

**VALLEJO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
MEETING OF THE  
CLOSURE AND FACILITIES ADVISORY (7-11) COMMITTEE**

**October 23, 2024  
5:30 P.M.**

**District Office  
665 Walnut Avenue  
Vallejo, CA 94592**

**MEETING MINUTES**

Pursuant to Education Code Section 17387 *et. seq.*, the Vallejo City Unified School District ("District") has authorized the establishment of the District's Facilities Advisory (7-11) Committee ("Committee"). The Committee will meet to convene a public hearing to solicit input, comments and questions on the disposition and proposed use of certain real property owned by the District.

**1. Call to Order.**  
Meeting called to order by Ralph Gross at 5:34 P.M.

**2. Roll Call.**

• <b>Ralph A. Gross</b>	Present
• <b>Hazel A. Wilson</b>	Present
• <b>Tony Vargas</b>	Present
• <b>Evangeline Espiritu</b>	Present
• <b>Ruby Acevedo</b>	Absent
• <b>Kevin Steele</b>	Present
• <b>Melissa Tigbao</b>	Absent
• <b>Joe Hatchett</b>	Present
• <b>Ydelita Valera Gonzales</b>	Present
• <b>Katrina Rodgers</b>	Absent

*(3 members absent, a quorum was present.)*

**District Staff Present:**

Ruben Aurelio – Superintendent

Rosa Loza – Chief Business Official

Mitchell Romao – Assistant Superintendent, Operations

Dr. Gigi Patrick – Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources

Heather Topacio – Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services

Sarah Polito from Fagen, Friedman and Fulfrost, District Legal Counsel

**3. Action Items.**

A. Approve Minutes from the **October 9, 2024** meeting. *ACTION*

1. Motion: \_\_\_\_\_ Second: \_\_\_\_\_ Vote: \_\_\_\_\_

**Motion: Tony Vargas**

**Second: Ydelita Valera Gonzales**

**Vote: 7 yes**

**4. Public Comments.**

Community members are encouraged to attend the public 7-11 Committee meetings. Any citizen may address the Committee concerning any item that has been described in this agenda or any items under the purview of the Committee. However, Committee members will not enter into discussion nor take action on any item not previously published on the agenda. Community members are asked to submit a comment card in order to speak.

1. Bridget Winkley: In favor of keeping Steffan Manor and Pennycook open. Has a goal for the committee to be creative and keep an open mind and think of ways to keep all schools open.
2. Dante Delacerna: Spoke in support of Vallejo Charter School. Is a parent of students that attend the school and also works at the school. Talked about the positive attributes of the school. Believes that if the school is relocated, there will be an inequitable commute and negative impact on the students and families.

**5. Discussion**

A. Committee review of requested data.

B. Discussion of final Committee recommendations and findings.

Reviewed committee's findings and recommendations.

When discussing the committee's findings, Ralph Gross emphasized that the committee should look at all findings from a wide scope.

Ydelita Gonzales spoke in favor of keeping Vallejo Charter School open. Explaining that it is centrally located and that by keeping it open, we can compete with other charter schools. She also spoke about the facilities and programs that VCS has in comparison to Mare Island. Evangeline Espiritu agrees that we should keep VCS open. Explaining that the school had to move several times. She also does not believe that it would be the most equitable.

Hazel Wilson emphasized that every finding and recommendation will mean something to someone different and will be difficult. However, we will have to make a decision based upon the total picture.

Joe Hatchett agreed with Hazel that it is a tough decision, but that ultimately a decision will need to be made and schools will need to be closed and consolidated based on declining enrollment.

Ydelita emphasized that they will need to make a decision that benefits the most students and families. If we move Vallejo Charter to Mare Island, we will have a ton of students and families commuting across the bridge. She thinks that we should amend recommendation two.

Superintendent Ruben Aurelio emphasized that there is a lot of value in committee recommendation two and that it was specifically written the way it was. He expressed the importance of reviewing the data, costs, and value of the property.

Rosa Loza, Chief Business Official of VCUSD, explained that when school closures occur there will be less overhead cost that will allow us to provide better programs and learning environments to students. She emphasized that the less schools, the more funding to students.

Sarah Polito: There is a financial benefit, but there is also a programmatic benefit.

Sarah Polito asked if there was a consensus on any of the sites that were deemed as surplus or not surplus in committee finding number four. She also explained what was meant as "Surplus" and "Not Surplus". Explaining that a surplus site is a site we intend to use.

