

Community and Intergovernmental Relations Committee Meeting
March 27, 2006 5:30 p.m.
Minutes

Attendance: Commissioners Brennan, Evans, and Thompson; Ms. Kimberly Rohring; Ms. Linda Dunsmoor; Mr. Jim Fenton for Rick Hannon

Commissioner Evans convened the meeting at 5:32 p.m.

Discussion:

Facilities Modernization Initiative

Mr. Fenton represented Mr. Hannon in providing an update on this initiative. Mr. Hannon was in Albany meeting with local legislators around budget and facilities in the final days of budget negotiations.

Mr. Fenton stated that the current emphasis is on the development of enabling legislation to send to Albany. They have been working with Harris Beach and have developed a chart comparing the Buffalo, Niagara Falls, and Syracuse legislation.

Commissioner Thompson arrived at 5:34 p.m.

In developing legislation, we are seeking as much flexibility as possible; an aid commitment – though the state legislature cannot commit aid, it can commit to a cap on the local share – of maximum 8% local share. We anticipate having a draft in the next couple of weeks to share with the committee. There is a notable deviation from both the Buffalo and Syracuse models in that they both operated with a Joint Board that was authorized through the City charters and consisted of representatives from both the school district and city.

The first part of the legislation, legislative findings, essentially makes the case of what the “ask” is and why we are seeking it.

There will be another meeting on April 11th with SED and Mr. Saburla.

We have learned that the legislation, once completed by bill drafters in Albany, is likely to be referred to the Education committee as an Education Appropriation bill, and then will go to a finance committee.

We are seeking to have a draft to Albany not later than the end of April.

With both Buffalo and Syracuse, the legislation has asked for a number of instruments (conduit financing). Rating agencies are viewing these as state credits. This allows the borrowing to stay off the City of Rochester’s balance sheet and not count against its debt ceiling.

The Legislature wants to see more reporting in approving these bills. We have taken the position that we want to report and believe it is a prudent thing to do.

The actual plan is fluid. The current draft is being reviewed by cabinet; and Board input will be needed. The ranking of the Schools of the Future Criteria by the Board was used in developing the current draft.

Position on Apprenticeship

The District staff has requested a written statement from the Board regarding its objectives around apprenticeship opportunities for students and making them a requirement in contracts, as well as the Board's stated interest around ensuring contracts with City companies and employment of City residents around the Facilities Modernization Project.

Commissioner Thompson asked about the percentages for Women and Minority Owned Businesses. She added that based on information from Commissioner Powell and Mr. Sullivan, staff to City Council, she understands that we may not want to fully implement the current percentages.

It was suggested that this topic be pursued further when the Policy committee reviews draft language in the next month or so around contract/RFP language.

It was noted that the two Board Members (Commissioners Bowers and Brown) and the District staff (Ms. Margaret Dever) who were working on the apprenticeship initiative in 2004-05 have all left their positions. Ms. Dever's position was eliminated in the 2005-06 budget, but that was not clear until a fall budget amendment. The impact of such a decision is now being seen. Ms. Rohring is the only individual closely involved with the project that remains in the organization.

Ms. Rohring stated that the intent of the workgroup was to model the programs at the School of Skilled Trades after the Firefighters program or Teacher Academy at East High School. These programs prepare students for future employment and open roads of opportunity. The Skilled Trades programs have not been able to fully provide their students with apprenticeship opportunities to give them the skills needed to compete for apprentice opportunities and employment after graduation.

Representatives from the skilled trades unions and major construction companies also participated in the workgroup and were supportive of the objective.

Commissioner Brennan noted that Ken Warner of the Ironworkers Union contacted him about the work that was done last year and expressed continued interest in collaborating with the District on this. It was determined that this needs to be raised with the Superintendent so someone can be assigned to follow up and work collaboratively with them to start this.

Commissioner Thompson motioned to advance the memo stipulated the Board's objectives around apprenticeship opportunities and employment of city residents to the full Board for approval. Seconded by Commissioner Brennan. Adopted 3-0.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Brennan, Seconded by Commissioner Thompson. Adopted 3-0 at 6:19 p.m.