

## Feb 7, 2024 | 🗓 Budget Committee Meeting

Attendees: Martin Barron Kory Kalahar Julie Norton Kimberly White WSD Cabinet

Absent: Diana Haglund

### Notes

MB - Major misrepresentation in the Exec. Summary - reflects poorly on Cabinet & Board. A \$10M forecasting error is not a spending error. Boils down to three equal parts - 1) enrollment decline, 2) COVID \$ going away, and 3) 3M error. All because we immediately took action and ended up with a \$2M budget surplus. We want to give the real perspective, not that we screwed up in 2022. Major mischaracterization. Suggest going back to 2022 saying there were three parts to the 9M. Everyone needs to understand that the forecasting error does not mean we spent the money. These are the real things that we need to focus on today. Need to be factual and regain trust.

KK - We do want to get it right and make sure that people understand that it wasn't money that was spent.

MB - Delivery date of Davis's work? Curious about future boundary changes and how that will work.

JN - What is the communication about moving Valley into Columbia? May ease the impacts for some. Is it intentionally part of this Plan yet? If it develops as an option, need to communicate that as soon as possible. Could there be a space share there with some age bands remaining?

KK - Valley is definitely something we are looking at. Have not solidified that plan yet. We would like to see the building used for WSD purposes. As long as we move the whole program over, we would still realize the anticipated savings.

MB - This is a big transparency and confidence issue. Talked about it on the radio. This is a multi-year problem, with a multi-year solution needed. It's very crucial what we say about Valley. Messaging will depend on how fast and how well you can do it. Demographics must be handled well. What can we say and what should we say?

KK - Columbia may be a very usable shared space; CTE is looking at having some offerings there as well.

MB - The answer is that it's under study.

MB - When one school does not need a remodeling bond in 10 years, that is important.

JN - The Board needs to explain all components to the community. Important to communicate transparently.

KK - What about compassionate separation for grieving Columbia families?

JN - Good point. That could be insensitive. Struggles with the timing of this proposal already. Feels families should have one year more. Need to know the budget ramifications for why such a quick timeline.

MB - Lead with this: Deal with building first (too many elementaries); then deal with what will we do; The sooner you bring in studies in the open, the better. Would like to see part of the budget allocated to schools where kids are moving to deal with extra social/emotional issues. Hiring additional family advocates, etc.

MB - (budget) - Good image to identify new trends and how we are dealing with them.

MB - Is this a good or bad thing for transportation efficiency?

JN - Important to see the objective data (threats of lawsuits in the community)

JN - Full classrooms, vs. Full buildings - important to distinguish.

JN - Are we certain in our numbers? KK - Yes. We were right before. Empty classrooms are being utilized for purposes other than grade-level instruction. JN - Important to make this distinction. **RB - Maybe we add a narrative about how the buildings were originally constructed - 4 tracks, what we did when we had overcrowding and what we are doing now. Accurate but worth explaining.**

MB/JN - Treat the board as hostile. They have to be able to explain things to community members when they don't believe our data.

MB - Likes these boundaries better than just sending everyone to Lincoln and Mission View, as what had been looked at previously.

JN - Mapping - is this invasive of privacy? RB - Student Directory Information. MB - Could you take the main street names off? **RB can make it a little harder to look at street names.**

JN - Any way to start tours, open houses, etc. of other schools before the decision is made? MB - Thinks it is a good idea. KK - Maybe Linc & WA do a presentation about what they are going to do to support the new kiddos. JN - Need to be presented as welcoming, not that they do it better.

MB - Would be good to have the PTA's talking together. Is there anything district can do to support this. KK - They are already doing so.

JN - Can the city help with and grant \$\$ to help with additional safety measures for walkers?

KK - will schedule some more time to review the rest of the packet. Julie available

MB - Categorical - Make sure numbers in Jeremy's tables match up with numbers referenced previously in terms of highest low income, poverty, etc. Is Jeremy using a different Metric? Cautionary advice. Make sure we don't make it look like Columbia is highest.

MB - Students at Col asking him questions at lunch buddies today - where are our teachers going? What can we do for students who have questions. Be proactive early, even though decision not made yet. JN - Need to make sure staff and students can look at this as maybe a fun thing. Maybe current teacher will be in their new school? Need staff to communicate to kids that things will be okay. Staff can air their frustrations with Cabinet.

MB - Double edged sword trying to show stuff. Get red DRAFT on top of everything very prominently. Whatever you need to show that it's a work in progress. KK - Very normal for these predictions to be made in a normal year.

MB - Hours of support - Spec. Ed. - Put a label on it. JN - Important to note that other student's support will not be decreased. MB - Bar chart pg. 42 - LRE breakdown - stuff we needed to adjust anyway. We have been working on corrective action in IEPs for two years. KK - We have additional information that will be shared from Janise in the future.

MB - Try to always mention that we are making a plan for Col while simultaneously improving and optimizing everywhere. KK - Maybe a good time to offer some suggestions. KL - Being generic with what you say should make people feel good. KK - What we are looking at is quite exciting. Will help the system overall.

#### Staff Analysis

JN - Interest form to her teacher friend implied to her that Col was being closed. MB - Validity for Col staff? KK - Extension offered, but all turned in on time regardless.

