

CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY COUNCIL
Joint Work Session with Charlottesville City School Board
May 26, 2021
SCHOOL RECONFIGURATION
Virtual/electronic meeting via Zoom

4:30 PM WORK SESSION

The Charlottesville City Council met on Wednesday, May 26, 2021, at 4:30 p.m. for a joint budget work session with the Charlottesville City School Board to hear a presentation and discuss school reconfiguration and budget. The meeting was held electronically pursuant to a local ordinance amended and re-enacted on April 19, 2021, to ensure the continuity of government and prevent the spread of disease during the coronavirus pandemic.

Mayor Walker called the Charlottesville City Council to order at 4:31 p.m. Clerk of Council Kyna Thomas called roll and noted all members present: Mayor Nikuyah Walker, Vice Mayor Sena Magill, and Councilors Heather Hill, Michael Payne, and Lloyd Snook. Lisa Torres, Board Chair, called the City of Charlottesville School Board meeting to order and noted a quorum present. Clerk Julia Green conducted School Board roll call.

Mayor Walker turned the meeting over to Wyck Knox, representing the design company VMDO.

Mr. Knox reviewed existing school conditions versus more modern school space configurations, and timeline.

Kristen Hill with VMDO reviewed outreach and engagement efforts. There was a question about work group size parameters for the community design team and Ms. Hill advised that the core group would be 40 people with open public livestream meetings which could be larger. She advised that in the future, the group could be split into smaller groups as more specific conversations are held about each school.

Mr. Knox presented information about student capacity. The presentation noted that the last public conversation about reconfiguration was in the context of the 2016-17 Capacity Study, while today's focus was on equity and academics. Deciding how many students to build for now would have a significant impact on project cost, and how soon additional builds might be needed.

Councilor Snook asked about student population growth level for school-age children.

Maria Bninski answered that growth projections have not kept with the upward trend as

projected years ago. She shared a combination of reasons for the school-eligible population decline, including declining birth rates, growth in student housing, migration of families to the county, pandemic, housing development in the county out-pacing city development.

Mr. Knox presented reconfiguration options based on funding amounts, design expectations and capacity expectations.

Krisy Hammill, Senior Budget and Management Analyst, presented information on the City's Adopted Fiscal Year 2022 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Budget, sharing scenarios to illustrate balancing debt capacity and affordability.

Council and the School Board engaged in discussion. Some topics that were brought up were:

- Informing the general public about the impact of this project
- Health equity in spaces
- What other avenues there may be for funding besides City coffers
- Revenue streams
- Debt structure. Kevin Rotty, the City's financial advisor, advised of the guidelines from bond rating agencies.
- Reaching out to other localities for their reconfiguration experience
- Use of American Rescue Plan funds for maintenance items
- Other Capital Improvement Plan projects
- Impacts on the affordable housing strategy
- Phased tax increase approach versus one-time implementation
- Trade-offs as project costs increase

City Manager Chip Boyles provided input from Delegate Sally Hudson and Senator Creigh Deeds, who stated that they would be willing to sponsor a bill in the General Assembly within the coming year to ask for the legislation that would allow the City to increase sales tax. Senator Deeds added that his bigger initiative is for a comprehensive revenue change for local school districts and local government for school improvement, and that he would be supportive of co-signing legislation to support local efforts. The bill would become effective as of July 1, 2022.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Walker opened the meeting for public comment. No speakers came forward.

Other Questions and Discussion Points

1. What is the budget range we should study with the public? The group agreed that community engagement would range from options of \$50 Million to \$90 Million.
2. If the construction dollars are phased, what is the range/limit for phase one?

3. Can we save money from going to inflation by starting construction funding in FY24?
4. If we price work in a phase two, when is that construction funding available?
5. If you have to prioritize starting at one campus only, is it Buford?
6. Middle School: Should we build now for anything less than 1050? If so, how low? 975? 900?
There was consensus to build for more than 900.
7. Confirm that a proposed 10 cent real estate tax increase is for entire CIP, not just reconfiguration.
8. What's the best metric to discuss local funding of schools, inclusive of CIP?

Mayor Walker adjourned the meeting of City Council at 7:18 p.m., immediately followed by adjournment of the School Board meeting.

BY Order of City Council

BY Kyna Thomas, Clerk of Council