

FINANCE CONTROL BOARD, April 17, 2008

Present: Chairman Christopher Gabrieli, Mayor Domenic Sarno, Robert Nunes, James Morton, City Council President Bud Williams, City Clerk Wayman Lee

Public Comment

Wayman Lee: Our first speaker is Ms. Sheila McElwaine.

Sheila McElwaine: I am here this morning to talk to you about civic participation in Springfield, something seen as essential by authors of the Urban Land Institute report. I hope that the control board will hire an experienced community organizer to review civic participation in Springfield and to make recommendations that, if followed, would ensure that in June 2009, an energized and vigilant citizenry will be ready to build on the solid foundation you will have left behind.

It has been inspiring to watch you tackle so many of our problems and bring us into the 21st century in so many ways. But I am still waiting to hear about a plan for improving civic participation, particularly participation by residents who are members of racial “minorities,” and who, despite this misleading shorthand, comprise 60% of our population.

Look at the faces in the audience today and remember audiences at other control board meetings and at September’s community forum and you will see what I mean. Springfield is rich in opportunities for civic participation: police beat management teams, neighborhood associations, school based teams, PTOs, and branch library advisory committees, but membership in these groups is no more representative of the city than the audience here today.

Recruiting strategies for our civic organizations, to the extent recruiting is done at all, only produce more of the “same old same old.” The same old faces or new faces from the same old streets, the same old parishes, the same old organizations. Try recruiting new faces, and you are referred to the same old same old sources whether or not the person is effective or the parish or ethnic group represents today’s demographic.

This means that the voices of 60% of our neighbors are not part of community conversations about law enforcement, land use, education, or library services. This means that 60% of us are not developing skills in public speaking, publicity, parliamentary procedure, active listening and lobbying, skills needed by leaders at every level. It means that the current generation of civic activists are not being replaced and that even with ward representation and, potentially, charter reform, it will be very easy for Springfield to slip backwards into old habits of inattention and passivity.

Community organizing is sometimes assigned to planning or community development departments, a trap I hope we avoid. Land use planners and economic developers lack the technical and interpersonal skills needed to reach out, inspire, and

train citizens in inclusion and active civic participation. Therefore I hope you hire an experienced community organizing consultant to assess the state of our civic participation and to make recommendation. And, having received these recommendations, I hope you will to make available the resources to implement them at once. Thank you.

WL: Ms. Vera O'Connor.

Vera O'Connor: Good morning, control board members. My name is Vera O'Connor. I am a long-time resident of Springfield. I am here before you this morning to speak about a few things. The first is I would like to congratulate Mr. Morton and his team on choosing William Fitchet to be Springfield's police commissioner. I am sure that Commissioner Fitchet will do a good job.

The last time I was here I waited for over two hours while you were in executive session. In my humble opinion, I thought some consideration should have been given to the public and the media who sat twiddling their thumbs while waiting for you to begin the proceedings with the speak out. I wondered if in the future you could take a break during the executive session and have the speak out and then go back into executive session.

Breaking news yesterday, Dr. Burke, superintendent of schools, decided to leave at the end of his contract here in Springfield. This will avert a lot of conflict and division. That brings me to my next subject, education and who is to blame for the low performance level in the schools. In my opinion, the principal obligations of parents are to see to the education of their children. Parents have to play a part and not leave the responsibility of education their children to the school system.

Children are having children, so most are uneducated and unable to help their children with their homework. They are unable to cope with the stress of life. Most parent or parents have to work two jobs to put food on the table. The children are left alone and the TV (which I call the "idiot box") is the babysitter. There are many educational programs, but most has violent programs, programs that encourage disrespect to parents and others. Without proper supervision, some of our children roam the streets and are easy recruits for criminal activities.

There is no parental bond. That is a bad example and most distressing is the attitude of some parents who go to the schools, not to check on their child's progress, but to confront teachers who try to discipline their child but to confront teachers who try to discipline their child. That is a bad example for the children who not only show disrespect to the teachers, but physically attack them. We cannot blame the educators for our children's failure in school. Children have to do homework, know why they are in school, and have a vision of what they want for the future. They have to develop pride and self-esteem.

We have to motivate the young people to get a good education, have programs for teaching parenting skills. Programs for the young people need to be developed and

implemented that will help them to stay on the right track. More emphasis needs to be placed on programs that develop life skills education, such as decision making, civic responsibility and conflict resolution. Libraries are important and need to be open; not everyone has a home personal computer.

The superintendent of schools, principals and teachers cannot be with the child 24/7. Parents, religious organizations and others have to help direct our young people. They are our future. And if most will not live to be 20 because of their lifestyle, or spending lifetime in prison, where will that leave Springfield, Massachusetts, the nation and the world?

WL: Mr. Timothy Collins.

Tim Collins: Well, thank you for giving me the opportunity. I missed...with the time change. I'm here on a couple of reasons. First of all, I did have a conversation with Mr. Morton a minute ago, but I would like to encourage you to work in collaboration with our school committee on the choice of a new superintendent. And I do want to say thank you to the superintendent for doing what's best for the kids and not having a long, dragged out situation in the courts.

I also want to talk about the budget situation. I know you're in that process right now, and I'm aware that school committee has asked you to increase the city's contribution above the minimum requirement by law. But I don't want to see the same kind of situation that happened in the House of Representatives and that is cutting corporate taxes and then having it be revenue neutral. And I'm speaking specifically, and I know that there's negotiations that will happen on Schedule 19 where the city is looking for a 70+% increase in IT from the school department, a 30+% increase from the personnel on the city side on Schedule 19 and other...the law department and an increases there as well. Whatever it is that's done and however you land on Schedule 19, the increase that we need has to be more that what the increases are going to do on Schedule 19. You can give us \$3million more in contribution from the city, but charging \$3million more on Schedule 19 is no help whatsoever. You know, the budget speaks to what our priorities are. And I've heard a lot of *talk* about public safety and education being a priority, and what you put in that budget will speak a lot louder than the words that have been said up to this point.

And I also would like you to make a public statement as a group. There's a lot of people out there in this community who aren't even aware that there's a binding question on the ballot in November that would eliminate the state income tax which would not only be a disaster for the schools, it would be a disaster for every city and town in this commonwealth. Nearly a third of the state's revenue comes from the income tax. 40% of all school revenue across the state comes from the state income tax. 77% of our school funding comes from the state. That kind of a cut would be disastrous not only to the schools, not only to the cities and towns with police and fire and roads and infrastructure, but to Medicaid, to our hospitals. Taxes are the price we pay for living in a civilized society, and we've made some good strides over the years, but this would be marching backwards like I've never seen before. There may be people in the public who think it

won't happen, but times are tough. People have a tendency to be short sighted, and we need leaders such as yourself right now standing up and saying "This is not a good idea."

I also want to put in a plug once again for the building of our new high school and our new middle school for a "project labor agreement." The commitment the trade unions have made to have 20% of that work done by minority city residents that they are committed to putting into their apprenticeship programs will bring living wage jobs to people who are in dire need of living wage jobs. And quite frankly, my suggestion is you could avoid any legal battles by putting it in the specs for the bid that it be done locally, that whoever gets the contracts has to do what these labor unions are willing to do, because what we need here in the city of Springfield is living wage jobs for the parents of the children in the schools. We need hope and nothing brings hope better than seeing a future for yourself. So thank you for the time and I'll be here to help you in any way I can.

Approval of Minutes

Control Board Executive Director Steve Lisauskas: Good morning, Mr. Chairman, members of the board. The next item on the agenda is item II, approval of the minutes.

****MINUTES APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Authorization to Conduct a Project Labor Agreement Study

SL: Thank you. The next item on the agenda, item III, is authorization to conduct a Project Labor Agreement Study. Just a little bit of history. Project labor agreements really took hold in or about World War II, were designed to promote workforce harmony. Obviously during wartime production, you couldn't have strikes at your munitions factory or the place where you were making your artillery or your rifles, so project labor agreements really started to grow and spread through manufacturing at that point in time. there's been a trend now to consider them on public projects; increasingly in Massachusetts that trend continues.

