

JOINT MEETING of
ALBANY CITY COUNCIL and
GREATER ALBANY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (GAPS) SCHOOL BOARD
Council Chambers
Wednesday, February 27, 2013
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Sharon Konopa called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

INTRODUCTIONS

The Albany City Council members and the Greater Albany Public Schools (GAPS) Board members introduced themselves. City staff and members of the audience also introduced themselves.

ATTENDANCE

Albany City Council: Mayor Sharon Konopa and Councilors Rich Kellum, Bessie Johnson, Ray Kopczynski, Dick Olsen, and Floyd Collins (Bill Coburn was excused)

GAPS School Board: Members Lyle Utt, Micah Smith, Frank Bricker; Chair Sandi Gordon, Assistant Superintendent Frank Caropelo, and District Superintendent Maria Delapoer

Media: *Albany-Democrat Herald* reporter Jennifer Moody

City Staff: Management Assistant/Public Information Officer Marilyn Smith, Public Works Director Mark Shepard, Transportation Systems Analyst Ron Irish, and Finance Director Stewart Taylor

Public: Bill Root, President of North Albany Neighborhood Association (NANA) and Doug Finegan (citizen)

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

There was no business from the public.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

School Safety

GAPS Board member Micah Smith commended the joint efforts taking place with Albany Police Department (APD) and GAPS to assess the security and safety of schools. The partnership is working much like the fire marshals who offer advice on fire safety and evacuations. It is time that law enforcement takes a look at the safety of schools to ensure that they become and are maintained as safe facilities. Smith said they do not want to turn them into institutions that are nonfunctional, but to look at ways to ensure that safety continues.

Smith said the partnership includes the Linn County Sheriff's Office and APD. They are forging a new relationship that will hopefully involve Geographic Information Services (GIS) from both Linn County and the City. They have detailed overlays of the county schools down to the footprint of each room, including detailed schematics overlaid on satellite images. They want that to be consistent with all schools inside and outside the boundaries so are working with both City and Linn County GIS to make that happen. This will enable law enforcement and first responders to know what schools

look like inside and outside of the city boundary. The goal is seamlessness and consistency across the district. Today was the first meeting of the Superintendent School Safety Task Force, being led by former administrator Rick Vasquez.

Smith said they are focusing their efforts in four areas:

- Assessment of the physical infrastructure and security; not just in the wake of recent school shootings across the country, but a comprehensive safety analysis to consider questions such as: Is there vegetation or other structures that would provide roof access? If so, what are ways to mitigate that?
- Mental health networks and behavior specialists to provide mental health awareness, treatment, response, and interventions to all youth in Albany.
- Review of policies and procedures, and guides for security situations for schools and across the district.
- Improve communication practices so that there is a clear, concise, and timely flow of information to parents and kids that are off campus, and also staff and community partners. They are on a fast schedule (11 weeks) to bring recommendations to Superintendent Maria Delapoer, and then to the GAPS Board.

Smith said this is an aggressive schedule and there are over 60 schools throughout the county. They will be headed to Harrisburg later in March, and then Central Linn, Scio, and Mill City. They want to have all the partners in all police agencies (municipal police, state police, and sheriff's office) to be able to respond quickly and effectively to any security threat.

Chair Sandi Gordon asked Smith to talk about the social media component. Smith said social media could be the cause of a threat or could be the cause of miscommunication about security at the school. The Task Force is looking at how to utilize social media to share news about school safety and security, as well as sharing other news and communications. The plan is to hone in on how it is being used and persuade folks to refer to a district-provided location for information about safety and security. It may mean that GAPS will launch a Facebook page or Twitter account to provide correct information immediately. It could prevent having too many phone calls inundating the school office. Currently they use Flash Alert but technology has evolved quite a bit. He described some other tools being used. They plan to capitalize on technology improvements.

Partnerships that Benefit Youth

Member Lyle Utt mentioned several partnerships GAPS is involved in. They look for groups in the community they can partner with to enhance kids' experiences in and out of school. Examples are: security assessments with APD and APD Resource Officers in the high schools; the use of facilities by Albany Parks & Recreation at Timber Ridge School and across the district; activities planned by Albany Parks & Recreation around early release days; and the Community After School Program. Other partnerships are with United Way, which has the FamilyWize program that has helped over 2,200 families and saved \$191,000 in health care costs; the Boys and Girls Club, which provides use of their gym and provides sports programs and after school activities, with GAPS buses providing the transportation for the kids every day after school; and the Club's dental program that benefits the community. Albany Options School has a partnership with Habitat For Humanity and GAPS has a Summer Library Program which allows libraries to be open and also a summer lunch program to feed needy families during the summer. Utt said one of the things he likes about this community is how the School Board and City partner in ways that benefit the whole community.

