

Citizen's Oversight Committee
Minutes
January 13, 2021

At approximately 5:04 Jennifer Cobian, Citizen’s Oversight Committee (COC) Co-Chair, greeted those present. Norma Macias, Director of Facilities, Maintenance, Operations, and Transportation called roll and quorum was reached. The meeting was called to order and Ms. Cobian conducted the meeting.

1. Introductions:
 - Roll Call

Present:

- Jennifer Cobian
- Cathi Eredia
- Cynthia Arredondo
- Joanna Haro
- Jose Macias (approximately 5:46 p.m.)

Absent:

- Luis Aguilar
- Heidi Carrillo
- Andres Gonzalez
- Erica Mondragon
- Julia Ruedas

b. Flag Salute: led by Jennifer Cobian

c. Approval of Agenda:

Moved: Joanna Haro Seconded: Cathi Eredia Action: 4-0

d. Approval of Minutes— (September 17, 2020)

Moved: Cathi Eredia Seconded: Jennifer Cobian Action: 4-0

Anne Bazile, El Monte Union Education Association (EMUEA) President, Jason List and Jeff Picket from Isom Advisors, a Division of Urban Futures attended the meeting.

Debt Waiver Presentation

Mr. List and Mr. Picket provided a presentation on the request for the Bond Waiver for the second series of Measure HS. A summary of the 2018 election on Measure HS was provided. Measure HS received overwhelming support with more than 74% of District voters. There remains \$52.8 million authorized but unissued bonds from the 2008 election for Measure D. The District's tax base was reviewed in detail. The District is requesting to access additional funds from Measure HS given the increase in assessed values and the continued low-interest rates. There is a statutory tax rate limit of \$30 per \$100,000 to access bonds from Measure HS. The District's debt limit capacity is \$35.4 million which greatly limits the sale of bonds without a waiver. The California Department of Education (CDE) can approve a waiver to exceed the 1.25% debt limit for the District via an application process; the District is requesting 1.59%. Each year, the CDE approves several waivers.

The process for the waiver includes a summary of the District and its bond program, a public hearing, a meeting with the District's bargaining units and an advisory group like the Citizen's Oversight Committee. The state requires notice and labor groups recognizing the needs of the District and how it will benefit students. A written email is sufficient to support the waiver request. The waiver process takes about 12 weeks for approval. The District is targeting approval from the CDE on May 12th or 13th to take to board in May. The request for the waiver will not increase taxes. A timeline for the waiver was discussed, the process began on January 13th. If the waiver is approved, the District will receive the funds the week of June 7th.

Mr. Elatar, the Chief Business Official stated that the District's legal counsel is helping with the required resolution. A discussion about State Matching funds for modernization at El Monte, Arroyo, and Rosemead high school took place. The projects can start earlier than anticipated to finish the projects with a lower construction cost. Funding available from the first series is not enough for the projects needed.

Joanna Haro, committee member asked if everything goes through, will other projects be opened after State Matching funds are provided for some of the projects. Mr. Elatar responded that new construction is eligible and explained how State Matching funds work. State Matching funds come about 20 years later. He provided an example of new construction in the early 2000s. The District has to put everything upfront. We have to put the entire amount first then we get the State matching which will be used for other projects. They do not release the funds until they sell the bond themselves.

Ms. Cobian asked if there would be a cost to the District. Mr. List replied there would be no cost to the District. Mr. Elatar did mention that there is a cost for issuing the bond but not a cost to the operation side. Once the bond is sold, there will be a cost which is part of the process.

Mr. Elatar said the rates are so low for the bond right now which reduces the overall cost for the community, homeowners and refinance the bond in the future.

Ms. Cobian asked who needs to write the letters and if a vote was needed for approval. Mr. List stated we do not need to take a vote but simply receive an email of consensus.

A copy of the presentation was requested, the presentation will be emailed to the committee. Ms. Cobian thanked Mr. List and Mr. Picket for the presentation.

Progress Report

Ms. Macias reviewed the progress report with the Committee. She reviewed the balance in the bond for Measure D and HS as well as the First Interim Budget for each budget. Ms. Macias provided an update on Fernando Ledesma's Multi-Purpose Building, reviewed Phase 2 of Groups C's HVAC project, the progress of the Community Education Center at the District, the new track and field at Rosemead High School, and the quad project at South El Monte High School. Ms. Macias also discussed the Granada Transition Center feasibility study.

Enhancements to outdoor learning in the quad at Mountain View is taking place. Finding from LPA will be taken to the Board soon. Ms. Bazile had some question about the track and field project and parking lot at Mountain View, a discussion took place. Ms. Macias reviewed the upcoming home and visitor snack bar and track and field at Arroyo High School.

Ms. Bazile asked Ms. Macias who the stakeholders at Mountain View were. Ms. Macias mentioned that the administrators at Mountain View picked their teams. Mr. Elatar stated Lee Porter, a teacher from the Zoo Crew project was a stakeholder.

Other items

Jose Macias, the committee chair shared his concern for the safety of students once they return to the classroom. He asked if HEPA filters would be used in the HVAC systems and would prefer money being spent on these instead of the Cafetorium or even the new track and field. He wants to minimize the spread of COVID-19. Ms. Cobian suggested we bring this topic up at the next meeting.

Ms. Macias stated that we needed to schedule a special meeting in February to review the Annual Written Report to present at the March board meeting. A meeting will be scheduled for next month.

Cynthia Arredondo, committee member moved to end the meeting, Mr. Macias second the motion, and the COC meeting ended at approximately 6:07 p.m.