

**Official Minutes of
MARION COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

March 27, 2024

CALL TO ORDER:

The Marion County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) met in a workshop session at 9:15 a.m. on Wednesday, March 27, 2024 at the Southeastern Livestock Pavilion (SELP) located at 2232 NE Jacksonville Road in Ocala, Florida.

INTRODUCTION OF WORKSHOP BY CHAIRMAN MICHELLE STONE

Chairman Curry advised that the joint workshop is scheduled this morning with the Marion County School Board (MCSB).

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting opened with invocation by Commissioner McClain and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of our Country.

ROLL CALL

Upon roll call the following members were present: Chairman Michelle Stone, District 5; Vice-Chairman Kathy Bryant, District 2; Commissioner Craig Curry, District 1; Commissioner Matthew McClain, District 3; and Commissioner Carl Zalak, III, District 4. Also present were Chief Assistant County Attorney Dana Olesky; County Administrator Mounir Bouyounes; Assistant County Administrator (ACA) Angel Roussel; ACA Tracy Straub; and ACA Amanda Tart.

The following members of the MCSB were present: Chairman Nancy Thrower, District 4; Vice-Chairman Lori Conrad, District 2; Board Member Allison Campbell, District 1; Board Member Eric Cummings, District 3; and Board Member Sarah James, District 5. Also present were Superintendent of Marion County Schools Dr. Diane Gullett and School Board Attorney Jeremy Powers.

It was noted that members of the various municipalities were present.

The Deputy Clerk was in receipt of a 43 page Agenda packet to follow along with the PowerPoint presentations.

WORKSHOP PRESENTATION

1. Opening Remarks - Mounir Bouyounes, County Administrator

County Administrator Mounir Bouyounes advised that this is the first Joint Workshop since the approval of the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) on February 7, 2023. He stated staff are encountering situations that may require clarification, updating or changes. Mr. Bouyounes advised that he is relying on the Technical Working Group (TWG) to convene and review those concerns, prior to bringing back recommendations to the BCC, MSCB, and municipality Boards/Councils in the future. He commented on the importance of coordinating the siting and construction of new schools moving forward, noting coordination needs to be transparent and executed in concert with all the different staff involved in the discussions.

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2. Overview - Chuck Varadin, Director of Growth Services, Marion County Director Chuck Varadin, Growth Services, presented a PowerPoint presentation, as seen on the overhead screens. He advised that the Public Schools Planning Officials (PSPO) Joint Planning Workshop provides opportunities for the PSPO to discuss policy, set direction, reach understanding on issues of mutual concern, and coordinate land use and school facilities planning. Mr. Varadin provided an overview of the progress summary leading up to today's workshop.

Chairman Nancy Thrower, MCSB, noted the new ILA was not fully executed by all parties until March 15, 2023.

3. City of Ocala Presentation - Jeff Shrum, Growth Management Director Growth Management Director Jeff Shrum, City of Ocala, advised that the City is currently working on its 2050 vision, which is the update to the 2035 vision. He commented on population projections, noting Florida Clearinghouse Data (Schimberg) Population Estimates provides estimates for the cities and not just the County overall. Mr. Shrum provided an overview of population estimate data ranging from 2021 to 2050. He commented on an overview of the development approval process and referred to a slide relating to various projects within the City of Ocala.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Mr. Shrum stated a breakdown of single family residential (SFR) versus (vs.) multi-family residential (MFR) can be provided.

Mr. Shrum provided an overview of the 2023 calendar year (CY) site plan and subdivision approvals throughout the City of Ocala, noting there were approximately 2,500 units. He commented on projects that are still under review (CY 2023), totaling roughly 2,200 units.

Mr. Shrum addressed road construction projects, noting most of the focus has been on SW/NW 44th Avenue. He advised that the goal of the projects is to open a north/south facility parallel to Interstate 75 (I-75) that provides connectivity from State Road (SR) 200 all the way up to Highway 326 to the north. Mr. Shrum stated most of surplus properties in the City of Ocala are smaller lots typically used for SFR. He advised that the City is in the process of developing an application (app) to identify surplus property citywide, noting the City is trying to get those lots incentivized for affordable housing. Mr. Shrum commented on the TWG's ability to better define opportunities on surplus and underutilized properties as the MCSB may be looking at school sites.

