WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, February 17, 2016, for the purpose of meeting with Prince George's County School Board Member Lupi Grady and Chief Executive Officer Dr. Kevin Maxwell.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 8:01 p.m. The meeting was held in Room 201 of the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Judith F. Davis, Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael McLaughlin, City Manager, and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Lupi Grady, Prince George's County School Board Member; Dr. Kevin Maxwell, Prince George's County Schools Chief Executive Officer; Mary Moien, Greenbelt News Review; Genevieve Kelly, Bill Orleans, and others.

Ms. Grady provided an update from the Prince George's County Public School (PGCPS) Board. She reported that financial literacy training for students began this school year for eighth grade students and mentioned this was the first program of its type in the State. Ms. Grady also reported on the "Terrapin Teacher" project that involved students from the University of Maryland assisting school students in science and other activities, and the upcoming Youth Summit Day on Leadership involving approximately 60 ninth and tenth grade students from Eleanor Roosevelt, Northwestern and Parkdale High Schools. She said she will have another listening session scheduled soon.

Dr. Maxwell said he had been in his position as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for PGCPS for over two years (on a four year contract) and plans to seek a four year contract renewal. He spoke about his good working relationship with the School Board. Dr. Maxwell said the current funding levels for PGCPS are not adequate to achieve all that he would like to accomplish, but added that lack of adequate funding is the same in all school districts.

Dr. Maxwell reported that the graduation rate rose 2.47% in his first year as CEO and another 2.16% in his second year. He said PGCPS graduation rate is now at 78% compared to the national rate of 82%.

Mayor Jordan mentioned Senator Rosapepe's session in Laurel regarding the success of the Monarch School which is a private public partnership serving students in Anne Arundel County. Dr. Maxwell said the Monarch School was a great school and a very good model of a private public partnership. He reported that schools such as Monarch, that receive private funding, are not held to the same construction standards as public schools.

Dr. Maxwell mentioned the need to find viable options to lower class sizes, especially in pre-kindergarten programs. He said Delegate Washington is working on a legislative bill to provide additional resources in this effort. Mayor Jordan suggested Dr. Maxwell notify Council if he would like City support of any legislative bills. Dr. Maxwell said he would provide contact information for the PGCPS legislative aid.

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Dr. Maxwell reported the proposed PGCPS FY 2017 Budget is available on the PGCPS website. He said the proposed budget includes an increase of $182 million (9.9% over the FY 2016 budget).

Dr. Maxwell said PGCPS is continuing to look for a new site to relocate the Greenbelt bus lot. He said an alternative site they had been working on acquiring last year did not work out during contract negotiations.

In response to a question from Ms. Davis, Dr. Maxwell said PGCPS is still leasing out school property for placement of cell phone towers. He said he wasn't aware of any schools in the Greenbelt area under consideration for cell phone tower placement at this time.

Mr. Roberts said he thought all student suspensions should be eliminated and more efforts should be taken to address whatever problems students may have. Dr. Maxwell said a task force dealing with student conduct and behavior, recovery programs to keep students on task, etc. has been established and there is a statewide effort looking into alternative educational programs. He said it would be great not to have to suspend or discipline any students but there are situations, such as weapon or drug matters, that warrant a student's removal in order to keep schools safe. Mr. Roberts requested Dr. Maxwell provide Council information regarding student suspensions and their graduation rates.

Ms. Mach, Ms. Pope and Ms. Davis stressed the need to have all Greenbelt children attend their neighborhood schools. Ms. Mach reported that children living in Greenbelt Station are currently assigned to Berwyn Heights Elementary, Greenbelt Middle School and Parkdale High School. She acknowledged that the schools in Greenbelt are overcrowded but noted that both Berwyn Heights Elementary and Parkdale High School are overcrowded also. Ms. Davis said there is still time to work this boundary problem out since there are no school age children residing in Greenbelt Station at this point.

Dr. Maxwell explained the PGCPS operates as a county district and it is not possible to place children in each municipality in schools within its municipality. He offered to arrange a meeting with Council and representatives from the office of PGCPS Boundaries and Zoning to explain how boundaries are established.

Ms. Davis stated that the City and its Advisory Committee on Education does a great deal to support Greenbelt schools, including offering grants for teachers, awarding outstanding educators and students, funding after-school Science and Reading clubs and funding a Student Resource Officer. Ms. Mach said taxpayer money is used to fund these programs and it is not fair that not all Greenbelt children benefit from them.

Mayor Jordan and Ms. Davis mentioned the City was having difficulty in reaching an agreement with PGCPS for the joint use of the athletic fields at Greenbelt Middle School. Dr. Maxwell said he would check into the matter.

Ms. Grady and Dr. Maxwell left the meeting at 9:08 p.m. to attend another meeting.

Ms. Kelly, member of the Prince George's County Advocates for Better Schools, spoke about their meeting on February 4th. She said School Board Member Grady and John Pfister, Director

of Budget and Management Services for PGCPS, were in attendance and reviewed the proposed budget. Council requested Ms. Kelly provide them with meeting dates of the organization. Mr. Putens suggested Ms. Kelly reach out to the City's Advisory Committee on Education as well as the College Park Education Advisory Board.

Informational Items

Ms. Davis provided an updated from the Maryland Municipal League Legislative Committee meeting.

Several other informational items were discussed.

The meeting ended at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cindy Murray
City Clerk

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