissioner Burt Aaronson
Commissioner Addie L. Greene
Commissioner Jeff Koons
Commissioner Mary McCarty - Absent
Commissioner Warren H. Newell
County Administrator Robert Weisman
County Attorney Denise Dytrych Neiman
Condensing Clerk Dawn Whyte

PALM BEACH COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD:

Chair Thomas E. Lynch
Vice-Chair William Graham
School Board Member Monroe Benaim
School Board Member Paulette Burdick
School Board Member Mark Hansen
School Board Member Sandra Richmond
School Board Member Debra L. Robinson - Absent
School Superintendent Arthur C. Johnson
Chief Counsel Julieann Allison

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Samuel J. Ferreri, City of Greenacres
Sandra Greenberg, president, Coalition of West Boynton Residential Associations (COWBRA)
Commissioner William Moss, City of West Palm Beach
Mayor Jeff Perlman, City of Delray Beach
Councilperson Carmela Starce, Village of Royal Palm Beach
Councilperson Elizabeth Wade, City of Riviera Beach

1.B. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

2. **WELCOMING COMMENTS**

School Board Chair Lynch thanked everyone for attending and commented briefly on the county's school system. He mentioned the following:

2. - CONTINUED

- * The county's school district is the fourth largest in the State of Florida.
- * The district had approximately 156 schools and 19,000 employees.
- * The district was the largest building contractor in the county with an estimated \$1.3 billion worth of schools to be constructed over the next five years.
- * The current school budget was \$2.4 billion.

Commissioner Marcus welcomed everybody and suggested that the county commission and the school district meet at least twice per year to facilitate ongoing dialogue.

3. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

3.A.

FUTURE CAPITAL FUNDING SOURCES FOR SCHOOL BOARD. DISCUSSED 5-12-2003

Dr. Johnson informed the board that the five-year plan would be abandoned to make adjustment for an additional 13,000 students. He said a deficit existed and the school board would seek a referendum in the amount of \$225 million to close the funding gap and continue with the building program.

Kris Garrison, planning director for the school district made the following comments:

- * The capital construction program that was part of the school concurrency package in March 2001 had envisioned alternative funding sources for fiscal year 2003.
- * An update of population projections changed from the approximate 157,000 made in September 2001 to include an additional 13,000 students.
- * The school district hired a demographer to prepare projections for the capital construction program. The school district also established a population subcommittee that comprised planning directors from all the municipalities and hired a Florida Atlantic University demographer to review the projections for the capital construction program and determine that the enrollment projections were reasonable.
- * The school district raised the enrollment projections because the state also increased their enrollment projections by more than 10,000 students June 2002.

Councilperson Wade said if a referendum were to be proposed the school board should be prepared to answer questions from the public pertaining to where the money would go and how it would be divided up within the school district.

Mayor Samuel Ferreri urged the school board to get all the municipalities involved in the referendum.

3.A. - CONTINUED

The commissioners' comments included the following:

- * The school board and the county should consider designing schools around the needs of the neighborhoods.
- * The changing enrollment projections might mean that the \$225 million could be insufficient over the long term.
- * The school board should prepare and outline what the referendum will achieve before the proposal is put to voters.
- * Further joint planning between the school board and the county was needed to ensure that population projections were solid and that there was consistency in what would be asked for under the referendum.
- * The school board needed to ensure that the enrollment projections being proposed would not increase within two to four years without the influence of an outside source such as immigration.
- * The school board should provide more information to the county commissioners to support that \$225 million would suffice for the five-year plan.
- * Funding pertaining to technology in school programs and class size should be incorporated in the referendum.
- * The school board should plan a joint meeting with the county commission in September 2003 for the purpose of considering proposals to be incorporated in the referendum.

No backup submitted.

3.B.

TRUANCY INTERDICTION PROGRAM. DISCUSSED 5-12-2003

Commissioner Newell gave an update on the truancy interdiction program that was developed through the Criminal Justice Commission approximately three to four years ago. The program helped to keep children off the streets when out of school. The program, he said, was effective in reducing shoplifting offenses and other crimes in certain areas; funding was needed, however.

No backup submitted.

3.C.

DRIVER'S EDUCATION SAFETY TRUST FUND GRANT PROGRAM.
DISCUSSED WITH DIRECTION 5-12-2003

Commissioner Aaronson inquired of the status of the driver's education program.

Staff said the program had begun and was going very well throughout the county's high schools.

3.C. - CONTINUED

Discussion included:

- * The school district was working in conjunction with Safety Council of Palm Beach County, Inc., to provide driving instruction along with classroom and simulation instruction to high school students.
- * The Safety Council had hired over 30 driving instructors, and the sheriff's office had donated 15 Chrysler PT Cruisers.
- * The program was elective.
- * Approximately 4,000 students were in the program, and enrollment was expected to increase.

Commissioner Aaronson requested, in writing, information outlining what the program entailed, the advantages and the benefits.

No backup submitted.

3.D.

INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE COUNTY AND SCHOOL BOARD FOR MUTUAL USE OF FACILITIES. DISCUSSED 5-12-2003

Discussion included:

- * The school board and county could reduce spending by combining facilities instead of purchasing and constructing new sites and duplicate services.
- * Facilities, especially high schools, could be designed with extensions that are assessable to the public in the evening without keeping schools open.
- * Joint utilization of facilities would result in more community centers where children would be able to access programs after school.
- * The school board should be more specific with its directions and policies for non-recreational uses of facilities in the interlocal agreements.
- * Partnership with the school board, county, and municipalities to provide programs in sports education.
- * Staff to select a few pilot schools, in particular high schools, and measure public access, security, and feasibility, specifically as they relate to libraries, and make recommendations.

