

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

March 31, 1998

6:30 PM

Mayor Wieczorek called the meeting to order.

Mayor Wieczorek called for the Pledge of Allegiance which was led by Alderman O'Neil.

A moment of silent prayer is observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Wihby, Klock, Reiniger, Sysyn, Clancy, Shea, O'Neil, Girard, Rivard, Pariseau, Cashin, Thibault, Hirschmann (late)

Absent: Aldermen Pinard

Alderman Cashin asked if the Parkside addition would be available for them to move in, in the Fall of 1999 for the school year.

Mayor Wieczorek answered yes, it should be.

Alderman Cashin stated in 1997, it was the second priority and was funded at \$2.5 million. In 1998, it drops down to the sixth priority and is not funded until 1999. I don't understand how this happened.

Mr. MacKenzie replied in the request for the FY97 proposal, the School Board requested the Parkside addition in the number two spot. There was a lot of discussion about alternatives at the time brought about by several parties, including some School Board members and others. That held the program in abase and the next year when they asked for the Parkside addition, they actually moved the request down to the sixth place, this is the School Board, and they had requested it in a future year rather than the current year they were requesting. They have again brought that back up to second place this year. I am not sure why the change in priorities, but they did switch back and forth.

Mayor Wieczorek stated it is a very high priority and I recognize that and appreciate all the people that spoke at the public hearing to show their support for it and I will be shocked if this Board doesn't support that being the highest priority here and being ready for occupancy in September of 1999.

Alderman Girard asked if the addition to Parkside could be accomplished by September of 1998.

Mr. MacKenzie answered no, I don't believe so.

Alderman Girard asked if the School Department is considering moving the sixth grade from Parker-Varney into Parkside prior to the addition being built.

Mr. MacKenzie answered I know that it has been discussed, but I suspect that there is disagreement as to whether they should do that or not.

Alderman Girard asked Mayor Wieczorek whether he knew if the School Board was considering moving the sixth grade from Parker-Varney into Parkside prior to the addition being built.

Mayor Wieczorek replied I think they are talking about having some portable classrooms, but I am not sure. I know there are four classes and that is what is at Parker-Varney for the sixth grade. They might be bringing them over in temporaries or they might not with the understanding that it will be ready for occupancy in September of 1999 at the latest.

Alderman O'Neil stated I heard a number thrown out the other night of 15 classrooms, is that correct. If that is the right number, shouldn't we be building 18 or 20 classrooms so that we don't get ourselves in this predicament again. It seems that all we do is build to the immediate need with no thought to the future. Northwest was too small the day it opened. They tell me the middle school is close to too small and it hasn't even opened yet. I would just throw that out as a recommendation that whatever the right number, if it is 15 now maybe we should look at building 20 classrooms.

Mayor Wieczorek replied I know that there is only a need for four right now because the others are over there. This is only the four from Parker-Varney so this is the purpose of having the architect take a look.

Mr. MacKenzie stated they are only bringing over four classes from Parker-Varney so although they are overcrowded now and may need additional classrooms, the immediate need is only for four classrooms.

Alderman O'Neil replied but they were talking about using janitor's closets and everything else so it is going to be more than four classrooms.

Mr. MacKenzie responded it is definitely going to be more than four but probably less than fifteen. What they have asked for is a brand new music room, brand new library, brand new cafeteria, existing facilities that they have that are currently the same size as Hillside and Southside, they have requested new facilities. I think what we have to do is make sure that we go through the entire program with the school officials, both the principal as well as school administration to review the enrollment numbers and get an exact idea of how many classrooms and new facilities they need.

Alderman O'Neil stated my point is that if for some reason that number is ten, we really should build fourteen or sixteen rooms so that there is room for additional expansion five or ten years from now. We seem to build towards the need of today and not for the future and I hope we get out of that mode.

Mayor Wieczorek replied it is my hope that at some point this balances out. As you know, this isn't something that just continues to grow in perpetuity. I guess that is the purpose of making a study because the elementary grades are now dropping down so there is a bubble that is going through now.

Alderman O'Neil responded the City has a history of not building big enough, your Honor and that is my point.

Alderman Rivard stated if the school is going to be open in 1999, when are we going to fund it. In this CIP this year?

