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# Manassas City Council Meeting, Thursday, June 25, 2026

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[00:02:58] for the public so they know what-- Sorry, it says CSA Out-of-State Services Funding Impact. Could we have that acronym? Child Services Act. OK, if we could have that-- You're saying spell it out. Yeah, spell it out. Thank you.

[00:03:20] Anyone else with questions or comments? You're good, Mr. Burke. Yes, ma'am. OK, so we'll move it and we'll go over to-- Pierce Ball, I'm going to open up to your presentations. OK. Dr. Newman, are there any additions or deletions to our agenda?

[00:03:39] - Can I get a motion to approve this meeting agenda? - Chair, I move that the school board of vicinity has been asked to approve the public meeting agenda as presented. - Second. - I have a motion by Ms. Stephens, seconded by Ms. Seberg, that meeting agenda.

[00:03:55] Is there any discussion? In favor? - Aye. - Any opposed? 7-0. We're gonna start with Dr. Casada happily giving an update on our alternative education program.

[00:04:17] - You're at work. the standing movement. I know. I'll come over here. All right. Good evening, Chair Spall, Vice Chair Jones, School War members, and Dr. Newman. Good evening, Madam Mayor, Mr. Vice Mayor, City Council members, and Mr. Burke. Tonight, I'm presenting an update on alternative education programming in Manassas City Public Schools. I'm presenting on behalf of our Deputy Superintendent, Mr. Gefeller, and Ms. Wynnum, our Director of School Leadership, since neither of them are able to be here this evening. The purpose of this presentation is to provide updates on two of Manassas

City Public school programs that serve students in alternative settings first I'll share some information about the Osborne High School evening school program and second

[00:04:54] I will provide an update on the new pathways alternative program so Osborne High School offers an evening school program that provides flexibility to support those students who may otherwise not graduate on time with a traditional school day setting this year 80 students were served through this evening school including 51 seniors by it by the end of May 74 students were enrolled the slide shows where the other seven students went. In terms of outcomes I'm proud to say that 34 of the students graduated in May including a student who entered the year behind as a junior but that student caught up and was approved to graduate on time with their cohort and another 18 who are expected to

[00:05:34] graduate this summer. Well those data help us measure the success of evening school the stories behind the numbers best demonstrate its impact. Among the students served in the evening school are young parents who are making progress toward on-time graduation while balancing significant family responsibilities. Their perseverance shows that a diploma remains attainable even when life presents substantial challenges. The students come from diverse backgrounds and many have experienced hardship, trauma, or interruptions to their education. Despite the obstacles, they continue to move forward. This is especially evidence among some disciplined play students, all of whom are making measurable progress toward graduation. Students have entered the program significantly

[00:06:13] behind their peers, many of whom have caught up and are now ready to graduate on time or will be next year. These successes highlight the importance of providing flexible pathways, meaningful support, and adults who believe in students' potential. Evening school is more than an alternative setting. It is an opportunity for students to earn a diploma, build confidence, and create a brighter future. The Pathways Alternative Program was launched in January of 2026. MCPS thanks the city for the approval of the use of school division fund balance to support the launch of this program. This alternative education program was developed in order to do a few things. One, support students who struggle to thrive in traditional school settings. Two,

[00:06:51] prioritize academic success for all learners, and three, respond to disciplinary violations through restorative practices and alternative learning environments. The program launched on January 12th and is located right now in the Manassas Community Center. Pathways enrollment increased throughout the school year from program inception, and it finished the school year with 25 active students in grades 5 through 12.

[00:07:15] Manassas City is currently in the process of identifying and enrolling students for 26-27. I'll explain a little bit more about that in a minute, but it happens through a holistic approach in partnership with the alternative education coordinator principals and more in only one semester pathways has gotten up and running and seen successes staffing at the school includes a program administrator teachers at the intermediate middle and middle school level esol teacher special ed teacher reading teacher office support full-time nurse and a security officer and we have an alternate alternative education case manager who spends a good bit of time there the school developed a strong internal structure aligned with division procedures

[00:07:51] including adjusted schedules, early release and delay plans, student monitoring systems, targeted academic supports, and data-informed instructional planning. In terms of logistics, the school

follows the METS schedule in terms of start and end time. Transportation is provided to and from school for all students.

[00:08:09] Intermediate and middle school students are there all day. High school students are there on shifts, some in the morning and some in the afternoon. Lunch is brought to the school from Hayden, and breakfast as well for students who are there in the morning. Community time exists throughout the day or during the day. Intermediate and middle school students are together and there are two separate high school sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

[00:08:29] And recess is embedded for the younger students. All staff members that I mentioned before engage during this daily community time. All of the students at the intermediate and middle school level have similar schedules. High school students have more independent work in their respective course areas that is supported by teachers plus small group for identified needs.

[00:08:47] Two high school students graduated from the alternative program. One entered as a junior and one as a senior. Teachers engage, so you see up here, so collective efficacy of staff. The teachers are engaging in weekly collaborative learning team processes focused on individualized student needs. In addition to support continuous improvement, the year concluded with a leadership retreat to help them plan for next year. So the partnership, this program does not exist in isolation and one of the benefits to having the program in Manassas City is the partnership that exists with our principals. So principals refer students to the coordinator of alternative education and then they decide together and in partnership to determine the best placements among our

[00:09:27] various options. So the coordinator of alternative education is currently working with schools and principals to enroll new students for the upcoming year and facilitate transition meetings for students who may have finished the year at Pathways who are returning to their base schools because this is a fluid and dynamic location. So in addition to earning credits and progressing through I'm sorry I'm standing like right by you in progressing through academics there are many other indicators of student success I want to highlight behavioral improvements students learning to apply for jobs working with peers and having appropriate emotional responses all of these allow for students to return to their base schools which is one of the big goals

[00:10:03] students are able to connect with other students and adults in this smaller setting they learn how to ask questions they learn how to ask for help and they learn how to self-advocate one of the biggest successes is helping students learn to pivot before a larger issue in a behavioral or emotional response occurs. We're already seeing mentorship occur among students, which is one of the benefits of a multi-grade level configuration. Thank you for the opportunity to share this update on two of our alternative program offerings. We're super proud of these programs that we've created for our students who need some extra support, but are there any other questions?

[00:10:44] Thank you. How many years has the evening school been going on? Three. Three. Okay. And is it additional teachers that staff that?

[00:11:01] Teachers from regular school. Okay. And is it, like, does one, does that change week to week? Who stays? No, it's people commit to it for the program. Yeah, okay. Cool.

[00:11:17] Good stuff. Thank you. It's Vasquez Luna. Oh, go ahead. I'm sorry. I didn't see you. Thank you, Madam Mayor. My question is, it might be too early and you might don't have an answer, but is there a

long-term goal when it comes to where the path school will be located?

[00:11:36] Because I know the residents were talking a lot about the investment and the purchase of the building, which for me was more about giving you a home, having your home anyway for a long time. And more like, is there any weather now or an answer later on long-term goals?

[00:11:59] We're trying to determine the long-term home floor. So next few years there, the location. So next school year we'll be there?

[00:12:15] Next year they'll be at the community center. Okay. Right now it's only funded this year. Successful, but we're reporting tonight on the success that's needed to make sure that we keep some of the locations.