What a project labor agreement is essentially—and this is boiling it down a fair amount—is a contract with labor prior to the conduct of a project. So a project is bid out, in this instance, as a project labor agreement so all vendors know what the requirements are between the relationship for union—for labor and management and essentially provides uniform work rules, uniform grievance provisions and other important items with regard to the labor management relationship during construction.

A variety of studies have indicated that project labor agreements are more expensive than non-project labor agreements, and a number of other studies have indicated that they are less expensive. So there are...on both sides of the issue there are studies coming out saying PLAs are better, PLAs are not better. Regardless, the one thing that is clear is that a case know as Callahan vs. the City of Malden sets forth requirements that a public entity must follow prior to entering into a project labor

agreement on a project. The requirements of Callahan are summarized in the third paragraph of the item, the executive order 041703 2008. And just to summarize that for the board is [reads] “a project labor agreement may not be used in the public building construction project unless the awarding authority through a ‘carefully reasoned process’ concludes that in light of the size, duration, timing and complexity of the project, a PLA is the only way to achieve the goals of the competitive bidding laws which are to obtain the lowest price that competition can secure, place all contractors on an equal footing and promote labor harmony.”

So the first step that’s required to use a PLA under Callahan vs. City of Malden is that a carefully reasoned process, a carefully reasoned review, be conducted. And the order before you is an order that would authorize the school building commission of the city to conduct that carefully reasoned review by way of a study which would look at the labor market, project size, project complexity and other relevant factors to determine whether a project labor agreement is permissible for the Putnam project.

The order, as I mentioned, would begin the procurement of that PLA study, the executive director reviewing the selected firm and the executive director and the board reviewing the final results. The board would need to be a signatory to that project labor agreement, so the results of that study are important for the board to understand. This, as I mentioned, is a required step before you can do a PLA. If this step is not taken, you are foreclosed under Callahan vs. City of Malden from doing a project labor agreement on this project. So this study will tell us if it’s an appropriate vehicle to promote the requirements of competitive bidding and labor harmony on the project. So this is an order that is before you and do request your approval of it.

DS: Mr. Chairman if I may. Steve thank you for your work on this PLA. I’m in agreement that we should forward on the study. We’ve heard pros and cons on both sides of the issues and the proper way and legal, the legal way we have to do it with the Callahan Malden is move forward on an independent study to see the benefits of a PLA, the pros and cons on both sides or the...and the regular construction, too. We had a history a little before my time on school projects that constantly ran over: cost overruns, cost overruns, cost overruns. So I think it’s fair to put the PLA on the table, look at it, independently get the pros and cons and try to craft the best possible deal, not only for construction, but to benefit the students at Putnam Vocational any other programs or schools that we move forward with Forest Park Middle schools or others, but I’ve heard a lot of good things on PLAs and then there other sides’ll cast aspersions. But do the study, get everything on the table, and let’s see if we can hold individuals’ feet to the fire whether it’s a PLA or anything else that you stay on time, you stay on budget, and you get the job done proudly and efficiency. And the study I would say should move forward and if it comes out the PLA, then I’m sure that that work will be done properly, too. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

BW: Mr. Chairman, just a couple questions. Steve, in terms of cost of this item?

SL: We'll...once the procurement is conducted, we hope to bring the appropriation order to the next control board meeting which would be third, fourth week in May, I believe at this point in time. So we should have that cost item in ahead of that meeting and will share it with you.

BW: Normally, what's the turn-around time in terms of conducting these studies?

SL: I don't know that there is a norm. I think that we could probably do this in... You're looking at labor market, you're looking at whatever other construction projects are coming on line, you're looking at the unique factors relative to this project itself, so I would think it would be a fairly tight turn-around: a month and a half, two months, once you have somebody on board working on it.

