Blue Ribbon Commission Meeting Notes – October 28, 2013


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I. Review and Report out of Subgroups

a. BRC Subcommittee Report on Brainstorming Ideas Exercise
   i. Where does reconfiguration fit in for this report and do we need to fit this in as a way to reduce costs? – place this on hold for now – add Realignment of Schools as a supporting document for the report?
   ii. Could any schools be shared with the County since several City schools are under capacity? Magnet schools? Investigate the potential of this.
   iii. List does reflect what they discussed last week but does not really reflect any out of the box thinking and the group needs more time to do this – Allison to come up with some questions to ask the group next to help facilitate this?

How can this group become more creative and think more out of the box? How does this group want to proceed? Too much stress to get this done and make a solid recommendation?
   o Extra meetings to get the best ideas of the group?
   o New ideas that the group have not thoughts of yet?
   o what about political will to do these things?
   o And what idea would open up a new dynamic of this whole issue and how we balance this with political will

- Suggestion 1 – brainstorming session with NO RULES!!
- Suggestion 2 – to start to pull all the information together that they have and start looking at either how the schools get more revenue OR how the budgets are cut

Creative Exercise – List all the things you would never do to solve this problem
I would NEVER…..

1. have class sizes of 50
   Explore more opportunity for online classes (max of 25 per the research) and are there certain things that could be taught in this way? Is there a hybrid approach that allows for traditional instruction with online classes with proper feedback to the student. There are also competencies that can be accomplished through hybrid classes (badging) – cost savings – using fewer teachers? and improving the quality of education?
2. reduce instruction time (school day, school year)
3. eliminate sports and fine arts
4. float bonds or debt
5. reduce the effectiveness of the schools (tests, graduation rates, etc.)
6. consolidate CCS and Albemarle into a single district – but should the school board explore any opportunities for sharing programs? Feasibility study to look at the two districts and see where they are opportunities (Williamsburg/JCC District)
7. stop the 4 year old program
8. make a decision that would decrease the quality of education
9. abandon our goal of an excellent education for all of our children
10. segregate classrooms by race
11. destroy an important highly ranked city program to get money
12. charge a fee for regular education
13. never effecting teacher salaries
14. reduce admin staff
15. keep funding the schools as they are
16. Charge more for after school programs/diversify options – would the parents pay more
17. charge parents for the 3 and 4 year old program
18. charge more for summer school programs

Silver Bullet Ideas

- 1% tax on gross rents of City rental properties – Steve Campbell to provide some information at the next meeting.
- merge the City and County schools
- consider charging tuition to some degree
- fee for anything beyond core education
- citizens need to recognize that to continue the system as is, they need to pay more
- closing one of the six elementary schools
- Crow Pool property and the potential for that usage
- State should fund the schools as they should
- private sector involvement with the schools?

Suggestion – break into two groups – one for City (raise revenue or reduce expenditures) and another for schools (raise revenue or reduce expenditures)

- next meeting, break into groups to get some work done on various pieces and come together to form some solid ideas
  - City – Cole, Bitsy, Steve R., Marijean, Anne
  - Schools – Steve, Alvin, Ernest, Nikki, Kirk, Stephanie, Elliot

Key Findings Documents – add your findings/ideas to this document by November 8th – go into Google Docs – and add bullets that the commission members believe is relevant to the discussion
Information to Send to Commission

Schools
   1. Information on discussions between City and County schools on merging schools or school related services
   2. Quantitative savings that’s been calculated by closing one elementary school.

City of Charlottesville
   3. City debt service payment estimates for school reconfiguration project
   4. How are other jurisdictions funding their schools? What % of their total GF budget?
   5. City taxes – comparison of major tax rates with other cities; estimated increase of major taxes if raised 1%/1-cent