[00:12:39] yes i thank you and i understand uh but the residents you know i'm uh reading i mean 50 of the residents might don't you know they don't have a kid at them in the school and then uh when they look at you know maybe it's too early but i will be it's too early but i will be uh speaking in regards to you know uh the ratings and uh accreditations or asking later um but my uh question is even though if it's not you know the complaint has been that you know that wasn't the

[00:13:16] location i'm thankful that it i believe is driving and it's great i just want to make sure that the residents know that when there is a decision or when something changes they know it will be coming within no time i mean i think anyone who thinks that who believes that we bought a building to put a temporary program is is you know not checking out all the facts but um we are doing our very best to report to you and i mean we only started january and this is a great time to report so this is out of the gate what we've got um but we'll we'll keep it up and we have funded it ourselves

[00:13:55] for the remainder of the of year you know you allowed us to to spend money on a year but since we didn't get started till January, it's January to January. And so we found money to not end the program in January of 27 to make it last through next year. Then we have to have some more conversations about location and funding. Thank you. Dr. Casale. So tell me a little bit about

[00:14:29] the student body here. So what grades are covered in the pathway? Five through 12. Five through 12 are eligible to be in, so intermediate, middle, and high school. Okay, and what were actually there, 5 through 12? You had 5 through 12, not necessarily every grade level.

[00:14:45] I'd have to get the breakdown, but you had students as young as 5th grade and students as old as 12th grade. But the membership, because it's dynamic, can fluctuate over time. And you described a little bit about, for instance, a graduating senior and so forth.

[00:15:01] So what can you tell us about those that were in the lower grades, let's say in terms of their progress 100 of them moved on to the next grade so they they were all got promoted will they be are they all continuing at pathways or are they 14 are continuing out of the 45 they will have new students coming along okay gotcha so it is possible how many how many students would you possibly have at this location? 60. 60? Thank you Dr. Quesada.

[00:15:40] Thank you. I'm teasing. I am. No, please. I just, that's good. Appreciate it Dr. Dill. Any other questions? So move on to our presentation about school board priorities coming out of the retreat. And we will start with priority number one, that is Ms. Martin. So everyone has a sheet

[00:16:14] on their desk, so you referenced that our first priority that we came up with was supporting year five of the strategic plan to improve student outcomes and 100% of our schools on track. And this paper that I made just kind of shows how we're going to support that in the first six ways.

[00:16:36] The first way is attendance and getting consistent updates on absentee rates. We've already seen decreases in chronic absenteeism across the division. And so decreases in chronic absenteeism, my bad.

[00:16:54] Number two, supporting students with special needs. This school year coming up, we will be sending out case manager letters for all our students with IEPs. and this is going to strengthen communication and family partnerships. And we also just, as you know, recently adopted a new math curriculum for K-12.

[00:17:15] Currently, we have teams, K-6 and 7-12, who are aligning the calendar and working on planning guides for implementation so that they can hit the ground running in August, and all teachers will receive training on the implementation of this. They also will be supported throughout the year and receive individual coaching to ensure high-quality instruction for our math curriculum to be successful.

[00:17:39] Number four, to support our school board priority, number one is professional learning and instructional excellence. All professional learning is driven by the strategic plan, as you know, and we received a school improvement grant to support our schools with high-quality Tier 1 instruction.

[00:17:56] We continue to have our collaborative learning teams, which aka CLTs, weekly where teachers are planning lessons, reviewing data, unpacking the Virginia standards, and then teachers are also given another three days to take what they discussed in CLTs, cater it to their students' specific needs.

[00:18:15] Individual coaching is also happening to ensure high-quality instruction with new teachers to the district and also new teachers at the school new to teaching. Next, we're growing future leaders with our Leadership Institute Pathways. There are three pathways to develop and grow our leaders. We currently have the teacher leadership, which is to build, refine, and cultivate foundational leadership skills. We also have aspiring administrators, which prepare certified personnel to step up and become an administrator, whether it's a principal, a vice principal,

[00:18:50] excuse me, or just a leader in their school. Aspiring principals is also a pathway, and that is to grow, um, to advance teachers who would like to be principals or currently, um, assistant principals. And then we also have our last one is staffing and retention success. Um, I'm happy to report that we have 93% of our licensed staff retained this year and 90% of our support staff retention, which is excellent numbers. Um, and we're also fully staffed for K through six and we have minimal vacancies in 7 through 12. And if you check out our Manassas City

[00:19:29] Public Schools, for sure here, we've been giving out at job fairs. You can see some of the things, the reasons why our staff is staying. There are a lot of great quotes. So we just wanted to share that with you so you could have some information about how we're going to get those schools on track. So that's all I have, Chair. Any questions? Thank you, Ms. Mark.

[00:19:50] Thank you, Madam Mayor. So the 93%, my ask is, is there a specific issue for that percentage?

[00:20:07] Because we do get emails from our constituents on your report. I'll get to the point when it comes to rounds. Is that 7% round or it's all across? All across. And is the round, it was only licensed, or

the round issue?

[00:20:29] That's a personnel issue. The board can address it or not. My ask is if you have a percentage of employees living, because we're talking about retention. And even though it's 7%, but it doesn't say out of how many.

[00:20:45] I do have an idea how many employees you have. So, my ask is around 7% for the licensed staff, or it's a bigger percent? The total number, the 93% represents the entire division, not around.

[00:21:02] So, I know in prior years there were issues at METS, and now there are issues at other places that are brought up. So, I'm not asking about employees or people. I'm asking about, is there any school that concerns you when it comes to the 7%?

[00:21:19] because seven percent is really small but at the same time if it's from one place whatever the school is it can be important so i think we're managing the day-to-day operations school i've had students just the other day a report of who's moving schools students were moving in just around no one was moving out we have we had had some training that was optional after

[00:21:53] school ended that, you know, the cafeteria was full at round. You know, I mean, there are people that are very committed to being at round and where we have nothing but a good plan for next year. And from a board member perspective, we have not received reports that the majority of those who chose not to come back to Manassas City were coming from round. So there was not a specific school that stood out that said this is where the majority of individuals are leaving from. And

[00:22:28] that's licensed staff and support staff. And it's important to note also that 7% doesn't just reflect individuals leaving for one reason. There's a variety of reasons why people have moved on, so that's important to remember. So correct me if I'm wrong, but that 93% for licensed staff, that backs out. That does not include retirements, and it does not include non-renewals.

[00:22:57] And since it's the division number, if you move schools in the division, you count as retained. So if you leave round and go to Hayden, you are count for that number as retained. So that might help you contextualize, like in the question that you were asking about the 7%.

[00:23:13] And as a board member, I can tell you that the 7% doesn't, I know you asked the question, does the 7% concern you in a particular school? And for me, the answer is no, I have no red flags about any particular school regarding retention.

[00:23:29] I will say that having the 93% is a growth for us because it was 82, I believe, or 85, so 84, 86, thank you, 86, so to improve almost 10% is wonderful, and if you read in the wire teachers are staying, it's really great too.

[00:23:53] We also have stay interviews that we consistently, and we have those results if you want to see those, we can also provide those for you. Thank you, Madam Mayor. I appreciate the feedback. As a mother with two students, you know, I'm your biggest cheerleader. But as a council member, I'm held accountable for your results, not for your, you know, for your policies. So, you know, I appreciate it. And, you know, it was brought to me as a council member. That's why I wanted to make sure that the public, you know, gets an answer or at least, you know, they get to hear the comments.

[00:24:32] Yeah, congratulations. It's great. And, you know, the other piece that we might not be talking about that always concern me is the salaries. So if you are having a retention, so, you know, it gives me a

peace of mind that the salaries, no, you know, it is always necessary, especially today.

[00:24:52] But it's also, you know, there are many things that come out of this. So congratulations on the retention. Very proud of 93%. You did say fully staffed K-6. And that's an indicator, I mean, of a question about round two.

[00:25:15] There's lots of pieces you can pick out of the report to say that I understand it's a flare-up. I'm proud of our progress a lot. Not the overall picture, and that's what matters.

[00:25:31] It's not the overall picture of how this city is operating, the schools, and what we're really about. And so one thing, we deal with it, we move forward, we focus on the positive. So that's good. another thing to note about round um last school year not the 25 26 school year the 24 25 school year round was really struggling with test scores with student academic success and so when new administration brought in there were a large number of changes that had to be made to address

[00:26:05] that dip in student success and round is our one school that's being is being monitored at a higher level by the state. So some of the changes that are in place are in some ways driven by the VDOE, not just the school division. So it is, as an employee, maybe a little bit of a tougher place to be because there are more eyes on the people in that school because it was a struggling school and because the VDOE saw that it was a struggling school. So it's been a more difficult path, But the reports that we're getting are showing that that path is getting smoother and that path is straightening out.

[00:26:44] And our students are further on a pathway towards success where some of our other schools are. In addition to what Ms. Laban said, the school improvement grant goes two-round and some of our other schools that are working on their Tier 1 instruction.

[00:27:02] So, you know, we are doing what we can. And I wanted to make sure that we highlighted the things that we are doing so that we can get our schools on track. How much was a grant? Sure. Dr. Newman, would you? So, Brown's grant is about \$120,000 for the course of the next year.

[00:27:23] And then the other schools that receive funding were significantly smaller amounts, like \$15,000 to \$20,000, because it's a shorter time frame. But it's very prescribed what we do with that money. Yes, very much. Yes, very much so. Thank you. Really good.

[00:27:39] I'm fine. Okay. Anybody else? So we'll move on. Priority number two is Dr. Jones. Thank you. Okay, school board priority number two, developing a plan for the existing Jenny Dean building.

[00:27:56] The school board's second priority is developing a plan for the future of the existing Jenny Dean Elementary building. The special use permit, approved on May 13, 2024, requires that the request for continued use of the existing building aspires 18 months after certificate to occupy the building is issued for the new Jenny Dean Elementary School. Therefore, the school board must present recommendations regarding the future use of the existing Jenny Dean building by March 2028. The school board has been diligent in discussing

[00:28:30] potential outcomes for the building. On June 11, 2026, the board housed a community discussion to the voices of the Manassas community. The event was well attended and more than 15 individuals shared their thoughts. The overwhelming message from the community was a desire to preserve the building. Speakers cited numerous reasons including its historic significance, the importance

of preserving physical evidence of our history, the belief that tearing down landmarks erases history and the fabric of Manassas, community pride and identity, potential use of the gymnasium,

[00:29:07] cafeteria, auditorium, and commercial kitchen, recognition of the Jenny Dean site as a national treasure, the desire to preserve at least a historic section of the building, and the possibility of incorporating green space. Community members and the school board members have discussed several potential educational uses for the building, including a career and technical education CTE center, workforce development and vocational training programs, a robotics center for building practice and competitions, expansions of the pathway programs,

[00:29:42] a health clinic, and universal pre-kindergarten program. The school board is currently seeking and investigating cost estimates for all options, including demolition, preserving portions of the building, preserving only the historic section, or preserving the entire building, determining requirements and restrictions should the building receive historic destination, determining whether placement on the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Iniquities Registry would affect demolition options, continuing to hear and consider community input, determining whether

[00:30:19] the City Council would fund recommendations presented by the school board through special use permit process, and monitoring the Save the Bennett campaign, which many city council members support, and which is estimated to cost approximately \$56.25 million for relocation and renovation.

[00:30:37] For the 2026 school year and into 2728, the school board is considering housing the pathway programs in the existing Jenny Dean building. Pathways is currently temporarily located at the Manassas Community Center. Additional uses are also being explored.

[00:30:55] The school board recognizes that the building has the potential to house numerous initiatives that would directly benefit Manassas City Public School students. The greatest challenge may be financial. The school board will continue working with the requirements of the special use permit, gather information, engage the community, and present recommendations before the established deadline.

[00:31:18] We look forward to partnering with the community to envision what is best for both our students and it's an important piece of Manassas history. Any discussion? If there's no other discussion, is Eric in the room?

[00:31:40] Thank you, Eric. What you're looking at on the screens is the sewer network in the area of Dean Elementary. This was the primary cause for the city to include the recommendation to do the demolition of the non-historic portion of the building.

[00:32:03] What you see in yellow is an existing 18-inch line that was nearly at capacity with the old Jenny Dean. With the new Jenny Dean, it is even closer to capacity. We will not have the ability with that existing 18-inch line, as well as at the terminus of that 18-inch line is a lift station that then conveys the sewage from this whole area into the UOSA system.

[00:32:31] That line simply can't handle two sizable class facilities, And that was the main reason that staff recommended the demolition of the majority of the school and included preservation of the historic portion.

[00:32:50] As you develop your plans, please recognize that any proposal to preserve the school in its entirety for full use will require upgrade of that 18-inch line and upgrade of that lift station.

[00:33:07] we do not have a cost estimate because we had not anticipated that being a viable need but it is significant and that is something we will be asking for we need to know the cost of that and again without knowing what use you're using that we would have to ask you all to provide that because but that is something that is a significant cost to preservation of the school school in its entirety. Didn't the city recently undergo a water pipeline expansion from Lake

[00:33:46] Manassas, like through the city, connect it up to the county? Correct, but this is a Seward's line. It's not water. Oh, okay. I mean, is there any comparable project that we could, you know, pull across just to get a ballpark? I mean, I recognize what you're saying that you couldn't, without knowing how much of the school and what the school would be being used for, that you can't accurately get a quote from a company that would be doing the work, but maybe is there something comparable that we could scale to get a call park? For the pipeline, probably, yes, ma'am. For the lift station, again, without knowing the full discharge to that, it would be hard to have someone come up

[00:34:24] with a, whether it has to be fully replaced, whether there's portions of the lift station that can be approved. Yes, ma'am. The pipeline can be effectively, you'd have to build a parallel line to support the new use but it is the lift station that we believe would be significant more significant and from your educated opinion what if you were to ballpark just guess like you're saying significant but for the people in the room can you talk about what significant means

[00:34:58] to you building a parallel line of at least 12 inches for the mile or so that it is and then upgrading, if we were to basically double the usage, we're probably into the seven-figure cost.

[00:35:21] Like seven figures as in six million, seven million, eight million, ten million. It's in the millions. High millions, low millions. What are we talking about? I don't know. My point is just for you to see that when he's saying significant, it's millions of dollars of infrastructure work.

[00:35:44] At least \$1 million. She wrote at least \$1 million. At least. That's what she's saying. I know. Seven figures. I know. That's what she's saying. At least \$1 million. Ms. Stevens. Mr. Smith. City Manager, thank you for the information.

[00:36:01] But that's, I don't mean to use the term, but because that minimizes. That concern is if the building, the old Jenny Dean building, was going to be used to the same capacity it is right now, along with the new Jenny Dean, correct? So if let's say it was carried down to a much smaller program, that would look very different as far as capacity is concerned.

[00:36:26] The concern from the city, if you preserve the footprint in its current state, the city has to account for full utilization of that site and then the potential for the full discharge from that site.

[00:36:44] Because, again, the school board coming in and saying, we'll keep it open, but we're going to turn off half of the toilets five years from now. Someone may not remember that, turn them on, and then we're dealing with the failure of that lift station. So generally speaking, that building with the pipelines, with the super lines we have today, that building in its current state with the current student population could not be sustained with a new Jenny Dean population of the same use and same size.

[00:37:18] Well, the new Jenny Dean is significantly larger, significantly more population. So, again, we did not do a full build-out analysis. But we did recognize that if the portion that is historically significant was preserved in some way or fashion, we believe that that could be accommodated within the existing sewer network.

[00:37:45] Okay, so my next question for you, and this is not necessarily for today, tomorrow, this calendar year, you know, whenever this happens, if we were to give you scenario A, B, and C, you would be able to give us a better idea of what cost A, B, and C for how to use the old building if it's not used in its entirety as it's used today.

[00:38:08] Without getting into a great deal, we would ask that your designer, architect, engineer, for whatever options you're proposing, will indicate a number of people in the building and the equivalent water and sewer demand.

[00:38:30] Thank you. Mr. Smith. Thank you, Madam Mayor. The time frame again, or actually, it sounds like discussion, maybe that's because of the nature of the question, But it sounds like most of the planning and the wish list, if you will, has to do with the physical space.