Mr. MacKenzie answered we had debated this question before and the Mayor had put in his budget to go through the testing, planning and design for this fiscal year and then come in early next year for the next year's funding for the actual construction. That would have been a little tight. I think that given the discussions on the need for that facility, I do have some suggestions on how to fund that in this current fiscal year so that if the planning and testing goes well, we could get under construction as soon as possible.

Alderman Rivard asked how much are you looking for.

Mr. MacKenzie answered what I am suggesting is that there were funds set aside in the proposed CIP for a Chandler replacement, which was intended at one point for the Lake Shore facility. The School Board is now looking at leasing a facility rather than constructing a facility and that would be an interim solution. Maybe two to three years. So that was \$2.5 million of bond money that I think we can reprogram to use this year. If we do need a new facility for Chandler next year, we would use the funds that we earmarked in the next year for the Parkside. Now \$2.5 million is perhaps a little more than they need at Parkside. I would suggest a number of \$2.2 million. What that is, is the School Administration requested \$1.9 million for the addition. I think that is a little tight. I would also like to see the Tech Ed facilities, which we now estimate at \$200,000, to be included in that number so they would have both the addition and the new Tech Ed rooms at Parkside. We do have the money to do the Tech Ed facilities currently at both Hillside and Southside. We have been waiting for the School Board to come up with their educational program and their educational curriculum and they have now done that so we know that the Tech Ed centers in total for the three schools will be about \$600,000. Doing that will bring existing junior highs up to par with what the new middle school has in terms of modern technical education facilities. I would propose that the budget for the Parkside addition, including Tech Ed facilities, would be about \$2.2 million. I would also note that the School Administration has asked for some money in case there is a fit up of the facility they are proposing for Chandler and I would say that is about \$200,000. The balance there of about \$100,000 the Board could just unprogram at this time.

Alderman Thibault stated although there is a need for only four rooms right now, let us not forget that Parkside has already absorbed three classrooms from the Northwest Elementary. This is why, as Alderman O'Neil was just saying, they are meeting in janitor's rooms and closets out there. That doesn't make any sense. The west side has always been the last to get the proper schools they need. Like Alderman O'Neil just said, I would like to make sure that this time we build something that they don't end up needing outside classrooms again.

Alderman Clancy asked how about Chandler School. I know there is talk about going down to Easter Seals at 555 Auburn Street. Lets clear the air for the people here on the east side, especially the people who send children to the Chandler School. Where do they stand?

Mr. MacKenzie answered they would be taking the enrollment that is at Chandler, which is an older, dilapidated building and as I understand it, moving it to this new facility. I am not sure if that has been publicly released yet, but it is my understanding that the School Administration and the School Board is moving in that direction. Easter Seals was redone by a private group several years ago into

classrooms. It is a one floor facility providing full handicapped accessibility and it is my understanding that it is reasonably well suited to that program. Certainly much better suited than the old Chandler building.

Alderman Clancy asked is that just going to be temporary relief.

Mr. MacKenzie answered I think it is an interim program for perhaps two to three years until we...

Mayor Wieczorek interjected longer than that. They are talking about four to five years. They are still negotiating so don't start negotiating here, let the School Board do it.

Alderman Clancy stated we have the property and we have the land at McDonough School.

Mayor Wieczorek replied let the School Board take care of the School Board business.

Alderman O'Neil responded, your Honor, it isn't always the School Board. It ends up here when it comes to the building so it is not always the School Board.

Alderman Hirschmann stated I have toured Parkside many times. My son is a pupil there and seeing four more classrooms come over from Parker-Varney is...if you don't build it right it is going to be a problem. My son eats lunch at 10:30 a.m. because of the conditions of the cafeteria right now so he comes home and eats supper around 2:30 p.m. or 3:00 p.m. If you don't build that thing big enough, putting these kids from Alderman Cashin's ward in that school it is going to be incredible. You have got to plan on that cafeteria plus classrooms. Tech Ed, that is a luxury. I went and saw handicapped children in that closet that Alderman O'Neil was talking about, mentally challenged kids that have a 20' x 20' room that they are being taught in.