BW: But I agree with the Mayor that if we can do a PLA, because I've publicly supported the PLA agreements, and I like the caveat of the 20% of trying to get some minority students off the streets, because that's part of economic development. We always talking about gang initiatives and what we're going to do, but, that's one where economic development in terms of trying to get these young people a career, so that's very enticing, I believe. What's the amount of the project, the Putnam project?

SL: The Putnam project is an approved project that I believe is \$125million with a 10% local share.

BW: And just, and I'll ask the same question to this board that I asked to the school building commission: What role does the control board play in this process?

SL: Well, the control board plays I think a similar role to the role it plays in other projects which is obviously funding. And the control board through its executive director, deputy executive director and other staff are involved in assisting city personnel wherever it's necessary to assist them in the project. So providing oversight, providing additional management assistance and additional project assistance as appropriate. So generally speaking, it's at funding, at contracts, it's at change orders and it's at other legal points.

BW: Change orders included?

SL: Yes.

BW: Change orders are included. OK

SL: To the extent that a contract is required which would be anything over \$5,000. And I actually think for a construction project, it doesn't even have that limit, so I would say in all change orders there would be a need for the control board to execute it.

BW: OK.

SL: Or the Mayor under delegated authority.

DS: Mr. Chairman, just to [unintelligible] Council President Williams also, you know, movement toward a PLA also, there's also negotiations when a PLA occurs also that the union contracts will be held under standards that have to be faced either/or on that. So if it moves towards a PLA, that there's negotiations and highlighting some of these programs, too. So this is just a first step of consideration. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

JM: Mr. Chairman, I understand that these PLA can be very different from one another. So are we going to have in front of the consultant a PLA proposal for the Putnam project that we're going to be looking at to determine whether that is a...an appropriate approach for us to take or...? I guess I'm wondering what terms is this consultant going to be looking at to decide whether we should enter into a PLA agreement with respect to Putnam and any other project.

SL: Sure. What the consultant will be looking at is environmental issues, so looking at the labor market and determining: Is there sufficient labor market unionized environment to staff this project? Is the project of sufficient size and complexity so in some ca—I believe it was in Malden vs. The City of Callahan [sic], actually...in Malden's instance, there were a number of projects that involved...that relied up each other. So you would renovate School 1, and while you were renovating them, you would move the children into School 2 which impacted School 2 which impacted five or six other schools. So there was a need to coordinate multiple construction projects and the education of students in multiple schools, so there was a lot of coordination. There was...there were a lot of issues related to both the size and the complexity of the project, and in Callahan vs. Malden, the duration, six, seven, eight year long project. So those are things the consultant will be looking at. Is it sufficiently large enough that the union harmony outweighs any potential downside of the PLA?

It's not going to look at specific terms and conditions of a PLA. We would need to negotiate that separately with the unions, and a very strong recommendation we have received is that, at that point in time, you hire someone who is expert in negotiating project labor agreements, because there are good project labor agreements and bad project labor agreements. And you want to make sure that you have the best one possible so that union and management know how to relate to each other and you have clear guidelines. So this would look...this study would look at environmental issues related to: Is a PLA appropriate? And then the next step would be to negotiate that appropriate PLA and then, obviously, bidding and construction.

JM: Is it anticipated that this consultant will meet with our local labor unions, trade unions, and as he or she decides whether this is an appropriate contract approach?

SL: Yeah, I think that it would be appropriate for them to do so as they scan the labor market. It's not simply going to the Department of Labor website and seeing how many people are here and how [unintelligible] unionized. I think you'd need to get that on the ground intelligence, so I anticipate that they would.

JM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

DS: ...talk to both sides, obviously.

SL: Yes. That's necessary.

DS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CG: Any other questions or comments or discussion?

****MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

Training Program for Municipal Employees

SL: Thank you very much. The next item on the agenda if Ms. Vinchesi would please...deputy executive director Patricia Vinchesi joining us for item number IV on the agenda, the training program for municipal employees.

Deputy Executive Director Patricia Vinchesi: Good morning. What you have in your packet is a relatively brief outline of a training program that we're proposing that we develop and implement for municipal employees in the city of Springfield. We've come up with an acronym, the Springfield Management and Administrative Resources Training Program or SMART. As you can see, what the goal of the program is is to train, particularly middle management supervisors, department and cabinet heads in some core management areas so that we can ensure that there's equity and uniformity in the management and distribution of policies and procedures and sort of finance and budgeting expectations across all city departments.

The way the program is designed and proposed is it would have a recycling core workshop of five workshops or seminars for managerial staff in finance and budgeting, human resource management, communication skills, supervisory skills (including motivation and team work), human resource management in terms of working with staff both in and out of collective bargaining agreements and creating an ethical culture.

After we implement this part of the program, there's a second phase to it or a second piece actually, which would have an intermittent series of seminars for a wider variety of staff (support staff as well) that would cycle as staff turn-over happens or people get promoted into new positions or are new to the organization. customer service delivery, procurement and purchasing, evaluating performance and performance appraisal, succession planning and executive leadership. This is one of the things that the control board staff has identified as really being a useful management tool for the city departments as we go forward by institutionalizing a training program and professional development for staff across all lines.

The last component of it is to actually bring that actual training program in house so we have a robust training program to continue to offer these courses and seminars and workshops throughout the year on an on-going basis. And I'm happy to answer any more specific questions that you have.

DS: Mr. Chairman, first I want to commend you, Ms. Vinchesi and Steve, I think this is...James had Dewie Evans, former Red Sox great, at the YMCA, very successful breakfast and he talked about farm systems. And this is what this is about, creating a farm system for middle and upper management to move to upper management and or above and have the proper mentoring, the proper shadowing, the proper training, and it plays right into the line of we talk about local, Springfield residents or Springfield quality. And I think this will be very beneficial and so people can work their way up the ladder in a proper fashion and have the proper training on techniques, and they can also build it in with the knowledge that they have, their common sense and tangibles, the non-book smart issues that come up at that point in time and that you can't put a price tag on, but I just simply the analogy of the farm system that this is developing from within. And if you develop from within, it also builds on the good job that's done, it also builds on the morale of city employment. So I...this is something that I believe we should entertain. I appreciate your efforts on it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

BW: Mr. Chairman, [unintelligible] a cost analysis associated with this?

PV: Well, we'd actually go out to bid for it and review the bids. Each workshop is limited to 30 folks, so I think conservatively you're looking at probably \$1200. to \$1500. per workshop for 30 folks plus the materials and stuff like that.

SL: I think as you're looking at it, Mr. President, as the Mayor has said on a couple of occasions and most recently when we were out with the energy service contract, you do need to spend some money to... as we have discussed, spend some money to save money in this instance.

BW: That was my point, my point that we should know what we're going to spend.

SL: Exactly. Right.

BW: Penny wise, pound foolish: I understand the theory. I just think the taxpayers still need to know what we're spending...a blanket check. I understand...

SL: And that would come to the next board meeting for appropriation once this is...

PV: It's actually going to be bid in three different ways. It's going to be bid lump sum for the core workshops, but also in a per workshop basis so that we can pick and choose. As we go forward are there some we might not be able to do, so we'll get a wide variety of cost analysis.

SL: We'll have it give it to you at the next meeting.

BW: Hopefully at some point, in time we'd be able to do this in house?

SL: Yes.

BW: Did I hear that?

PV: That's the key component. We only want to do this once or twice with a consultant and then they will quote a separate fee for bringing it in house and working with HR [human resources]. We should have a robust training program in house.

BW: So HR will eventually run this?

PV: That is our intent.

BW: This does not include the school department I... We keep saying the city of Springfield, but it's the city side?

SL: Well I think it should be open to school department principals, vice-principals, others who have a managerial function, certain people in the central office. I don't think we're looking to foreclose it. The idea is to help develop skills and, as the Mayor indicated, that sort of farm system. And I don't think we should foreclose the opportunity for the school department to be part of the...part of that.