Ms. Thrower commented on the slide referencing the Winding Oaks project, noting it is her understanding there will be approximately 2,000 homes on that tract.

In response to Ms. Thrower, Mr. Shrum advised that some of the housing in West Oak will be affordable housing units. He stated for 2023, building permits and certificates of occupancy (CO) are much lower than approved units (roughly 300). There is a timing lag relating to building in addition to some projects going away completely.

Chairman Stone advised that when the TWG reconvenes, they will drill down the figures and bring that data back next year when this entire Board is present for the joint workshop. School Board Member Dr. Sarah James stated the Marion County School Superintendent Dr. Diane Gullet, her staff and others will be working this fall on rezoning lines to accommodate 2 new elementary schools. She noted the importance of obtaining data relating to the number of housing units that may come online to avoid the need to redraw zoning and boundary lines again in a couple of years.

Commissioner Zalak commented on the density relating to the SW 49th Avenue Road corridor, noting in addition to a new school being built, there is other infrastructure like fire stations and trying to build the appropriate road capacity. He addressed the need for

conversation regarding road capacities and how to work together to ensure roadways are still traversable during school hours. Commissioner Zalak commented on issues relating to traffic at Westport High School.

Commissioner Curry questioned the remaining buildout within the City of Ocala. Mr. Shrum advised that the City is currently reviewing data relating to all vacant and underdeveloped properties.

In response to Commissioner Curry, Mr. Shrum advised the City of Ocala is approximately 50 square miles in size.

Ms. Thrower commented on 2 placeholder dates for the TWG to meet, noting they are September 13, and November 6, 2024.

4. Marion County Data Presentation - Chuck Varadin, Director of Growth Services, Marion County

Mr. Varadin stated there was an Administrative Subcommittee to the TWG that met to discuss the data/variables to provide. He referred to a slide showing a list of data, the timeframe the data covers, and the format in which the data was provided. He commented on a map showing the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and the Farmland Preservation Area (FPA). Mr. Varadin advised that the County is going through its Evaluation Appraisal Report (EAR) process for the Comprehensive Plan and does not anticipate any changes to the UGB. He referred to a population density base map, noting the animation reflects changes in population from 2015 through 2045. Mr. Varadin commented on increases in the UGB, southwest corridor, Marion Oaks and the City of Ocala. He advised that the population heat map (utilizing the same data) shows that by 2045 the most densely populated area shifts from the City of Ocala to SR 200 by SW 80th Avenue. The map data includes all ages. Mr. Varadin referenced a map displaying residential development by quadrant from January 2016 through December 2023, which indicates the southwest corridor has the greatest number of approved units and building permits.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Mr. Varadin stated the units have mostly been approved over the past 5 years and are mainly Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) and the building permitting relates to units ready to build.

Mr. Varadin addressed the current year (2023) approved units, noting in this instance, approved means the project has been through the Development Review Committee (DRC). The current year pending units relate to projects pending the DRC process. He stated the residential development map covers the 8 year timeframe from 2016 through 2023 and indicates the southwest corridor is where a lot of the development is occurring. In response to School Board Member Dr. Allison Campbell, Mr. Varadin stated Marion Oaks and Silver Springs Shores (SSS) continue to see growth on the heat map, yet they remain outside of the UGB. He stated as the County goes through the EAR process it will look at Planned Service Areas (PSAs) to possibly help provide some planning and development to those areas.

Commissioner Bryant advised that due to when and how those subdivisions were platted, they have never been part of the UGB, noting it is just how that development came along rather than the intent of the Board.

Mr. Varadin referred to a map of the 5 year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) roadway improvement projects, which shows a lot of the capacity improvement projects in the general southwest corridor area. He advised of a quick response (QR) code linked to a residential development web map showing the number of units, the unit by type, and the status of the development/project.

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In response to Dr. James, Deputy Director Ken Weyrauch, Growth Services, stated the green dots on the map indicate the projects have building permits, noting some of those are larger developments that will be built in phases; therefore, not all units are in the permitting stage. He advised that the data does not provide a perfect picture of possible impact fees that could be in the pipeline, noting his team is working to better manage and visualize that through the maps and tables.

