

**COMMUNITY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**  
**Committee Meeting**  
**Wednesday, January 18, 2006**

**Attendees:** Commissioners Evans, Garcia, Thompson, and Powell, Ms. Rohring, Ms. Dunsmoor, Mr. Richard Hannon  
Absent: Commissioner Brennan (sick)

The meeting began at 5:35 p.m.

Facilities Modernization:

Commissioner Evans thanked everyone for providing answers to some of the questions on the facilities piece that we had and submitted in advance of the meeting. He then turned the floor over to Mr. Hannon to highlight any points that he wanted to talk about and to update where we are in the process. He stated that he also had a question about the timeline in terms of where we are. He would like to have a better concrete understanding of where we are, and a more detailed timeline outlining key decision making points.

Mr. Hannon stated that we have a revised copy of questions responses that include answers to some of the questions we were not able to answer earlier. There are still 3 outstanding questions. He went on to state that on the matter of the timeline, he is not prepared to specify what will happen and when. There is a substantial amount of work that needs to be done. The Superintendent will be in Albany next week, and I hope to join him. We will continue to work with City Hall and get a better sense of their concerns/questions on this topic. They have not been too engaged thus far and we need to better inform them on where we are and what we are looking to do, along with how they can partner with us.

Commissioner Evans asked whether or not Mr. Hannon expected this was happening because we are early in the process or that they have a new administration and have had to deal with the ferry and other more immediate issues thus far?

Mr. Hannon responded that it was the latter. Mr. Hannon stated that he had every reason to think that they're going to be very engaged in the modernization plan. Mr. Hannon raised a question about the Mayor's proposed "leadership council"

Commissioner Garcia stated that the proposal for a Leadership Council by Mayor Duffy engaged the Superintendent, so Dr. Rivera is aware.

Mr. Hannon provided the campaign document that spoke to this proposal for the Board members reference

Commissioner Evans read the following from the campaign document “Establish a culture of leadership council with the Rochester City School District Superintendent. The Council would include County Executive, President of United Way, Sears and Rump Groups, representatives of New York State College and Rochester City District unions. Each representative will guarantee goals, all in support of the ultimate Rochester City School District’s goals to improve attendance, behavior, grades, and graduation rate. They will meet quarterly to monitor and collaborate, and have any news conference.” So I guess this facilities piece is definitely a part of that.

Commissioner Thompson wanted to know which slide they were on.

Commissioner Evans stated that Mr. Hannon was giving an overview of the timeline.

Commissioner Evans is concerned that about developing legislation that could be submitted by March, in terms of deciding on a funding model, delivery model, and scope of the project.

Mr. Hannon stated that we anticipate needing a “home rule” message from City Council. Such action would have to take place prior to submitting proposed legislation to the state. The Board of Education would also be asked to take a formal position by resolution.

Commissioner Evans wanted to know if Mr. Hannon thinks realistically that we can be there then.

Mr. Hannon responded that he thinks getting a better read on City Council and the Mayor is critical.

Commissioner Garcia wanted to know from Mr. Hannon what he suggests. Should we be talking to somebody at City Hall, should we be talking to the Mayor?

Mr. Hannon stated that he did not know what level of discussion had taken place between the Superintendent and the Mayor.

Commissioner Garcia stated that we could recommend that they have a meeting by the end of the month. Commissioner Evans agreed because the timeline is so aggressive.

Commissioner Powell stated that it seems to her that before we can craft special purpose legislation we need to know what our strategy is for the local share. So, can you give us a hint as to which direction you’re going with it? I know City Council had a notion that if we could give them the Lofton Building they would be able to sell it and we could use that for a down payment on the local share. But at the time we were pretty strident about needing it for swing space and that sort of thing.

Ms. Tripi states that we are assessing swing space needs as we move through solutions development. There is some thought that we could give back Lofton in a couple years and use the proceeds from the sale for the local share.

NOTE: Would have to have signed legal agreement on this because there are differing opinions, including legal, regarding who gets the proceeds from the sale of School District buildings.

Commissioner Evans wanted to know if you combined the cafeteria with the auditorium if you would have a higher aidable rate.

Mr. Keysa notes that there are certain spaces in a building with very low or non-existent aidable rates. It has to do with instruction. There may not be a higher aid rate, but the costs would be lower through combined space usage.

It was noted that the District could seek a guaranteed reimbursement rate through the special legislation.

Commissioner Thompson wanted to know on what grounds the State would guarantee a higher return, for what reasons would they guarantee that.

It was stated that other districts has incorporated such guarantees in their legislation in this is something Rochester should consider pursuing. It would allow for more upgrades with a smaller local share.

Commissioner Powell states that she's still a little confused. It occurs to her that we're going to need the local share investment to front load this project.

Ms. Tripi stated that actually the local share is loaded at the back end of the debt service.

Commissioner Powell stated OK, but even paying off debt is going to require more cooperation from City Council than what we've seen to date.

#### SCHOOLS OF THE FUTURE CRITERIA:

Commissioner Evans is seeking input from members on the proposed schools of the future criteria. How were the criteria developed? Are they ranked at all?

Mr. Keysa noted that staff were brought in to aid in the development of the criteria and they were asked to weight them, though the final list which has been shared with the Board was not prioritized by the group. So these are not in any particular order.

Commissioner Powell wants to know if we're looking to standardize across the District and raise the sinking boat, so to speak, by bringing all classrooms up to a certain level, or are we going to cite a specific kind of list of criteria; things that we want versus things that we really need and then note all of the associated costs so that the Board can make a fully informed decision.

Mr. Wheatcraft stated that he believes one of our goals is to standardize across the District as much as possible, recognizing that it is not financially or politically feasible to necessarily standardize site space. Mr. Keysa noted that if we do more than 50% renovation of a building, then we have to bring the entire building up to current SED codes. Many of our buildings are not there. We could add air conditioning to all our buildings, but he noted that it is very costly to retrofit the buildings and we would need to consider the ongoing operating costs.

Commissioner Garcia departed at 6:12 p.m.

Commissioner Thompson stated it sounds like it could be a combination. Maybe some type of standardization on a very small scale of things that we absolutely need and things that we want that will not be cost prohibitive; and then have to pick and choose those sites where we're going to do some specific things that are going to be done consistently across the District with various restrictions.

Mr. Hannon stated that we are currently developing a strategy wall in the project room at the Lofton building. It is over 17 fiscal years. The project team will look at this building, what can be done in a particular amount of time, then the associated costs, the aidable amount, and finally enrollment projects.

Commissioner Evans asked members in reviewing the Schools of the Future criteria if anything tonight stands out that we could send a message to say we think this is important, or if we would need another meeting to discuss this.

Commissioner Thompson stated she has seen the list here, and if this is considered an exhaustive list, then she would be happy to work from this and say what she thinks. But, tonight it wouldn't be very meaningful because it could possibly change tomorrow.

Commissioner Powell says that the only thing that she would have trouble with, and it's trouble in terms of selling it to the public, is any money spent on school entry and lobbies, although I've seen how important that is, and I've seen what it does, not only in plans, but in new buildings that Tom has had a part in building. If it's not 100% aidable, I would say that's the bottom of the list, along with one other item. As important as parking spaces are to the people who go to work

everyday, that's a hard sale because it sounds like an employee perk. The sale we need to make to the public is why we need that.

Mr. Keysa and Mr. Wheatcraft noted that parking provision is part of the RTA contract. They also stated that when there are not sufficient onsite parking spaces, frequently staff park on neighborhood streets which can be problematic for residents where there is limited parking.

Commissioner Powell stated that there was nothing on the list that she personally disagreed with, but if push came to shove and we had to make some decisions, the least defensible is entry ways, and if that's all the school needed, I have to say let's give them a pass on that. And, I know that land acquisitions in some areas are going to be almost impossible, maybe impossible due to cost. I'm not prepared to say no we don't try, and I'm also suggesting that even after we've got our 17 year plan if opportunities come up for some of these items after that, that for instance, athletic fields not be dropped from the template of schools of the future, I think it belongs there. If we can't do it the first time around doesn't mean that we don't strive to do it somewhere along the line. Sooner or later these buildings will get condemned, maybe 50 years from now.

Commissioner Evans stated that the Board would rank order the criteria and provide this feedback to the staff and project team to guide their recommendations to the Board. He asked if District staff could provide the anecdotal supporting information, such as was noted around parking, and that Board staff would develop a ranking tool that would be sent with the additional information on criteria and gather member responses.

Commissioner Powell stated that the other comment that she wanted to make about the list, even though it's not rank ordered, is air conditioning. One of the points that came out in our joint meeting with City Council is the question of eventually are schools going to be used year round. That deserves our attention even it means we end up with an operational cost. With a new AC system what if you decide you do not need to use it in a given summer, can you keep it in mothballs for 18 months or more?

Mr. Keysa stated that was possible.

Commissioner Thompson stated that she is making a note to Kimberly to say that it would be helpful to know which of the additional questions has been answered rather than try to read through those now. Commissioner Evans agreed.

Mr. Hannon stated that they would differentiate in future documents to aid the members in this.