BW: Anything that's going to enhance upward mobility, I think that we should be on board for. Certainly training is very important and for many years in this city, the training was on the low end of the totem pole so to speak. So I just want to commend you and applaud you for moving in the right direction, but still we have to know what it costs.

SL: Right, exactly, absolutely.

BW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

DS: Steve, when we were doing the boiler thing, you're right. Sometimes you have to spend money to make money. And the other aspect, to is R and D, you know, this is R and D, research and development. Times are tough, you don't have the money to do it. Times are stabilizing now, and it, you know, pays dividends down the road, but again it's to foster that you can, you do a good job, you work hard, you can rise through the ranks. And then the next person sees that, he or she, and that gives an opportunity, too so thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SL: So this is just an update to let you know that we'll be putting this out to bid, and that at the next control board meeting, we'll have a request for an appropriation to fund all or a portion of this work.

CG: Look hard at electronic alternatives, you know, tools, because they're just so cost-effective and can often reach a lot more workers who can't you know afford to take time off to attend a specifically scheduled seminar. I don't know a thing about how that plays out in the municipal space, but...

SL: OK OK. Thank you. Thank you.

CG: Thank you.

Discussion of Capital Improvement Plan

SL: The next item on the agenda is a discussion of a capital improvement plan. I've asked Patricia to remain. She's taken a leadership role in helping move this forward for the city.

The financial policies adopted in June by the control board require that the city conduct a multiple year, multi-year capital improvement plan. This capital improvement plan that's currently being developed and is nearing completion is the first comprehensive integrated review of the city's capital needs. All departments...all department requests will be included in it. Right now it's ballparking at about \$425million. The requests are being scored and ranked and are ranked on a number of different criteria including its fiscal impact of the issue, whether you are legally required to do that (make that capital improvement), its impact on public services, its...the emergency of it as a maintenance need (so if a roof is collapsing, that's more urgent from a maintenance perspective than say, perhaps, a sidewalk that needs some additional work), what the prior phases of work have been conducted and, of course, the priority that the department or cabinet head places on that improvement. So those scores and rankings are being assembled now.

But what we wanted to share with you is number one, that we're...is nearly completed...it is a policy of the control board for the city that this work be conducted, but secondly, that again as a round number, we're looking at about \$425million which reflects two things: number one, the large size of the city (Springfield is a large city with a large population and as such will have large capital needs) and the second is that, during years of financial difficulty, the city was not able to invest in capital assets, not able to invest in maintenance. And so you're going to have a significant back log in maintenance. Many areas the control board over the last three or four years has been able to invest in: some additional school maintenance, some additional municipal building maintenance as, certainly, this building has been maintained in an excellent manner and, hopefully, other municipal building, all municipal buildings can achieve this level of maintenance.

But with that \$425million worth of liabilities, it's important to keep in mind that this city's unfunded pension liability is about \$400million, and the city's OPEB [other post employment benefits] liability or health insurance liability for retirees is also about

\$400million. So the three of these put together, we're looking at about \$1.2billion in round numbers of liability for the city of Springfield. Obviously, you don't need to fund those today (thankfully) but there needs to be...it just underscores the needs to continue to manage the city as the city has been managing itself and the control board has been assisting in the management of to ensure that today's spending allows you to meet those capital needs as laid out in the capital plan which will be finalized shortly. But also so you're able to plan for and address those other large liabilities. So just wanted to give you a quick update on it. It...again, it is a requirement of the control board's financial policies that the plan be developed. It is nearing completion, and it's under review right now and we should have something for you in the very near future.

DS: Mr. Chairman, we've been reviewing that the last few days and they have been made what needs to be made priority the...we're very obviously cognoscente some of the bond indebtedness issue that we have. And there are some projects that we have to pursue within reason, but they've all been allocated and a process of ranking whether a, b, c, d or e and also the mandatory aspects. But, you know, we're reviewing them and some that'll have to be on others, you know, that are not going to be able to be done and also this helps to take off what we decide to pull off on the bond helps to take off on the bottom line long term or short term, too, on the overall budget aspect. But it's a pretty comprehensive document, and just because it's in that document doesn't necessarily mean it's going to get *done*. But we'll look at the, you know, the bottom line of what has to get done and move from there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

BW: Just a quick question, what is our...the service on our bond note?

