



City/School Liaison Committee Special Meeting Final Minutes



Special Meeting
May 21, 2020

Chairperson Collins called the meeting to order at 8:32 A.M. virtually via Zoom.

Present: City of Palo Alto Representatives
Greg Tanaka, Council Member
Lydia Kou, Council Member
Monique Le Conge Ziesenhenné, Assistant City Manager, Staff Liaison

Palo Alto Unified School District Representatives
Jennifer DiBrienza, Board Member
Todd Collins, Board President (Chair)
Don Austin, Superintendent, Palo Alto Unified School District

Oral Communications

Deborah Simon asked everyone to work toward a solution that would allow Cubberley Community Center tenants to remain at Cubberley.

Jeff Greenfield encouraged the City and Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) to coordinate guidelines for indoor and outdoor recreation facilities as they reopen to the public and inquired regarding the guidelines PAUSD would be utilizing for recreation.

Minutes Approval

2. Approval of the April 16, 2020 Meeting Minutes.

MOTION: Council Member Kou moved, seconded by Council Member Tanaka to approve the minutes as presented.

MOTION PASSED: 4-0

3. Superintendent's Comments and City Manager's Comments.

Don Austin, Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) Superintendent, reported Ed Shikada, City Manager, and he were communicating frequently over the past weeks. Kristen O'Kane, Director of Community Services

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Department were also interacting with PAUSD Staff regarding a variety of issues. PAUSD was preparing reopening plans and coping with conflicting information. Guidelines, orders, and collective bargaining were issues that needed to be resolved. PAUSD was holding live webinars on Mondays and collecting public input regarding reopening schools. A targeted survey was to be released later in the day. PAUSD Staff were going to meet with Stanford University to share plans and issues for reopening. PAUSD lobbied and was successful in lifting the Public Health Department's ban on graduation car parades. Mr. Shikada recommended he confer with Police Chief Jonsen regarding parade routes. Private schools were invited to participate in the parades. Issues around sports and recreation activities were even more confusing than school issues.

Monique Le Conge Ziesenhenné, Assistant City Manager advised that she would ensure the appropriate City Staff were aware of the car parades. The Council discussed the Budget over three days the prior week. A tentative Budget was to be released for discussion on Tuesday, May 26, 2020.

4. Review of Recent City Council and PAUSD Board Meetings.
 - a. CITY: Recent Council Agendas Recap
 - b. PAUSD: Recent Board Agendas Recap

Council Member Tanaka inquired about the potential impacts of the 25 percent increase in fees for middle school sports. Perhaps Palo Alto Unified School District's (PAUSD) survey was able to include a question about the topic. He thought this increase could be a hardship for some members of the community.

Council Member Kou advised that the City Manager, Council Member Kniss and Council Member Cormack were leading a business roundtable. Local businesses were coordinating additional meetings about businesses reopening. The Council implemented a Small Business Grant Program, adopted an Ordinance requiring community members to wear face coverings except when exercising and approved a Resolution in support of COVID-19 testing and contact tracing. The Council directed City Staff to prepare an Ordinance mirroring the County of Santa Clara's (County) Ordinance banning the sale of flavored tobacco products.

Council Member Tanaka indicated City Staff proposed cuts to teen programs, the reduction of one School Resource Officer (SRO) position and requested Board Members' input.

Board Member DiBrienza noted the County preferred to utilize recommendations rather than mandates and education rather than enforcement for reopening guidelines. The PAUSD Board of Education

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(Board) was focused on planning for the upcoming school year. PAUSD Staff was meeting with classroom teachers and stakeholders to obtain input for plans.

Chair Collins added that the Board was also facing Budget cuts. The \$3 million deficit for the current Fiscal Year (FY) was to be funded from reserves. PAUSD Staff anticipated a deficit of several million dollars in the upcoming Fiscal Year. The Board was reviewing priorities, expenses and recommendations for reductions. Planning safe school operations was a worldwide problem.

Board Member DiBrienza related that the Board was attempting to discuss and act on regular business items in addition to COVID-19 related items.

Chair Collins indicated construction projects would continue.

Don Austin, Palo Alto Unified School District Superintendent advised that construction of the science building at Palo Alto High School was proceeding nicely. Field renovation projects appeared to be close to completion. Construction at Addison Elementary School and installation of HVAC at Gunn High School were underway.

Council Member Kou clarified that the Council had not enacted a ban on the sale of vaping products.

5. COVID-19 Coordination Update.

Chair Collins requested the status of the Palo Alto Shuttle in light of Budget cuts. Many students utilized the shuttle to reach school.

Council Member Tanaka understood funding for the shuttle program would be reduced but did not know how it would affect student riders.

Chair Collins asked if the proposal was to eliminate the shuttle program.

Council Member Tanaka replied yes.

Chair Collins urged the Council to consider continuing service on the routes used by students.

Council Member Tanaka believed the City contracted with a vendor to provide shuttles and manage service. Perhaps the City was able to provide shuttle service during school commute times only.

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Council Member Kou noted seniors as well as students relied upon the shuttle for transportation. Maybe City Staff and PAUSD Staff were able to explore sharing the cost of shuttle service for students.

Chair Collins stated elimination of shuttle service would impact traffic and safety.

Board Member DiBrienza remarked that as a member of the community she planned on providing comments to the Council regarding Budget reductions. PAUSD was facing reductions as well and were not able to fund programs that the City cut.

Council Member Tanaka agreed that funding programs and Budget reductions were shared problems. Upper management of City Staff agreed to salary reductions, and hopefully bargaining units were going to agree to salary reductions as well. If that occurred, budget cuts were anticipated to be less, and layoffs could be avoided.

