

**The Worthington City Council  
&  
The Worthington Board of Education  
Joint Meeting Minutes  
October 14, 2019**

**CALL TO ORDER – Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance:**

Worthington City Council met in Joint Session with the Worthington Board of Education on Monday, October 14, 2019, at the Worthington Education Center, 200 East Wilson Bridge Road, Worthington, Ohio. School Board President Jennifer Best called the meeting to order at or about 7:30 P.M. She welcomed the City Council members and asked for a roll call of School Board members.

**School Board Members Present:** Jennifer Best, Nikki Hudson, Julie Keegan, Sam Shim, and Charlie Wilson

President Michael thanked the Worthington School Board for hosting the joint meeting and asked for a roll call of Council members.

**City Council Members Present:** Rachael R. Dorothy, Douglas Foust, Beth Kowalczyk, Scott Myers, David Robinson, Douglas K. Smith, and Bonnie D. Michael

**Also present:** Superintendent Trent Bowers, Treasurer Jeff McCuen, City Manager Matthew Greeson, Director of Parks & Recreation Darren Hurley, Clerk of Council D. Kay Thress as well as numerous staff members/directors of the City of Worthington and the School District.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

*President Best invited those in attendance to stand and join in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.*

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION** Mrs. Keegan made a motion to approve the agenda of the Joint Meeting of the Board of Education and the Worthington City Council. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Hudson.

**The motion by the School Board to approve the Joint Meeting Agenda carried unanimously by a roll call vote.**

**MOTION** Mr. Myers made a motion to approve the agenda of the Joint Meeting of the Board of Education and the Worthington City Council. The motion was seconded by Mr. Foust.

**The motion by the City Council to approve the Joint Meeting Agenda carried unanimously by a roll call vote.**

## **ENROLLMENT GROWTH UPDATE**

Dr. Bowers believes there are multiple things going on in Worthington Schools that intersect with Council and are heard out in the community. He called attention to a map of the Worthington School District that identified the various communities that overlap the District. The District includes the cities of Columbus and Worthington, townships of Perry and Sharon and the Village of Riverlea. Growth is occurring in all quadrants of the school district.

The District has had several Enrollment Projection studies done in the last five years with the most recent occurring in January 2019. That study showed the highest enrollment of any study done although it is lagging actual enrollment numbers for this year. Of the 10,715 students who began the 2019 school year, approximately 2,300 live in the city of Worthington. While the study recommends 12,000 students for the facilities planning, the high end of the growth projections for 2028-2029 showed almost 13,500, which may be more realistic. The district is growing significantly, and that growth is impacting many areas throughout the district.

The growth information prompted the District to begin working on a master facilities plan. The Ohio Schools Construction Commission came in and assessed all their facilities. From that a facilities task force was created and three goals were developed: address aging facilities, change feeder patterns to balance enrollment at the two high schools, and add capacity for all students.

When the task force created their plan, the decision was made to do it in phases because there was more work that needed to be done than they could ask the community to support in one phase. Phase I of the master facilities plan was approved by the community last November through a bond issue. Phase I covers the renovation/rebuilding of several middle schools as well as moving sixth graders from the elementary schools to the middle schools. This will allow for more capacity for the elementary schools. Phase II will likely be presented to the voters in 2022 with Phase III coming in the 2026/27 timeframe. This is all an effort to rebuild the aging buildings and have capacity for the students attending the schools.

Along with the master facilities plan is a feeder pattern change. A committee was formed and charged with selecting one elementary school feeder from Thomas Worthington High School to redirect to Worthington Kilbourne for fall 2021. They need to balance high school enrollment and determine which students will attend that school. They have developed several options. The committee will reconvene this fall and reevaluate this year's numbers to come up with recommendations for change.

The school district is experiencing significant growth. We believe that growth will continue throughout the next decade. Other changes may need to occur as time goes by. The job of the school district is to serve all the students that live in the area. Worthington is a desirable place but with that comes more students for the district and necessitates change. He thinks everyone will have to work through that change together.

