



City of Newark – Newark Unified School District
Liaison Committee



Monday, Nov. 16, 2020, at 5:30 p.m.

Various Virtual
Teleconference Locations
5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

A. ROLL CALL

Chair Collazo called the meeting to order at 5:35pm

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

B. MINUTES

B.1 Approval of January 27, 2020 minutes

Motion made by Member Hannon, and seconded by Member Nguyen.
Yes: Chair Collazo, Members Hannon, Nguyen, Zhang.
Motion carries.

B.2 Approval of July 20, 2020 minutes

Motion made by Member Hannon, and seconded by Member Nguyen.
Yes: Chair Collazo, Members Hannon, Nguyen, Zhang.
Motion carries.

C. OLD BUSINESS

D. NEW BUSINESS

D.1 Update on NUSD School Consolidation – Superintendent Dr. Triplett

Presentation provided by Superintendent, Dr. Triplett. Dr. Triplett because with background information regarding the district's decline in enrollment. Enrollment is attached to ADA, and overtime there has been a decrease in enrollment and revenue. Multi-year projections are required by the county and state, and projections were provided of the years 2020-2024. Projection include the approved saving from school consolidation. Revenues and expenditures are expected to diverge, as expenses increase and revenue decreases. The district was built for 10,000 and currently have 5,500. A stakeholder committee was created to help recommend four schools for consolidation. The recommendation has been made, and the school board will soon decide what two schools to close/consolidate.

Dr. Triplett ended the presentation and opened the floor for questions. Question by Chair Collazo was which four schools were recommended by the committee, and Dr. Triplett answered Graham, Musick, Snow, and Lincoln. Chair Collazo stated she sees Musick and Graham have a Latino community that walks to school, and inquired about transportation. Dr. Triplett said the board is looking at the proximity of all the schools.

Question by Member Hannon, with the million-dollar saving with the school

consolidation there will still be a deficit, and asked if the school has gone beyond year 2023. Dr. Triplett stated yes, and stated that projections provide hope for recruitment based on increase housing development to assist with the development. Member Hannon stated budget decisions need to be made early to minimize the impact.

Question from Chair Collazo. Stated if the property will be sold, will that be to build on Area 3. Dr. Triplett land use will require another committee to make decisions on land use, so it may be sale or it may not. Chair Collazo then asked if Dr. Triplett knew the history of how land on Musick was acquired.

Written public comment was requested and submitted by:

Jaimie Tavares:

"Dear City of Newark and Board of Education Members:

I have been a resident of Newark for nearly two decades and a parent of NUSD students, one at Snow and one at NMHS. I participated with my students in the walking protest that took place on November 5th and the car parade protest this past weekend. Newark is a small inclusive community and we should all be pulling together to hold NUSD accountable for the mismanagement that has been occurring year after year. I have been an active parent in the district for ten years and continue to see mistakes being repeated rather than repaired. NUSD sold the Ruschin school site to "prevent" this very problem, yet here we are again.

Where is the concern and action to build equity? We live in a community where big corporations like Facebook, Amazon, Stanford, Tesla, etc occupy buildings within our city limits. Their employees have students in our district. Why hasn't the City and NUSD pulled together to approach these companies with our problem and come up with programs to better our students? Facebook gave excessive amounts of money to Menlo Park and schools surrounding their headquarters area. They are constantly trying to entice their employees to move to our city so why not let them know the problems we are facing and work with them to try and better our school ratings and programs? I have been a long time advocate to many that have moved to my neighborhood and advocated for our local schools telling them not to pay attention to what they have read online, and that my students are thriving. They don't trust NUSD putting their own students in Fremont schools or private schools, and quite frankly I don't blame them at this point. Dr. Triplett should be ashamed of his actions late Friday night sending urgent emails out to not only parents but students as well. My high school freshman received the same urgent email and I was shocked!