[00:38:52] How much of your consideration is given to legacy or tribute to the dean? And so I have some concerns and may not need to raise them among many things.

[00:39:10] There's two things that cause me trauma, trauma reactions. And one of them has to do with inadvertently honoring ideologies for existence at the time.

[00:39:48] Our situation here with the school was presented, the city, the area was presented with an excellent opportunity to truly honor the continuity, continue with legacy in a way that doesn't carry as much baggage as using the building that blocks

[00:40:18] the view of the new building. Buildings just don't, and they can't convey the full nuances, if you will, of the complexities of things like, and these are the two things that cause me great trauma, the gendered building that we're just replacing or talking about, I'm not certain that any thought process has been given.

[00:40:49] When we pre-made legacies and things like that, again, we end up honoring some ideologies that takes away from what our intent was. What we're presented with, I'm going to try not to take up a lot of time, but let me throw this as an aside, but a point I want to make, why I'm giving this out now, just to keep in the back of your mind and your planet. Two things that give me, send me into trauma, is anything that's named after former Governor Mills Garvin, like Garvin Drive and Garvin

[00:41:27] School and all that, any educational building that was built in the 50s in Virginia. Because we have to understand the complexity of Virginia's involvement with massive resistance.

[00:41:52] Jenny Dean was added to, I think, 59 or something, to make a high school for colored kids after this lady had done her work 100 years earlier. That school, and let me point out, I visited that school, I was 15, 59, or 60, somewhere around that time, because they were going to close my school, and they ended up closing for five years.

[00:42:22] My social studies teacher that semester taught us about a hero named Jenny Dean, what she did, and so forth. And when those supervisors decided not to fund our schools, several of us went to our parents, the teachers and the community leaders, and told them about Jenny Dean.

[00:42:45] We were successful in getting them to bring a carpool up here. and the dean was long gone, obviously, to talk to the parents and the students and teachers who had been in that industrial school, because what we saw was we were going to have to do the same thing, replicated in Prince Edward. The

trauma that comes in is when we drove up, the same pattern, and you all, many of you know, Prince Edward became Brown versus Board of

[00:43:19] Education. The class action I was involved in was Davis versus Board. One of the things that when they drove up to the school and said, when was the school built? And it was along the same routes that got Mills, Garvin, and that group in building that massive resistance was, let's give them a nice shiny toy.

[00:43:38] They would not want to get into a new school because they got, I mean, into a school with equity because we give them a new building. Genedine was built in 1959. That's when the massive resistance folks around the South were all of a sudden building schools for colored kids. Five years after the Supreme Court told them, you can't do that. When we were meeting as a city council at Genadine, every time I drove down that sideway, and I'm getting them

[00:44:11] there, I get chill bumps because I can't see honoring the legacy of people with that mindset. The platform that's out there with Genadine and the new building is a perfect legacy to her because that building, the school she created, didn't come with any baggage of who can't sit with each other, who can't go to Bushbell from the internet, anybody could have come to her school.

[00:44:38] That's what we need to, that's the legacy I think she would want. And the new school comes clean, none of that baggage about kids are the same thing, can't go with this, none of that happens, but Jenny Dean's new school is brand new. I'm just very concerned, I'm probably one of the oldest people that have this trauma, but people need to know, we don't teach history anymore.

[00:45:03] The history of, we know the history of Genardine. Why? Here's one of 20 insults I can find to Genardine's legacy.

[00:45:20] It was Genardine at the Middleton Industrial School. It was Genardine High School. And when they tried to get themselves cleaned up to satisfy or circumvent the Supreme Court, they decided to make some maneuvers with high school.

[00:45:36] The first insult, Genardine lost the name of the high school. Oh, well, that hurt me in middle school, elementary school. What happened to her credit village as the name of high school? My point, unless you suffered, unless you got your head beaten up with dinner clubs, and unless you had to fight to get to a school dorm, it's not a minor subject.

[00:45:58] So I apologize if I'm making it too personal, but we are insulting in a lot of ways. I don't mean lead the school board. I'm talking about any time we do things like this without putting it in context. Every colored school that they thought was so great for the colored peers lost its name.

[00:46:23] Carter G. Woodson, Booker T. Washington, Bradune, Robert Moulton, all of them because of the privilege that was assumed by those who thought they were in a position to give us something.

[00:46:41] It didn't exist. Why didn't Jenny A. go to high school? Why were we forced to go to schools when we lost our school names? That's the mindset. That's the resistance. We had a governor. We had delegates in Richmond threatening other localities.

[00:47:00] If you accept a student who comes from Prince Edward, we're cutting off your funding. So, honor that? Sorry. Just keep that in mind. You can continue with your planning. I won't even be around to vote on it. But I just caution you to understand the context in which these things came about.

[00:47:22] Jenadine did what she had to do of necessity. The woman impacted Prince Edward County in two ways. When we came up here, we learned some things about going back and telling people what they need to do to teach their kids.

[00:47:38] It wasn't a form of teaching, but it kept them out of trouble. The other thing, her, you do your part, I'll do mine. We modified that she got out of time. We called it, ironically, No Child Left Behind, because the AME church decided to convert this junior college into a day school, foundation school, for the kids in Prince Edward County.

[00:48:09] And the bishop's line was, there is no charge, but whoever wants to donate can. Our message is students, but to tell our buddies, we can go to school. If your parents say they don't have the money, the bishop said, no child left behind.

[00:48:26] We had to go through all of that because people were building buildings like Jenny Dean and circumventing the Supreme Court. I ain't proud of that. I'm sorry. I have to say thank you for telling us that.

[00:48:42] I feel like we should all have a box of tissues right now because you're sharing a perspective that so many of us were not taught about in our history classes that so many of us have no understanding of. And I think, I hope I speak for the board when I say this board right now, whatever we do, we have to make sure we're honoring the legacy of Jenny Dean appropriately and correctly, and not in a manner that celebrates the circumventing of the Supreme Court decision.

[00:49:17] Because you shared with me many stories about your experiences, and I think it would be very dishonorable of us to just, in a lump, have a general honoring of Jenny Dean without understanding and recognizing the nuances and what you've explained.

[00:49:37] And I think you shared quite a bit, and I, for one, really appreciate it. And I know it's a very difficult thing for you, but I don't know about anyone else on this board, but I would appreciate having what you said in writing so that it can be referred to as further discussions and decisions are made concerning Jenny Dean because it is a very narrow path we walk when we honor someone.

[00:50:01] And when we honor a legacy of schools that in each iteration had a very different purpose, and we have to honor them correctly, because truly, if we don't do that, then we do a dishonor. We do a dishonor to the city, and we do a dishonor to all the people who experienced it in real time.

[00:50:19] So thank you. Thank you. Some of this is driven by a 98-year-old gentleman who served in the career in one.

[00:50:37] He's murdering to my family. And we were talking about, I was bragging about Dean and all that. And he said, are they going to tell the truth? I said, what do you mean, Sam? And he shared those things. He said, we have got to not let people continue to let truth decay.

[00:50:57] Don't take actions that will further decay the truth. And Benedictine Industrial School is there for a reason. Now, there are those, if you take your grandchild or any of the residents, take their grandchild to that, and the child happens to ask, why did they do this?

[00:51:19] I'm pretty certain the answer they get is not going to be because they weren't allowed to go, because your grandfather or you wouldn't allow them to go to the schools. Instead, they built schools that this time had bathrooms and electricity.

[00:51:36] This time they didn't put any books in the library, but they can lie to the Supreme Court. like they had been. Fifteen years after the kid's decision, you got localities building a school to avoid doing the right thing. And it comes from that privilege that they have the right to do something. I didn't want them to give me anything. My social studies teacher taught me as soon as she found out those eels were working, the Constitution gave you what you're looking for. Don't go to any

[00:52:13] man and say, give me the right to vote. Don't go to any person and ask to give me the right to go to school. I have the right. What I need you to do is take your knee off of my neck and let me do it. And that's the message that I'm committed to telling people. I'll stand at any river cutting and honor all.