Commissioner Curry commented on the impacts of the Great Recession and the COVID-19 pandemic on both building and impact fees. He stated the Ocala Metro Chamber and Economic Partnership (CEP) has indicated the County is between 4,000 and 5,000 units short of what is needed based on growth projections, noting there are approximately 269 new residents that move to the County on a weekly basis. He questioned if Mr. Varadin concurred with that figure.

Mr. Varadin stated based on the figures from the Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR), the prediction could be roughly 10,000 new residents annually.

Commissioner Bryant stated a good way to identify if there is a housing shortage is to start with the Marion County Association of Realtors to determine how much inventory is available.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Councilmember Valerie Hanchar, City of Dunnellon, stated there is an approximate 3 month inventory, noting anything that lists today should take 3 months from list to close. She stated a lot of people are testing the waters trying to get the price they want, and it depends on where the listing is located. Ms. Hanchar stated properties priced between \$200,000.00 and \$350,000.00 are the median, noting she would not consider that affordable.

Commissioner Bryant stated based on the multi-family units being constructed throughout the County she questions whether the County is short on units.

Commissioner Curry commented on data he was provided by realtors relating to a decline in sales due to the increase in interest rates.

Mr. Varadin advised that staff is going to continue working to refine the data.

Chairman Stone stated by the time the TWG comes back together, she hopes the figures will be more specific relating to multi-family units coming online and what is in the pipeline for the benefit of the MCSB's ability to budget.

5. Proposed Table of Contents for the Future Report to the Public-School Planning Officials (PSPO) members - Chuck Varadin and David Herlihy

Mr. Varadin provided a brief overview relating to the proposed table of contents for the future report to the PSPO.

Planning and Governmental Relations Manager David Herlihy, Marion County Public Schools (MCPS), advised that he previously met with Mr. Varadin and some of his staff to discuss the content included in the ILA and the list Mr. Varadin presented earlier. He commented on the supply and demand approach utilized in addition to the related cost and budget data. Mr. Herlihy addressed the likelihood of limitations relating to what the data will enable the parties to do, as well as Mr. Bouyounes' comments relating to changes needed in the ILA itself.

Mr. Varadin clarified that the municipalities provide data, the data is filtered and provided to the MCSB to perform analysis prior to providing the information to the TWG for feedback and vetting purposes before that information is then submitted to the PSPO by the November 30, 2024 deadline.

Chairman Stone advised that the November 30, 2024 deadline provides the PSPO

adequate time to review the information prior to the next meeting sometime during the first quarter of 2025.

6. Marion County Public Schools (MCPS) April 2024 Update: Diane Gullett, Ed.D., Superintendent; Margarete Talbert-Irving, Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction; David Herlihy, AICP -- Planning & Governmental Relations Manager; Barbara Dobbins -- Sr. Executive Director of Operations; Theresa Boston-Ellis, Chief Financial Officer

Superintendent Dr. Diane Gullett, MSPS, advised that there are 45,000 students in Marion County that she has the privilege to serve, noting her commitment to ensure everything is being done for students to be successful. She referred to a slide, as seen on the overhead screens, which provides a snapshot of the MCPS 5-Year Strategic Plan. Dr. Gullett stated the MCPS vision statement is "Helping every student succeed". She commented on the different needs students have and meeting those students where they are to ensure they have a choice in the future and that they can be successful in the choices they want for their future. Dr. Gullett addressed the foundations for success and the MCPS goals, noting goal 1 is student success. She stated goals 2 through 5 (safe and positive learning and working environment, talent management, fiscal and operational efficiency, and community engagement and communications) support goal 1. Commissioner Zalak out at 10:11 a.m.

Dr. Gullett provided an overview of MCPS District highlights relating to partnerships, programs, awards, appropriations, grants, coursework and outcomes. She addressed goal 1, noting the MCPS District grade improved to a "B" this year.

Commissioner Zalak back at 10:16 a.m.

