

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

January 16, 2007  
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room  
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Degginger, Deputy Mayor Chelminiak, and Councilmembers Balducci, Davidson, Lee, Marshall, and Noble

ABSENT: None.

1. Executive Session

Deputy Mayor Chelminiak called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and announced recess to Executive Session for approximately one hour to discuss two items of potential litigation and one item of property acquisition.

At 7:00 p.m., Deputy Mayor Chelminiak announced that the Executive Session would be extended for an additional 20 minutes.

The Study Session resumed at 7:29 p.m. with Mayor Degginger presiding.

2. Study Session

(a) Wrap-Around Services Pilot Project Update

Parks and Community Services Director Patrick Foran reported that the three-year Wrap-Around Services Pilot Project is at the year and a half mark. Mr. Foran introduced the project Panel Members: Judy Buckmaster (Principal of Lake Hills Elementary School), Bellevue School District; Doug Whalen, United Way of King County; Erin Boone ( Project Coordinator), City of Bellevue; Helena Stephens, Parks and Community Services (City); and Patricia Knight, Planning and Community Development (City).

Mr. Whalen explained that the United Way is interested in the project because it aligns with two primary priorities: 1) Helping to improve the social, emotional, and cognitive skills of preschoolers, and 2) Helping to advance the school readiness of young students. Research indicates that children with higher literacy and social skills are much more likely to succeed in

school. Mr. Whalen said the United Way agency would like the project to be sustained at Lake Hills Elementary School and expanded to other schools in the district. Three steps toward sustainability are: 1) Brainstorming and reaching consensus about one or two most probable alternatives, 2) Conducting a feasibility assessment of these options and selecting the preferred alternative, and 3) Confirming an action plan by mid-July 2007 and working to secure bridge funding and/or a long-term solution by 2008. Bridge funding will likely be obtained from one or a number of private foundations.

Ms. Boone provided a status report of the project to date. The goal is to deliver high-quality, locally relevant services through a strategic plan and RFP (Request for Proposal) process to solicit the best possible services the project can provide. RFPs have been issued for both evaluation and recreation services.

Ms. Boone presented the extensive list of agencies collaborating in the project. Participants in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program have been matched with 30 children. The Wrap-Around Services project team has worked with Big Brothers/Big Sisters to encourage them to realign their programs to meet local needs. They have traditionally provided services during the school day but this has been expanded to after-school programs. Mentors from local businesses have also been recruited as part of the program.

The Jubilee REACH Center is a nonprofit program established by First Presbyterian Church of Bellevue and located in a neighborhood church near the school, essentially functioning as a community center. Ten Lake Hills dentists volunteered to provide a free dental screening clinic and hygiene education stations, which served 90 children. Consejo Counseling Services and Asian Counseling Referral Services are mental health service providers who have worked well with the diverse population at Lake Hills Elementary School. The downtown Barnes and Noble store adopted Lake Hills Elementary as its partner school this year through a grant application process and have made significant contributions to the school library through a book drive, financial donations, and encouraging community involvement.

Ms. Buckmaster described the School Ready Team at Lake Hills Elementary, which meets once a month. The purpose is to conduct outreach to families with preschool age children who otherwise would not access preschool services. More than 50 percent of incoming students have never been in any type of academic or group setting. While preschool cannot be provided for all children, the program provides education for parents and opportunities for the children and parents to become familiar with the school.

Potential children for the program are identified and recruited through postings with the library, pediatricians, Crossroads Mall, and home visits to all students in the school. Families are invited to monthly family nights, which have been in place for some time at the school but have been expanded to include a component for three- and four-year-olds and their parents. Forty preschool families attended last February.

The school's first-time kindergarten orientation was held and 40 out of 57 registered families attended. Lake Hills Elementary hosted the District summer school program last year, with the

addition of a pre-K program for non-English speaking students. A similar program for children with no preschool experience will be held this summer. A math night was held for all families last year, which was again attended by approximately 40 preschool families.

Ms. Buckmaster said students significantly improved reading test scores last year. Teachers are now staying with students after school to continue to help them with their studies, which is possible through a \$20,000 grant from the Bellevue Schools Foundation. A more intense emphasis on math is in place due to a Bellevue Chamber of Commerce grant of \$4,000. A large number of students are participating in these extended learning opportunities.

In terms of parent involvement, Ms. Boone said a family involvement brochure was created as part of the Title I requirements. Twelve multilingual parent ambassadors were recruited to serve as liaisons to their ethnic communities. The school has a record number of parents (25 to 60) attending PTSA meetings. Family volunteerism has increased at the school, especially among non-English speakers.

Ms. Knight described elements of neighborhood vitality including people who are connected to each other and have pride in the neighborhood, as well as support for and a commitment to a common goal. Lake Hills Elementary School is becoming a community gathering place, and volunteerism has increased even among citizens who do not have children in the school. The Lake Hills Community Association held its first blueberry festival at the school last year. Approximately 700 residents participated in an open house at the school, which included those without children at the school. Multi-cultural involvement has significantly increased at the school as well.

Mr. Foran reviewed the 2007-2008 work plan, which will involve working with a consultant who will review all 11 project outcomes, academic achievement, service delivery, and community impacts. A major part of the work plan is to develop a sustainability plan for transitioning this project into a program. The project team is testing whether two local governments and the nonprofit network have compatible or distinct roles. Results indicate more of a shared mission, and project staff are attempting to determine whether this model of collaboration could be replicated in other parts of the community.

Councilmember Lee expressed support for the project and its success in stimulating community-wide involvement.

Responding to Councilmember Noble, Mr. Foran said a report on the project's performance and outcomes will be available at the end of this school year. The sustainability of the project depends on continued funding and the ability to expand the model to other schools and areas within the community.

Councilmember Balducci said she has enjoyed being a part of the Leadership Team on this project and outreach effort. She noted the project implements many of the City Council's values including meeting human needs, reaching out to diverse communities, encouraging public

participation, and creating community vitality. She thanked Ms. Buckmaster, Ms. Boone, and everyone involved in coordinating the project.

Councilmember Marshall suggested creating a template or model to assist other school districts in establishing the same type of program. She feels the project is a strong candidate for a national award and that it should be shared with the state Department of Education. Mr. Foran said they have been keeping the state delegation apprised about the project, because a couple of them serve on state education committees. Ms. Marshall suggested sharing the project with federal legislators as well and inviting them for a tour or to one of the family events.

Mayor Degginger commended the project's accomplishments and community involvement.

(b) Windstorm Debris Removal Update and Snowstorm Response

[Moved to Regular Session under Agenda Item 5, City Manager's Report.]

At 8:02 p.m., Mayor Degginger declared recess to the Regular Session.

Myrna L. Basich  
City Clerk

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