Lee’s Summit R-7 School District Oct. 19, 2016

Citizens’ Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

LINK TO SLIDE SHOW PRESENTED: Select here.
LINK TO CAC CHARTER: Select here.

FUTURE MEETINGS/EVENTS:

● 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 25.
● To be determined - Spring legislative forum (possibly with Business Roundtable)

Members attending
CAC members attending included Chairperson Kent Kirby, Assistant Chairperson Elaine Bluml, Greg Arens, Dr. Dave Benson, Dr. Brent Blevins, Julie Doane, Jerry Evans, Trish Frevert, Mia Fulson, Jacque Gragg, Hilary Graves, Dr. Dale Greer, Terri Harmon, Stephen Hill, Tom Jackson, Charlie Johnson, Mike Johnson, Valerie Jones, Lora Ledbetter, Manne Magady, David McCaughey, Amy Moore, Judy Noland, Janice Phelan, Michael Shaw, Linda Thee and Ying Zurbuchen. The meeting opened at 6:32 p.m. and adjourned around 8 p.m. Guests included Bob White, Board of Education president, and Dr. Judy Hedrick, assistant superintendent of business services.

Introduction from Dr. Benson
Dr. Dave Benson, interim superintendent, introduced himself. Dr. Benson is in his 44th year as an educator who began his career in Joplin, Mo. He was superintendent of Blue Valley (Kansas) for 11 years, served as superintendent in Ladue and retired from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, a little over a year ago. He has been interim superintendent since Sept. 1 and will serve through June 2017. Dr. Benson said that he has been to almost all the schools and support facilities, adding that Lee’s Summit R-7 is a wonderful school district, filled with great staff members. He added that the school climate is very positive and praised student behavior and instructional processes.

Superintendent Search and Board of Education Election
Bob White discussed the superintendent search and the April 2017 Board of Education election. The Board of Education spent time and effort seeking a search firm, selecting BWP and Associates as the firm to assist with the superintendent search. Close to 750 individuals participated in the superintendent search survey and focus groups, providing feedback being used to develop a leadership profile. Feedback from the 17 focus groups, held Oct. 4 and 5, has been positive. Feedback from the community input was presented to the Board of Education at an Oct. 13 work session. The deadline to apply for the superintendent position is Nov. 11. On Dec. 6 and 7, the Board of Education will visit with several applicants. A second round of interviews with a reduced number of candidates will take place following the first round. Following screening and interviews, the Board of Education hopes to name the permanent superintendent during January 2017 with the new superintendent beginning his/her job next summer. Mr. White added that the Board of Education has been working incredibly hard and has put in many, many additional hours to conduct the national search.

The public will elect three members to the Board of Education in April 2017. Candidates may file Dec. 20 through Jan. 17. Mr. White said it is vitally important that community members who care about R-7 and who have a vision for the future sign up to run for the Board of Education.

Finance and Facility Update
Dr. Brent Blevins presented information on district finances and facilities. The financial information included fund balances, budget estimates through fiscal year 2021, class sizes, teacher salaries and enrollment trends. Facts included:

- R-7 receives around 60 percent of its revenue from local taxes, with around 30 percent from the state.
- The district needs 15 percent in its fund balance to avoid borrowing money at the end of the calendar year when local taxes begin to roll into the district. This fund balance is also available to cover potential withholdings of state revenue.
- Dr. Blevins also discussed budget projections which take in factors such as enrollment growth, additional staffing requirements, salary and benefits as well as revenue estimates.
- A total of 70 percent of the district’s budget is salary and benefits.
- A total of 65 percent of the salary expenditures go to teacher salaries.
- The vast majority of teachers have a master’s degree or above.
- Enrollment for this year is 17,927. By 2026, we expect to be over 20,000 students.
- Planning considerations such as a potential boundary study, technology infrastructure, the possibility of a 19th elementary school (the district owns land in the northeast part of district for this building), fourth middle school (land is available on Bailey Road) and fourth high school (no land currently owned by district for this facility). Mason Elementary is currently a “hot area” for enrollment growth. Significant growth is also taking place at Summit Lakes Middle School and Lee’s Summit West High School.
- If the district proceeds with future bond issues for new schools, we believe we have the bonding capacity and debt structure to continue to offer no-tax-increase bond issues. This includes the next elementary, middle and high school.

The facilities update included information about the 2015 no-tax-increase bond issue which is funding the new Summit Technology Academy / Missouri Innovation Campus as well as improvements at each R-7 school. Facts shared included:

- The new Summit Technology Academy / Missouri Innovation Campus construction is going well and is both on time and under budget. It is scheduled to be complete next summer and will open its doors to students in August 2017.
- The design for the new Summit Tech / MIC recently won a national design award from the Association of Learning Environments.
- The vast majority of the bond issue projects for individual schools are complete, including LSHS science room, performing arts center and music room renovations; LSHS flooring and school store; LSNHS entry renovation and school-wide flooring; LSWHS restroom/concession facility; Meadow Lane Elementary basement renovation; Lee’s Summit Elementary art room, nurse’s office and teacher work room; Hazel Grove Elementary kitchen renovation; and playground improvements (both play surface and equipment) at all elementary schools.
- The Mason Elementary gymnasium is under construction and will be complete later this school year.

**Membership**

Kent Kirby discussed the importance of membership and involvement. The Steering Committee will be reaching out to members who have been unable to attend recent meetings to make sure they truly want to remain involved. He also thanked the members for their engagement and involvement and for sharing what they learn with others in the community. The CAC has an application process and will be seeking new members in the near future. Elaine Bluml encouraged everyone to review the charter which also spells out expectations and roles for CAC members.
Thank you for being a part of the Citizens' Advisory Committee!!

Please visit the CAC website at: http://www.lsr7.org/district/community/citizens-advisory-committee/