

# **Fairfield Civic League Minutes**

October 6, 2014

## **Summary**

President, Matt Maxwell, opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with approximately 30 residents/visitors present. Matt opened up the meeting by giving of the summary of the meeting events. We do not have the opportunity to talk with Virginia Beach Public School Board members or candidates. After the Pledge of Allegiance, Matt introduced the guest speakers Bill Brunke, VB School Board Vice Chairman, and Ashley Mcloud, VB School Board Candidate. The public elections are scheduled for November 4<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Brunke has his own CPA firm and has served on the school board for 7 years. His profession as a CPA has helped him understanding the current fiscal challenges. He pointed out that the city schools have taken a \$90 million cut in real funding over the past few years. He noted that budget reductions have not negatively impacted the graduation rate. A key factor in the maintenance of academic excellent, according to Mr. Brunke, has greatly assisted by the new Superintendent, Dr. Spence. After a nation-wide search the board found a candidate with local ties to Virginia Beach. The schools have focused on how to integrate technologies into the classroom.

VB Public Schools are ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation. Graduating VB students typically are well prepared for college; however, he made the point that half of our students do not pursue college educations. That is why there is an emphasis preparing students for alternative paths after high school. The schools focus on preparing graduating students for college, life skill trades, and military service.

Improved City funding for public schools does not appear to be probable in the near future due to the relatively soft real estate market as evident by the anticipated 1 percent increase housing assessments. The Commonwealth continues to cut revenues, which impacts local schools. He noted that 85 percent of the school expenses are personnel related. Without raising teacher's salaries, keeping teachers in the profession is a challenge especially with an improving economy.

A concerning trend is the 40 percent increase in children applying for meal assistance which is directly correlated to those families living below the poverty level in Virginia Beach. In addition, there are 750 homeless children attending public school.

A final topic of discussion was magnet and academy schools. Kempsville High School (KHS) has a declining enrollment and is one of only three non-academy schools in Virginia Beach. Twenty years ago KHS was one of the best in VB, now it is at risk of losing its SOL accreditation. There are unintended negative side effects of all the academies. Ashley Mcloud spoke about her experience as a parent and school board member addressing magnet and academy schools. There are two HS's that

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have opted out of these programs for their school. She commented that she brings a broad experience to the school board and asked for her vote.

Other Civic League Business:

The treasury has a balance of \$1,092.84. There are 27 paid in full members so far this season. The President encouraged all to publicize the civic league with our neighbors.

The Neighborhood Watch has totally transitioned to [www.nextdoor.com](http://www.nextdoor.com).

The Princess Anne/Kempsville Road intersection is now scheduled to be completed December 2014. Once it is done, the community will re-evaluate the Fairfield traffic problems. We have had an agreement with the City to execute a trial closure of Lord Dunmore Drive once the intersection is completed. Given the work that is being done on the north bridge near Singleton Way (the s-curve) a trial closure might be perfectly timed with that project.

The current problem with the drainage along the canal has been the temporary bypass that was installed in order to construct the drainage culvert on Kempsville Road. In the next few weeks, this bypass and sheet piling will be remembered which should help drainage along the canal.

A question was asked about the "eagles nest" near Singleton Way. It is not a fully developed eagle's nest. The City is investigating whether or not they can cut down the trees while there is a nest in one of the trees.

The Walgreen's project is on hold. The proposal will be presented to the City Council on 21 October.

## **Upcoming Event**

**Finally, a reminder that Veteran's Day is coming up in November and that flags will be displayed throughout the neighborhood. Any volunteers should contact Sean McGinty at: [mrmcgint@hotmail.com](mailto:mrmcgint@hotmail.com)**

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM.