



**City of Newark – Newark Unified School District
Liaison Committee**



Monday, July 20, 2020, at 3:00 p.m.

**Various Virtual
Teleconference Locations
3:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

A. ROLL CALL

Chair Collazo called the meeting to order at 3:08 p.m.

Present were Chair Collazo and Committee Members Hannon, Nguyen, and Zhang. City Manager Benoun and Superintendent Triplett were also present.

A.1 Introduction of new Superintendent, Dr. Mark Triplett.

Committee Member Zhang introduced the newly appointed school superintendent, Dr. Mark Triplett.

B. MINUTES

B.1 Approval of January 27, 2020 minutes

City Manager Benoun stated that the January 27, 2020 minutes were being prepared and not ready for approval. They will be presented for approval at the next committee meeting.

C. OLD BUSINESS

C.1 Earthquake preparedness – Superintendent Triplett.

Dr. Triplett stated there has been a collective effort between the City and the District to set up a preparedness plan to cover any emergency. It was noted that the school district needs to equip each school site with additional supplies in case of an earthquake or other shelter-in-place emergency.

District staff has researched necessary equipment such as radios and emergency kits (supplies for 32 – 35 individuals, for two days) for each classroom. This has been put on hold because of the pandemic. Going forward staff will assess the needs for each classroom and for the district office. They will continue to work with the police department and City staff for recommendations on the best radio and want to ensure a channel is available for direct communication with the police department.

Committee Member Hannon suggested that district staff coordinate with the Alameda County Fire Department in addition to the Newark Police Department. He also asked there be a follow-up to this item at the Committee's first meeting in 2021.

City Manager Benoun stated that the City of Newark has an agreement with the City of Union City to share an Emergency Preparedness Coordinator and offered to share his contact information with Dr. Triplett to use as a point of contact and interface between the police and fire departments.

C.2 Update on enrollment for 2019/2020 – Superintendent Triplett.

Dr. Triplett stated there has been declining enrollment over the last several years and the way to increase enrollment is to create the best educational services possible.

For this upcoming school year the state is not basing their funding on what happened at the end of the last school year but where enrollment and ADA (Average Daily Attendance) were before the pandemic hit.

C.3 Census update – City Manager Benoun.

City Manager Benoun stated that the census is important for three reasons – 1) It determines the allocation of Congressional seats in the House of Representatives, 2) It is important for the City to know who is living in its jurisdiction, and 3) It determines how much federal funds the City receives. If the City reaches a population of 50,000 it would be considered a direct entitlement city and would be eligible to apply for funds directly from the federal government.

As of July 14, 2020, the percentage of those who have already complied with the census is higher than the final completion rate of 10 years ago. Results will be made available to the public in mid-2021.

D. NEW BUSINESS

D.1 City and School District budget updates as a result of SIP orders – Superintendent Triplett and City Manager Benoun.

Dr. Triplett stated that overall the District has had a structural deficit in its budget for some time and is using reserves. This coming year the state legislature has passed significant relief as a result of the financial challenge of the pandemic.

City Manager Benoun stated that in the National Economy the GDP fell 5% in the first quarter of 2020 and unemployment rose to 13.3% in May 2020. In terms of the State Economy the budget contains a multi-year recovery approach and there is no State takeaway or borrowing of City funds. There is no guarantee of Federal or State funds for cities.

The City is projecting a \$100,000 surplus for FY19/20, a \$7M deficit for FY20/21, and a \$6.18M deficit for FY21/22. The City has taken a number of actions to reduce expenditures such as not funding non-essential positions, eliminating non-essential travel and training, reducing contractual services and supplies, and all employee bargaining units agreed to eliminate the July 1, 2020 negotiated general salary increase. This resulted in a \$6.3M reduction in the 2019/2020 budget. Despite the cost-cutting measures a \$14M budget deficit remains and the City Council authorized staff to use reserves to balance the 2020/2022 Biennial Budget. This will impact services such as reduced park landscaping, decreased pot-hole repairs and roadside cleanups, slower plan review times, delayed engineering services, suspension of childcare services and most recreation programs, and elimination of additional Sunday library hours.

D.2 Impact of State reductions to school districts & teaching strategies for upcoming school year – Superintendent Triplett.

Dr. Triplett stated there will be a differentiated approach between elementary and secondary schools. Moderate Intensive SDC and Mental Health program students need to return to a consistent in-person schedule as early as possible. As schools phase into in-person learning it will initially be in small groups of 12 students or less and focusing on creating safe conditions for everyone.

The school district envisions a phased reopening approach and will be following the guidelines from the experts at the county and state levels. They will start with distance learning and gradually phase into in-person learning. Distance learning will be high-quality, standards driven, rigorous, and engaging.

In addition, the district has purchased a significant amount of equipment for cleaning and protection.

D.3 Review possible school closures – Superintendent Triplett.

Dr. Triplett stated that even though the school district has some one-time funding from the state and federal governments to support the pandemic the district continues to have a structural deficit in the budget. One of the critical ways to address that is to consider the entire district footprint in terms of the schools (the right size to fit their population). The school district did approve a long-term budget that included some consolidation of schools. A committee has been formed to address this issue and to explore what is the appropriate strategy in terms of consolidating schools and how to do that. They have identified an experienced outside facilitator that will be utilized to develop a strategy. It will be a plan developed through engagement with the community.

D.4 COVID-19 update – Superintendent Triplett and City Manager Benoun.

Dr. Triplett opened the discussion to questions and comments from the committee members.

E. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

F. ADJOURNMENT

Committee Member Nguyen moved, and Committee Member Hannon seconded to adjourn. The motion passed, 4 AYES. Committee Chair Collazo adjourned the meeting at 4:43 p.m.

Kathleen L. Slafter
Deputy City Clerk