



MINUTES
Committee of the Whole
Monday, October 14, 2024 @ 6:00 p.m.
Tony Benavides Lansing City Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Garza called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councilmember Peter Spadafore
Councilmember Adam Hussain
Councilmember Tamera Carter
Councilmember Trini Pehlivanoglu
Councilmember Jeffrey Brown
Councilmember Ryan Kost
Councilmember Jeremy Garza
Councilmember Brian T. Jackson

OTHERS PRESENT

Sherrie Boak, Council Staff
Lisa Hagen-Lawrence, OCA
Greg Venker, OCA
Charles Randall, Internal Auditor
Mark Lawrence, Mayors Office
Ben Shuldiner, Lansing School District
Chris Swope, City Clerk

Minutes

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER HUSSAIN TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 30, 2024, AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 8-0.

Public Comment

No public comment at this time.

Presentations

Lansing School District Updates on Construction, District Goals and Growth – Superintendent Ben Shuldiner

Mr. Shuldiner acknowledged Council for the invitation to present. Mr. Shuldiner began with building updates which included updates based on the bond and funding from the State of Michigan. The presentation moved into other activities in the district which included the pre-K program expansion through out the schools. The Newcomer Center, which was formally a church near Gardner, has been converted for students to be successful when they move onto the other high schools. As part of the safety grant and safety plan, they have installed new

fencing at all schools. Mr. Shuldiner provided cost comparisons on the work and the improvements.

Council Member Pehlivanoglu asked some of the project updates, including buses. She then asked about the Newcomer center, and asked how much time do they spend there before they transition. Mr. Shuldiner stated depends on language understanding and age, and there is some exit criteria. Each child is evaluate by what they need. Council Member Pehlivanoglu asked for the timeline on when all schools will get the new playground equipment, and Mr. Shuldiner stated their hope is that all schools will have some upgrade by the end of this phase.

Council Member Kost acknowledged all the work that is being done, referring to Sexton specifically where renovation costs could have changed based on a study in 2014. Mr. Shuldiner stated their plan is to bring up to standards over the next couple years. Council Member Kost asked if any there is any maintenance being put into the CADL building in downtown. Mr. Shuldiner stated it is a 50 year lease, and they use for 10 months of the year, and the school has to keep it useful. CADL contract states they can give a 60 day notice, and if they so choose to go somewhere else, the LSD plans to utilize to the best. If it reverts back to the school they then can look into maintenance that they can do.

Council Member Hussain asked Mr. Shuldiner if the idea CADL might move out of downtown new and where did it come from. Mr. Shuldiner stated he cannot speak to how the library runs, and the LSD is just the landlord and have a lease that says they only have to give 60 days notice. It is a beautiful building, but why CADL wants to do why they want to do, he cannot speak to. Council Member Hussain stated it is critical to have a downtown library, and asked if there have been any meetings. Mr. Shuldiner stated they have not had any meetings, and if they choose to leave the lease, the school district will do their best. Council Member Hussian with implementation with AC in buildings, is there discussion of moving the school district to a balanced calendar. Mr. Shuldiner stated they have not gone down that road and never been a push to go to balanced calendar, and they have students in other area of education that do not have a balanced calendar and they are not contemplating that.

Council Member Garza asked when lease with CADL expires, and was told 2048. Council Member Garza asked if they would extend, and Mr. Shuldiner stated they cannot negotiate in public. Council Member Garza stated that there is a rumor there is no library in the buildings, and Mr. Shuldiner stated that is in correct, and each school has libraries in different forms depending on the schools. Council Member Garza asked about the permitting process through the State, and asked if the City is capturing any of those permit fees, and if not is there a way to get an agreement to make sure that happens. Mr. Shuldiner and Mr. Lawrence could not provide that information now, but could look into it.

Mr. Shuldiner moved the presentation to M-Step scores in the district and that they are not happy with them and are working on bringing the students to efficiency. The presentation went into enrollment, which has increased from 2021-2022 to 2022-2023 year by 136 students. The presentation concluded with the graduation rates.

Council Member Kost stepped away from the meeting at 6:56 p.m.

Mr. Shuldiner shared the numbers unaudited at an 86.9% graduation rate, which is the first time over 80, lowest drop out rate. In just 3 years raised the graduation rate over 25%. The official numbers will be available in February 2025.

Council Member Kost returned to the meeting at 6:57 p.m.

Council Member Hussain spoke on the teacher vacancies. Mr. Shuldiner stated when he started there were vacancies in the 100's but with negotiations they have the highest starting pay. Today, they have 0 vacancies in high schools, and a total of 21 classroom vacancies in the rest of the schools.

Council Member Jackson noted small improvements over the last 3 years and asked how that compared to 2020 pandemic.

Council Member Hussain stepped away at 7:02 p.m.

Mr. Shuldiner stated that where it stands, graduation is higher than pre-covid. The testing is complicated because of different testing so they are below pre-pandemic for that. The struggle is attendance, and they are at 84%, which is lower than pandemic, however the high school attendance is the highest they have ever been. The elementary attendance is lower than COVID, but they are still having issues with buses.

Council Member Hussain returned to the meeting at 7:04 p.m.

Council Member Jackson stepped away at 7:04 p.m.

Council Member Pehlivanoglu asked if the attendance issue is with preschool, and Mr. Shuldiner stated that does not count in the number. What they found is that families are fond with the elementary schools, but they get concerned with the high schools. Now with schools at K-8 they are not seeing the reluctance.

Lansing City Clerk – Elections

Mr. Swope stated they will remain in REO Elementary 16 through this election. He then briefly spoke on the current election that is occurring, and on the ways for people to vote.

Council Member Jackson returned to the meeting at 7:09 p.m.

Council Member Brown stepped away from the meeting at 7:09 p.m.

Mr. Swope provided details on new voting options, where if you get the absentee ballot at home, you can return at the early voting locations and put in the tabulator. They have issued over 23,000 absentee ballots, of those they have gotten 40% back (9382).

Council Member Brown returned to the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

Mr. Swope spoke on the ballot drop boxes, and reminded residents they have to return their ballot to the Lansing drop boxes, not other communities. He then spoke on the ballot instructions.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:16 pm

Respectfully Submitted by,

Sherrie Boak Recording Secretary,

Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee October 28, 2024