No backup submitted.

3.E.

UPDATE ON STUDENT GENERATION RATES. -- 5-12-2003

(CLERK'S NOTE: This item previously discussed under item 3.A. See pages 2 and 3).

3.F.

REVIEW OF SCHOOL DISTRICT EXPENDITURES OF BCC DISCRETIONARY FUNDS. DISCUSSED 5-12-2003

Commissioner Aaronson commented that the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) had given approximately \$4 million for programs at various schools. He noted two instances in which money had not been used well, namely, at Hagen Road Elementary School and at Eagles Landing Middle School. In January 2001, he said, \$220,000 had been provided through a bond issue for two lighted ball fields at Hagen Road Elementary School, but in February 2003, the school let it be known that it needed an additional \$210,000 for field lighting. Three years previously, he said, the BCC gave \$280,000 in matching funds for an athletic field at Eagles Landing Middle School, but that the athletic field still has not been built. Commissioner Aaronson stated that when the BCC gives money for schools, the money should be used as intended. If it is not, they should be notified so that the money can be used elsewhere.

School District Facilities Management Chief Joseph Sanchez explained that the increased cost for lighting at Hagen Road Elementary School stemmed from a revised estimate two years following receipt of the bond issue. The money could not be spent if a new school was to be built on top of the playground. He further explained that the athletic field had not been built at Eagles Landing Middle School because a drainage issue needed to be addressed first.

Commissioner Aaronson observed that Conniston Middle School had used its money well.

Commissioner Koons advised simplifying the standard Recreational Assistance Program agreements by not involving an excessive number of hours of work by county departments on each of them. He also recommended working with the school board on a reimbursement program and, if successful, to then include the municipalities.

Commissioner Marcus asked County Administrator Weisman if he and Dr. Johnson could meet with staff to develop recommendations for shortening the work involved in the agreements. Mr. Weisman responded that under certain monetary values, staff, not the board, could sign off on the agreements.

Commissioner Masilotti remarked that it was difficult for not-for-profit organizations to front the money for various programs and then be reimbursed by the county as was currently done. He suggested that a more user-friendly method be developed.

Mr. Weisman advised that the county could only reimburse moneys, not advance them. Commissioner Marcus stated that the county would look into the matter.

Commissioner Moss recommended that the school district be more open in the future with their site plans and site plan reviews by municipal governments.

3.F. - CONTINUED

School Board Chair Lynch said he had been bothered for some time about the State of Florida mandating local construction of evacuation centers at the schools, a mandate that will cost the county school district around \$20 million. He proposed that the county assume responsibility for building the evacuation centers inasmuch as they were not an educational matter.

Returning to the issue of money for school programs, Commissioner Aaronson stated that the BCC should be notified when there was a delay in the use of money and the reason for the delay and that the decision should be made on whether to use the money at another location or to just leave it.

It was suggested that when a commissioner intended to give money to the school district, that he or she let the school members know too.

No backup submitted.

3.G.

STATUS OF CONCURRENCY AGREEMENT. DISCUSSED 5-12-2003

Planning Director Garrison said that in fall of 2002 the technical advisory group recommended two changes to the concurrency interlocal agreement. She said that in order for the changes to become effective 51 percent of the signatories needed to approve the changes. She was optimistic that the changes would be effective by summer 2003.

No backup submitted.

3.H.

SAFE TO SCHOOLS INITIATIVES. DISCUSSED WITH DIRECTION 5-12-2003

Commissioner Koons gave a brief on the Safe to School Initiative passed by the state under the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).

Commissioner Koons recommended improving safety infrastructures such as installing flashers, creating bicycle pathways, and marking sidewalks.

School Board Chair Lynch was concerned that children who live within two miles of their school could not take the school bus. He said the school district should partner with the county and municipalities to correct this issue to make it safer for children who walk.

School board member Graham agreed with Mr. Lynch and added that the state does not provide funding for transportation; therefore, in order to assist children who fall under the two-mile limit, he recommended that the school district get funds from other areas.

County Engineer George T. Webb said the county had created a pathway along Military Trail in conjunction with a high school's request and a crossing was created on Gateway Boulevard in Boynton Beach.

Commissioner Marcus said intersection safety issues were her concern even though she approved of the safety infrastructures now in place. She asked Mr. Webb to meet with school district staff and make intersection safety a priority; recommendations should be brought back to the boards.

3.H. - CONTINUED

Commissioner Moss commented that schools located along Parker Avenue had a severe safety issue and flashers needed to be installed to slow traffic. He said the county had informed him that flashers could not be installed because traffic lights already existed in that locale.

Mr. Webb said school zones were equipped with either flashing lights to slow traffic speed or traffic lights, but never a combination of both.

Commissioner Newell suggested that a letter be written to the sheriff's office and requesting enforcement of the 20-mile per-hour speed limit in school zones.

3.I. UNSCHEDULED ITEM

3.I.1.

BUDGET UPDATE. DISCUSSED 5-12-2003

Dr. Johnson made the following comments:

- * The public was very supportive of public education; therefore, the school board was very confident to go forward with a referendum.
- * The economy was negatively affected by the events of September 11. The school district would be expecting a shortfall of approximately \$50 million from the Senate and \$80 million from the House.
- * Student population increase coupled with increase in health care insurance, utilities, and other expenses reduced the money available on a per student basis.
- * Because of the shortfall mentioned above, certain programs and personnel may be reduced.

Commissioner Aaronson disagreed with the possible elimination of seventh period in high schools.

School board member Burdick said the county should invest in public education for a better future. She suggested including other organizations, such as the Florida Chamber of Commerce, at board meetings to garner their support for public education.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

ATTESTED:

APPROVED:

Clerk

Chair