

Citizens Oversight Committee  
Minutes  
February 27, 2023

At approximately 5:09 p.m., Cathi Eredia, Citizens' Oversight Committee (COC) Chair greeted everyone present. Ms. Eredia called roll and a quorum was reached. The meeting was called to order and Ms. Eredia conducted the meeting.

1. Introductions:
  - a. Roll Call

Present:

- Pablo Tamashiro
- Luis Aguilar
- Cathi Eredia
- Joanna Haro (5:17 pm)
- Cynthia Arredondo
- Erica Mondragon
- Jennifer Cobian

Absent:

- Heidi Carrillo
- Julia Ruedas-Alternate

- b. Flag Salute: led by Pablo Tamashiro

- c. Approval of Agenda:

A motion was made by Pablo Tamashiro and seconded by Erica Mondragon to approve the agenda for February 27, 2023.

6 Ayes            0 Nos            0 Abstained            3 Absent

Ms. Eredia thanked everyone in attendance. She stated the reason the meeting was called was to discuss the action taken by the Board to cancel the DLR Group in which 1.1 million dollars from the bond have been used and will now be wasted. It is now up to the district to see what they can do to recoup it. This COC is an independent meeting outside the Board and administration. By law, we have to enforce oversight over the bond dollars being spent as the bond money has restricted use. We can hire an attorney to represent this group to make sure the board is doing what they are supposed to do.

Ms. Eredia asked if Zuzanna Tkaczow, the District's attorney could comment on what was going on. She stated she was only in attendance to observe and listen to the meeting.

Ms. Eredia said the COC needs a separate attorney, not the District's. The District will incur the fees for the attorney. She asked if the committee was ok moving forward to hire an attorney.

Pablo Tamashiro, COC Co-Chair, asked what will happen to what is left of the bond money since we're not using it for this project. Wael Elatar, Chief Business Official, said we will be using the bond dollars for other projects. It will be used for all the approved board projects. Mr. Tamashiro asked if we convince the Board to change their mind, can we move forward with the project? Mr. Elatar said it is suspended right now but yes, we could move forward with the project, but as of right now the project has been stopped as directed by the Board. If we move forward with DSA approval, the District will have four years to start construction with the approved plan. If we exceed the four years, the District will have to resubmit.

Jennifer Cobian, COC member, asked how long the contract with Pasadena City College (PCC) is for. Mr. Elatar stated the existing contract is set to expire on June 30, 2023, and the District is currently negotiating a new contract as directed by the Board. The initial contract was a 7-year contract which expired June 2020, and the Board directed a short-term contract for two years that expires June 2023.

A discussion regarding the Adult Ed. program took place regarding enrollment, funding, and history. Ms. Eredia asked if PCC is taking our students. Mr. Elatar stated we have a clause in our agreement that they cannot compete with us.

Mr. Tamashiro asked what Norma Macias, Director of Facilities, Maintenance, Operations, and Transportation, and Mr. Elatar felt about the Board's decision. Ms. Macias said they are here to execute whatever the board directs them to do, which is to terminate the DLR Group agreement and negotiate with PCC. Mr. Elatar agreed with Ms. Macias.

Ms. Cobian stated that the bond money was used the way it was voted on previously. The bond authorized the spending of the money on the projects and does not see a misuse of the money or money inappropriately spent. She is hesitant on spending additional money on an attorney. Ms. Eredia chimed in and said the misuse of money happened when the Board canceled the project with the DLR Group. We already spent 1.1 million dollars which will be wasted and sees misuse of the bond dollars.

A discussion regarding moving the transition students to the comprehensive schools took place.

Mr. Tamashiro would like to find a middle ground. If we do stop everything the money will be wasted. If we can move forward with DSA approval, we can use the approval to move forward with the project within the allotted 4 years. Mr. Elatar said the District directed the DLR Group to terminate the project and provide a final invoice. DLR Group will not act on the comments for DSA and everything will stop. Joanna Haro, COC member, asked what our job as committee members was; do we just see what the Board decides and sign a paper saying it is ok? Mr. Elatar said the bylaws serve as the guidelines to make sure the bond dollars are spent appropriately. Ms. Haro asked if we could use the District's attorneys. Mr. Elatar said it would be a conflict of interest. Luis Aguilar, COC member, gave his opinion from a tax dollar perspective. He wants more information; every dollar has to be accounted for. Cynthia Arredondo asked if there will be a cost to the district if we hire an attorney. Ms. Eredia answered there would be a cost. Mr. Tamashiro stated that 1.1 million dollars has already been spent, and spending a little more to get more information is reasonable. If we can continue with DSA, it would serve its purpose but stopping it all, is a waste of money. Mr. Tamashiro made a motion to set up a meeting with an attorney and get more information from an expert. Mr. Aguilar seconded the motion. The motion carried 6-0.

A motion to end the meeting was made by Mr. Tamashiro and Ms. Haro seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:14 p.m.