

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**

**NOVEMBER 20, 2024 – 2 PM via ZOOM**

**In Attendance:**

Ms. Karen Malinowski, Committee Chair

Ms. Marion Mullauer, Board Chair

Mr. Craig Ballew

Dr. Joanne Waeltermann

Mr. Rob Hair, MSB Superintendent

Ms. Kibian Vazquez, MSB CFO

Mr. John Stierhoff, Venable, LLP

Ms. Valerie Johnson, MSB Executive Assistant

**Absent:**

Mr. Scott Wales

Ms. Robin Zimelman

**Call to Order:** Ms. Karen Malinowski called the meeting to order at 2 PM.

**Approval of August 26, 2024 Minutes:** Ms. Malinowski moved to approve the minutes, and Ms. Marion Mullauer seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved, and the minutes were accepted.

**2025 Legislation Priorities and Strategy**:  Mr. Rob Hair and Mr. John Stierhoff discussed the following:

**2024 Strategic Plan Overview:**  Mr. Hair presented an overview of the strategic plan, highlighting four key pillars: education, employee experience, visibility and partnerships, and campus infrastructure and legislative advocacy.

**Campus Master Plan Update:**  Mr. Hair provided an update on the demolition of the Bledsoe building and the transition of braille textbooks and students to the new Bledsoe dormitories. He also reported that the pool demolition would occur in the coming weeks.

**FY26 CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) Submission:** Mr. Hair reported that the plans for the $65.4 million athletics facility and front entrance upgrade were submitted to the IAC (Interagency on School Construction) in October. He will testify in December to advocate for full funding.

The discussion included the IAC's funding role and the potential need for bridge funding, noting the IAC's recent support of financing above minimum levels.

**Legislative Strategy:**  Mr. Stierhoff outlined Maryland's $1 billion budget shortfall this fiscal year, with a projected $4.7 billion deficit by 2028. The $2.4 billion "rainy day" fund is under consideration to balance the FY26 budget. Discussion included potential economic impacts of federal employee relocations.

**FY26 Pay Plan:**  Mr. Hair reported unexpended funds for FY25 and FY26 due to challenges in filling specialized positions, some vacant for up to three years. He and Mr. Stierhoff plan to meet with legislators to share the school's financial progress, emphasize that no additional funding is needed for FY26, and proactively address potential budget cuts while highlighting efforts to fill these positions.

**Building Relationships:**  Mr. Hair and Mr. Stierhoff plan to meet with legislators to highlight the school's success and advocate for continued funding. Specific language will address the challenge of hiring for hard-to-fill positions.

Invitations have been sent to key legislators, and tours have already been given to Senator McCray and Delegate Forbes. Senator Feldman is scheduled to visit in December.

Mr. Hair emphasized strengthening relationships with stakeholders, including legislators, Board members, and hiring partners. He noted efforts to collaborate with colleges and universities to address staffing needs, such as the orientation and mobility specialist role.

**Submission of Governor Appointee Board Nominees**:  Mr. Hair reported that Mr. Ray Brown has agreed to continue as a Governor Appointee, and he is awaiting a response from Dr. Nancy Grasmick.

**Bill Ratchford Outdoor Learning Area Update:** Mr. Hair reported that the designer is still working to finalize the outdoor furniture for the learning area.

**Open Meetings Act:** The Committee discussed ensuring compliance, including posting meeting details and minutes online, following procedures for closed sessions, and citing exemptions. Ms. Malinowski has completed the required training.

Mr. Hair committed to completing the training and designating Ms. Valerie Johnson to do the same. Policies will be developed to guide compliance, and templates from the Maryland Attorney General's office will be utilized to ensure adherence to the Act.

Ms. Malinowski announced she would be out-of-town for the December 6 Board meeting and requested a volunteer to present the Legislative Committee report. Dr. Joanne Waeltermann agreed to provide the report.

**Adjournment:** Ms. Malinowski adjourned the meeting at 2:40 PM.

**Action Items:**

**Dr. Waeltermann**:  Provide an update on the Legislative Committee at the December board meeting.

**Mr. Rob Hair:**

* Prepare talking points for his testimony before the IAC in December, emphasizing the deteriorated state of the pool facility and the need for student safety improvements.
* Coordinate with Mr. Jack Pumphrey to practice the messaging and approach for meetings with legislators regarding the school's financial situation.
* Receive training on the requirements of the Open Meetings Act.