While the district did create the SCAC committee it really feels it was all just to make sure they crossed their "T's" and dotted their "I's" so they could move forward and close the schools they already planned to close. It doesn't seem that any of the public comments were taken into consideration nor the comments from the members of the SCAC. There are still many unanswered questions. It is known that the district is not receiving funding for current enrollment but instead for their enrollment numbers of two years prior. In that case and with students not back in the classroom overhead costs shouldn't be as high. I did notice a lot of repaving was done at multiple sites, some that are even on the chopping block to close. Why would the district do this especially if they are planning to sell the sites eventually? It was threatened that if the SCAC didn't vote or do the process that the state would have to come in and close the schools. Why not let the State come in and clean up shop? They could get rid of all the stagnant underperforming employees at the district and get things on track and running the way it should. Parents might not be so upset with the latter since this ongoing problem might be finally resolved.

Closing two elementary schools during a pandemic is NOT the answer. Our students are already going through so much mentally and knowing that they left in March to never, ever return again and have to start "new" somewhere else could be very detrimental to most. There are many properties underutilized, I can agree with that. The district offices look as if they are falling apart and could possibly move to McGregor with the SDC's that are being housed at Musick. There are many other ideas and options but Dr. Triplett and the board do not care to hear, they only want to steam roll ahead and make this decision in the next few weeks which is an insult to our community. School closures will affect our local economy, housing prices, and more which is why the City of Newark should be very concerned and get more involved in this process.

Sincerely,

Jamie Tavares"

Cary Knoop:

"Dear Liaison Committee and residents of Newark,
I want to share some information with the members of this committee and the residents of Newark about how Newark Unified is handling the school closure decision-making process.
Let's be clear, given the financial position of the district and the under-utilization of school sites, it is reasonable to seriously consider closing one or more schools.
Determining which schools and at what time they should be closed is a process that requires the utmost care. We owe it to the community to have a fair and open process. We also have to ensure information used in determining which schools should be closed is accurate and not politically biased.
The Newark Unified School Board created an advisory committee in March to advise the School Board on which schools to close. On August 27 the first meeting took place. The School Board mandated a schedule over a nine-week timeline with relevant information being unveiled at each meeting.
Since the committee's first meeting the process has become toxic, drenched with manipulation and inaccurate data.
Despite California Department of Education recommending the superintendent and school board members should not be members of the committee the School Board insisted otherwise, and worse, they insisted the two board members hold the chair and vice-chair positions on the committee. The advisory committee disagreed; both motions to appoint them as chair and vice-chair failed. The board President then refused to agendaize an action item at the regular Board meeting to allow for a change.
From that moment on the School Board President, now firmly acting as chair, unilaterally, without any discussion, implemented a reduction from public speaking time from 3 to 2 minutes, limiting committee discussions to 30 minutes, frequently cutting-off committee members, insisting that the meetings can only be extended once over the allotted two-hour meeting time, refusing committee member requests for items to be placed on the agenda, calling committee member's arguments emotional, and the list goes on.
The way the School Board tries to steer, influence and rush the advisory committee is a classic example on how not to do it.
The interference of the School Board with the advisory committee does not stand alone; longstanding board procedures and practices are radically changed without board discussion and public input. An agenda item is no longer introduced by staff and the public is no longer heard before a motion is made; minutes are now stripped from any narrative, Brown Act violations are common, the Brown Act has been called "guidance" and public speaking procedures are adjusted to create reasons to refuse citizens from speaking.
No one wants to see their neighborhood elementary school site closed but with under-utilized sites and the current financial conditions closing one of more schools is a reasonable proposition. But the Newark community deserves a thorough, fair and transparent decision-making process. None of that is happening.
The city has negotiated land in Area 3 to transfer to Newark Unified provided they build a new school by August of 2025.
However, many Newark residents will struggle with the idea that schools have to be closed on grounds of cost saving and under-utilization while at the same time a new school is planned to be built in Area 3.
I encourage all of you to become informed about how Newark Unified is handling the decision-making process. All the facts can be found in videos, minutes, slide presentations and documents.
Cary Knoop"

Carole Rose:

"Good Evening,
I am anxious to speak about the proposed closing of two elementary schools in Newark. For the record it seems the worst time possible during the pandemic. Seems like another major blow to our young people. I hear the information about a huge deficit and low enrollment. However the numbers first if all sound exaggerated 5,500 students to 10,000 student capacity to scare the community. The process of determining the terrible position our district is in should be something our community knows all about and we should all be brain storming ideas and solutions to avoid closing our community schools. Instead it has been discussed in a secretive way in a short time period. Many in our community only became aware of what was happening in the past month.
In these times when we are forced to look at systemic racism in our world. How it is hidden from view, challenging to identify. Our community needs to have people in charge that are trustworthy and care about the entire body of people that make up this community. It seems the schools that are slated to be closed are less taken care of.