**Washington missing on Kelly's first chart showing the number of sections at each grade level at each elementary school. Need to add.** MB questioned number of classrooms at Lincoln as referenced earlier in the document.

MB - We want to make sure Monika is defended and protected in order to keep relationships strong.

#### Facilities

MB - Good idea to talk about original thought of delaying for 18 months, but the economic harm would have been greater. JN - Very important to let people know that it will hurt the entire system if we wait to close. MB 1) we have to change; no choice (reduce a school)

MB - Contradictions in Facilities study; **Maybe need to talk about waiting to move Valley until space is modified to accommodate their needs. Maybe talk about capital needs at all buildings built in that time frame. 1989.**

JN - Energy Study - what was said about Columbia? KK - It was not assessed. As things accumulate, proves another reason for closure. JN - If there is any potential messaging that we could put out indicating that "eventually" we may consider moving Valley in. MB - Valley is currently turning away students; All of these schools need to be replaced; it is not window dressing - 8 point multi-year plan, which Col is 1 point. JN - Messaging Valley with other programming. MB - No gain by moving Valley right away. Where are the 50 on waiting list coming from? Bundle your messaging - everything is part of Facilities Comm that is starting this year. 18 mo. timetable, not 6.

JN - Do we need to set up meetings with Microsoft? Make connections and find out what may be coming down the pike. KK - Yes. We need to do our due diligence.

MB - Is there a way that WSD and Entiat could work together in some capacity?

#### Staff Survey

JN - asked what's going on with AD position? Soccer coach? KK - He is still moving forward with hiring.

#### Compression Planning

MB - Asked level of Admin. that were included.

#### Conclusion

JN - Bolster that we are trying to make system-wide improvements.

#### Other

JN - How will this info be presented? KK - Hard copies and slide show. Pauses throughout. Need to move fairly swiftly.

MB - Workshop: Long-term restructuring necessity; provide opportunities for other board members to ask questions; sit quietly for the most part. Next day - different attitude. We are misrepresenting history and doing ourselves damage over and over, even in Q&A. The stumble two years ago is a footnote, not a headline. Not doing his job if he doesn't bring this up.

JN - Sean is presenting all of this in his presentations. Need to explain all that we knew about. Is there something that we did? KK-There was not a systemic plan in 2022 to rectify COVID \$\$ going away.

MB - LEA, Regionalization, enrollment lower than usual, expensive staff, inflation. All these things contribute. Still has a problem with the numbers. Wrong to say we lost \$10M.

MB - Numbers don't compute. 5M plan has only been presented to Board. Don't want to be a saboteur. Take graph showing headcount going down. Alcoa piece should not be a focus. It should be all the other things. Still call the "mistake" a \$3M one.

JN - We seem to be losing our enrollment to other districts. Can this be quantified? Can we work to keep families here. Graph shows to other districts, rather than being more specific. KK - typically we have about the same number of students choosing in as choosing out. 1600 Wenatchee kids going elsewhere. Gossip is they are going to EM, Cashmere, etc. Rumormill is that people leave WSD because we suck.

MB / JN - Need to position this District to be attractive to families as part of a long-term plan. As you say we have a declining enrollment, use this as a preamble. Restructure the District. WSD is school that takes everybody, has lots of options, etc. Use this as part of the argument for not waiting a year.

KK - Wants us all to be in alignment with the numbers. Will make what he is saying more succinct.

MB - Takes risks. Your overall plan is good. Plan would generate \$5. That's good. Wants people to understand that it's not about a goof-up. Sean may need to further explain what inflation has caused. Don't like seeing \$8M on the board, so will say something "fuzzy" about it at the meeting.

JN - Same spot. Second guessing numbers. Want to be critical, yet supportive. Trusts the vision and the plan. Sales side of this is amplifying how not doing this now amplifies the problems.

MB - Maybe say we are still working on the numbers. Issues with \$4M set aside for OCR complaint that will likely cost more, now reserves less than expected. **Sell Valley building and use funds to help with Softball complex.**

Still thrown by Sean talking about \$7M back to back plans and "capacity". Wants Sean to deliver the same message as Kory does about long-term plan . . . .developing situations that are adverse to us.

KK - May not be able to get all their points in by Monday. Hopefully a better Draft.

JN - Maybe small walk-through on Monday before Board meeting.

MB - Upfront ordering of what you are doing is critical. OK with 5 million dollars and three big changes.

JN - Workshop for the purpose of diving in. Even if we aren't talking about numbers, there still needs to be solid work on the options we have looked at.

MB - Problem analysis is real. Synthesis of what the actions would achieve is preliminary. Need a good analysis.

JN - Need a final analysis for the community. Maybe identify certain areas as needing further study

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Martin came by. Dropped off his notes from reviewing the analysis. Stressed that in the Exec. Summary you should say the numbers are preliminary and will be refined in the coming months. Also indicated that he hasn't had a chance to review the board packet, but will try to do so soon. I told him Monday would be fine and noted that Julie had some questions about the contracts. He then said he knew there was an issue with the bond, pushing too hard . . . something about the Board President and Superintendent relationship, and that Kory and Julie would need to talk about it before the meeting.