Councilor Bessie Johnson asked how the summer lunch program works. Utt said there are a few ways; some schools in the community provide lunch for the kids who show up at schools and in other neighborhoods, the lunches are delivered.

Gordon added that there is a strong partnership between Sodexo, Inc., their food provider, and schools that are in need, like Waverly School. They go in and target certain areas that have higher needs and low income. They feed any children in the family, not just school age children. They also use it as an opportunity to provide the families with other information such as housing bulletins and brochures to educate the local families about what is available.

Johnson said some families are one paycheck away from homelessness so she applauds feeding hungry kids. It fulfills a great need since sometimes that is the only meal a child may get in a day.

Delapoer said that about 45% of students qualify for free or reduced lunches. They served about 26,000 lunches last summer to anyone less than 18 years of age with no questions asked.

Assistant Superintendent Frank Caropelo said previously he was the Principal at Waverly School. They were one of the schools that had an open library during the summer. It was staffed by GAPS employees and they backed it up with the summer lunch program. Parents could take their kids to get a book and a voucher for a free lunch. After lunch they ran pre-kindergarten (pre-K) summer outreach program for kids who they knew would be incoming kindergarteners. They would come for three weeks in August to learn about school. They also had an academic intervention program in the mornings for 1st and 2nd graders who needed help catching up. Combining the programs provided for a longer lasting opportunity than any one program alone.

Councilor Ray Kopczynski commented to the 45,000 lunches that are served and the last few years of recession. He asked Delapoer if she has an idea of how many kids may be living in poverty – whether it is increasing, decreasing, or leveling out. Delapoer said that over the last few years they have been increasing. Families have to apply to qualify for free lunch but she thinks there are some families who choose not to, especially at the high school level due to the stigma that may be attached to it. She said, 45% of students is more than they used to serve.

Gordon said that about three years ago, they started serving breakfast in the classroom at a few schools. Everyone in the classroom got it, not just those who qualify for free or reduced lunch. She described how it works and that it runs 15 minutes from start to finish. They run the program at six or seven schools now and Gordon said they have seen test scores in some schools improve because all the kids are eating. This is mostly federally funded. She invited the Council to visit.

Smith said there is also a movement underway to give library cards to GAPS students that don't reside in the city limits so they can have access to the libraries in the summer time. Whether it is at the City's Library or libraries at schools he is tremendously impressed with the ability for the district to be able to staff the schools, especially coinciding with meals like what was done at Waverly School. It gives kids access to books, a meal, and a safe place to interact with strong mentoring adult figures.

Gordon said last year there was an initiative around pre-K work that the entire district participated in, including principals, kindergarten and other teachers, Head Start staff, and Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC) and Oregon State University (OSU) representatives. They all came together for a series of meetings and at the end of the year they had an initial product, a brochure, which is consistent throughout the district. Before the brochure was created, the different schools each had different programs. The brochure is not just for pre-K parents but is also distributed in hospital birthing packets and in pediatrician and dentist offices. The brochure gives guidelines about the development levels kids should be at before they start kindergarten. Gordon said it has made a difference to parents to have this information. She commends the district for being proactive in getting kids ready to come to kindergarten. Gordon said they will bring the brochures to the next Joint meeting with the Albany City Council and can provide an update at that time.

Johnson said, regarding the stigma associated with being in a breakfast program, she thinks it is great to have all the kids eat rather than identifying just one set of kids. Gordon said the program has evolved from a paper-driven program to one that allows parents to discretely apply online.

Utt said one thing that helped to alleviate the stigma is that they issue a number unique to each student. The number does not indicate whether or not the student paid for their lunch or if they are getting it for free.

District Initiatives

Caropelo said over the next three to five years there are district initiatives that relate to an instructional focus, or professional development of the teaching staff. Some are driven by changes at the state and federal level in education and state policy around the governor's 40/40/20 initiative, which has the goal that 40% of high school students go on to earn a four-year degree; 40% go on to earn a two-year degree; and the rest to graduate prepared with career-ready skills.

