

MINUTES
JAMES CITY COUNTY POLICY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
Building A Large Conference Room
101 Mounts Bay Road, Williamsburg, VA 23185
February 28, 2019
1:00 AM

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Jack Haldeman called the meeting to order at approximately 4:00 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

Present:

Jack Haldeman, Chair
Julia Leverenz
Tim O'Connor

Staff:

Tammy Rosario, Principal Planner
Jose Ribeiro, Senior Planner
Tori Haynes, Planner
Terry Costello, Deputy Zoning Administrator
John Risinger, Community Development Assistant
Sue Mellen, Director of Financial and Management Services
Sharon Day, Assistant Director of Financial and Management Services
Jeffrey Wiggins, Budget and Accounting Analyst

C. MINUTES

There were no minutes.

D. OLD BUSINESS

1. **FY 2020-2024 Capital Improvements Program Review**

Mr. Marcellus Snipes, Senior Director for Operations, Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools (WJCC), presented the Committee with information about WJCC's Capital Improvements Program (CIP). He stated that a site has not been currently identified for the new elementary school. He stated that further discussions would be held with the County and the City of Williamsburg before a site is determined. He stated that Grimm and Parker Architecture, Inc. estimated the construction costs listed on the application. He stated that the new elementary school would be around 106,000 square feet. He stated that using the FY 2018 Virginia averages for construction cost, construction of the new elementary school would cost approximately \$22 million. He stated that the new elementary school would cost approximately \$28 million including soft costs.

Mr. Haldeman asked what is included in soft costs.

Mr. Jim Falzone, Supervisor of Facilities and Capital Projects, WJCC, said that soft costs include design and architecture costs.

Mr. Snipes stated that the estimated costs are within the range of construction costs of schools built in Virginia during FY 2018.

Mr. Tim O'Connor asked if having high estimated construction costs would result in contractors submitting high bids.

Mr. Snipes stated that, on the contrary, WJCC's experience has been that the competitive bidding process has resulted in construction bids under the estimated construction cost.

Ms. Tammy Rosario stated that there had been a question during the February 14, 2019, Policy Committee meeting about utilizing existing school designs to reduce costs.

Mr. Snipes stated that school designs change as teaching methods change. He stated that current teaching methods benefit from having flexible learning spaces. He stated that Grimm and Parker Architecture, Inc. might have estimated the construction costs with flexible learning spaces in mind. He stated that the next question he received was in regards to how the Future Think projections are created. He stated that the projections are based on a number of factors including birth rates to project the enrollment in kindergarten classes.

Ms. Julia Leverenz asked if the projections account for people moving to the County.

Mr. Snipes confirmed. He stated that another question he received was about moving the Bright Beginnings program from the elementary schools. He stated that WJCC had discussions about moving the Bright Beginnings program to its own facilities. He stated the WJCC School Board School Liaison Committee's guidelines state that when an existing school is at 85% enrollment capacity, needs are evaluated and potential solutions are considered. He stated that a plan of action is put in place when a school is at 90% enrollment capacity. He stated that many variables determine if WJCC will construct a new school or expand an existing school.

Mr. Haldeman stated that the new elementary school application only lists additional personnel costs during FY 2022. He asked if these costs would continue each year.

Mr. Snipes confirmed.

Ms. Leverenz asked if new buses would be required regardless of whether the Bright Beginnings program is moved to its own facilities.

Mr. Snipes stated that current capacity of school buses vary between schools. He stated that moving the Bright Beginnings program to its own facilities would require additional buses.

Mr. Haldeman asked how many additional students would be accommodated at the high schools with the proposed expansions.

Mr. Snipes stated that the expansions would add capacity for about 200 additional students at each high school.

Mr. Falzone stated that constructing a new high school would create greater demand for school facilities such as sports fields. He stated that expanding current high schools would raise the student capacity while adding less demand for facilities.

Mr. Haldeman asked how much land area is needed to build an elementary school.

Mr. Snipes stated that the Virginia Department of Education requires four acres plus one acre for every 100 students for an elementary school.

Ms. Rosario stated that the standard is 27 developable acres for a school with a capacity of 500 to 700 students.

Mr. Haldeman asked why the new elementary school application was moved to an earlier Fiscal Year compared to the last application.

Mr. Snipes stated that the previous timeframe was a placeholder.

Mr. O'Connor asked if the Warhill High School application includes the fields and auxiliary gym.

Mr. Snipes confirmed.

