

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Joint School Board/County Board Work Session
April 7, 2017

Item C-1-a

The Arlington School Board convened on Friday, April 7, 2017 at 9:08 AM at 2100 Clarendon Blvd., Arlington, VA.

Present were:

School Board

Nancy Van Doren, Chair
Barbara Kanninen, Vice Chair
Reid Goldstein, Member
James Lander, Member
Dr. Patrick K. Murphy, Superintendent
Melanie Elliott, Clerk

County Board

Libby Garvey, Chairman
Jay Fisette, Vice Chair
Katie Cristol, Member
Christian Dorsey, Member
John Vihstadt, Member
Mark Schwartz, County Manager
Hope Halleck, Clerk

Also present were:

John Chadwick, Assistant Superintendent, Facilities and Operations
Linda Erdos, Assistant Superintendent, School and Community Relations
Cintia Johnson, Assistant Superintendent, Administrative Services
Leslie Peterson, Assistant Superintendent, Finance and Management
Tara Natrass, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction

Call to Order and Introductory Remarks

Mr. Fisette called the meeting to order. Ms. Van Doren announced that Ms. Talento could not attend as she is traveling. Acknowledging collaboration between the Boards, the Chairs highlighted areas of joint interest and acknowledged responsibilities of each Board. Mr. Fisette then reviewed the budget process.

Arlington Public Schools Proposed FY 2018 Budget

Ms. Van Doren shared highlights about Arlington Public Schools (APS) and reviewed information that informs the School Board's budget process such as goals, pupil data and use of reserves. She then outlined the School Board's proposed budget, explaining that it focuses on enrollment growth, expansion of Arlington Tech at the Career Center, compensation, and savings and efficiencies. The proposed budget totals \$614.3 million and she confirmed that an additional \$11.2 million is needed above the amount proposed by the County Manager. If additional funding is not provided, APS has identified tiered reductions that would need to be made. In closing, Ms. Van Doren thanked the County for their support.

Arlington County Proposed FY 2018 Budget

Mr. Schwartz presented the County's proposed budget, outlining general fund facts and noting external pressures. He explained that the County's budget includes some internal reallocations to

meet needs, and he has recommended that the County Board consider increasing the tax rate by two cents. He then highlighted the recommended funding included in the budget for APS. Recognizing the impact of enrollment growth on County departments, he also outlined indirect contributions that the County makes to the schools. In closing, he reviewed the budget timeline.

Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth and Families (APCYF)

Barbara Gomez, APCYF Board member, presented the organization's feedback on the proposed budgets. She recognized the County's commitment to providing affordable child care, and confirmed that APCYF supports a Youth Services library position as well as funding for additional school social workers/psychologists. She congratulated the Boards and encouraged continued collaboration.

Teen Network Board (TNB)

Noah Robertson and Simer Choudhary, Co-chairs, presented an update of the TNB's work. Four subcommittees were formed to look at areas of interest identified through surveys. They confirmed that the TNB supports funding for librarians, an additional school nurse and school social workers/psychologists, noting the importance of ensuring staff members are available to provide all students with social/emotional support. In closing, they highlighted their future plans and suggested the County Board add a non-voting seat for a student representative. Board members thanked the students for their efforts.

Discussion

The group briefly discussed how funding in the proposed school budget is allocated to the areas of maintaining current services, enrollment growth, and enhancements/additions. Mr. Vihstadt asked about APS efforts to reduce capital expenditures and how these efforts affect the proposed operating budget. Dr. Murphy provided information on APS practices such as using construction management at-risk and preparing three cost options for the Board to consider for projects. APS also recently completed an internal audit of the Design and Construction Department and built a net zero elementary school. Dr. Kanninen described efforts to better use current space by making internal modifications to schools. County Board members appreciated these efforts and looked forward to receiving documentation of savings achieved with these efforts. Mr. Fisette asked how efficiencies are being incorporated into new projects, and he appreciated the focus on energy savings and sustainability for new buildings. The group briefly discussed cost per square foot and how Arlington compares to other jurisdictions, and recognized the challenges for planning both school and County facilities that are economical but also of high quality.

County Board members were interested in how community input was considered as the School Board developed its proposed budget. Dr. Murphy noted that this input is reflected in three key areas of the budget: quality of instruction, quality of staff, and personalized instruction that meets each child's unique needs. Dr. Kanninen noted the budget builds on the Whole Child initiative which responds to the APCYF recommendation from last year to strengthen social/emotional support. APS staff and Board members also provided additional information about the Whole Child initiative and services that are being expanded, noting that this work includes strong collaboration with APCYF and the Out of School Time Taskforce. Recognizing that the upcoming

move of the APS administration to the Sequoia complex will provide additional opportunities for collaboration and efficiencies, the group also acknowledged that this will support the continuum of services throughout the County.

An additional topic briefly discussed was the fluctuation in per pupil cost that has gone up slightly in recent years. APS staff and Board members spoke to the challenges of providing needed services particularly with the growing enrollment, and confirmed APS is focused on managing costs. Additional topics discussed were how schools can achieve efficiencies of scale, revenue from Extended Day and Food Services, and the need for sufficient staff to ensure that facilities can be maintained. The group also recognized that upcoming boundary refinements will likely impact transportation costs and looked forward to input from the Advisory Committee on Transportation Choices will help identify potential savings. Mr. Schwartz and Dr. Murphy confirmed discussions are underway to identify areas for additional collaboration.

The group also discussed the different approach that each Board takes when preparing their budgets. School Board members explained that the APS approach is to prepare a needs-based budget, which allows the Boards to have a conversation and collaborate as they work to meet the needs of the community. APS also recognized the importance of looking to achieve efficiencies. Ms. Van Doren noted that implementation of the Arlington Tiered System of Support focuses on providing services that meet individual student needs and will lead to efficiencies.

Additional topics briefly discussed were how APS determines how to use reserves, the \$11.2 million budget gap, and state funding for the schools. Mr. Fisette recognized that the biggest drivers for both budgets are staffing needs. He asked for additional information about salary increases for APS employees.

Closing Remarks

Looking ahead, members of both Boards recognized the need to continue to strengthen collaboration especially as fiscal challenges will continue. The group agreed that changes will be needed and also recognized that difficult decisions may need to be made. Ms. Van Doren confirmed APS is looking to put in place practices that streamline processes while also providing equity and maintaining excellence. She appreciated the opportunity to meet with the County Board. Mr. Fisette appreciated the discussion and the work of each Board member, and looked forward to continuing to work together.

The meeting adjourned 11:17 AM.

ATTEST:

Melanie Elliott, Clerk
Arlington School Board

Nancy Van Doren, Chair
Arlington School Board