Caropelo said several years ago the GAPS Board developed their own internal accountability plan that predated the state goals but have some of the same measures, such as tracking instructional targets, facilities targets, transportation, and community outreach processes. They have been tracking these through their internal accountability plan.

Caropelo highlighted some of the items on the bulleted list in the agenda packet on page 1.

- Professional Learning Communities: early release schedule on Wednesdays allow teachers to gather in their own schools or meet together at one school to discuss student learning and how to improve and make learning more efficient. The way education has changed, the standards and expectations on kids and teachers has also changed. They are trying to adopt a model for continuous improvement and ways to improve instructional delivery. If kids are not learning it then teachers need to consider how to teach it differently or better. All students must meet standards in reading and math to graduate high school with a standard diploma. They are working on long-term and short-term goals to prepare students for that.
- The dual immersion program teaches English and Spanish at South Shore Elementary. It is being expanded to fourth grade and they are adding fifth grade next year. They are exploring how to extend it to middle schools so the kids can continue learning in both languages. This is a very successful program and draws kids from all over the district.
- Albany Online is new this year and is an opportunity for kids in middle school and high school who are not currently enrolled but are seeking an online environment. It was a successful pilot this year that they plan to grow.

Street Width and Bus Size

Russ Allen, Director of Business and Operations, said municipal street standards are not typically on the radar of school districts; but it came to their attention last year when an individual in a newer housing development was concerned that the bus could not pick up kindergarteners on a door to door basis. When they investigated they learned that the street widths were a concern for the buses. Allen said staff representing GAPS and the City will be talking about the concerns.

Chris Ellison, the previous Transportation Director for GAPS, displayed a map of the North Pointe subdivision (see agenda file). Typically, students walk to the bus stop on Spring Hill Drive, but this year there were some kindergarten students that needed to be picked up. This prompted the issue at hand. Ellison pointed out on the map the area of concern. A bus needs a 17 - 19 foot arch to make a turn. Going into the subdivision there is a residence on the corner with a motorcycle parked on the street perpendicular to the curb, and on the other side is a parked car. A bus cannot navigate that turn. Ellison said he asked Transportation Systems Analyst Ron Irish if the curbs could be painted yellow to prevent parking. The City painted the curbs yellow on the north end and south end. The standard space allotted for a parked car is seven feet, but it only works if the cars are parked correctly. Any street width less than 30 feet is an issue for student transportation.

Konopa said the City sets street standards based on fire trucks. Streets can be narrow but they still need an adequate turn radius. She was unaware there was a problem for buses.

Ellison said the other neighborhood is Benton Woods in North Albany, between Scenic Drive and Crocker Lane. He displayed a map (see agenda file). This is a new subdivision with two roundabouts. The issue is that when coming out of the roundabout, the street width is narrower at 26 feet. There is also parking on both sides so it is impossible to maneuver a bus. One side was painted yellow but there was a car there anyway. The buses do not service that area; those kids walk to 24th Street and to the end of Robin Hood to be picked up. The walk is about a three or four tenths of a mile for the furthest house.

Konopa thanked GAPS for bringing this to the City's attention so it can be considered in subdivision plan elements.

Ellison said that he, Irish, and Public Works Construction Management Supervisor Kevin Hamilton took a bus ride to the Bridle Springs subdivision last week. It is another example of the 30 foot street width, but when making the turns there is

no yellow curb and so cars are stacked up at the corners. It will be an easier fix because there are many other route options.

Johnson asked if GAPs could use smaller buses for the problem areas. Ellison said not always, because some are the same width as a standard bus. They may be shorter by 10 feet or so, but their width is the problem.

Irish said 30 feet curb to curb is the City's standard design for local streets and is the design used in 90% of cases over the last eight years. They have not had a lot of problems with buses or fire trucks. The Albany Development Code (ADC) does allow narrower widths if the developer does certain things. For example, they can use 28 foot streets if they cluster the driveways so a fire truck can set up. There is also a 22 foot street design with parking restricted to one side if the lots are rear loaded and next to public alleys – though it is rare. Coastal Crossings is an example of an alley-loaded design.

Irish said the problem with the 28 foot width is not just specific to school buses; they just get reported first with buses because they are there every day as opposed to a fire truck. For the 28 foot width street the problem occurs when vehicles park close to the intersection and along the length of road if they are not parked right next to the curb. He described how parking along the sides impacts the street widths and how markings impact how people park. This is the problem at Benton Woods and Coastal Crossings.

Irish said at North Pointe they added yellow curb at intersections. Irish displayed a picture of a cut away of a 28 foot street with parking on both sides (see agenda file). The options are to look at the ADC and consider the 28 foot street standards and apply provisions or other options. Because it is in the ADC as a choice the City does not have the ability to say no without changing the ADC. Irish noted that Benton Woods is the only subdivision where the developer opted to build 28 foot streets by choice.

Councilor Floyd Collins said he disagreed with skinny street proposals at the time they were considered as part of the Great Neighborhoods project. At that time they were discussing street use by fire trucks. Back then the Council suggested that they take note of how the assumptions worked. They are learning that in practicality, people do not park within seven feet. Collins said he thinks they need to look at the ADC and survey drivers of large vehicles and property owners to see if they are satisfied. He does not think they should remove parking now. He thinks the 30 foot width should be the minimum. Discussion followed.

Irish said the good news is that the City does not have many streets that are 28 feet wide and in fact most of them are in the Benton Woods subdivision. The old standard was 32 feet and now it is 30 feet. One result of this change is that speed has dropped by about five miles per hour so for traffic-calming, the narrower streets are working.

Konopa said the Council will consider this issue.

District Areas in Need of Resources

Delapoer said GAPS has been using the list of Long Range Planning on page 4 of the agenda packet. The list has been used for about four years. It has been challenging to maintain a quality service level with the amount of revenue that is available. She said, we don't know what the funding level will be since the legislature hasn't determined it yet, so we developing the budget on the governor's proposed budget. Fortunately, they have some savings that will help to get them through the next biennium. If the governor's budget passes then they will be over \$1 million short over the next two years. Delapoer said they have a couple of one-time revenue sources: for the use of the Timber Ridge gym, and from the construction excise tax. The tax revenues have been set aside for growth.

Delapoer said this list is developed by the Board and the Budget Committee to flesh out where they are thin in their service areas due to reduced revenues, so that if and when more money does become available they can add back some of these items. Their budget is 89% related to staff costs, with about 1,000 employees and 9,000 kids. The best investment they can make is in their staff, though they are coming to a point where they may not have textbooks in ten years. She gave an example of a 7th Grade science class with 37 kids; they have not had new textbook in ten years and recently the

lights fell out of the ceiling in the classroom. They have some basic needs that they cannot go without long-term. GAPS revenue is based on income tax so, until the economy improves, they don't have much chance of increased funding.

Kopczynski said he doesn't see deferred maintenance for basic infrastructure on the list. Delapoer said that they considered the top ten needs for facilities. Kopczynski asked if there are seismic needs. Delapoer said that Central School is solid due to a grant. They have been depending on grants. Some grants are going away, such as the Regional Trades program grant which teaches high school kids trades.

Collins asked Irish if the City has a program for installing segments of missing sidewalks around schools. Irish said yes, but there is not much money. They do have some projects in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) that are for improvements directly in front of schools, namely Oak Elementary and on 24th Avenue by Liberty School. There is also the sidewalk project along Spring Hill Road. Collins said that these many not represent money in the GAPS budget but they are projects that will make it safer for students. This is an example of the City coming along side GAPS to support the safety of the kids.

Johnson asked if the projects and improvements supported by the school bond have been completed on schedule. Allen said they accomplished everything they told the public they would do, and they were also able to do some extra improvements as well.

Johnson asked if GAPS has enough money to buy the textbooks that the kids need. Caropelo said the teachers are working hard to supplement areas where the books are not in alignment with the state teaching standards. The normal cycle for textbooks is a seven-year adoption cycle. Generally the way it works is that the state certifies the books and the district adopts the materials. Over the last few years they have had to postpone adoptions to save funds and find other ways to provide information to teachers or for teachers to access materials online. They are making it work. Discussion followed about using online resources.

Delapoer noted that to adopt new language-arts text books, for example, would cost over \$1 million.

Collins asked about long-range planning for future schools, such as in the South Albany area. He asked if the district has considered the approximate number of and locations of schools that would be needed when the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) is fully saturated. Delapoer said no; enrollment has been flat and is not projected to go up for several years. There does not seem to be a pressing need. Timber Ridge was built to help to alleviate the populations at the middle schools. Discussion followed about how the City and GAPS could work together on long-range planning for school locations. Delapoer said that in 2015 the state may fund full day kindergarten classes so they will need to start talking about what facilities are available and may have to shift some boundaries if the Board decides to take advantage of it.