Mr. O'Connor asked how long the extra capacity from the high school expansions would suffice.

Mr. Snipes stated that the high schools should have enough capacity through 2028.

Mr. Haldeman stated that the enrollment projections have consistently been too high. He stated that in 2011, the projection for elementary school enrollment in 2021 was 5,396 students. He stated that the current projection for 2021 is 5,186 students. He stated that in 2013, the projection for 2023 was 5,522 students while the current projection is 5,200 students. He stated that in 2017, the projection for 2027 was 5,371 students while the current projection is 5,265 students. He stated that the total enrollment projections were similarly too high. He stated that the enrollment projections may be misleading when looking at constructing new schools.

Ms. Leverenz asked if the projections declining was due to declining population or birth rate.

Ms. Rosario stated that although population growth has been strong, the growth rate in the County has slowed down since 2008. She stated that birth rates have been declining nationally.

Mr. Haldeman stated that birth rates are at an all-time low nationally.

Ms. Leverenz asked if the County's demographics have shifted to having more growth in the older population compared to the younger population.

Mr. Jose Ribeiro stated that projections from the Comprehensive Plan show that people 65 or older will be the largest age group by 2040.

Ms. Rosario stated that Greg Grootendorst, Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, presented demographics information to the Board of Supervisors on February 26, 2019. She stated that the presentation showed that the County's average age is a decade greater than the rest of the Hampton Roads area.

Mr. Snipes stated that the WJCC CIP plan is updated based on the most current enrollment projections at the time. He stated that they have recently been using the "Low Projection" from the Future Think methodology instead of the "Most Likely Projection."

Ms. Rosario stated that the Comprehensive Plan shows that in 2010, people ages 19 and younger were 23% of the population. She stated that the 2040 projections show ages 19 and younger as 20% of the population. She stated that while the proportion has decreased, the total number of people ages 19 and younger is projected to increase due to continued population growth.

Mr. O'Connor asked how WJCC determines when a building no longer satisfactorily meets the students' needs and teaching standards. He stated that older schools might not have the

same quality of learning spaces or sufficient capacity for school functions.

Mr. Snipes stated that feasibility studies are conducted at each school to understand the condition and how to best address any issues. He stated that the decision is made based on a variety of information including the community's opinions.

Mr. O'Connor stated that it might make more sense to start planning to replace older schools instead of investing money into expansions or renovations.

Mr. Snipes stated those decisions need support from the community, the County, the City of Williamsburg, and the WJCC School Board.

Mr. Haldeman opened the meeting for public comment.

Mr. Jay Everson, 103 Branscome Boulevard, stated that new facilities for the Bright Beginnings program could potentially be built on land at existing elementary schools without increasing the number of school buses needed. He stated that the Future Think methodology uses building permit statistics as part of the calculation. He stated that the projections are higher due to including building permits from age-restricted communities.

Mr. Haldeman closed the public comment.

Mr. Snipes stated that the community might prefer having the Bright Beginnings program distributed across the County instead of at one site.

Mr. O'Connor stated that he has concerns with the expansion at Warhill High School in addition to Fire Station 6 adding additional traffic on Opportunity Way. He stated that WJCC should work with the Fire Department to address traffic issues on Opportunity Way.

Mr. Snipes stated that WJCC has looked into the possibility of adding a turn lane on Opportunity Way to improve the traffic flow into Warhill High School.

Mr. Haldeman asked if there were any further questions.

There were none.

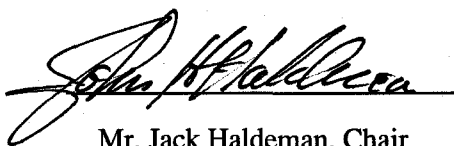
E. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

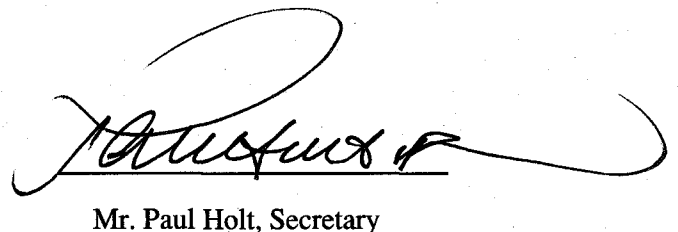
F. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Leverenz made a motion to adjourn. The motion passed 3-0.

Mr. Haldeman adjourned the meeting at approximately 5:00 p.m.



Mr. Jack Haldeman, Chair



Mr. Paul Holt, Secretary