

**School Facilities Review Committee Minutes**  
**June 6 2016, 5:30 PM**  
**City Hall, Room 335**

Chair Dennis Slopak called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

**Committee Members Present:** Superintendent Abby Dolliver, Mayor Deberey Hinchey, Board of Education Member and Committee Chair Dennis Slopak, Alderwoman Joanne Philbrick, Comptroller Joshua Pothier, Board of Education Member Angelo Yeitz, Facilities Supervisor Dolores Thayer and Business Administrator Athena Nagel

**Committee Members Excused:** None

**Others Present:** Alderwoman Stacy Gould, Member of the Press Kevin Gorden, Member of the Press Claire Bessette, Recording Secretary Melinda Wilson, and several citizens

**Presenters:** Bruce Kellogg, JCJ Architecture

**Determination of Quorum:** It was determined a quorum was present.

**Prior Meeting Minutes:** On a motion by Josh Pothier, seconded by Mayor Deb Hinchey, the minutes of May 25, 2016 were unanimously approved.

**Citizen Comment:** Susan Blinderman identified herself as a teacher in the Norwich Public School system. She read a statement on behalf of the Norwich Teachers League which was a non-endorsement of the school facilities review process.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business: Final Recommendations**

Bruce Kellogg of JCJ Architecture reviewed the actions of JCJ thus far, including holding the public forums and performing research to create the various options for the Norwich Public Schools. These options were presented to the Committee. Over time, and with much discussion, the Committee narrowed the options. At that point, O&G prepared estimates for construction and renovate-as-new, taking state reimbursements into consideration.

Abby asked for a description of the state's ED049 Form process. Bruce summarized the process. The non-binding ED049 indicates that the community intends to put the project out to referendum and serves as a placeholder for future review by the state legislature. The form must be submitted by June 30<sup>th</sup> of a given year to bring the project before the legislature for potential funding the next spring. A current year ED049 project could go through the referendum process in November 2016 before the legislature acts on the ED049 in Spring 2017. The next opportunity to file it is by June 30, 2017.

**Next Steps**

Chair Dennis Slopak spoke regarding the need to fully review the options and garner community input. Several community forums have been held but more contributions would be considered.

Angelo Yeitz spoke to the process used in the Kelly Middle School construction project which included community input on various aspects. For this review of the entire school district, the Committee could benefit

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from more time to consider the economic development effects of the project while working closely with the City on all cost impacts and benefits.

Angelo made a motion to delay making a recommendation to the City Council at this time. The motion was seconded by Abby Dolliver. Discussion was opened.

Abby spoke to the Committee's intent to create a win-win school system restructure project for the City. While education is the main topic of the project, conversations with community groups could help ascertain the effects of school closures. She noted the Committee could meet for another six months, giving NPS and the City more time to look at the 'if and then' work, and the educational aspects of the various options. She noted that allowing a little more time for consideration is prudent.

Abby continued by reviewing the input the Committee received as they went through the process. The multiple forums provided a wealth of information. She summed up her comments by noting the realization that the City and NPS have to do something; all of the decisions are hard so it is best to take more time.

Mayor Hinchey told the Committee it is important to remember the reason for this Committee was to address the heartbreaking issue of cutting the school budget every budget cycle. For six years, the question has not been, "What are we doing for the kids?" Instead it has been, "Where are we going to cut?" The intent of the Committee was to create an opportunity to stop cutting.

Dennis spoke to the original process which was to create an environment of working together for synergy. The parents who attended the forums asked for many improvements, which will be considered as the Committee looks to create efficiencies. Hopefully by taking more time to review options, the Committee can develop enough synergy to make everybody happy.

Bruce noted that JCJ is at the end of their contract with the exception of the final report and referendum support. Abby asked if they can give the Committee the final report and then give referendum support at the appropriate time. Bruce agreed and noted a willingness to supply the Committee with more help over the next few months. The Committee would need to define the assistance it needs. He suggested having a City representative call the state directly to clarify the ED049 process.

Dennis summed up the comments. The Committee originally held the forums to garner everyone's input and had received many comments in various modes, which were all taken into consideration. The Committee would continue meeting. They would continue to gather everyone's input. All parties would make their desires public.

The Committee unanimous voted to delay making a recommendation to the City Council.

**Adjournment:** On a motion by Angelo Yeitz, seconded by Mayor Deb Hinchey, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 PM.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Melinda Wilson, Recording Secretary*