Mr. MacKenzie replied it is our intent to provide the full facilities that they believe they need. We do see that at the middle school level the enrollments are going to continue to increase probably for the next four years. I think the City is very fortunate in seeing that for the first time since 1984, the elementary school population has started to decline. That is the bubble that I talked about before that is now moving through. When we talk about programs like Chandler, we are proposing that we take 800 children out of the elementary school system, move them to the middle school which frees up some room plus you see a declining enrollment of elementary students over the long-term. I think there may be some

opportunities in the long-term for Chandler to appropriately put them in one of the existing schools, but I think that is something the School Board has to explore and if they want our assistance I am happy to provide it.

Alderman Wihby stated we have \$2.5 million for Chandler that we are going to let them go to Easter Seals and everybody is happy with that decision anyway, at least in the short-term and in the long-term it will have to be evaluated over the next couple of years. The \$2.2 million would go towards Parkside out of the \$2.5 million. \$200,000 would go to fit up Chandler. That leaves \$100,000. I know when we had the hearing the other day, there was a lot of people from the Hartnett Lot and they were looking for a couple of hundred thousand over there. Is there, somebody had said something about the ADA coming up with \$90,000. Could we use this \$100,000 and the \$90,000?

Mr. MacKenzie replied we could let me just...one other funding source for the Chandler program which has never been used, partly because of the strings attached, was \$275,000 of CDBG money and that is HUD funding that has to be earmarked for certain things. That was earmarked about two and a half years ago and that has not been used. I would also recommend that at the present time that be deprogrammed for Chandler and that does free that up for use. One of the eligible uses is handicapped accessibility. It can also be used for programs for street improvements and other improvements in eligible areas. One of the suggestions I had was for Elmwood Gardens the CIP committee has been working for a couple of years and heard residents from Elmwood Gardens as to how they could have their streets and sewers and drainage rebuilt, so that is a cost of \$201,000. That would be an option for the Board to take. If they took \$201,000 and put the balance into handicapped accessibility at Hartnett, I think that would almost cover both Hartnett and the Elmwood Gardens which has been discussed.

Alderman Wihby stated so we could take the extra \$100,000 plus the \$74,000 in CDBG funds for Hartnett.

Mr. MacKenzie replied that could be done, yes.

Alderman O'Neil asked how can you bond the \$100,000 for Hartnett.

Mr. MacKenzie responded there is already earmarked \$100,000, so putting it together with another \$100,000 does make it a more sizable bond.

Alderman Wihby asked when would we do that. Where is all this? Is it sitting around somewhere that we are going to get to it later.

Mr. MacKenzie answered no. We have been discussing this in the last two days so it is not on the agenda, but if the Board wants to talk about the CIP program tonight, I would offer that as an option. I thought the Board was going to review, act upon and make changes to the CIP program so this would be done at that time.

Alderman Shea stated I find it amazing how we can jettison school funding to Hartnett playgrounds or Hartnett improvement. It is amazing to me how school fund money can go into repairing something that has to do with the common, ordinary types of improvements in the community. My question is there is quite a bit of portables that have to be funded. Is that going to be taken into consideration? I know that Hillside needs them and Southside needs portables.

Mr. MacKenzie replied portables do not come out of the CIP budget, they come out of the operating budget of the School Administration. That has been earmarked and has been requested through the operating budget. I do still question myself the extent to which that number of portables is needed because what they are doing is taking 809 sixth graders and putting them into an 810 capacity new middle school. I am not sure if the numbers are that far off. I know the School Administration has requested a lot of money for portables, but you are moving up 809 kids and you are adding a capacity of 810. Those two numbers are not too far apart.

Alderman Shea stated the principal over at Chandler now raised several objections to the Easter Seal program. She noted that there were problems with the bathrooms and so forth. I am wondering if the fact of the negotiations are going to, you know if it is a three to five year plan which isn't in cement of course, but I am wondering if that is really solving a problem and creating another at the same time.

Mr. MacKenzie replied I have not been involved in those negotiations. That has been the School Board and the School Administration.

Alderman Shea stated there are several special needs students coming into the school population, different minorities that are coming in that need foreign language and so forth and I am wondering if that is taken into the planning of Parkside as well. I think they have quite a few that have been added.

Mr. MacKenzie responded there are no unique requirements necessary for a school building just because of different languages. There are ESL classes. They typically like to have those smaller because it is more difficult to learn in a different language so that will be taken into account. There are special needs rooms typically that you don't like to have more than twelve students in a class.