Chair Collins requested the status of crossing guards.

Monique Le Conge Ziesenhenné, Assistant City Manager indicated City Staff had proposed a budget reduction.

Council Member Tanaka did not recall crossing guards being on the most recent list of budget cuts.

Chair Collins understood the City and PAUSD shared equally in the cost of School Resource Officers (SRO) and requested the status of SRO positions.

Council Member Tanaka related that one SRO position was on the list of reductions. He supported salary cuts as a way to reduce the Budget deficit. Another way to reduce the deficit was to delay capital projects. He had also proposed the City lease space in its buildings. The Council was discussing many options but had not acted on anything.

Chair Collins emphasized that these programs were needed to ensure schools functioned safely and effectively.

Council Member Tanaka wanted to reduce expenses without reducing services.

Pat Burt commented that the City abandoning programs with virtually no public awareness was a radical departure from its usual method of operation. Deferring capital projects was a feasible proposal for reducing

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the deficit. City Staff and Council proposals were to retain an all-time high in capital expenditures at the expense of reducing services.

Chair Collins reiterated that the programs provided fundamental services. The school community was possibly not aware of these proposals and may not take the news well.

Council Member Kou inquired about additional status updates that Chair Collins may be interested in.

Chair Collins expressed interest in teen and youth programs that were not school specific.

Kristen O'Kane, Director of Community Services reported the Council had returned some funding to the Community Services Department Budget, and it was to be used to fund teen programs. City Staff was also exploring ways to combine similar programs and develop joint programming for teens.

Council Member Kou concurred with Mr. Burt's comment regarding the City assuming responsibility for providing programs and services for students. She urged PAUSD to consider partnering with the City to provide services and programs for students.

Council Member Tanaka requested Chair Collins share a prioritized list of programs he was interested in. The City and PAUSD were going to optimize their Budgets as best they could.

6. Updates on Ongoing Matters.
 - a. Cubberley Update
 - b. Grade Separation (Rail Crossings) Update

Don Austin, Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) Superintendent reported the City Manager and he had discussed provisions for terminating the Cubberley lease. Hopefully, the PAUSD Board of Education (Board) were going to have a Draft Termination Agreement for discussion and approval at the Tuesday meeting, May 26, 2020. Termination of the lease resulted in the loss of \$3 million in revenue for PAUSD, but PAUSD was able to obtain facilities to accommodate physical distancing. One provision of the termination agreement was that the City would terminate all leases for buildings located on PAUSD property. The tentative effective date was July 1, 2020. The City requested, and PAUSD agreed to short-term leases for portions of PAUSD property. Working with Mr. Shikada and Ms. O'Kane was a positive experience.

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Kristen O'Kane, Director of Community Services advised that City Staff would issue notice to tenants soon. The City was attempting to retain some tenants onsite and to relocate other tenants to Cubberley facilities located on City property.

Pat Burt remarked that in the absence of public knowledge and a transparent plan, the City's relationship with community-serving entities was being transformed. The community was not aware of the changes. A major portion of Cubberley Community Center was no longer going to be a community center.

Council Member Kou inquired about the eight large tenants leasing facilities on PAUSD property at Cubberley.

Ms. O'Kane clarified that ten tenants were leasing facilities on PAUSD property. The Children's Preschool Center was leasing a facility located on both PAUSD and City property. The City was going to lease the portion of the facility from PAUSD so that the business could remain. City Staff was proposing Heart Fit for Life remain in its facility because it had access to the gym. The City planned on continuing to lease gyms, the pavilion, the theatre and athletic fields.

Council Member Kou inquired whether Friends of Palo Alto Library leased facilities on City or PAUSD property.

Ms. O'Kane indicated Friends of Palo Alto Library leased facilities on both City and PAUSD property. Library Staff was working with the group to find an alternative facility.

Council Member Kou asked if any non-lease tenants were located on PAUSD property.

Ms. O'Kane answered yes. City Staff were going to attempt to find alternate space for the tenants.

Council Member Kou appreciated City Staff's efforts to accommodate the tenants.

Nigel Jones advised that Friends of Palo Alto Library had four facilities, two on City property and two on PAUSD property. He inquired about the meaning of displacement and the terms of leases with PAUSD and with the City after the termination of the City's lease with PAUSD.

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Michelle Baldonado, Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra Board President, commented that she had not received any communications regarding relocating within Cubberley and advocated for retaining youth programming.

Monique Le Conge Ziesenhenne, Assistant City Manager indicated additional updates would be forthcoming.

Chair Collins believed the City would share information with tenants as they became available.

Council Member Kou indicated Cubberley Community Center leased facilities at affordable rates. Many nonprofit agencies had leased facilities at Cubberley.

Council Member Tanaka noted the Council would discuss Cubberley Community Center in detail at an upcoming meeting. He suggested PAUSD take over the leases for tenants located on PAUSD property.

Board Member DiBrienza did not believe PAUSD was in a position to become a property manager. PAUSD needed space to accommodate social distancing, and the City needed to reduce expenditures.

Ms. Ziesenhenne reported the Expanded Community Advisory Panel (XCAP) reviewed new alternatives for the Charleston and Meadow rail crossings. Information was found at connectingpaloalto.com.

Future Meetings and Agendas

Council Member Kou requested a list of City expenditures that supported Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD).

Monique Le Conge Ziesenhenne, Assistant City Manager reported there was no proposal to eliminate funding for crossing guards, and funding for a School Resource Officer (SRO) was under review.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 10:07 A.M.