[00:52:34] Let's not forget at some point in life, you cannot further decay truth. I'm done. Thank you, man.

[00:52:51] I appreciate the presentation and I look forward to hearing the school's plan. I'll point out some things that I think we've known of the sewer issue.

[00:53:09] It's been communicated forward in staff. It's a very significant cost. I don't think it's a million dollars. I think it's in the millions. Those conversations are insanely expensive.

[00:53:27] Number two, there is no issue or question about the historical part of GDT, the industrial school. How it's going to be preserved, who's going to pay for that, is going to be a whole other conversation.

[00:53:47] There ain't no money set aside for any of that. Counselor, we'll deal with that later. Counsel in the day was sold, and I have campaigned, and I have supported, and I have put in everything I can to ensure that the new Jenny Dean was built.

[00:54:10] And we spent \$10 million to do that. It was built on the premise that the existing old school has passed its time. It costs ineffective to rehabilitate it, to put new air conditioning and everything else into that school.

[00:54:29] That is an exceptionally high hurdle for this, just for me. I think that's an exceptionally high hurdle for the school board to overcome that basic preposition. We engaged the citizens to spend \$50 million.

[00:54:44] Come back and say we're going to put kids in school. We said we weren't going to put kids in. You've got a problem there. Tied to the school, knowing a little bit about construction.

[00:55:01] I hear all the things about, well, we could preserve the gym, or we could preserve the lunchroom, or we could do this. Buildings are fungible, are designed as an entity. The HVAC, the electric, the water, and all that is just not cut and paste.

[00:55:20] And if you're going to try to do that, particularly in a very old building that has been added on and added on, and pasted and patched innumerable times. Again, you're going to find that is an astronomical cost.

[00:55:35] I will guarantee you that. It makes what we did at the museum a few years ago. Mr. Osin is laughing because he remembers the fight just about putting the HVAC in the museum for the addition. It is beyond challenging.

[00:55:54] Third point I want to make, and again, this is something the board's got to wrestle with, but as you are going through this process, if I was your outside consultant, i would urge the board to engage in a various you know outside firm to do a very serious good enrollment study been here 18 years i've seen all the enrollment studies been done in the past i can tell you they all have one thing they're approximately optimistic is to the number of kids that will show up and we end up being at the bottom they give you a high low middle and low

[00:56:30] you're always ending up at the middle or low number not the high number we always build for for the high number. As a result, as of this year, Manassas City Public Schools has 1,642 empty desks. 18% of the desks in schools. You do not have a facilities problem. You have a utilization problem. And I would dare say, again, if I was being your business consultant, schools are spending more time and administrative costs busing kids and principals and everything else that comes

[00:57:10] schools then you really need to i know that's a really really tough thing to handle i came from a community went from five elementary schools to one been there on my best friends is on that city council exactly what it's like but i would posit i would posit that we need to be reduced looking at reducing the number of facilities rather than adding your friend your consultant giving you some

[00:57:47] free advice as it were you're going to go through you're going to go through the process and give us recommendation within 18 months of August 4th forward to that, but to me, I think you're pretty clear. I would love to know where you got those facts. They're from the state, from staff and from

[00:58:15] the state BDOE counts of the September-October enrollment versus capacity. Just an idea, if you were to take the building has anybody considered like outlining the historical part in the way that the other buildings where they were were outlined you know what i'm talking like where the other because you know we're bringing the cottage back so that's going to bring an element

[00:58:50] of history there as well and something that i imagine uh visitors will be able to enter and kind of learn about that history in a tangible way um i don't know if anybody's thought about it but If the building was to not stay, I feel like outlining it to kind of expand the historic footprint of the industrial school park memorial would be a really cost effective way to honor that building and what it did and have a nice, you know, plaque that explains why and where.

[00:59:28] I mean, if you, you know, I think I didn't know anything about Jenny Dean before I moved here and started, you know, moved into the city and started exploring this park and reading at our museum. And a lot of the stories that I felt were or that I heard at the school board event are, to me, recorded on in our historical places.

[00:59:51] You know, the Frederick Douglass is in our Manassas Museum. you know, we are, I think, I think Jenny Dean's legacy is something that everybody in this room is incredibly proud of. And, you know, as we've said, walking the line of honoring the history in the right way, but also knowing our limitations of our infrastructure and funds. Just in case anybody hasn't thought about what if we did the brick outline, I just wanted to throw it out there that I think that could be a good idea. Thank you. I think I'm fast. Thank you.

[01:00:28] That's the cottage. I'm asking for a friend. So, was that a vote? Was that something that we decided together and we voted on to bring the cottage back?

[01:00:44] And who is going to maintain that cottage? What are the expenses for the cottage? Is that something the city's taking on? A gift to my knowledge? It is a gift from Dominion, and they're paying the cost, I believe, to relocate it, And the rehabilitation cost will probably be in our budgets, if I remember correctly, initially.

[01:01:09] And then ongoing programming of it, I think, has to be a part of the conversation of the historical part of the current, the old Jenny Dean, the industrial school part, and how that fits into the cottage.

[01:01:27] And is there a viability of a building or programming? Is it becoming part of the museum system? Who's going to maintain the property? I mean, those are all things that we have to work through together. I believe the cottage is to be part of the museum system.

[01:01:50] Thank you for that clarification. And then Ms. Mara. I'm sorry. No, you're fine. Thank you, Madam Mayor. And I think something that is important that we can forget is not only how long the school has been there, the conditions, whether it's inside of the building, but also anything And you're doing it on land use.

[01:02:19] And I think that was also part of the decision when it was made. So I don't believe the school board has jurisdiction over the land use when it comes to moving the college or what we're doing on that. But I do understand.

[01:02:37] That's it. Thank you. I was just going to speak to Mr. Smith about his sentiment about the building. And I think that just putting it in terms of maybe another historical event, you know, when the Berlin Wall came down.

[01:02:58] So every time that you see if a person of that descent saw the Berlin Wall and it stayed up and they looked at it and people walked past it, I'm sure that hurt was there. So in my mind, hearing what you had to say, you brought so much more perspective to me because obviously I didn't I wasn't born in that time.

[01:03:22] But knowing that as a child, you're looking at this building that means hurt and heartache and rejection from a country that, you know, we lived in. And so I think that we need to keep that in mind when we're talking about, you know, what we do with it.

[01:03:39] It always, in my mind, was a good idea to look at the building as a museum to bring back that truth because that isn't necessarily talked about, how the building was used and like the process of how it came to be what it is today.

[01:03:55] And I think sometimes we forget that part of our history just because it's a hurtful part and people don't want to talk about it. But it is important for people in our community to understand that, yes, everything's good now. Yes, everybody can go to school there now.

[01:04:12] But at one time, that building was made specifically to separate people. And I appreciate you sharing that. And I think that that needs to be something that we really think about instead of making it a use for STEM building or even pathways.

[01:04:32] But having, if we want to say a memorial to the cause, to having to go through that as a child is unbelievable and something that I can't even think or fathom. But for us to not erase that, not just talk about Jenny Dean, but talk about the process.

[01:04:51] So I just hopefully as a board, we can, when we talk about it, we'll keep those thoughts in mind. Like Ms. Stevens said, I would love, I don't think you had it written down, though. You were going off the cuff. But hopefully you can share them with us so that we can really...

[01:05:07] I have a doctor that told me to find out ways to mitigate my re-traumatization. Gotcha. There you go. You shared it with us tonight. But I really appreciate that. And like she said, I was there crying too. But I think that we have a lot to think about, share, so we can do that.

[01:05:24] Dear friend and personal consultant, I would love any day that you're available that we can walk around and we can walk weeds.