SL: On the entirety, on the city's debt service? TJ, [Plante, city CFO] do you have that?

City CFO TJ Plant: I think it's \$16million [unintelligible].

SL: Pre-reimbursement or post-reimbursement?

TJP: Pre-reimbursement.

SL: Pre-reimbursement, so about \$16million.

BW: That's per year.

SL: Yes.

BW: Could be go up next...

SL: Yeah, well, actually the most recent bond issuance in January, the city had an inclining...our debts, our spiky debt schedule with some issues from a number of years past. The last bond issuance leveled that off, so it's actually pretty level...

BW: Pretty level now?

SL: ...at that figure, it may move up a little bit. We weren't able to work out all the spikes. There were some mammoth spikes in the city's debt structure before. So now we have a more normal debt structure which is level...

BW: Level.

SL: ...and then declining.

BW: There's a...there's a name for that.

SL: Yes, you want a declining debt schedule. The city had previously used level debt service rather than equal principal.

BW: Level debt service.

SL: Equal principal.

BW: Equal

SL: Equal principal is substantially less expensive, but harder to afford up front.

BW: Over the long haul, equal is better.

SL: That's correct.

PV: If I can add, this capital plan's a major step forward, I think, in having the total financial picture for the city in one snapshot, because in a perfect world, the capital plan runs concurrently with the operations plan. So you now just looking at your operational budget, which is under review now, but you're looking at the total picture both from the short term and a long term basis. And each year as capital items are funded, they'll roll over to future years, new items will pop up, but you'll have a rolling capital plan so you'll at least be able to have a good bench mark estimate of what your debt obligation or your capital needs out, not only for this fiscal year, the next fiscal year, but even five to ten fiscal years out. And that's really why it's such a valuable management tool.

BW: And I'm very appreciative I've sat on one or two meetings and I'm very appreciative, but back of my mind, the big "r" word and it's not Republican; it's recession that looms...I mean we're doing pretty good; we're stabilized, but I'm really, really concerned about our revenue numbers if they're going to be able to sustain, to hold on. I just think that, Mr. Chairman, that I'm not forecasting this, because I don't know it to be certain, but all the indicators would lead us to believe that the worst is yet to come. And I think that I just want to be very conservative in terms of what we're doing. I mean it looks really good now, but we know down the road that, you know, something good...*not* good could be waiting. And I just want us to be prepared for that bump in the road that I think's going to come. It's just...every city's going to go through it, just the

financial ways of this country now. So we've got to be understanding, so that's why I'm very conservative and trying to hold back on a lot of stuff. Thank you though.

SL: Thank you.

Update Regarding School Superintendent Search

SL: OK, and the last item on the agenda is an update regarding the school superintendent search.

CG: The update is that we're told by our search consultants that they have over 20, I believe it's 21, active candidates that they're either applicants or under review. It's been brought to my attention that some folks think that there may be candidates either here in the Springfield area or elsewhere who weren't aware of the window, and I just want to reiterate through the media and directly that you know it's clear that we'd accept candidates right to the point where we'll be interviewing finalists, because we want the best person possible out there; there was a pretty broad process and candidates from across the country. I'm under the impression from our search consultant that he's very pleased with the quality and range of candidates, both Massachusetts candidates and national candidates which is exciting. Apparently the Springfield opportunity seems one of the best opportunities available this year which is really good news for us, I think, in terms of the quality of person we're going to likely have.

Subject to logistics that continue to be need to be worked on and making sure the process is as expeditious as possible, but as thoughtful as possible, I would anticipate finalist interviews will be here in Springfield, public interviews, the week either of the 28th of April (two weeks from, ten days from now) or the following week, May 5. And they would be over more than one day.

