

Council Meeting Date: December 18, 2008

// A special meeting of the Council of the City of Lynchburg, adjourned from December 9, was held on the 18th day of December, 2008, at 5:30 P.M., School Administration Building, Joan F. Foster, President, presiding. The purpose of the meeting was to conduct a joint meeting with the School Board regarding several items. The following Members were present:

Present: Dodson, Garrett, Gillette, Helgeson, Johnson, Perrow, Foster 7

Absent: 0

// Following dinner, Mayor Joan Foster and School Board Chair Julie Doyle welcomed everyone to the joint meeting.

// Mayor Foster thanked Senator Newman and Delegate Valentine for taking time out of their busy schedule to attend tonight's meeting.

// City Manager Kimball Payne provided an overview regarding the City's 2009 Legislative priorities, i.e., Accelerate Funds for Combined Sewer overflow (CSO) Construction, Arts and Cultural District, Comprehensive Services Act (CSA), Graffiti Removal, Local Law Enforcement Funding, Transportation and Utility Marking. Mr. Payne stated that the City was pleased to see that there was funding for CSA in the Governor's proposed budget, and commented that in light of the current budget situation the new policies and guidelines should be reconsidered or their costs borne solely by the State and not shifted to localities. Mr. Payne also noted that the Commonwealth should be equitable in its support for local law enforcement funding both to those localities with police departments and to those in which Sheriff's Departments provide law enforcement and that cities should not bear a disproportionate burden for law enforcement funding through continued reductions in funds provided by HB599.

// School Board Chair Julie Doyle along with Schools Superintendent Dr. Paul McKendrick provided an overview regarding the Lynchburg City Schools 2009 Legislative priorities, i.e., Compensation and Employee Relations, Instruction, and Funding.

// Linda Jones and Blair Smith provided a progress report regarding the construction of the new Sandusky Middle School, stating that the School is 15% complete, still on schedule and within budget. Ms. Jones also noted that the School will be 35% more energy efficient than minimum standards and that plans are to move into the new school in October 2010.

// Dr. McKendrick provided information regarding the top issues discussed at the recent School Board Retreat, i.e., Closing the achievement gaps, attendance and graduation rates, capital improvement plan, alternative education, math achievement, marketing and communications, schools for innovation and staff recruitment, retention and development. Following discussion, there was a suggestion that the Schools initiate a marketing plan to explain to the community what "closing the achievement gap" means.

// Dr. McKendrick stated that given the current economic situation, that almost all new initiatives requiring extra funding will have to be nixed, including a recent proposal for extending the day at three schools that have been historically challenged via SOL scores. Dr. McKendrick did note that the only new money the Schools is looking at spending would be to lease or buy new financial software at a cost of between \$300,000 to \$600,000. Council and School Board members also agreed that they needed to move forward as quickly as possible with looking at opportunities for greater collaborative efforts between the City and Schools operations/services.

// Council and School Board members reviewed information regarding the status of the Schools Accreditation. In response to Council Member Helgeson's question regarding increase in employees in light of the Schools declining enrollment, Dr. McKendrick explained that 250 pre-K students are not included in the enrollment numbers.

// City Council members were provided with the Schools Capital Improvement Plan for 2010 – 2013, in addition to a major project history (June 1996 – November 2008) for Heritage High School. Mr. Sonny Witt provided an overview of capital improvements for Heritage High School through 2013 at an estimated cost of \$3.8 million. City Manager Payne stated that the biggest challenge right now is trying to find out how to pay for the new Sandusky Middle School and the new Courthouse and that the goal would be to have Heritage High School renovated or rebuilt by 2018. Mr. Payne went on to say that even that date would be a challenge. Some Council and School Board members expressed interest in forming a community taskforce to discuss Heritage High School's future, while others questioned the necessity when there is no money in the immediate future to pay for Heritage High School. City and Schools officials decided that further discussion regarding a community taskforce could be added to the agenda for the joint City Council/School Board meeting in late spring, when a tour of the new Sandusky Middle School is planned.

// Schools Superintendent McKendrick stated that after reviewing Governor Tim Kaine's proposed cuts to education, City Schools would lose about \$3.8 million. Dr. McKendrick went on to say that there is some concern that once the budget process is finished the figure could be closer to \$5 million or \$6 million.

// Council and School Board members agreed that at the spring joint meeting, that more discussion was needed regarding the Schools financial software, City/Schools collaborative efforts, enrollment and Heritage High School.

// The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.