Dr. Gullett stated the goal is to move the MCPS District from the bottom third to the top third of the State. She advised that kindergarten readiness increased from 66th to 37th in the State because 2 years ago prekindergarten (Pre-K) was added at every elementary school. Middle school acceleration increased from 34th to 28th in the State and College and Career Acceleration increased from 34th to 29th statewide. The MCPS District experienced a 57% pass rate on Advanced Placement (AP) exams, which is the highest ever. Dr. Gullett commented on goal 2 relating to a safe and positive environment. She advised of a request to accelerate school hardening, noting 96% of those related tasks have been completed. Dr. Gullett addressed the commitment to making sure students are in classrooms, emphasizing the importance of attendance. She expressed appreciation towards various community leaders and members who volunteer, mentor and provide health education as a preventive measure. Goal 3 is talent management. Dr. Gullett commented on partnerships with local universities to provide tuition, fees and books, in addition to paid internships for aspiring educators to complete their college degrees. Goal 4 related to fiscal and operational efficiency. She commented on the use of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) dollars to provide upgrades to classrooms including interactive flat panels, and a grant that made it possible to distribute over 12,000 Chromebooks. Dr. Gullett stated through partnerships, Fitness and Nutrition in Schools (FANS), and the Marion County Hospital District (MCHD), students are growing products that are now being sold and purchased by the Food and Nutrition Services Department. She reiterated the importance of on time delivery to school, noting a 3% increase relating to this measurement. There is an annual savings of \$5,800,000.00 relating to health insurance (due to self-insured status). Goal 5 relates to community engagement. Dr. Gullett advised that there have been 8 career fairs and 3 career expos

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with the CEP/CareerSource. There are 35 community members who participated in Leadership MCPS, and 131 more families participated in Family Focus events.

Mr. Herlihy advised that the PSPO Joint Planning Workshop is an opportunity to review a report prepared by the TWG and consider its recommendations; discuss policy; set direction and reach understandings concerning issues of mutual concern regarding public education and coordination of land use and school facilities planning. He noted that includes, but is not limited to, population and student growth, development trends, school needs, off-site improvements, school capacity, school funding options to reduce the need for additional permanent student stations (to provide for additional permanent student stations), roadway improvements, joint use opportunities, the District Facilities Work Program, and Educational Plant Survey.

Mr. Herlihy stated the MCPS District Facilities Work Program, and Educational Plant Survey are somewhat analogous to the County's Comprehensive Plan and upcoming EAR. He advised that the MCPS District performs its Educational Plant Survey every 5 years, which is an entire inventory including a combination of walkthroughs of the buildings/facilities and review of the databases and other materials. That information is utilized to develop an assessment of facility needs for the next 5 years worth of the 5 year work plans.

Director of Student Assignment and Records Stephen Ayres, MCPS, stated the capacity numbers he will share are based off the 120 enrollment count. He referred to a map depicting elementary school capacity, noting the areas in red are at 90% capacity or higher, the yellow areas are at 80% to 90% capacity and those areas in green are below 80% capacity. Mr. Ayres commented on a map showing middle school capacity (same color coding as the previous map), which shows most of the red area is located in the southwest corridor. The map for high school capacity illustrates the areas over 90% are located in the southwest portion of the County. He advised that the capacity numbers are done every 20 days, and they are posted on the MCPS District website.

Mr. Herlihy referred to a graph representing enrollment history from 2013 to 2024. He stated there was a fairly steady growth rate until COVID-19 hit, noting a dip at that time prior to recovery the following year and significant increases since.

Sr. Executive Director of Operations Barbara Dobbins, MCPS, advised of 4 critical areas impacting school facilities; 1.) growth; 2.) aging buildings; 3.) aging portables; and 4.) deferred maintenance. She stated there has been a 9% growth in enrollment in the past 10 years with rapid growth occurring during the last several years. Ms. Dobbins commented on the Benesch MCPS Long Range School Plan Study, noting it provides an overview of permitting from 1990 through 2021. Permitting has spiked over the last several years and from those, there are 2 averages considered to determine enrollment projections. She stated growth is occurring in high density areas such as the southwest corridor, noting the dark purple color on the map depicts a projection of possibly up to 40,000 new residents in the next 20 years based on the Benesch Long Range School Plan Study. Due to this projected growth, Benesch consultants recommend between 6 to 10 new schools will need to be built in the next 15 years to keep up with enrollment increases related to population growth. Ms. Dobbins advised that this recommendation is based on a range of 2,800 to 3,500 permits averaged per year and a low and high scenario based on the number of portables to be utilized to offset the need for construction. She stated MCPS is taking a conservative approach and recommending a total of 5 new schools and 9 additional classroom wings in the next 15 years. There will be continual reassessment to make appropriate, timely recommendations for future