Dr. Bowers addressed questions asked by Council members.

## SWIMINC UPDATE

City Manager Matt Greeson reported that representatives of Swiminc, Worthington Schools and the City of Worthington have met in recent weeks to discuss strategies for addressing the needs at Worthington Pools. This was done because:

- a) Swiminc has completed its long-term master plan.
- b) The pool complex is important to the quality of life of Worthington and has aging infrastructure and a significant need for investment.
- c) Swiminc needs to begin planning for use of the \$1 million in State capital bill funding in 2020. How this funding is used depends in large part on whether there is a larger project that can be conceptualized and funded.

Swiminc President, Rob Schmidt told those present that this joint meeting is a critical step in moving the master plan for the pools forward. He believes it is the appropriate time to make decisions about the pools and it is time in which to engage the community to determine the best course of action both for the school district and the city.

The primary topic of discussion focused on the needs of the outdoor pool and natatorium that are operated by Swiminc. These pools are located on the grounds of Thomas Worthington High School; however, the facilities are managed by Swiminc which is a nonprofit organization separate from either the Schools or the City.

Swiminc had a condition analysis of its facilities done in 2017 and an inspection done in 2018. They engaged the community in a master planning process in 2019 to decide how to address their aging pools and buildings. They began to explore what they can and can't accomplish on their own.

The high school swim, dive and water polo teams utilize the natatorium, the Worthington community swim teams use the pool facilities and this location provides the only outdoor pools within the city and school district limits. This is a valued community asset and the infrastructure needs of the facilities exceed the capacity of Swiminc to address. Representatives of the City and School District discussed the situation with Swiminc to fully understand the needs and will be holding ongoing discussions among themselves and with the community to evaluate options for investing in the facilities so that they are available for years to come.

Facilities Committee Chair Mike Keller reported on the aging facilities and shared more specific information surrounding each pool. He reported information regarding the Master Plan and possible options, some of which may require a phased in approach. Those options include:

- a) Option 1 - Use the \$1 million in State dollars and Swiminc funds to repair/improve as much as possible.
- b) Option 2 - A \$4-\$5 million-dollar investment only in the outdoor facilities.

Possible funding for the renovation of only the outdoor facilities would be the \$1 million in state funds along with a possible loan and/or grant from the City and fundraising

dollars. The Schools could consider whether to include funding for a new or renovated natatorium at some point.

c) Option 3 replaces everything, natatorium and outdoor facilities.

Possible funding for this option could be the formation of a Joint Park District, which is separate from both the schools and the city. Ohio law allows the City and Schools to create a District that would have the authority to place on the ballot a School district-wide property tax levy to support implementation of some or all the Master Plan projects. The benefit is that it spreads the cost across the largest number of pool beneficiaries.

None of these options have been fully explored to date. There could even be some combination of options not yet known.

Both Council members and School Board members asked questions of Mr. Schmidt and his team.

## **SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS**

Darren Hurley, Worthington's Parks and Recreation Director shared that this initiative is being encouraged by the City of Worthington's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. He provided a background of the program and a timeline of steps taken to this point.

The program can involve a range of activities and investments to make it easier and safer for children to walk or ride their bike to school. Consideration of this initiative is still in the early stages and will involve additional discussions among the two organizations to determine how it might be implemented in Worthington.

Mr. Hurley requested that the School District identify a liaison who will be available to learn and engage with city staff and the Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Board on potential projects and programs. President Best agreed to have that as a topic of discussion at their next meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** Mr. Shim made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Hudson.

**The School Board's motion to adjourn carried unanimously by a roll call vote.**

**MOTION** Mr. Myers made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Foust.

**The City Council's motion to adjourn carried unanimously by a roll call vote.**

President Best declared the meeting adjourned at 9:46 p.m.

/s/ D. Kay Thress  
Clerk of Council

*APPROVED by the City Council, this  
4<sup>th</sup> day of November 2019.*

/s/ Bonnie D. Michael  
President of Worthington City Council