



City/School Liaison Committee Regular Meeting Minutes



Regular Meeting
June 17, 2021

Chair Burt called the meeting to order on this date in virtual teleconference at 8:31 A.M.

Present: City of Palo Alto Representatives
Pat Burt, Vice Mayor
Greg Tanaka, Council Member
Chantal Gaines, Deputy City Manager, Staff Liaison

Palo Alto Unified School District Representatives
Shounak Dharap, Board President
Jennifer DiBrienza, Board Member
Don Austin, Superintendent, Palo Alto Unified School District

Absent:

Oral Communications

None.

Minutes Approval

2. Approval of Minutes From the May 20, 2021 Meeting.

MOTION: Board President Dharap moved, seconded by Board Member DiBrienza to approve the minutes from the May 20, 2021 meeting.

MOTION PASSED: 4-0

3. Updates
- Superintendent's Comments and City Manager's Comments
 - Review of Recent City Council Meetings and PAUSD Board Meetings
 - Update on Cubberley Ad Hoc Group.

Don Austin, Superintendent of the Palo Alto Unified School District reported that Palo Alto Unified School District (School District) held graduation

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ceremonies and school is out for the summer. He noted that roughly 3,000 students are attending summer school. The School District is now focusing on school opening in the fall of 2021 and one of the five goals set by the School District is to focus on service to others. He predicted that the School District will collaborate with Palo Alto (City) regarding future events focused on that goal.

Chair Burt requested more information regarding the summer school program.

Mr. Austin explained that approximately 1,600 high school students are attending remediation credit recovery with the summer school program. Approximately 400 middle school students are attending summer school and 600 elementary students. Mental health services are also available to high school students. The summer school project cost roughly \$2 million and the attendance has tripled since previous years.

Council Member Tanaka inquired what was the key driver for the larger attendance for the summer school program.

Mr. Austin explained that the School District invited students to come back to school to help fill the gaps missed during the pandemic. He shared that the School District has created a new division that focuses on students who are struggling with mental health and/or academics.

Ed Shikada, City Manager announced that the City's summer camps have begun. The Palo Alto Utilities Department will be sending out notices to utility customers who may be affected by rolling blackouts. The final piece of the new bike bridge over Highway 101 has been installed, but the bridge will not be open for another couple of months. The Palo Alto Summit for Women and Girls was held and well attended.

Board President Dharap confirmed that the School Board is focused on construction and the budget. The School Board feels comfortable with the budget and hopes to make some changes that will help the students transition back to face-to-face teachings.

Chair Burt shared that through a combination of a variety of funding sources, the City was able to not make any cuts for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Budget. The City Council (Council) was unable to restore any cuts that were made in the FY 2021 Adopted Budget. Once the budget is finalized, the City will be focused on hiring positions that have been restored. Many of

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the City-funded programs, including the Art Center and Children's Theater, will be open fewer hours than previous years. The City was not able to restore the City Shuttle for FY 2022. The City did receive funding from Santa Clara County and the City of Los Altos Fire District for full coverage of Staffing at the Foothills Park fire station. He noted that the City still faced a structural deficit even before restoring programs. The Finance Committee has moved forward with a Business Tax which will be on the November 2022 ballot. Any revenue from the Business Tax will be split between Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) and restoration of services. He happily reported that the City did restore funding to the Youth Connectiveness Initiative (YCI).

Council Member Tanaka asked if the School District had any information regarding the 2021 revisions for the math framework as proposed by the State of California.

Board Member DiBrienza confirmed that the State of California is exploring revising the math framework, but the School District did not have any more information.

4. Student Emotional and Mental Health Support Services.

Don Austin, Superintendent of the Palo Alto Unified School District introduced Yolanda Conaway who presented the item to the Committee.

Yolanda Conaway, Assistant Superintendent of the Palo Alto Unified School District shared that the School District is focused on the mental health needs of students and staff. The restructuring of the School District included a district-level mental health specialist. The focus of that role was to identify areas and gaps that the School District needs to fill in terms of meeting the needs of students, staff, and parent education. The objective of the restructure was to strengthen the existing wellness centers and explore how to embed the mental health structure into the organizational structure. Also, the School District will be exploring avenues to promote physical health for Staff members.

Mr. Austin restated that the School District will be surveying students and faculty regularly to keep a pulse on where everyone is in terms of mental health.

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Ms. Conaway mentioned that a study released by Education Week Magazine showed that teachers had the highest levels of stress and anxiety during and after the pandemic.

Board Member DiBrienza appreciated the attention and investment the School District is making towards mental health.

Chair Burt agreed that many challenges are facing the School District as students and staff come back to face-to-face teachings.

5. City and Schools Collaborations Follow Up Discussion.

Don Austin, Superintendent of the Palo Alto Unified School District requested that Yolanda Conaway explain Care Solace.

Yolanda Conaway, Assistant Superintendent of the Palo Alto Unified School District explained that Care Solace is an online resource that is a live, multilingual Care Concierge who can assist individuals in finding local mental health-related programs and counseling services. An individual is linked with a family, walks the family through the entire process, and provides step-by-step follow-ups. In terms of the wellness centers, the School District will be focusing on efficiencies and efficacies as students go through the process. The School District will continue to use Telehealth Services and that program is available to students at any time. She reported that the School District will be strengthening the partnership with Asian American Community Involvement (ACCI) and other contracted services. In terms of recreation, she shared that the School District has a partnership with InPlay. The School District will be focusing on expanding that partnership to include the entire City. She mentioned that the School District has partnered with Right At School in order to allow high-quality childcare for Staff. The School District will be updating and monitoring the school site emergency plans.

Chair Burt mentioned that the teen mental health center, Allcove, will be opening in the next week. He noted that teacher housing is also a collaborative effort between the City, School District, and Santa Clara County. He disclosed that there is an agreement with Stanford University that Stanford University must provide municipal-type services. Santa Clara County will be analyzing Stanford University's municipal services and what that means. He believed that agreement and analysis will provide a greater engagement from Stanford University. The City also has collaborations with the City of East Palo Alto and he predicted some of those efforts may be overlapping with the School District and City's partnership. He suggested an

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Ad Hoc Committee be formed to work on how to provide more structure to the programs the two agencies collaborate on.

Board Member DiBrienza supported having an Ad Hoc Committee. She agreed that the Ad Hoc Committee should explore all agencies that overlap each other, but she emphasized that the majority of students live in Palo Alto, not the City of East Palo Alto.

Chair Burt said the Committee could benefit from hearing about where students live and the School Districts' insights. He specified that the City does not link its similar programs to the School District's programs and that may be helpful for families who are looking for resources. He acknowledged that the School District has done a phenomenal job of addressing the air quality inside the school buildings. He predicted that change will greatly increase the health of students during mega-fires and bad air quality days.

Board President Dharap supported the idea of flushing out joint areas of interest.

Chair Burt announced that an Ad Hoc Committee will be formed offline.

Future Meetings and Agendas

Chair Burt inquired if the Committee Members were interested in taking a summer break in July of 2021.

Board President Dharap agreed.

Chair Burt announced that the Governor of California has extended the Brown Act requirements and the City is exploring a hybrid model for in-person meetings.

Chantal Cotton Gaines, Deputy City Manager noted that the extension is through September of 2021.

Board Member DiBrienza asked how a hybrid model works.

Chair Burt explained that the public can come to the meetings in person or attend virtually.

Ms. Gaines articulated that the next meeting will be held on August 19, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:41 A.M.