growth needs as they are forecasted to develop. In the next 4 years 3 new schools will be completed in addition to 4 classroom wings in the high density growth areas of the southwest. The first 2 new schools will be elementary schools; School "W" will be located on the northwest side of Marion Oaks and begin with a capacity of 860 students with a predetermined and plotted expansion area for future classroom development. Ms. Dobbins advised that this school is designed to accommodate just under 1 mile of car rider line space along with plenty of bus drive to keep cars and bus lines off the public roadways. It is anticipated to open in August 2025. School "X" is in the southwest portion of the County in the Winding Oaks area and will also begin with a capacity of 860 students. She stated the school will also have a predetermined and plotted expansion area for future classroom expansion and follow the same layout as the previous elementary school relating to bus and car line space. It is also anticipated that this school will open in August of 2025. To address the high density growth in the southwest area at the middle school level, a new classroom wing is being added at Liberty Middle School, which will provide an additional 352 seats to the current capacity, bringing the total capacity for that school to 1,555. Ms. Dobbins noted this wing is being enhanced to shelter standards and will add approximately 400 spaces for evacuated community members in the case of an emergency that requires sheltering. The wing is on track to open in February 2025. The third new school to be built "CCC" is a high school located on the southeast side of the Marion Oaks area and will begin with a capacity of over 2,000 students. There is a third floor expansion shell and a predetermined and plotted expansion area for future classroom building. This will allow for a future capacity of over 3,000 students. She advised that the project is in the design phase and will include plenty of driving area to minimize car and bus traffic impacts to public roadways. The construction will be enhanced to emergency shelter standards and this facility will serve as the 15th public school to be utilized as an emergency shelter, providing roughly 3,000 spaces for evacuees. Ms. Dobbins stated it is anticipated this school will open in August 2026. There will be a new middle school classroom wing constructed at Horizon Academy of Marion Oaks adding another 352 student seats and bringing total capacity to 1,526. This new wing will be open in August 2027 and is also being built to shelter standards, providing an additional 400 spaces in case of an emergency. She advised that an additional classroom wing will be built at Marion Oaks Elementary School providing 288 to 352 new seats, increasing capacity to roughly 1,300 students. This new wing is anticipated to open in August 2028. Ms. Dobbins stated an additional classroom wing will be constructed at Hammett Bowen Elementary School, increasing capacity to approximately 1,300 students. This wing is also slated to open in August 2028. She advised that Phase 1 of construction spans from the current year through 2028, noting the total estimated cost exceeds \$256,000,000.00. Prior to the start of Phase 2, spanning from 2029 to 2033, MCPS will reevaluate its needs based on updated data projections for that time frame. Based on the Benesch Study, it is anticipated at this time a minimum of 9 new classroom wing additions will be needed at a cost of \$95,850,000.00. Ms. Dobbins addressed Phase 3 of new construction ranging from 2034 through 2038, noting 1 new elementary school and 1 new middle school are anticipated in the southwest area of the County. The estimated cost for those 2 schools is \$147,125,000.00. In total, as of today new construction based on the Benesch Study for high density growth is estimated at roughly \$500,000,000.00. MCPS will adjust accordingly as trends and data are reviewed and reassessed.

Ms. Dobbins stated it is anticipated that Certificate of Participation Funds will be utilized

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for a majority of new construction relating to Phase 1.

School Board Member Lori Conrad questioned the additional requirements relating to schools that also serve as shelters. Ms. Dobbins stated MCPS works directly with Director Preston Bowlin, Emergency Management, Marion County Sheriff's Office, (MCSO), and considers his recommendations for the area as he works with the State. It requires extra funding for the hardening of the buildings (particularly with the windows and projectile resistant coverings, etc.). She stated the inclusion of a generator is the choice of the MCPS, noting they are used to provide emergency lighting, ventilation (fans but not air conditioning (AC)), select receptacles for electricity, in addition to the refrigeration and freezers in the cafeteria used to feed evacuees.

In response to Ms. Conrad, Ms. Dobbins advised that there are 2 special needs shelters as of today, (Lake Weir High School and Westport High School) noting those shelters are for those community members that need continuous access to electricity for medical equipment and so forth. She stated that Emergency Management and the Department of Health (DOH) in Marion County work directly with MCPS. Those shelters require an upgraded generator to ensure there is electricity in addition to extra receptacles to plug in medical equipment. Ms. Dobbins commented on the level of coordination required between the County and MCPS because transportation is provided for the community utilizing buses to deliver individuals to the shelters.