Let's think create and don't eliminate!
Our community schools!

Thank you Carole Rose"

D.2 Tentative Reopening School Schedules – Superintendent Dr. Triplett

Presentation provided by Dr. Triplett. Dr. Triplett stated that the Alameda County jumped back to the Purple Tier. Some questions regarding reopening included, why are other districts opened, but no school in Alameda has in person learning. No date set for reopening. When the district opens there will be a distance learning option. District priorities include Staff and Student Safety, Student Centered Approach, Considerations of Draft Schedules. There will be health screenings, such as home surveys, and other equipment to monitor. Checking HVAC systems, and replaced filters, and comprehensive assessments. Cleaning protocols include daily disinfecting. Procured agreement with Curative for COVID Testing to check all staff regularly. School has plexiglass barriers. While students at school they will be strict about safety precautions. The day structure includes many safety protocols as well.

Data update: Survey asking about the comfort level of returning to live instruction. “Would you want to continue in distance learning or in hybrid?” The district goal is to serve the entire community. Based on data there is a design challenge to meet the needs of all families. There is a multi-phase approach to a return to live instruction.

Tentative schedules were presented.

Questions:

Chair Collazo: For Latino parents who are working, and need to take children to school there are challenges.

Dr. Triplett said that is a challenge they working through, and thinking about bringing back childcare.

Chair Collazo: At each school, what percentage of schools participated?

Dr. Triplett: Data not available here, but it was about 1700 families, and survey provided in English and Spanish. Planning to send another survey at the beginning of December.

Chair Collazo: Would you consider free childcare and time from 8am to 6pm or 5pm?

Dr. Triplett: The childcare would be until around 5:30pm with an opportunity at the beginning of the date. Childcare is need based, and certain families have free or reduces cost.

Chair Collazo: In relation to mental wellness, is there help for the students and parents.

Dr. Triplett: There is a Wellness Committee to give support in various ways including online mental health supports, and more.

Member Hannon: How active is the state superintendent in the conversation regarding addressing school closures regarding mental health and more.

Dr. Triplett: State Dept has provided various grants, one specifically for mental health. Meets with county leadership every other week, and a COVID call with the health department, and with principals every other week. Amazing team of mental health providers, and parent partners/liasons at all schools via the COST program.

Member Hannon: How do you make the decision to progress a child from one grade to the next ensuring they are capturing the information.

Dr. Triplett: He visits schools and classes every week, and notices some screens are never on, and worries that there are students that they are not reaching. There are some who do not show up at all, and to address this it will be done on a case by case basis. These conversations are happening with teachers and principals.

D.3 Update on COVID-19 Task Force (Data on Latinx population) – City Manager Benoun

Presentation by City Manager Benoun: A Newark resident was able to provide COVID data specific to Newark, and noticed the high numbers in the Latinx community, and the city created this task force. A slide regarding “Racial Inequities in Newark.” Another slide regarding “Case Rate by Race/Ethnicity.” The members of this Taskforce were named. Some accomplishments were listed: Outreach for Spanish speaking community. Information material was distributed. PP was distributed in Sept at the Silliman Center. Held a Children’s Poster Contest. A video was distributed. Testing and community resource training. Flu shot distribution. November the City hosted additional programs. Testing was scheduled at McGregor site.

Member Nguyen: Thank you to everyone involved. Do you know how many families got tested in November for COVID-19.

City Manager Benoun: He did not have the information was not available, but can provide later.

Member Nguyen: Looks like information is being put out monthly.
Be – yes it has been monthly and they will continue.

Member Collazo: There will be a Task Force meeting on Wednesday and they will provide information regarding the data of people being tested.

Member Hannon: Have you been able to articulate what are some of the dynamics that have resulted in such a high number of positive testing, and are you expecting that the work done will lower the numbers?

City Manager Benoun: Unfortunately, there is not a lot of information from the Alameda County, to address that problem. Most is from speculation or word of mouth. A lot of it is because of social inequities such a multiple family in a household. To see if we are making progress we will continue to monitor the progress.

Chair Collazo: Some are essential working and with multiple families living in close quarters.

D.4 Update on Camp Newark Program – Assistant City Manager Hovorka

Camp Newark was offered this fall to help with distance learning. Has served 145 Newark Residents. Lunch is provided. Session end on Dec. 18, 2020. Up to ten children were provided a discount rate from the First 5 Program. It’s the fourth session.

Chair Collazo: What is the cost of the program? And can lower cost programs be available?

Assistant City Manager Hovorka: \$900 for 6 weeks. \$600 for the reduced rate.

City Manager Benoun: Introduced Mr. Cuevas to talk more about program pricing.

Mr. Cuevas: First two session grants were offered. 20 Latino children were offered a grant to qualify for the program at free of cost. Four weeks for \$900. City of Fremont has the same programs and for four weeks charges \$1300. Newark offers a discounted rate, and to qualify the participant has to apply for the scholarship

program. Able to serve about 8 families to reduce tuition for them.

Chair Collazo: Suggested finding other fund sources to provide a low cost to more families.

Mr. Cuevas: Will work with Mr. Zehnder and Mr. Benoun to do additional research.

Member Hannon: Asked Dr. Triplett to tap on to state funding to reimburse families for this program.

Dr. Triplett: Not at the moment, and trying to get the child care program ready as well.

D.5 Upcoming Recreational Programs/Events (student age focused) – Assistant City Manager Hovorka

Fall programs include various aquatic programs, lifeguard, tap dance, and various virtual programs. Winter Holiday Events are coming up on Dec. 11. Had a Drive Thru Halloween event that was very successful.

D.6 Update on Number of Crossing Guards and their Locations & Areas of Traffic Concerns – Assistant City Manager Hovorka

No crossing guard are currently being used since school is not live, but the Police Department hold the contact with the crossing guards. One crossing guard per school, so there are eight crossing guards. Waiting for schools to open and to see what schools will be opened to see where crossing guards are needed.

D.7 Newark Police Department Community Survey - Chief Anderson

Presentation by Anderson, the killing of Floyd sparked protests, also here in Newark. An evaluation was done to address the need of Newark. It was important to target our Newark community to see their expectations. Newark launched a 20-question survey. Survey opened for four weeks. At the conclusion there were 382 responses, 97.91% were from Newark. A slide was presented regarding the interaction with the Newark Police. The respondents with interaction, majority were satisfied. Crime perception is an indication of how the community feels, and it is clear that crime in Newark is increasing. Asked where the community wants the police to focus, and 5 categories resulted. 19% were parents of Newark students, and 89% the SRO experience was helpful or very helpful. There was a question to find out the preferred method of communication within various social/digital platforms. Areas of interests are in the areas of Info on General Law Enforcement, How to get Involved, How to Prevent Crime, Traffic, Firework, and De-escalation. To maintain the high level of trust, it is important to listen, and form strategies on the suggestions.

Questions:

Member Zhang: There was a grant to prevent grant theft, and how are we using that grant.

Chief Anderson: Exploring some technology to help address that, but the challenge is getting the equipment because of COVID.

D.8 Update on the following development projects: Bayside Newark, Sanctuary Village, and NewPark Mall Revitalization – City Manager Benoun

City Manager Benoun introduced the Community Development Director, Steven

Turner who provided the presentation. Bayside Newark: A good area for a transit center. Over the past 10 years the city has approved various projects. Glassbay – 217 single family homes. Bayshores – 546 single family homes. Lighthouse with affordable housing for senior. Compass Bay – 138 units. Bridgeway - 580 single family units. Parcel C – 192 units. 5-acre park. FMC – Willow – Transit station. Sanctuary Village – 96, 97, 108, 97 units. School Site – 6 acres with a park at 3 acres. NewPark Mall Revitalization – transitioning from indoor to indoor and outdoor. It will include residential unities build in 5 phases, for a total of 1,519 units. Retail area will be about 814,767 square feet.