[01:05:42] And I want you to find 137 empty seats or 137 places that we can put kids in there because you can't get rid of the fence. So if you're going to downsize schools, it's going to have to be elementary.

[01:06:00] And I'm not saying your numbers are wrong because you definitely got them from somewhere, but I challenge you to go look at the reality of the building. And when you walk in there and see what desks are actually being used and how many more you can put in there.

[01:06:16] So I challenge you any day when students are back in session as my new friend and consultant, that we walk that building and see if we can do it. I do have a question. Wasn't the current, the building there, it's not built to capacity?

[01:06:37] I mean, weren't there some spaces, expansion built in or additional use down the line? That's not online yet. The numbers that... I'm sorry? That's not online yet. Well, to be honest, that number is actually at 900. The 900 is there in that number, yes.

[01:06:55] Not so much online, but I didn't want me to walk away with the impression that, kind of related to his point about vacancies and so forth, one could come out with the conclusion that the new dean is already at capacity, and that's not the case.

[01:07:18] Not new dean. But it was built with that purpose. Built for it. To have the additional, if we ever had to move kids, we had a place to put them. That was my hope. Because there is no more space in this city for a new school.

[01:07:35] So when you built this one, you had to build it with a capacity that you can put additional students in. So that was done on purpose. Okay. I know. Not that it wasn't a person. It was just a thought. Thank you, and he was speaking about the stuff that I wanted to talk about.

[01:08:02] So there is no only extra space at the new that will be to further develop, but we cannot go from Baldwin. You have the same space that you can further develop as needed. So, right? There is more space in Baldwin, intermediate Baldwin, elementary for that to be developed is needed for the school.

[01:08:29] You mean to add on to the school? Yes. For more students. There's no plan for more students in Baldwin. If you mean, I think when it was built, I was not here for that, so I would have to lean on my friend for that one. I believe what she's referring to, there was a part of the top floor of Baldwin that was not built out.

[01:08:50] Right. Yes, that could be expanded. The building can be expanded, but not the way it's currently built right now. My thinking is that even if it was and there was need because we had kids, we have students that they have to go, It would be, I believe it might be cheaper than the millions that we did use for the new school.

[01:09:20] And as we know, you know, I think somebody from here brought it up, you know, WIMS, it will be coming up in the future. So to me, you know, I don't see the need when it comes to the number of students that need to go or the other girls.

[01:09:36] And, you know, based on the past few years, and especially as we talk about, you know, more the involvement, but it's fine. But I just want to make sure that, you know, that we do acknowledge that there is other space that could be on top of, you know, what he's mentioned.

[01:09:56] I'm not sure if I want to count the desk, but I don't understand. And I think at the end, you know, for me, it's a peace of mind that there is a space for the new students and that there, you know, whether is there a need to keep the school as it is.

[01:10:14] I'm a little confused. We are in this conversation. I don't remember and I don't know if maybe somebody else has presented a case that we have a capacity problem. Because the conversation has been about, are we saving the school?

[01:10:34] I've got to look at numbers about tearing and building down or something. I don't think any presentation that this board has even discussed has been about saving old Dean because we don't have enough space in the other buildings.

[01:10:52] Matter of fact, it was about, it was robotics. That's not even an all-day, you put kids in there all the time. That's an after-school program and a weekend and a competition.

[01:11:08] The CTE expansion is not for kids because we don't have space at Osborne. It's because we want to expand the CTE offerings that are being offered to our students. So I'm not sure why we have had a 20-minute conversation and we keep talking about not having enough space.

[01:11:30] I'm not sure where that came from because it also came in an email to me about we're going to discuss a redistricting plan. We have no desire to redistrict because we have no need. We haven't had any discussion about needing to redistrict because of enrollment.

[01:11:47] I'm not sure where this is coming from. I'm just confused. Maybe somebody can help me explain how we got here. If I may, right now, correct me if I'm wrong, but Dean, old Dean, sits on what's considered, I know all property is city property, but Dean sits on what's considered to be school board property.

[01:12:17] The new dean sits on what seems to be what's regularly understood to be school board property. So I think we do have a compilation of a bunch of different problems because with the cottage being gifted to us and the portions of old dean being maintained and gifted, you know, it feels like and we know that there is no space to build anything new in the city.

[01:12:48] It feels like it's a slow roll to taking where we could, a place where we could educate kids. And for Mr. Smith, you know, I think that's where, how we came to a decision that when buildings that were more legitimate to your explanations of what history really matters, those buildings may have been able to be saved, but they weren't saved.

[01:13:15] This is the last thing that we have that could be saved. And so as a board, we're trying to work towards honoring some measure of history and also educating kids for a future that none of us really understand. And that's what keeps me up at night, expanding options for students to learn.

[01:13:41] And when we feel that land is shrinking and opportunities are shrinking, it becomes very difficult to understand. you know we have a package program that we know does not have a permanent home we have you know someone gets in a car accident don't you want firefighters to be saving you that you know grew up and were educated in manassas and you know and can afford to live there um you know we're trying to make things happen so that we're building you know the best foundation for any

[01:14:14] successful civilization that's ever been reported, which is kids, you know. So it's just, I understand that an outline would make council feel good and happy, but like, it feels like we're getting our land taken from us. And we're very concerned about that because we have big ideas for how to teach kids how to live in the future. And, you know, that is something that we want to keep, we want to maintain all available resources it doesn't have to happen immediately but you can touch and feel

[01:14:52] an existing building and when you can touch and feel an existing building and you know that it sits on land that's considered yours it makes you feel protective of it i just want to say we've heard a lot of discussion tonight about the existing jenny dean building and the school board is definitely going to take all that into consideration but i also think you have to taking consideration what our community is saying and yes you gave us we have a great new building getting ready to open up an office and as there's a girl style thing um make new friends but keep the old one in silver and the other's gold goal is the new jenny dean but you don't have to tear

[01:15:31] down the existing jenny dean there are things that the school system can use for it and we will make an educated decision but we also need help and making sure we get the appropriate cost you just can't say millions. That's like me going out and saying, how much are we going to spend for dinner tonight? And whatever, it's open tickets. So is it going to be \$100? It's going to be \$1,000 or \$5,000? How much is it?

[01:15:53] So we need help when we're trying to prepare and get costs of what things actually cost. To say millions and it can't be done, that doesn't help us any. So we need your assistance as much as possible, and we will make an educated decision, and maybe everybody won't be happy with the decision that we make, but it is a decision that the school board is more than capable and ready to make. Dr. Jones, I just want to add, I have been working with Matt, and we're working with RIMM to get numbers, so we will be providing it as soon as we can, so I want to thank Matt for his assistance, and we're going to continue working together to find out that number.

[01:16:31] Ms. Bresha, and then Ms. Vasquez. So, coming back around to consultants. So, we are getting a facilities study, yes. So, what does, can you talk a little bit about what that includes, like that includes an enrollment. It does include an enrollment. It's looking at all the facilities.

[01:16:48] Facilities include the old Jenny Dean building? I don't think we put it in there, but I'd have to. Since we do have the consultants.

[01:17:05] Ms. Vasquez-Lona from Rosina. Thank you, Madam Mayor. And going back to a comment I made earlier, I mean, I don't even know if it's the correct amount, but 50% of the homeowners, they may don't have somebody going to the school.

[01:17:24] They don't have a student. But when they purchased their home, which is, if we talk about millions, one penny is less than a million. And we were able to do two pennies reduction. You know, it might don't feel a lot, but it is a lot of money.

[01:17:41] So these homeowners hold council accountable for those rates. But the rates of the schools, each is cool. And I know everybody, you know, we all live here. We all have heard about the rates, and the other thing is about the high school and the middle school conditional or no full accreditation.