Ms. Conrad stated instructional time was lost last year because schools were shut down a day in advance due to preparations.

School Board Member Eric Cummings advised that in the past, individuals have needed to remain in shelters longer than anticipated, noting other Counties have had partnerships with the municipalities to create a joint shelter (Pasco County), to get evacuees out of school shelters, allowing them to reopen for students.

Commissioner Bryant stated that has occurred 1 time, noting she is in favor of a County Shelter if the funding can be obtained.

Commissioner Zalak stated a better backup plan is a good idea due to issues other than weather that can prevent schools from reopening all the way. He commented on churches and other places that volunteer time or space as possible alternatives.

Chairman Stone stated it is her belief that there is a contract with Central Christian Church now.

School Board Member Allison Campbell commented on the cost of a transfer switch, which was an issue relating to Central Christian Church being used as a shelter option. She stated funding is an issue but there is room for conversation.

Dr. James questioned if there can be a conversation relating to the County and municipalities constructing their new buildings to shelter standards and/or a special needs shelter.

Chairman Stone stated she is unaware of any Marion County building plans, but in the next 20 years that may become a conversation.

Commissioner McClain advised that the Pasco County shelter was funded mostly through the State appropriations process, noting it will take coordination from all parties to push for that type of shelter.

Mr. Cummings commented on evacuees coming inland to Marion County accentuating the need for this type of shelter.

Commissioner Bryant commented on a previous conversation relating to this matter. Mr. Bouyounes advised that the County has been involved in this discussion for over 3 years, noting staff visited the Pasco County shelter and reviewed the funding process relating to

that shelter. He stated it was a coalition between the County, municipalities and the State with the majority of funding coming from the State. Mr. Bouyounes advised that the County is performing some analysis to determine the best location for a multi-use facility that can be converted to a shelter when there is a need. He stated there will be a request for funding from the State.

Ms. Thrower advised that when she toured the Pasco County shelter, it was stated they used that facility for a lot of emergency services training and the building did not sit idle.

Mr. Bouyounes advised that more details will be forthcoming this year relating to the possible site.

Ms. Dobbins commented on the impact of aging facilities relating to academic performance, teacher performance, health and safety. She advised that numerous studies have pointed out that students in deteriorating school buildings score between 5 to 11 percent (%) lower on standardized achievement tests. Some experts believe that the negative impact of substandard school buildings may be cumulative and continue to increase the longer the student attends an older, deteriorating school. Further studies report higher absenteeism due to poor air quality from aging, outdated ventilation systems, and appropriate updated lighting conditions can increase student performance up to 23%. A study regarding acoustics found that third grade students in noisy, old buildings were behind in reading and math compared to students in quieter, newer schools. Ms. Dobbins stated deteriorating schools impact student morale, noting the students are more positive when they move to a new school or renovated building. She advised that research finds poor work conditions relate to poor performance, higher absenteeism, low morale and reduces job satisfaction relating to teachers. Ms. Dobbins provided an overview regarding the ages of MCPS buildings, noting of the 50 schools in the MCPS District the oldest school in operation is 110 years old and was built in 1914, with the newest being 11 years old. She addressed the conditions relating to ancillary buildings and the need to build a new technology center due to the closure of the former District Office.

Ms. Dobbins provided a brief overview of building replacement costs for Phases 1 through 3. She stated there MCPS owns 332 portables and leases 19, noting 246 are used for instructional purposes. This translates to between 4,428 and 6,150 students in a portable at any given point of the school day. Ms. Dobbins advised that portables are intended for temporary purposes, not long-term use. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) defines long-term as anything over 4 years and recommends the replacement of portables older than 20 years. She stated MCPS is currently utilizing portables built as early as 1964 and in June of 2025, all 332 portables owned will be over 20 years old. Ms. Dobbins commented on the impacts of portables including lower attendance, lost time to utilize restrooms in the main building, no covered walks, relocating to hallways during tornado watches or warnings resulting in more lost time. She advised that by placing more portables on campuses, the cafeterias are not adequately sized to handle the increased enrollment with lunch hours spanning from 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Ms. Dobbins stated portables are not a financially reasonable investment.

Ms. Dobbins provided an overview of statistics relating to the impacts of deferred maintenance, noting every \$1.00 of deferred preventative maintenance results in \$4.00 of expenditures to repair or replace those building systems.

Ms. Dobbins presented a video relating to the aging facilities throughout the MCPS District. She commented on a portion of the video relating to 44 days without A/C or heat at Ward-Highlands Elementary School because the system was so old, parts were difficult

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to obtain.

Ms. Dobbins provided an overview of the MCPS Facility Plan 2023 through 2038 and a breakdown relating to funding.

Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Theresa Boston-Ellis, MCPS, advised that based on its previous credit rating and the fact that the debt levels are coming down, the MCPS District has determined it can borrow up to \$330,000,000.00 with a Certificate of Participation. She stated the process is occurring now, and MCPS plans to close on the Certificate of Participation in April 2024. Ms. Boston-Ellis advised that in the meantime \$92,000,000.00 has been borrowed, noting building has started relating to the 2 new elementary schools previously discussed. She commented on impact fees relating to debt. Ms. Boston-Ellis stated the financial advisors have estimated that the MCPS District could potentially collect \$37,000,000.00 annually, but they could bond a portion of that in the beginning in order to continue with the buildout after the 5 schools and wings have been addressed. She provided a breakdown of the Certificate of Participation projects and associated costs.

In response to Commissioner Curry, Ms. Boston-Ellis advised that the term of the bond will be 20 years.

Dr. Gullett referred to the overhead screens, noting this picture hangs in her office and is a self-portrait created by a special needs student. She stated the picture represents all students in Marion County.

Councilmember Tim Inskeep, Dunnellon City Council, questioned where the MCPS District is relating to the use of the current technology for remote learning. He commented on the cost of brick and mortar schools, noting there could be a savings relating to 10% to 20% of the student population engaging in remote learning.

Dr. Gullett advised that there is a virtual learning program, Florida Virtual School has a program and MCPS has a partnership with them and currently offers a virtual learning option.

In response to Commissioner Curry, Dr. Gullett advised that a number of existing staff will move to the new buildings, and as students are rezoned into the new buildings, there will be an opportunity to choose to move to the new facilities. She stated hiring will be increased as the County continues to grow, noting retention and hiring will continue to be a priority.

Commissioner Zalak commented on the previous working relationship between the MSCB and the BCC. He expressed concern over stacking lanes and traffic impacts relating to schools. Commissioner Zalak stated citizens are pulling off on the side of 2 lane roads in some areas. He advised that the new elementary school being constructed on SW 49th Avenue is going to slow down traffic in an area that is designed to keep it moving. Commissioner Zalak opined that both Boards should work together for a better community. He commented on staff from both sides being appointed to sit down together and discuss how to make things work. Commissioner Zalak stated the area designated for a high school in Marion Oaks is the same area where the County is trying to possibly locate a flyover. He opined that although there is some stacking inside the schools, it does not solve the problem out in front of the schools during certain times.

Chairman Stone advised that the ILA has provisions relating to this, but has not been followed. She stated the TWG should be hammering out these details before schools are sited. If there is a Comprehensive Plan Amendment changed, those items should come before the BCC, but that has not occurred. Chairman Stone advised that Dr. Gullett has put together the next 2 dates for the TWG to convene, noting she expects that the MCSB

would honor the ILA and follow the processes that have been agreed upon. She stated if changes are needed, she would like to have the latitude to bring them back to the combined Board next year and make changes as necessary.

School Board Attorney Jeremy Powers, MCSB, advised that he will review anything that has not been followed. He stated he believes everything outlined by Commissioner Zalak is accurate, and as the TWG continues to meet, he expects those challenges will resolve. Mr. Powell opined that from the MCSB perspective there is nothing to indicate that the City of Ocala or the County has not followed the ILA, nor could he say either entity could say the MCSB has not followed the ILA. He advised that the ILA should be followed and if there is any disagreement relating to the language or interpretations, the parties will continue to work together to reach an agreement.

Chairman Stone stated there were concerns relating to Section 5 of the ILA.

Mr. Cummings advised that the BCC, MCSB and all municipalities must have great communication and some flexibility.

Commissioner Bryant commented on traffic issues, noting the parties can do better than what was done in the past.

