**2023-24 BUDGET ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Wednesday, Sept 13, 2023**

**Syphax, Rm 258**

**7:00 PM - 9:00 PM**

The meeting started at 7:04pm

1. 5 members were present: Erik Sullivan (Chair), Chuck Rush, Katherine Christensen, Nellie Carr, Chris Cummings

* APS Assistant Superintendent Leslie Peterson

1. Approval of May 2023 BAC meeting minutes

* Approved by all members.

1. Public comment

* Staffing shortages continue into this new school year, although situation not nearly as bad as neighboring districts, anecdotally.
* Looking forward to seeing the state’s budget for this year.

1. BAC membership
   * Andy Greenwood and Charles Smith were removed from the BAC and Michael Lyons resigned. Chris Cummings and Jenny Chen were added to the BAC. As a result, current BAC membership is 7 (of 15 allowed).
   * Erik Sullivan will continue as Chair in the interim. Request was made to all BAC members to consider taking on the Chair position, or the Vice Chair position for the year. This topic will be revisited in the October meeting.
2. BAC meeting schedule. The BAC approved the following schedule for the year:
   * October 11, 2023
   * November 8, 2023
   * December 13, 2023 - VIRTUAL
   * January 10, 2024
   * February 14, 2024
   * March 6, 2024
   * March 13, 2024 – VIRTUAL
   * March 20, 2024
   * April 17, 2024 – VIRTUAL (April 10 is a holiday)
   * May 8, 2024
   * June 12, 2024
3. Updates from School Board

* None – David Priddy was unable to make the meeting.

1. APS Finance Updates

* Leslie Peterson’s last BAC meeting. She will be retiring Sept 29. An interim replacement has been named.
* School Board approved their FY24 Priorities in the last School Board meeting.
* VDOE has provided high-level info on funding but at this point it’s difficult to tell what that means given we don’t have all language for Rev streams. More info is imminent. Superintendent wants to take next week to SB to amend the budget.
* Arlington County has not provided updated revenue projections, but initial signals are pessimistic.

1. School Board priorities and budget direction
   * School Board priorities have been approved.
   * The BAC provided recommendations to the School Board in the 2022-23 BAC EoY report for this FY. Similar to past years, the approved Priorities are written at a high-level and generally broad-brushed, with a few noted exceptions where specific statements are more targeted. However, for the most part, almost any budget request could be tied to a Priority as written.
   * The BAC agreed that we need to continue to push the School Board to be more explicit in the Priorities language.
   * The School Board budget direction is in progress. The BAC provided recommendations for these as well in last years EoY report including points on (1) including specific guidelines (e.g., one-time funds for one-time expenses only), (2) requiring metrics for discretionary budget requests and (3) including principles on the use of Reserves.
   * The group agreed we should resubmit these as input into the Budget Direction process. Erik will draft a response including the points and send to the BAC for review & input. Once collected Erik will send to David, as our SB liaison, and ask that they be forwarded to all School Board members for consideration.
2. BAC focus and topics for the year

* The BAC should set goals for the year, recognizing we don’t have the authority to implement anything and instead would focus on influencing decisions.
  + Metrics
    - Push to include a requirement that metrics be provided for new budget requests in this coming budget cycle. What that may look like and what the scope might be is TBD and something we’d want to discuss with the School Board members when we talk with them individually.
    - Look for 2-3 past, larger budget requests that were approved and pilot an assessment to establish metrics retroactively. We could collect the School Board members’ perspective on which ones they suggest be considered.
  + Contingency Planning – the BAC has called out the risks in the approved budget for out year financials and recommended that the School Board begin a contingency planning process. The BAC should continue to push the School Board to get that started this year.
  + Staffing – we will continue to have staffing challenges across all scales. The BAC should set a goal to set a PoV on things that might be done to help address those challenges. We will need to come back to this to further define this goal.
* In the past, the BAC meetings leading up to the release of the Superintendent’s proposed budget have been spent discussing specific topics to help educate the group in advance of reviewing the budget (e.g., transportation, compensation, planning factors, etc.). This year the BAC will take a different approach and look to use the meetings to influence the School Board’s decision-making. Specifically… take the opportunity to revisit the recommendations made last year (and previous years) with the School Board members to meet the BAC goals. Instead of different topics each meeting, the BAC will invite a different SB member to it’s meeting to talk thru the BAC recommendations in more detail and to collect info from the SB member to help achieve the BAC goals. Erik will reach out to David, as our BAC liaison, and request his help in getting these scheduled.

1. APS policies open for comment

* Policy K-7 Financial Management Use of School Facilities is open for comment. Request was made to BAC members to review the policy and send any suggested changes and/or comments to Erik. Erik will consolidate the input and submit it by the Oct 5 deadline, prior to the next BAC meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:04pm.