[01:18:07] And I know we're talking about facilities and other things, but when we have these that is brought up to us and we hold accountable for that and we're not making decisions, Maybe that's part of what I'm trying to bring to your attention that, you know, we need to care for all and put all in perspective and put it all at the table.

[01:18:41] And I hope that we don't forget about that as well. And when it comes to CTE, I mean, we all very proud that you almost have, you have 13 out of 16, 11 out of 17, which is, it's great.

[01:18:58] We only have one high school, and you're able to provide so much. But again, when you think of applying and when you come back, just remember that we only were able to reduce two pennies. We tried, you know, some of us wanted another one, and we couldn't do that.

[01:19:16] And then here we are talking about a million of millions, which is more than just one penny. So from my perspective, I'm just bringing to you what I hold accountable, what is brought up to me. And when somebody is coming to the city as a new homeowner or a family, they are looking at you rates.

[01:19:38] They are looking at whether their school is trending up or is trending down. And please, you know, please don't forget about that. Just to answer or to respond, all of our schools are fully accredited.

[01:19:58] I know that that was previous information, But current information is that they're all fully accredited. There are two that are on track. And so you can find that on the school quality if you aren't sure how to find that. But I can send it to you.

[01:20:15] But I just wanted to clear that up to make sure that we make that acknowledgement that all of our schools are fully accredited. Thank you, Mayor. So I'm listening to everybody back and forth here. I don't know that any minds got changed or what have you.

[01:20:32] But, you know, we did, and I'm not sure that that's ever the point here. You know, the resolution is that you have 18 months. If you wanted to take advantage of it, school board, that you did with a plan along the way.

[01:20:50] I do recall how our conversation about new dean went along here. And there were fits and starts. And there were disagreements about location and a variety of different things along the way here. And yet, here we are.

[01:21:08] We're going to, August the 4th, new school is going to be open. And in the meantime, you know we can count on the city, at least in the next fiscal budget, about to start. Setting aside money, you are setting aside money, and we continue to saving up money for future school construction along the way here.

[01:21:29] So, you know, several thoughts come to mind, which I probably have thought about, but the benefit of making sure that those words come out of my mouth, and for those that are watching or listening or are going to report on this, that they're at least acknowledged along the way here.

[01:21:48] And that is, last month in May, I visited both Hayden and Weems, and I did that primarily because I wanted to see about the modular classrooms. I knew that was coming up, saw the public hearing notices, so with Dr. Newman's help, the principals arranged and gave me a tour.

[01:22:09] And they didn't just give me a tour of the modular classrooms, we actually did a tour of the entire school. I do think that, from my perspective, when I see how the modular classrooms were being used, that, for instance, a gifted and talented program being in one where there's a space problem.

[01:22:28] And I think schools are built in a certain way, configuration, and then later on needs change, not just enrollment, but the needs or adding programs or different ways of having to teach come along.

[01:22:46] We're sitting in a building that was built in, what, 1986, something around that period of time. And there we, several years ago, we decided that there was a lot of wasted space and things needed to be updated.

[01:23:04] And we as a council decided to set aside the money to do that. We updated the AC system, the HVAC system. We reconfigured the floors so we could make more effective use. We could bring more departments together, more people together.

[01:23:20] And so I don't think it's ever unreasonable to be looking at how you can do those sorts of things with any kind of building along the way. One of the thoughts that I would share, and if it's been discussed, forgive me for stating the obvious there. But as Chair Spall has mentioned, that the land that Old Dean sits on is school board land here.

[01:23:45] And, you know, every 10 years was the idea that by setting aside money every year, every year we would continue to have money to be able to pay off bonds. So approximately every decade a building or some kind of construction could be done.

[01:24:03] And so possibly a thought to be had is, you're talking school board, that is, at this point, possibly retaining old dean or a portion of it or recommending or asking that to be the case, and stating possible uses there, but perhaps tearing it down and building a new building, and that may be something you've talked about.

[01:24:31] And so forgive me for repeating the obvious there, that you do put your Pathways program in, you put other programs in, whatever, expanded CTE, things of this sort. Recognizing that then, obviously, other schools have to be delayed a little that way.

[01:24:50] It becomes an order, just like it does for the city here. a new fire station, and we opted to do the city, assuming the city hall first, and we're working toward a variety of different things here, so keeping those sorts of things in mind, but, you know, not to ever, I would hope that nobody on the school board leaves thinking that if the building is torn down, that you no longer own the land.

[01:25:22] I have not heard of anybody on council talking that way whatsoever, and I hope that would not be the case for my fellow counselors. That should be the case, and I haven't been looped in, so to speak, on that because it is yours. But again, thinking of those sorts of things.

[01:25:41] And just as a reminder, we always try to figure out the best ways to use our existing buildings. And I know that when I toured those two elementary schools, there was a desire by the principal to get rid of those modular classrooms.

[01:25:57] But it was a matter of where do I put these programs that are in them? You know, I use, again, the gifted and talented program. Where do you put it? I'm being told it could be put as part of the library, but that means refiguring the library and on and on and on. And so those are all the things schools need to do.

[01:26:13] And I think that's the final thing that we should remember here on council, and I try to remember, is that, number one, our council, excuse me, our school board is elected by the same people that elect city council. And you are a duly elected body, and while you do not have funding authority, you are expected to do a lot of things along the way here.

[01:26:39] And I want us I want to be careful that I don't second guess you along the way just because I can, because I'm sure if the roles were reversed, you might have second guessed me about City Hall, for instance, in the renovation there or why we're doing whatever along the way.

[01:26:58] So we each have our lane to be in. But to the vice mayor's point about the school and the existing school, and I marked down that it was built, the new one was built on the premise that the old school would come down.

[01:27:16] I mean, because when I came on council, leaking roofs, a lot of serious problems there in a new school was needed, and students shouldn't be learning in that kind of environment along the way here. So I hope you keep those things in mind. It's easy to think now to forget some of these things, and it's good for us when we have these discussions to be reminded of where we've come and how far we've come.

[01:27:43] So I am looking forward to August the 4th, and you have a lot to celebrate for doing an incredible job with a new school. I'm looking forward to seeing that along the way. And I think I'm hopeful that in the ribbon cutting, you will point out some of the additions that you've added that make it, I think, even a more useful building, such as being able to separate the gym, the cafeteria, from the rest of the classroom so that it can be used by the public and by different groups along the way and not have to interfere with the classroom.

[01:28:21] A lot of your existing schools are like that, where they have to go through the classrooms. And so there are those kinds of things, for instance. It becomes a real anchor for our Dean Park, that all the money we've spent on park facilities along the way And to have the school as an addition to that where your students can take advantage of the park, you know, the recreation, but also, you know, having, you know, just having all of that along the way in that regard to me is very important.

[01:28:54] So I hope we leave here thinking good things, that there is a lot of good stuff and that we remember that we are partners in this and not adversaries along the way here. All right. Thank you, ma'am. Thank you, Chair.

[01:29:11] Whoever has control of the screen, could you reactivate? Mr. Dawson, he just moved it back. That young man. I have the mouse, but I don't have the password. Password is.

[01:29:33] I don't.

[01:29:43] Wanted to bring us back to where we were under priority number two, develop a plan for old jenny dean building as dr jones clearly stated we will be working on that we know that we are charged with compelling justification to keep the property in some form or fashion or not and um i'm confident we'll come up with that decision and we'll be able to

[01:30:16] share that with you to share i may not get up unless anybody else has anything they want to say I don't think anybody in this room has the connection to Jenny Dean more so, and I know, Zellie, you have been around and on the foundation and that, but your current mayor, and I know Ralph and I are on our way out, my mother went to the Manassas Industrial School, some of them know that story.

[01:30:44] My father was born on the land that the school actually sits on. And for me, Ralph, first of all, I sat here in tears listening to you. Don't ever apologize for stating what you have to state about legacy because you have earned it and you deserve that recognition and that time.