Dr. James stated she is on the Facilities Committee for MCPS, noting the selected sites were identified and planning began prior to the enactment of the ILA. She requested clarification relating to the timeline of events.

Chairman Stone advised that the ILA has been in place since its inception, noting this is the Third Amendment to the ILA. She stated those pieces relating to working together on school sites and identifying the supporting infrastructure necessary have been in place from the beginning.

In response to Dr. James, Chairman Stone advised that the TWG had not been convened by the Superintendent for a very long time and the group was pulled back together and some pieces were amended. She clarified that the pieces being referenced now have always been in place, noting the County has consistently provided data to the MCPS to make decisions relating to selecting sites for schools and planning for growth. Chairman Stone stated if there are desired changes that are allowed by State Statute, they should be brought back when the TWG meets again.

Commissioner Bryant clarified that it was previous Superintendents who did not convene the TWG.

Dr. James opined that this MCSB has been a part of getting the TWG back together and proper planning.

Chairman Stone noted the MCSB has staff that have been in place for longer periods and could make sure the ILA is followed.

Commissioner Zalak commented on the importance of ensuring the experts for both Boards agree that there are adequate turn lanes and stacking capacity for the schools. He stated where there are failures today, the parties should work together to acquire the property or build the necessary turn lanes. Commissioner Zalak advised that the interchange at SW Highway 484 fails, noting the relief factor is the site for the future high school. He stated if traffic is slowed down there, it will create an immense problem for the total community in southwest Marion County. Commissioner Zalak commented on the need for discussion relating to service roads or whatever is needed to mitigate a possible disaster for the community. He stated there is a need for a flyover in the area.

Ms. Campbell stated it is her understanding that staff members for both MCSB and the BCC are having that conversation.

Commissioner Bryant out at 11:45 a.m.

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Commissioner Zalak advised that if both Boards give collective guidance to staff relating to the vision, the teams will get it done.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Stone opened the floor to public comment.

There being none, Chairman Stone advised that public comment is now closed.

BOARD/COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND CLOSING COMMENTS

Ms. Hanchar expressed appreciation towards those in attendance. She expressed concern relating to traffic.

Mayor Christine Dobkowski, City of Belleview, expressed appreciation for the hard work put into today's meeting, noting she looks forward to getting new schools built and improvements to existing facilities.

Mr. Cummings commented on the need for this meeting.

Commissioner Bryant returned at 11:48 a.m.

Mr. Cummings stated the BCC and MCSB are on the right page so that the conversations being had will be productive. He expressed appreciation for those in attendance.

Commissioner Zalak stated he looks forward to more groundbreaking ceremonies and commented on the change in direction the MCSB has made through the policies that have been set. He advised that he is excited for kids and the community.

Commissioner Curry commented on the good working relationship between the Boards. Chairman Stone noted there are issues to address within the ILA and questioned if the TWG can make those changes and come back before the BCC and MCSB without going through the formal process.

Mr. Powell stated at this point it would be difficult. He advised that the BCC, MCSB, and City of Ocala staff have been working to identify issues and come to some agreement as to a resolution. He opined that there is no need for a joint meeting of this body to alter or amend the ILA, noting the language can be drafted and sent to all parties.

In response to Chairman Stone, Mr. Powell advised that if the BCC, MCSB, and the municipalities all agreed to a change, the amendment could be made without anyone convening.

Chairman Stone requested the TWG members review the ILA and be prepared to discuss any adjustments when they reconvene at the first meeting on September 13, 2024.

Commissioner Bryant addressed the County's upcoming EAR process and the need to have a conversation relating to school concurrency, noting the recent growth in the County.

Chairman Stone noted that discussion will occur when the County reviews its Comprehensive Plan, which will be occurring over the next 12 to 18 months.

Ms. Thrower advised that concurrency was deemed optional, and it was made clear while working on the ILA that concurrency was not desired. She opined that a lack of concurrency played a role in getting to where the community is now. Ms. Thrower stated there have been no schools built in the last 15 years, but there has been a lot of other construction impacting roads and those who travel them. She advised that if concurrency had been in place and meetings had occurred over the last 11 years, there would be no need for atonement. Ms. Thrower commented on the great working relationship between the various Board and municipality staff.

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There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting thereupon adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

Michelle Stone, Chairman

Attest:

Gregory C. Harrell, Clerk

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