Alderman Shea stated in reference to the elementary, there is a move afoot to cut down on the size of the first and second grades which may or may not impact an elementary school in terms of how many students are in a particular classroom, so although they may free up classrooms, there may be a need equally for the number that is being freed up because the lowering of the class sizes.

Alderman Girard asked the money that was there for the alternative facility, Lake Shore Hospital, was also so the School Department could develop an alternative school to handle the special ed population and hopefully contain those costs. With Lake Shore out of the way, is there an alternative that is being researched or is the School Board going to be coming back to this Board next year or the year after to say we want \$4 million for an alternative facility.

Mayor Wieczorek answered are you asking me to predict what they are going to do. I don't have any idea what they might do. I know what they are doing currently but I don't know what they are going to come up with next year.

Alderman O'Neil moved to recommend to Mr. MacKenzie and the School Board that the Parkside addition be built not only for today's needs, but for tomorrow's needs. Alderman Thibault duly seconded the motion. Mayor Wieczorek called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Resolution:

“Amending a Resolution ‘Approving the Community Improvement Program for 1999, Raising and Appropriating Monies Therefor and Authorizing Implementation of Said Program’.”

On motion of Alderman Reiniger, duly seconded by Alderman Klock, it was voted to read by title only.

Communication from Deputy City Clerk advising that if the Board wishes to proceed with expedited projects a motion is in order to amend the resolution as follows:

Amend Table 1-4 by deleting projects as follows:

5.10155	School/Parks Improvement	-\$200,000.
5.10176	West Memorial Field Improvements	-\$350,000.
5.10258	Livingston Park Capital Improvements	-\$560,000.
5.10263	Livingston Park Athletic Facility	-\$170,000.
5.10291	Riverwalk Planning and Development	-\$1,600,000.
7.50101	Sidewalk Construction Program	-\$200,000.
8.20411	Telephone Upgrade	-\$190,000.
8.30340B	City Hall Security/Audio/Visual	-\$600,000.
8.30354	School Capital Improvement Program	-2,350,000.

Total Amendments to Table 1-4 -\$6,22,000.

Amend paragraph 3, page 3 of the resolution by decreasing the amount of \$15,570,000. to read \$9,350,000.

Amend Table 1-5 by deleting projects as follows:

5.10179	Ammon Center Parking	-\$540,000.
7.30281	Terminal Expansion Project	-\$12,500,000.
7.30282	Construct Interim Parking Lot	-\$750,000.
7.30286	Runway 6/24 Extension	-\$8,000,000.

Total Amendments to Table 1-5 -\$21,790,000.

Amend paragraph 4, page 3 of the resolution by increasing the amount from \$70,955,000. to read \$98,620,000.

Alderman Wihby moved to so amend the resolution as outlined. Alderman Reiniger duly seconded the motion. Mayor Wiczorek called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated a motion is in order to amend Table 1-4 which is your bond table by reducing Special Needs Facility (Chandler School) by \$2.3 million for a new total of \$200,000; adding a new project, Parkside Improvements in the amount of \$2.2 million; increasing by \$100,000 Parking Facilities Improvement Program (7.10999, Hartnett Lot) for a new total of \$200,000. The bottom line on the bond resolution table does not change.

Alderman Cashin moved to further amend the resolution as outlined by the Clerk. Alderman Wihby duly seconded the motion. Mayor Wieczorek called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Alderman Wihby moved that the Appropriating Resolution ought to pass and layover as amended. Alderman Klock duly seconded the motion. Mayor Wieczorek called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Alderman O'Neil asked are we going to get a finalized form of this. All we have is what changes there are.

Mr. MacKenzie answered once you make all these amendments, we will provide a final version to the City Clerk and I believe that will be on the next agenda.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated you will get the new CIP budget with your agenda for the April 7 meeting.

Alderman O'Neil asked that a copy be provided as soon as it is received.

Deputy Clerk Johnson agreed to do that.

Alderman Shea asked if something could be added to the CIP budget.

Deputy Clerk Johnson answered you could amend it at the Board level if you want.

There being no further business to come before the Committee on Finance, on motion of Alderman Clancy, duly seconded by Alderman Pariseau, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee