

Clark County Schools Advisory Council Meeting Notes

Tuesday, October 22, 2019 – 9:00-11:00am

Members/Alternates Present: Eileen Quiring, County Council; Julie Olson, County Council; Mark Ross, Battle Ground School District; Heidi Rosenberg, Camas School District; Mike Merlino, Evergreen School District; Tyson Vogeler, Green Mountain School District; Steve Marshall, Hockinson School District; Todd Horenstein, Vancouver School District; Mary Templeton, Washougal School District; Michael Green, Woodland School District; Jennifer Baker, CREDC; Brian Schlottmann, County Services

Staff, Presenters: Lindsey Shafar, Clark County Manager's Office; Jenna Kay, Clark County Community Planning; Oliver Orjiako, Clark County Community Planning

Absent: La Center School District, Ridgefield School District, Vancouver Neighborhood Alliance, Neighborhood Association of Clark County, EOCF, ESD112, Washington State University - Vancouver

1. Welcome & Introductions

- April meeting notes: adopted

2. Legislative Priorities

- Chair Quiring, Councilor Olson, and Lindsey Shafar provided an update on the current, tentative list of Clark County 2020 legislative priorities, including:
 - Economic development 0.09% sales tax: SB 5899 would expand the 0.09% rural economic development sales tax to non-rural border counties. The money would need to be used for economic development. The bill is supposed to be worked on this legislative session.
 - Expansion of the multi-family tax exemption (MFTE): the expansion would apply to county urbanized areas outside of a city limit but within an urban growth area. The multi-family tax exemption is currently only allowed within city boundaries for cities over a certain size. The County Council would get to determine parameters on developments. The Council has seen the tax exemption applied within the City of Vancouver, and is interested in applying it to the Hazel Dell/Salmon Creek area. This expansion would primarily impact the Vancouver School District.
 - Transportation infrastructure for the 179th Street/I-5 Interchange: the County Council took action to remove urban holding near the 179th St/I-5 Interchange earlier this year, which will have the biggest impact on the

Ridgefield and Battle Ground school districts. The immediate impact will likely be a few hundred homes in the next couple years. This legislative ask is related to the I-5/179th St interchange project. There is currently \$50M planned for the project in the 2023-2025 Transportation Budget. The county is requesting \$1M of the \$50M in the 2020 budget to allow WSDOT to continue design and permitting work to ensure construction can happen as expeditiously as possible and to ensure the timing can be coordinated with the county road improvements. The corridor improvements, both county and state, are critical to commercial and residential development in the area. The County Council is excited for the long term economic opportunities in the area and requests that the school districts stay in touch if there are any issues with construction timing and impacts.

- Lifeline Connections Recovery Housing: the County may be requesting funds (amount TBD) to support construction of a Recovery Housing project in Vancouver. The project will provide 20 housing units for individuals exiting intensive inpatient alcohol and substance abuse treatment. Lifeline Connections will own and operate the facility. The County is waiting for more information regarding this item.
- YWCA – CASA/Guardian Ad Litem: YWCA provides CASA services to children in our county involved in various legal proceedings. The total program cost is roughly \$700,000, and until recently, the YWCA received a federal grant to fund about \$189,000 of these costs. The County pays roughly half of the program cost, and the state pays the remaining 24%. The YWCA is no longer receiving federal grant funds. For school districts, if you have a student who is involved in certain types of legal proceedings, they are required to have a guardian ad litem. The County is supportive of additional state funds to continue the program at its current levels. If the student does not have a CASA, the County is required to provide kids with a representative. This item is addressing the question about who pays.
- Other topics/requests the county supports.
 - Indigent Defense: the County strongly supports WSAC-lead efforts to increase funding to local governments for indigent defense costs.
 - Shoreline Management Act, SB 5152: the County continues to support SB 5152 that would exempt construction or placement of an ADU from substantial development permitting under the Shoreline Management Act if the dwelling's intended use is for the elderly or infirm.
 - Boys & Girls Club: the Boys & Girls Club will be making a Capital Budget request for seismic upgrades, HVAC, and roofing repairs. The County supports this request.
- The group discussed both the county legislative priorities and school district legislative priorities. Discussion topics included:
 - I-5/179th St project: Mark Ross raised a concern regarding the timing of this project because the impacted school districts need to figure out when to look at future bonds. There was also discussion on the type of economic

development in the area. There is some commercial/business park/light industrial land use close to I-5. Most of the development in the Battle Ground School District will be residential.

- Multi-family tax exemption: Todd Horenstein noted that expansion of this tax exemption would be great for affordable housing, which is certainly needed. He noted that the tug will be the impact fees to go along with the development. The Vancouver School District has been involved with the City of Vancouver's implementation of its tax exemption and there has been tension between growth and affordability. The Growth Management Act dictates that there need to be fees for growth. Todd suspects this issue will surface with the School District's updated Capital Facilities Plan that will come before the Council in 2020. It is up to the School District to waive or defer impact fees. In the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver School District, has elected not to defer the fees for a few reasons: 1) there are school impacts from growth, and, 2) Vancouver's recent bond program assumes part of the funding stream is from impact fees. The Vancouver School District has waived the fees for senior housing. Mike Merlino noted that the Evergreen School District has had a similar experience and has not waived impact fees either. The multifamily development in Evergreen impacted the school impact fee calculations during the last Capital Facilities Plan update.
- Economic Development Sales Tax and Regionalization: Todd Horenstein noted that SB 5899 is consistent with the regionalization factor of Portland and the impact it has on funding for school districts compared to larger cities in the state without neighboring community issues. It is a legislative priority for the Vancouver School District to keep that up front in the legislature and to show how Portland impacts the SW WA education community. Councilor Olson encouraged the school districts to discuss sales taxes lost to Portland and the impacts it has in SW WA. The County would be interested in more collective conversations about opportunities to mitigate loss of sales tax. Chair Quiring supported what Councilor Olson said and noted that the county wants to help with conversations about the region and how we are collectively impacted. Sales tax contributes to the county's general fund, which is affected by its location at a state border. Roughly 80% of the general fund covers law and justice, leaving only a small portion left for other general fund needs, which limits county flexibility.
- Regionalization Impacts in north county: Michael Green noted that for the Woodland and Green Mountain School Districts, regionalization funding is important. Those districts are in a donut hole where they are surrounded by districts that get more funding per pupil than they do due to the state formula. Tyson Vogeler also noted that the laws in the regionalization include Skamania County in Green Mountain and Woodland calculations where there are few homes.
- Post-McCleary: the whole group seemed in agreement that the post-McCleary K-12 funding model needs work.