Questions:

Member Zhang: There is a small rectangle by Willow and Chestnut, and what is that for?

Mr. Turner: That will be for residential as well, but have been working with the developer, and it could be residential for around 30 single family units but still needs some clean up.

Member Zhang: Where is the previously approved hotel?

Mr. Turner pointed to the location.

Member Zhang: In the area by Bridgeway, and is that residential.

Mr. Turner: It is a transition area but right now it's unlikely that the city would pursue residential area.

Member Zhang: Bayside area goes to Schilling, is it fair to say everything east of Hickory is build, so you will build on the west side.

Mr. Turner: There is some more to come.

Member Zhang: It will be significantly less than 2700 units.

Mr. Turner: There are area with potential for additional units, and could get close to 2500 units.

Member Zhang: The review is in process, and will the 300 units will get done within a year?

Mr. Turner: No, it will likely issue permits next year with and 18-24-month completion. Area 4 is not included in this presentation.

Member Nguyen: Is there a percentage of affordable housing set aside.

Mr. Turner: No. Some affordable housing concepts will be coming.

Member Nguyen: Is there an area specific for affordable housing

No, and it's best for it to be spread throughout the city.

E. PUBLIC COMMENT

E.1 *Members of the public are invited to address the City Council and Board of Education members on any item not listed on the agenda. Public Comments are generally limited to 5 minutes per speaker. Please note that State law prohibits the Council from acting on non-agenda items.*

F. ADJOURNMENT

Date for the next meeting: 4th Monday in January. Hannon suggested agenda items be provided by the 1st of Jan.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50pm.

IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING MEETING

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Newark and the Newark Unified School District are making several changes related to public meetings to protect the public's health and prevent the disease from spreading locally. As a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency, including the Alameda County Health Officer and Governor's directives for everyone to shelter in place, **the City Council Chambers and the NUSD offices will be closed to the public**. Members of the public should attempt to observe and address meetings using the below technological processes.

This meeting is being conducted utilizing teleconferencing and electronic means consistent with State of California Executive Order N-29-20 dated March 17, 2020, regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. In accordance with Executive Order N-29-20, the public may only view the meeting on television and/or online.

Liaison Committee Chair Collazo and Committee Members Nguyen, Hannon, and Zhang will be attending this meeting via teleconference. Teleconference locations are not open to the public. All votes conducted during the teleconferencing session will be conducted by roll call vote.

How to view the meeting remotely:

Please click the link below to join the webinar: Webinar ID: 818 9210 1976

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81892101976>

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Submission of Public Comments:

Public comments received by 4:00 p.m. on the Liaison Committee meeting date will be provided to the Liaison Members. Comments may be submitted by email to Lgutierrez@newarkunified.org (for the Oct. 16, 2020 meeting).

Reading of Public Comments: The Liaison administrative assistants will read aloud email comments received during the meeting that include the subject line "PUBLIC COMMENT FOR THE RECORD" as well as the item number for comment, provided that the reading shall not exceed five (5) minutes, or such other time as the Committee may provide, consistent with the time limit for speakers at a Committee meeting and consistent with all applicable laws. Matters brought before the Committee that require Committee action may be either referred to staff or placed on a future Committee agenda. No question shall be asked of a committee member, city or district staff, or an audience member. No person shall use vulgar, profane, loud or boisterous language that interrupts a meeting. Any person who refuses to carry out instructions given for the purpose of maintaining order may be guilty of an infraction and may result in removal from the meeting.

Agendas are posted pursuant to Government Code Section 54954.2. Pursuant to Government Code 54957.5: Supplemental materials distributed less than 72 hours before this meeting, to a majority of the City Liaison Committee, will be made available for public inspection at this meeting and at Newark Unified School District, 5715 Musick Avenue., and Newark City Hall, 37101 Newark Blvd., Newark during normal business hours. Materials prepared by City or school staff and distributed during the meeting are available for public inspection at the meeting or after the meeting if prepared by some other person. Assistance will be provided to those requiring accommodations for disabilities. Please submit your accommodation request to the City Clerk at least two business days before the meeting at Lgutierrez@newarkunified.org or 510-818-4112.