City Manager Wes Hare said the City's Strategic Plan is on the dais (see agenda file). The newest revision will be available on the City's website soon. Hare said, this is the City's work plan; it includes broad goals and objectives and lays out specific terms for items that are important to the community. He encouraged the GAPS Board to look at it and let City staff know if they think something is missing. Hare appreciates their feedback.

Hare said he is optimistic about things happening in the City. Because Albany has achieved Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) status, the City is expecting additional transportation revenues that will have a beneficial effect for GAPS and may solve some problems. Transit may have new routes and improved frequency. Also, in the past, Albany has had to compete for the Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) but now, as an entitlement community, Albany will get allotments for housing. Like GAPS, the City of Albany has had financial challenges. Hare said they have tried to make do without large layoffs or terminating services, but the City has lost 10% of the workforce over the last few years. It is a tribute to City employees who have stepped up and in many cases taken on additional tasks to keep services intact.

Hare said the Council recently decided to purchase software, called "e-plans", which will allow developers or citizens to submit applications and documents electronically. The large paper volume involved with the current process is difficult

for developers and City staff. The new software will facilitate simultaneous review of plans by Planning, Building, and Public Works staff. The City will be able to process plans quicker and better and do more with less staff.

As an example, Collins said that if the City had e-plans when Timber Ridge School was developed, there would be schematics that could be made available to all public safety agencies. Smith said that would be very useful. Discussion followed.

BUSINESS FROM THE COUNCIL AND THE BOARD

Konopa said Albany is fortunate to have a wonderful school district. GAPS and the City have a great partnership and are able to work together to make a livable city.

Collins said in the past, GAPS had shared their trend lines and test scores. Caropelo said they are continuing to see improvements and also identifying where they fall short. What constantly changes is the state saying where the benchmarks should be. Collins said the key is to make sure the core package stays the same. Delapoer said the standard now is that students must pass the state test in order to earn a diploma. GAPS has an outstanding graduation rate, higher than the state's average.

Collins asked what happens to students that do not pass the state test. Caropelo said they have to provide a work sample.

Smith said that Delapoer has directed the Board to create a 5th year advanced student program so they have graduates that are not just prepared for graduation, but are able to go to LBCC for a year and be a GAPS student for that 5th year. This allows them to be in college while still being under the guidance of a high school teacher. Discussion followed about how this benefits the whole community.

Collins asked if GAPS will get additional funding for 5th year students. Smith said they will have met the graduation requirements but will not have received their diploma yet, so GAPS will continue to get funding for them. The funding will pay for their tuition, books, and fees, and any remainder will go to the supervising teachers at the three high schools. This program provides a safety net as kids go through the process of college. Smith said the improvements to Albany's transportation system will be a huge help too since LBCC students can ride the bus.

Johnson said it seems like the federal requirements for education keep moving. Caropelo said yes, they do. It is a very interesting time with the governor becoming the Chief Superintendent of Public Education. The 40/40/20 Goal, the waiver of the No Child Left Behind Act, and others impact what they do. He thinks they are all good changes but they are being asked to do more with less. They must strive to be more efficient and more effective with the resources they have.

Member Frank Bricker said that a consequence to the 5th year program is that all the students that participate in the program, even though they will have completed all their requirements, will not receive a diploma and the state will show that they did not graduate. Thus, the GAPS graduation rate will decline. It is a good program, good for the community and students, but it will show declining graduation rates. Gordon said that issue is being studied at the state levels. Discussion followed.

Utt said that another side effect of 5th year program and a full day kindergarten program is that the state school fund would stay the same. In other words, GAPS would end up getting less money per student.

RECESS

The meeting recessed at 8:24 p.m. for a break.

RECONVENE

The meeting reconvened at 8:31 p.m.

Albany City Council Regular Session
February 27, 2013

Hare said he was asked by International City Manager's Association (ICMA) to do some work in Afghanistan. He would leave around March 20 and coming back in mid-April. Hare is asking the City Council for permission to go. He will be using his personal vacation time. Hare said he would have good internet access so he can communicate with Directors.

The Council concurred that Hare can go.

Collins said that this is Hare's personal vacation time and where he goes is ultimately his decision. The Council's concern should be how the City runs in his absence and Collins feels that there are good processes in place for that. The Directors work well together.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by,

Mary A. Dibble, MMC
City Clerk

Stewart Taylor
Finance Director