[01:31:09] So don't ever apologize. you take as long as you need to because people do not understand and they will never understand unless you share it. And you don't share enough. I'm always on you about not sharing your story. So people need to hear that. Most of the night is a brand new manuscript. That is going to the publisher soon.

[01:31:31] That's just one of the things. I don't want to sway whether you parted up with the thing. All I'm really asking with all those words were don't let Janet Dean's significant accomplishment with regard to providing a school lost in the way of the state boasting that we gave to you a new school.

[01:31:53] That school just, anyway, that's all I want. And I wanted to thank you for sharing that and to say don't ever apologize for sharing your story because it needs to be heard more. And I know that we'll be gone, but the due diligence will be done by these boards.

[01:32:15] I have no doubt. I have no doubt. Right. And you all will do what you need to do and what is best. And what we all want is a quality education for every child in this city. No matter how we get there, we're going to get there. And that is the priority of any other priorities is that we have schools that we are proud of

[01:32:37] We are producing the best in the business, and I just am just so excited about what is coming on August 4th, so much so, and I've been bugging Dr. Newman to death, I was just on the line with Governor Stanberger Monday, and there is a probability that she'll be able to make that ribbon cutting.

[01:33:00] I started bugging her over a year ago simply because of the pride that I personally have in that land, in that school, and that legacy that we are charged with carrying forward. It's so important, and what we're doing is absolutely amazing.

[01:33:21] They don't expect it of Manassas, but they're going to get it, and they're going to get it at the highest level, and I will keep bugging her until I get an absolute 100%. I will be there for the ribbon cutting, which I think we're very close. But Jenny Dean's legacy is my legacy. As I don't know, the first female, the first black female, and the fact that my mother went to that Manassas Industrial School, my father being born there, it means everything to me that we preserve the legacy.

[01:33:52] Outlining, saving foundation, whatever we need to do, but a brand new school with her name and her, I couldn't think of anything better. And I just felt the need to share that with you so that you understand, like I said, I'm not going to be here, but it just says so much about you all on these boards that have the ability to do this and make it happen.

[01:34:19] And you're going to do what you need to do. You're going to do the due diligence. You're going to do the quotes. You're going to get all the information, and you're going to make the best decision you can make. But it just makes me extremely proud to be a part of it now, and to see what happens going forward, and I know you'll do your homework.

[01:34:37] So I just wanted to share that with you, and as we wrap up this discussion, but again, Ralph, thank you. Thank you for sharing that. It's great. We appreciate it. There's a game show where you can buy vowels and buy letters, not buy five words, to the school board.

[01:34:58] Keep going. onward to greater. Thank you. So that's all I have on that. So I think we're ready to move forward. I had a long version and a short version. I'll give you a short version. Priority number three is family and community engagement opportunities. So just briefly, as we look forward to the future of Manassas City Public Schools, we recognize that strong schools are built on more than academics.

[01:35:26] They're built on relationships, trust, transparency, and meaningful engagement with the families and community members we serve. To strengthen those connections, our focus for priority number three includes expanding parent community engagement opportunities by building on successful programs already in place, including parents as educational partners with Rotary and our family liaison program, E3 coordination with Manassas City Police Department, and our award-winning adult English learner program just to name a few this is very draft form but I've been really excited to you

[01:36:03] know to talk about celebrating the 50th anniversary of Manassas City Public Schools this milestone provides an opportunity to honor our history recognize those who built this division celebrate our achievements and engage the community in shaping our future when Manassas established its own school division 50 years ago, it did so with the belief that local leaders could create something exceptional for students and families, and we look forward to showcasing that success story throughout the anniversary year.

[01:36:32] And improving communication and transparency, we heard a lot of great things over our retreat about expanded storytelling, videos, social media engagement, enhanced website content, and the exploration of a potential dedicated school board webpage that provides easier access to information and opportunities for engagement there's also increasing opportunities to listen and learn from our community through potential listening sessions held throughout the school year in locations across the city and the final thing is improving accessibility we heard

[01:37:08] some cool stuff about language access digital accessibility and other outreach efforts to ensure every family feels welcomed informed and able to participate in the life of our schools So it was a very full-bodied retreat, and we're just now one week out, but we heard a lot of stuff, and we're very proud of what we're going to bring forward and what our goal is in terms of expanding parent community engagement.

[01:37:34] So I guess before we leave, I'll just say that the success of Manassas City Public Schools depends on strong partnerships with our families and our community, and through these efforts, we'll continue building trust, strengthening relationships and creating opportunities for every student to succeed with this board and this council.

[01:37:54] So I will end by saying that my perception is that every citizen survey for at least the last 10 years has said that citizens, regardless of whether 50% of them have kids in schools or not, want our schools to be a priority.

[01:38:12] And so we're trying to move forward as a board with that in mind. And we would like to, you know, partner with you as much as you're willing to do that. Anybody have any questions or comments? Thank you, Madam Mayor.

[01:38:28] I think I just want to share, you know, learning about the foundation and the work the foundation has done. You know, it reminds me, the reason why they started and the business got together was because they wanted to provide internet to the schools.

[01:38:44] And, you know, today, you know, we even have free Wi-Fi from the city. So, you know, the needs are different, but I just want to make sure that when it comes to the upcoming needs or all the challenges that you have at school, you know, I love that we continue to partner with the businesses and, you know, talking about the community, you know, not only everybody here that's interested in making the schools better as a four-year-old, but also in the department when it comes to doing internships or helping the kids

[01:39:23] or providing, you know, future jobs. But I, you know, I thought this was, you know, a good ending. I got to get a motion to adjourn.

[01:39:39] I'm going to say something and I don't want to upset my school board more than I already have. I know, but I would be remiss if I didn't say this. You know this, but someone from council has to say i appreciate all you're doing council over the years has shown the priority of the school by making it by far the biggest expenditure of the city you can argue whether it's the right number the wrong number too much too high

[01:40:14] but it has consistently been dwarfs everything else that we do the number one bitch that i get as a city council member is still the schools and i don't newman knows this and i think each of you knows is i don't i support the schools and i don't ever throw you under the bus and i say you know i've said this many many times i'd much if i want to run the schools i'd be run

[01:40:51] for school board and god bless because you have a much more difficult job than i do or we do on the city council and i know all the things we are doing is towards india the citizens are looking for one thing and i'll be very honest as test scores have got to change and there's a lot that goes into it but i don't think we can come together as a body and not address the elephant in the room at least acknowledge the elephant i'm going to address you're doing all these things to

[01:41:26] try to address i guess that but it's it's out there it's tangible it's just you go door knocking this is the conversation you get uh and we all we all know it but it's i just felt as though it's it's important that to some degree in a public forum we acknowledge this is out there and everything the schools are doing is trying to accomplish that. I'd like to retort that I am

[01:42:01] actually currently door knocking and not one person has mentioned test scores to me at all. Hundreds of doors but you know we're addressing elephants in the room. Fire and rescue got a 21 percent increase. Police got a nine percent increase while crime is going down and the schools continue to receive a static three percent increase and you know i mean i think people need to know that too oh i'm not gonna get into the debate here that's i would just like to

[01:42:34] leave and redirect everyone to priority number one because that's where we are that piece where it says student outcomes to 100 of schools on track that's where that will come from proficiency in those slo scores and other pieces so we are working diligently and this year the priorities that came out of that retreat was that and so and some of us in the board advocated pretty heavily for that and so it is right there that's the will of the board we want all of our schools to be on track and the numbers reflect i mean having weaves and osborne on track the state is a significant

[01:43:13] change in improvement can be done and it will be done fully if we're in it now chair i move the The school board meeting adjourned. Second.

[01:43:29] I have a motion by Ms. Steven. Seconded by Miles. It's already here. We adjourn. Any discussion? All in favor? Aye. Any opposed? No. That's all.

[01:43:45] We are adjourned. Thank you. Sarah Hughes. How was it around here today?



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