I believe we're releasing today the list of the people appointed to the community advisory board, and I'm very grateful to many people on this panel and beyond who nominated people and to the many people who've agreed to serve on that community advisory panel. I think it's going to be extremely helpful to both the quality of the decision process and the launch, you know, for a new superintendent. So I think that's pretty much the update. I don't know if there's any questions from my colleagues.

BW: Mr. Chairman, real quick question: How many individuals from the city of Springfield applied? Is there anyone in that pool of 21?

CG: Yes, I know there are. I've not been shown the whole list, and the consultant is going to make some recommendations, but, yes, I know that Springfield residents, as well as Massachusetts, as well as national.

BW: You're... you're saying that the window of opportunity is still open for any candidate...?

CG: Absolutely. Mr. Lisauskas brought to my attention someone who had a concern about whether or not that was, you know, the case or... The answer in my mind is we want to get the best possible superintendent [unintelligible] and that's got to be the priority and the finalists have not been selected by any means and so someone, you know, I think realistically the end of next week is probably the end of when it's humanly possible for someone to be considered, but if a great candidate emerged, I assume my colleagues would agree that we want the best candidate not the...you now, nothing else.

BW: Just, just so the public will understand what the next phase is, the next process is, in terms of streamlining these 21 candidates and the focus of your community group, how do you envision that happening?

CG: The...working together with the search consultant, we would bring forth a group of somewhere on the order of three to four finalists. And those three to four finalists would be interviewed by the control board, school committee, and the community advisory panel separately, publicly. And then, through a process that still needs to be developed some, because through the welcome decision that happened with Dr. Burke and the school committee, the school committee is now accepted kind of our invitation to work out a good process to participate jointly in this. So the consultant has been tasked with working with them to sort of figure out what is a workable, balanced, appropriate you know process to [unintelligible] you know the school committee. So and the advisory, community advisory interviews will be, you know, there'll be a formal, you know, feedback form that every member of that will fill out that will inform the rest of us. And ultimately, I'm pretty confident that after the interviews, we will collectively choose the next superintendent subject to contract negotiations.

BW: So, the recom-...he's going to prioritize it down to three or four or five candidates, the consultant...

CG: Correct.

BW: Then there's going to be a public process...

CG: Correct.

BW: ...this community group and the school committee and the control board. And then they're going to fill out a sheet, a scoring sheet I guess.

CG: The advisory members will get the...they'll have questions answered and to give feedback to those who will make the decision on what they've seen some negotiated thing between the control board and the school committee we would collectively, actually pick.

BW: OK.

CG: Certainly welcome the school committee's, you know...I think we've all discussed in the past informally we want the school committee fully engaged. This is not a...this is a long term situation, not a one-time thing. So that's where we stand.

BW: Thank you.

DS: Mr. Chairman, you know, I want to thank you for your efforts and Steve. We've really put together a very good cross section for an advisory community committee whether business, education, neighborhood, etc. on that. And I'm glad that my colleagues on the school committee...we always wanted them to be involved...this is a huge decision. You know, we made an important decision in the public safety front, the root cause front now of our school system. So this is a huge decision of her or she is superintendent coming into you know highlight the good of the system, but also to change the direction where we want to go with the public system and so I'm looking very forward to this. And I'm glad that there's been keen interest in the position, whether locally or across the nation.

And in turn I'd also like to commend Dr. Burke on his decision. I want to thank him for the good initiative that he has put forth, but I commend him on the decision that, you know, it is time to move on, to move forward in a different direction. And I wish he and his family the best, but now it's time to get that individual leader, he or she, that is going to send a revolutionizing message pertaining to the school system whether it's on... Ms. O'Connor had spoken...we speak on all the time whether it's basic soft skills on citizenship, socialization skills, keep working, partnering with our business community on workforce development skills and other entities. So it's been a good process and now it'll...now really...it's going to really be gauged up now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CG: Thank you. Any other questions or comments? Any new business? Move to adjourn to executive session to discuss...

SL: ...real estate.

CG: Real estate and not returning to regular session.

****MEETING ADJOURNED TO EXECUTIVE SESSION.**