Hazel Wilson would like the board to consider all sites as surplus. Tony Gross talked about the capacity of students Solano Widenmann and that they are at about 88% capacity. He is concerned that by moving Loma Vista School students to Solano Widenmann, it may be too many students in too small of a space. Tony

Gross reiterated that we are in this situation because of things we can't control and are running 19 schools when should really be running half that number at full capacity.

Superintendent Ruben Aurelio emphasized that the VCUSD is still under full receivership and does not have full control yet. He explained that the district is audited annually and one of the findings that has been brought to their attention has been the capacity of their schools. He stressed the importance of reviewing the data.

Mitch Romao, Assistant Superintendent of Operations believes that there is a misunderstanding of what is truly offered at Mare Island Health and Fitness Academy. He highlighted that there is a large multipurpose room that can be converted into a dancefloor and a large grass field with a track that can comparable to VCS facilities.

C. Continued work on draft Committee report.

## **6. Public Hearing**

Hearing opened at: 6:38 P.M. by Ralph Gross.

The District hereby provides for a hearing of community input to the Committee on acceptable uses of space and real property, including the sale or lease of surplus real property.

Community members are asked to submit a comment card in order to speak, and designate that they wish to participate in the public hearing.

1. Wendy Komori Stager: Rev. of Community Presbyterian Church. In favor of keeping Steffan Manor open.
2. Cynthia Crane: Grandmother of VCS student. Expressed that is a good school and that it should remain open. Believes that Mare Island is too far of a commute to accommodate families.
3. Edwin Crane: In favor of keeping Vallejo Charter open. Who's going to watch the kids while the bridge is up at the Mare Island? What are the costs of moving the school? Also highlighted that Loma Vista Middle is where the students of Loma Vista eat lunch. Urged committee to think about that.
4. Alynn Garren: Mother of two that go to VCs. Also works for VCS. She is five minutes walking distance from the school. Emphasized that there will not be transportation provided to students moving from VCS to Mare Island.
5. Jason Walker: Father of fourth grader who attends VCS and plays on the basketball team. Explains that there is no basketball gym at Mare Island.

6. Christine Walker: In support of keeping VCS open. Explained that VCS lacked admin support last year and has recently received a principal and is now improving. Talked about the variety of programs offered at VCS and facilities available to students.

7. Teresa Samceda: In favor of keeping Steffan Manor open. Expressed its significance to the community.

8. Jennifer LaRiviere: Parent of first grader at VCS. Works at Springstown library. Explained that there are students that of VCS that go to the Springstown library. Believes there are not any resources at Mare Island.

9. Janice Lubin: Principal of Vallejo Charter. Expresses that is no data that shows the economic impact of moving Vallejo charter to Mare Island. We need to look at all of the factors. Many of the students that attend Vallejo charter are from outside districts.

10. Rosa Valasquez: Mother of three students at Vallejo Charter of various ages (TK, 4<sup>th</sup> grader, and 8<sup>th</sup> grader). Explained that the kids and parents will be negatively impacted. Some parents will choose to move their students out of the district to avoid having to drive students to multiple sites.

Hearing closed at: 6:58 P.M. by Ralph Gross.

## **7. Review**

### **D. Finalize language in Findings and Recommendations of Committee Report.**

#### Committee's Findings:

- ❖ Finding 1) School districts similar in size to the District by way of student enrollment figures are able to function and thrive with many fewer school sites that the number currently maintained by the VCUSD. There are considerable potential programmatic benefits to closure and/or consolidation of a number of school sites. Certain closures will facilitate greater teacher collaboration, and allow the District to offer a number of its

unique programs to a larger group of its existing students as well as making certain surplus parcels available for other district uses such as after school programs, professional development or healthcare access.

**Motion: Kevin Steel**

**Second: Hazel Wilson**

**Vote: 7 yes**

- ❖ Finding 2) It is in the best interest of the District, its students, staff members and the community at large, to ensure that no school sites sit vacant or unused thereby incurring security costs and potentially creating vulnerability to vandalism. The Board is encouraged to promptly find alternative uses, or otherwise dispose of, any closed or consolidated school site.

**No disagreement by the committee for the findings**

**Motion: Tony Vargas**

**Second: Hazel Wilson**

**Vote: 7 yes**

- ❖ Finding 3) Ease of walking access and home-to-school transportation proximity must be a priority to retain walkability of community schools for neighboring families. Programs that service students from a wider geographic area, can be relocated to alternative locations.

**No disagreement by the committee for the findings.**

**Motion: Kevin Steele**

**Second: Tony Vargas**

**Vote: 7 yes**

- ❖ Steffan Manor Elementary School – Surplus. Move students from Pennycook to Stefan Manor. A surplus site, we intend to use as instructional.

**Motion: Hazel Wilson**

**Second: Evangeline Espiritu**

**Vote: 7 yes**

- ❖ Vallejo Charter School – Surplus. Site to be moved to Mare Island. Designation is still undecided.

**Motion: Hazel Wilson designated for surplus**

**Second: Evangeline Espiritu**

**Vote: 7 yes**

- ❖ Loma Vista Environmental Science Academy – Middle school moved to adjacent MS, Solano Widenmann. Middle school as surplus.

**Motion: Kevin Steele**

**Second: Tony Vargas**

**Vote: 7 yes**

- ❖ Mare Island Health and Fitness Academy – Surplus. To move students to Federal and Lincoln. Have the site, if the goal is not to be used for instructional purpose.

**Motion: Hazel Wilson**

**Second: Kevin Steele**

**Vote: 7 yes**

- ❖ Annie Pennycook Elementary School – Surplus

**Motion: Tony Vargas**

**Second: Kevin Steele**

**Vote: 7 yes**

#### Committee's Recommendations:

- ❖ Recommendation 1) The Committee recommends that the Board consolidate the students currently attending Pennycook Elementary with the students currently attending Stefan Manor Elementary, and declare the Pennycook property as surplus to District needs. The District should consider potential alternative uses for the Pennycook property, in addition to considering potential lease or sale of the site to generate revenue.

**Motion: Tony Vargas**

**Second: Joe Hatchett**

**Vote: 2 yes, 1 opposed, 4 abstained, No majority, Motion failed.**

- ❖ Recommendation 2) The Committee recommends that the Vallejo Charter School program be relocated to the Mare Island Academy facility and the Vallejo Charter School site should be evaluated for potential use as staff housing as well as recreational and sporting uses for the athletic facilities and fields. The Committee also wishes for the

Board to have the flexibility to consider potential sale or lease of the Vallejo Charter School site, in order to maximize its value in a desirable location.

**No Motion. Recommendation failed.**

- ❖ Recommendation 3) The Committee recommends that the Mare Island Academy students be consolidated to the Federal Terrace and Lincoln elementary schools as well as surrounding middle school sites, to make room for the Vallejo Charter School program to relocate to the Mare Island Academy facility. The Committee recommends the District should retain ownership of the Mare Island Academy facility to potentially accommodate increased enrollment expected from residential development on the island.

**Amended verbiage in sentence two from recommends to believes.**

**Motion: Kevin Steele**

**Second: Tony Vargas**

**Vote: 7 yes**

- ❖ Recommendation 4) The Committee recommends that the students attending middle school in the separate building at Loma Vista be relocated to Solano Widenmann, and the facility be used to house an extended learning program associated with the nearby Loma Vista school and Farm program, professional development facility or other District facility needs.

**Motion: Hazel Wilson**

**Second: Tony Vargas**

**Vote: 6 yes, 1 no**

- ❖ Recommendation 5) For any facilities found to be surplus to District needs, the Committee supports any decision by the Board to apply for a waiver of the surplus property competitive bidding requirements in order to seek offers that are most advantageous to the District based on multiple factors, including price.

**Motion: Hazel Wilson**

**Second: Tony Vargas**

**Vote: 7 yes**

- ❖ No additional recommendation added



**8. Next Scheduled Meeting**

November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024 located at 665 Walnut Avenue, Vallejo, CA, 94592

[Study Session also held by the Board on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024]

**9. Adjournment.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 P.M.

**Motion: Kevin Steele**

**Second: Evangeline Espiritu**

**Vote: 7 yes**

*Agendas of public meetings and any other writings distributed to all or a majority of the members of the Committee in connection with a matter subject to discussion or consideration at an open meeting of the Committee are public records. If such writing is distributed less than 72 hours prior to a public meeting, the writing will be made available for public inspection at the District Office located at 665 Walnut Avenue, Vallejo, CA 94592 at the time the writing is distributed to all or a majority of the members of the Committee.*

**REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION**

*In order to help ensure participation in the meeting of disabled individuals, appropriate disability-related accommodations or modifications shall be provided by the District, upon request, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Persons with a disability who require a disability-related accommodation or modification, including auxiliary aids and services in order to participate in a Committee meeting, shall contact the District superintendent or designee in writing by noon the day before the scheduled meeting. Such notification shall provide personnel to make reasonable arrangements to assure accessibility to the meeting.*