- Special education funding: the school districts spend a lot of their local levies on it.
- Employee benefit changes: Mike Merlino and Mary Templeton noted that school employee benefits change in January. The changes will provide more access to healthcare for staff members, but artificially lowered the premium to make the budget work. Over time, it will not likely be sustainable for the state and will put more burden on local school districts. It also changes access; it is much more affordable for individuals than families. There is interest in finding solutions that will be more sustainable over time. The changes disincentivize having positions that work for employees who want options like job shares between teachers.
- Outdated prototypical school model: the state's prototypical school model has not been updated since the 1980s. For Battle Ground, for example, the state funds less than one full time nurse for all our students. However, the school district funds eight or nine above state funding. For a full time school psychologist at the middle school level, it would take 20,000 students to fund that position. And again, the school district has 9 or 10. The extra costs come out of the school district's levy, which are supposed to be for enhancements. With current concerns around social-emotional learning, we would consider nurses, and school psychologists as part of basic education, but the state's prototypical model has not been updated since the 1980s and there have been a lot of changes to students since then. Chair Quiring asked if the legislature plans to address the formula this session. The legislature may consider the requirement to review formula inputs every X # of years. The legislature may also look at funding a specific school topic, such as mental health and schools.
- Regionalization impacts: SW WA is very vocal about Portland, but Woodland is impacted by Cowlitz County, Washougal is impacted by Camas, etc. Salary schedules, for instance, are not funded at same level, making it hard to compete.
- Definition of teacher workday: Mary Templeton noted that a legislative committee is working on defining the workday for a teacher. It's very political. This is a significant thing to watch and provide input on. The school districts will be talking a lot more about that at the upcoming school legislative forum.
- Councilor Olson noted that unfunded mandates seems to be a common issue both the county and school districts are dealing with. This could be an area of common interest.
- School siting: Tyson Vogeler noted with economic development in the county, school construction and school siting is becoming very expensive. The cost of property falls to the districts and could mean districts won't be able to afford new school sites in the future. As the county looks at expansion, there was a suggestion for the county could look at this issue.
- Oliver Orjiako, Community Planning Director, shared that the county has

amended its code to implement a recent law that allow schools in rural area to have sewer. There are no provisions for acreage. Another provision is that service providers can serve a school site by tightline, but it's not well defined. The state law still calls for service providers and local governments to come up with mechanism to make that work.

- Measles: the County thanked the school districts for their partnership during the measles outbreak. The measles legislation passed since the group's last meeting and the group discussed any outstanding issues.
 - o 30-day grace period: Mark Ross noted that the 30-day grace period this year provided the school district with an opportunity for education. The Battle Ground School District saw roughly 600 student exemptions drop to fewer than 50 exemptions in that time period. The school district is concerned about next year when there won't be a 30-day grace period; instead, immunizations will be needed by the first day of school. Councilor Olson asked if immunizations and time needed for education would be a continuing issue in the future? Mark noted that Battle Ground has a large homeschool program and that is one group they need time to talk to because they are not allowed to come to school if they are not vaccinated. School districts could consider making the 30-day grace period request to state legislators and also raise the issue of inconsistency across school districts.

3. Annual Debrief

- The group reviewed what happened in 2019, with one meeting in the spring focused on planning and development and a second meeting in the fall focused on legislative priorities.
- The group agreed to follow the same plan next year, with two meetings on the same topics. There was a request to schedule the fall meeting later in the year, after the WA State School Directors' Association Legislative Conference, which is typically in November.
- Annual update to County Council. Chair Quiring and Councilor Olson will update the rest of the Council on the group's work this year.

4. Other

- Chair Quiring asked how permitting is going for the school districts.
 - Todd Horenstein noted that it is generally going well and that the school's team is very responsive and meeting regularly to discuss things in advance to address timing.
 - Mike Merlino noted that he has not heard of any issues in Evergreen and is aware of the need to get ahead of projects. The county has been good to work with.
 - Battle Ground has also found the county easy to work with.
 - The councilors requested that the school districts let them know if they run into any issues.

- Brian Schlottman noted that the superintendents and assistant superintendents received an email about reconvening the School Health & Safety Technical Advisory Group. November 15 will be the next meeting. The meeting topic will be to discuss periodic inspections of existing facilities, including what periodic means, what do the inspections mean, etc. So far, several maintenance supervisors are planning to attend. For superintendents who are not planning to attend, Brian is glad to answer questions. He has the county inspection schedule and can go into the details with anyone who is interested.
- The Councilors encouraged the school districts to reach out if anything comes up before the next meeting.

5. Next steps

- Group will meet in Spring 2020
- Staff: schedule the next two Schools Advisory Council meeting for spring 2020 and fall 2020, after the WA State School Directors' Association Legislative Conference. Meetings will cover the same topics as in 2019 with planning and development in the spring and legislative priorities in the fall.

The meeting adjourned at 9:55am.