

**Joint City/ School Finance Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, June 30, 2009**  
**PATHS**

**Attendees:** Chairman Nicholas Mavodones, Councilor Anton, Councilor Waxman, Ellen Sanborn, Anita Lachance, Chair Kathleen Snyder, Herb Hopkins, Doug Sherwood, Jeannie Wynot-Vickers, Doug Sherwood, Sarah Thompson, Robert O'Brien, Jaimey Caron, Jim Morse, Kevin Mallory, Peter Eglinton.

Chair Snyder called meeting to order.

**Item 1: Update on Sustainability Plan**

Kate introduced Kevin Mallory and Doug Sherwood. Jeannie said that two years ago they looked at efficiency and ways to save money and that is when they collaborated with South Portland for maintenance of their School bus fleet.

*Transportation:* Kevin provided handouts outlining the vehicle maintenance collaboration. They have signed an agreement with South Portland for next year. Maintenance has been an issue that has evolved over several years as their fleet is aging rapidly. In working closely with South Portland's transportation director they were able to cut 5% in maintenance costs. He said that they were receiving poor quality service with the outside vendor and that every year there was an increase in labor. Work was not being done correctly and they had to send busses back to be re-worked on. They spent \$287,923 on vehicle maintenance. There are not a lot of local vendors specializing in bus maintenance. South Portland is only 7 miles away and he felt this was a good fit as they have certified bus mechanics. The labor rate with South Portland was much lower. Final savings was \$12,020, and the fleet is in much better shape. He has already signed an agreement which will reduce facility cost by \$13,200.

*HVAC:* Doug provided a handout and tried to capture general information with more efficient equipment. They have had some savings with the installation of new equipment and have been working with Bob Leeman and Harvey Paul. There is now a new boiler treatment in place. The HVAC infrastructure is not in very good shape. Repairs are usually made during school vacations. The City did an inventory on all our mechanical equipment and a future preventive maintenance plan is in place. They are now using the "School Dude" system for work orders where anyone can place a work order which will be tracked for work progress, etc. Doug will meet with Bob Leeman and Harvey Paul quarterly to address tasks at hand. Anita said they have added three people to help work on the HVAC systems who are being paid for on the City side. She agreed with Doug that the infrastructure is not in good shape and there are challenges. She is excited about using the "School Dude" system and feels they are headed in a positive direction.

Chair Snyder asked Doug to have a MOU finalized between the School and City on the HVAC arrangement.

Herb Hopkins said they hired an accounting coordinator, Bobbi Godin. She has been meeting with Suzanne Knight to reconcile balance sheet accounts. Kathy Tyson from RKO has also met with her to go over things that we need to get on top of. He said that it is good to have another person on a day-to-day basis and that she is still learning. He said they have been audited on the federal government E-rate Program through Ernst & Young and that the exit interview went very well. They are busy closing up year end expenses through FY09. Jeannie said that Bobbi is also working on job descriptions with the business office.

Chair Snyder feels that continuing on the sustainability plan is important. She would like to have conversations on where we are on establishing MOUs describing expectations of work that is being done.

Jamie Caron pointed out that priorities were set on page 6 of the plan with bullets. Councilor Anton feels that the first step is to reconcile this report as elected bodies have changed. He remains committed and supportive of continuing on with the sustainability plan, but feels a lot of what is in the report can be handled at the staff level. Peter suggested walking through page 6 bullets.

*Bullet 1-Establish MOUs:* Sarah said that this continues to come up about payments for services such as athletic services, etc. Anita said during budget season she provided a chart on cost for services. Councilor Mavodones explained that community centers is on the list of topics being brought up at a future meeting as there is interest by different entities. Chair Snyder felt that now that we are out of budget season this is a great opportunity to discuss these. Jamey feels that MOUs are important also to see if there is any opportunity for efficiencies and cost savings.

Jeannie explained that with transportation they were able to receive for every bus what is being paid labor and parts to track spending. With that information they were able to examine the level of detail to be able to analysis. Jeannie said that last year the City was combining departments and that she feels now that this has been completed we are at the point to have these conversations. She feels we are not as far along with HVAC as we are with transportation.