Commissioner Evans said if we're getting rid of abandoned houses that have been abandoned because there was no money for demolition in the City's budget for that, and in the process are building up the neighborhoods and improving the schools, then we are killing two birds with one stone.

Commissioner Evans stated that he is grappling with what exactly the "ask" will be of council and the state.

Commissioner Evans stated that this is what he means in terms of a detailed timeline. Only because we've been going at a consistent rate probably since last year; we have regular legislative breakfasts with our state delegation. Obviously Dr. Rivera will continue to go to Albany and advocate for us, but we need to know exactly what it is that we're asking for. When all the Board members are singing the same tune it strengthens our case too.

Mr. Hannon agreed and stated that they would work on a more detailed timeline.

Commissioner Evans added that sometimes our legislators even say write the legislation, tell me what you want. Write it and give it to me. And, they'll give it to programming council, Ways and Means, they'll mark it up. Sometimes it's not what we want, sometimes it gets vetoed by the Governor, i.e. school nurses, but this has worked.

Commissioner Evans asked Ms. Tripi if she had anything to add in terms of finance.

She noted that she is doing some different models with higher reimbursement rates and that she would be ready to share them with the committee next week.

Commissioner Thompson stated that when the Administration is doing the timeline for different steps time should be built in for Board review, because that's the overwhelming sensation is that we're inundated with information to the point that we can't even keep it straight. What came when and what is the most recent, what is it related to. Coordinating information and presenting it in as timely a manner as possible is a major help.

Commissioner Evans stated that he thinks that getting through this part even before the budget process starts would be a major help. He would like to avoid five day a week meetings.

## Community Meetings

Commissioner Evans stated that they were going to try to encourage people to come to the community meetings. There will be a press conference, tomorrow, Thursday at 10:00 a.m. to encourage the community to come out. One of the things that Commissioner Thompson and I have in common is that we always want to get as many people out to these things to make them as useful as possible. At least we're out there saying come.

Commissioner Powell asked if we have a phone list of people who are players in the community like the ministers in the community, Baden Street, community organizations that we can extend a personal invitation to?

Linda Dunsmoor stated that we have an email distribution list that we have been sending information. We have agreements with some of these community organizations that they will then forward to their membership.

Ms. Jarzyniecki added that we do have the ability to send out a voice message to the parents in the District and we will be doing that on Friday, January 20<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Powell stated that she thinks that there are some people who will say that a press conference is simply not enough, but they will respond if they get a personal invitation.

Commissioner Evans stated that he knows that Linda and Barbara have been working with the PPC and DACT to at least come to hear the presentation. He does not want people to say they did not know about the meetings.

Commissioner Thompson wanted to know the format of the forum?

Commissioner Evans stated that it would be an information presentation by staff and then questions from the audience, followed by comments from the Board. He will chair the meeting and field the questions.

Commissioner Thompson asked if there were going to be materials that people will be able to take with them?

Ms. Rohring and Ms. Dunsmoor will work on such materials.

Commissioner Evans stated that the most difficult task will be that of managing the public's comments.

Commissioner Powell stated that we've heard that the State Ed Department is urging us, but at the same time it does not really necessarily translate into successful passage of supporting legislation. Because although the Dept. of Ed might want it to help us, the folks in the Legislature who have been watching the budgets aren't necessarily going to be so eager. Is there an answer to that?

It was noted that Niagara Falls, Buffalo, and Syracuse have all gone through this process. Syracuse will resubmit this year. Commissioner Evans stated that it is our turn.

Commissioner Thompson suggested that we get input from different people's vantage points, when crafting the presentation, so that we make it as anticipatory and viewer friendly as possible. And, we have a way to get back to people, to respond to their questions there, and however else we're going to respond to questions. We need to be able to get people's questions answered, get those answers to them after that night. And, have we considered any action steps that we want people to take, such as calling their legislators, City Council. It would be good to have some specifics simple to follow.

Commissioner Evans wants to be sure to have a sign-in available for the public in order to be able to follow-up with them afterwards. The people who come to the presentations are the ones who would be good to solicit and ask for help when we get to what the "ask" is going to be.

**Action Items:**

- Template for rank-ordering with supporting information on the criteria to be sent to full Board on January 20<sup>th</sup> – Ms. Rohring and Mr. Hannon responsible
- Detailed Timeline with key decision points/key deliverables so noted – Mr. Hannon work with Ms. Rohring
- Meeting Materials for next week – Ms. Dunsmoor and Ms. Rohring

**Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Thompson, Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 2-0 with Commissioner Brennan absent at 6:46 p.m.