Chairman Mavodones said that he is not so interested in details and feels a lot of this should be done at the staff level. He suggested that staff on both sides review the list and report back by the end of August, beginning of September with an update. Anita feels this makes sense especially with Jim coming on board. She will not break down hourly equipment by detail and cautioned that we will never get to an exact point on what is being snow plowed. She said they also do not track the ball field staff as they move from one field to another. Jim felt that some of these items are for the School department solely and should be eliminated from the report. Anita and Jim have agreed to put together a report by mid September and report back to both committees.

*Bullet 2 – Fund Balance Policy:* Chair Snyder said that the School Finance Committee will be meeting with the superintendent to put a fund balance policy in place. Ellen asked Kate to explain. She said the committee had discussed having a workshop on whether it would be helpful to have a fund balance policy in place for the School. They feel this is important. Ellen said she applauds their effort and feels that it's great they are thinking ahead; however there is already a fund balance policy in place that looks at all City and School expenses. Peter said that it is important for the School to participate toward fund balance. They are planning a workshop the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday in August to discuss this and Ellen said she needs to participate.

*Bullet 3 – Facilities Task Force:* Jaimey reported that the committee has completed a report and when they reconvene after summer break they will go forward. He said they have three issues; Nathan Clifford, West School, and a permanent home for Adult Education.

*Bullet 4 – Evaluate co-locating School & City Staff:* Jeannie and Anita have evaluated this but it is not feasible to make this move. It would split School staff in three different places. Anita explained that there is a square footage analysis.

*Bullet 5 - Building Maintenance:* Anita explained that they have started down this road a couple of times and that this is not an easy transition. From her prospective they have missed this issue due to employee contract signing. Councilor Mavodones said they are aware that this has to be taken up in collective bargaining. Anita believes that School maintenance employees have just signed a two year contract. Peter said they are willing to look at this and that it is in their contract if subcontracting makes sense.

*Bullet 5 – Technology:* Jeannie said this was analyzed about four months ago. She explained that they have an ongoing committee looking at web design and that they are moving ahead. Kate said that the School's website needs to be updated and she feels that the City has a good website. Jeannie said that in taking this on it was determined that they would need to hire a web master where this is currently being done by volunteers.

Ellen feels that the City's website is not up to par. She said that although there is set design there is no management of the website. The City has one person who posts things to the site. She said they need to commit to have a couple of people specifically for this undertaking, but need resources to do this.

## **Item 2: Technology Bond**

Ellen said this started a couple of years ago when it was there was an evident hole in textbooks and technology. This was Duane's idea and \$1.5 million came out of the discussion. The option is to finance this over years out of the CIP. She said that this year we are not financing equipment or doing short term financing. Subsequently the \$500,000 is there because we are not doing any short term financing. Discussion was held on the possibility of stimulus money being used for this. Jeannie said that Title 1

has specifications on how these dollars are spent and a small portion can be used for technology. They have maxed out as much stimulus funding as they can to be used for this program and have not budgeted for this.

Councilor Mavodones asked Ellen about bonding for technology and books. She explained this would come under the \$10 million cap for the term of life. Councilor Anton feels that technology is important. Discussion was held on not having financing for this program. Jeannie said they have been trying to build themselves back up financially and were planning on this but then funding wasn't there.

**Item 3: City School liability forecast**

Chair Snyder asked Herb about the warehouse inventory. Jeannie explained that they knew there was going to be a liability due to the warehouse closing. She said they also looked at this two years ago because it didn't make sense to maintain a warehouse as there was no longer a need to store these items. Now most vendors can supply these items with next day delivery. She said they sold off as many items as they could and some of the items they had were outdated. The liability is \$250,000.

Ellen said that she also brought an agenda and that Item 2 was for a discussion on joint efforts in the energy performance audit implementation. Jaimey said they are having a workshop on the 8<sup>th</sup> and that they will be bringing this up. He had anticipated having a discussion on their side on how to coordinate with the City. Chairman Mavodones explained that at the last Finance Committee meeting there was discussion on where we are going next on this. Councilor Anton feels that this primarily lies with the Energy & Sustainability committee and that the Finance Committee has been involved because of the financial aspect. Anita said that staff will take a look at this and make presentations to both committees. Ellen said that after looking at the report on 40 facilities this will involve a lot of money and that funding choices should be done jointly with the City and School. Councilor Waxman suggested having a joint meeting/workshop once the report is completed.