

**TOWN OF FOUNTAIN HILLS
MINUTES OF THE JOINT SESSION BETWEEN THE
FOUNTAIN HILLS TOWN COUNCIL AND
THE FOUNTAIN HILLS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD
February 21, 2017**

- **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Kavanagh called the Joint Session to order at 5:34 p.m. in the Fountain Hills Council Chambers.

1. INTRODUCTION OF ATTENDING MEMBERS BY MAYOR KAVANAGH

Present were the following members of the Fountain Hills Unified School District Board: President Edith Stock, Vice President Jill Reed, Boardmember Dr. Wendy Miedel Barnard, Boardmember Judy Rutkowski, and Boardmember Dr. C.T. Wright. School Superintendent Dr. Patrick Sweeney was also present

Present were the following members of the Town Council: Mayor Linda Kavanagh, Vice Mayor Nick DePorter, Councilmember Alan Magazine, Councilmember Cecil Yates, Councilmember Art Tolis, and Councilmember Henry Leger. Councilmember Dennis Brown was absent.

Town Manager Grady E. Miller, Town Attorney Andrew McGuire (attended by phone), and Acting Town Clerk Nancy Walter were also present.

- **AGENDA**

2. DISCUSSION RELATING TO THE POSSIBLE REZONING AND SALE OF SURPLUS VACANT FOUNTAIN HILLS UNIFIED #98 SCHOOL DISTRICT.

Town Manager Miller acknowledged the cooperative and collaborate relationship between the Town and the Fountain Hills Unified School District (FHUSD) and stated that the FHUSD had received donated property over the years from MCO Properties. Town Manager Miller introduced the Director of Development Services, Bob Rodgers, who explained and reviewed the details for the possible rezoning and sale of surplus vacant school district land in a PowerPoint presentation (available on line and in the office of the Town Clerk). Mr. Rodgers provided current and general information on the three vacant school owned properties located at 15680 N. Aspen Drive, approximately 20 acres, zoned R1-35, 15516 E. El Lago Boulevard, approximately 35 acres, zoned R1-10, and 12055 N. Arroyo Vista Drive, approximately 15.5 acres, zoned R1-18. Mr. Rodgers also explained the process necessary to dispose of one or more of the properties.

Councilmember Yates asked what the FHUSD Board's intentions were for the three properties and President Stock discussed the benefits allowed the district by keeping ownership and noted the possibility that there could be a future need for potential school sites. Vice President Reed added the proceeds in a sale of these properties would be limited to funding the schools infrastructure or pay-off debt and noted that if the district needed additional funding in the future, these properties would be available and could possibly gain in value over time. Dr. Sweeney mentioned that during a study session in April 2016, he suggested the district address the Four Peaks Elementary vacant school site first.

Councilmember Yates asked for additional information on the process in selling the property and Dr. Sweeney answered the action must be voter approved with a simple majority vote and placed on a

November ballot. He pointed out the voter approval would be good for ten years to sell one or all of the properties.

Vice Mayor DePorter suggested that the Council could assist the school district by making the property zoning attractive for buyers.

Councilmember Tolis and Dr. Sweeney discussed the school's current and future student enrollment and the challenges and benefits of being a smaller school district. They also brought up the issues involving competition from other schools and their choices and pointed out that the school district was making the best choices for the district. President Stock maintained that many students who had chosen to attend a competitive school had returned to the Town's smaller school district to experience more contact and benefits not offered in a larger school.

Vice President Reed discussed the declining enrollment and closing of schools experienced currently in Scottsdale and also felt the timing was not the right to sell the properties.

Boardmember Dr. Wright requested everyone acknowledge and support the FHUSD and maintained the district was doing an outstanding job. Boardmember Dr. Wright pointed out that the school district needs a strategic plan, looking at the next five to fifteen years.

Councilmember Leger expressed his confidence in the school board and personally understood the benefits of the Town's smaller school district and concurred with the Board's decision at this time.

Boardmember Rutkowski announced the Board was looking at possible future funding for activities in Governor Ducey's plan for Arizona schools but at this time did not know the impact to FHUSD and added that PROP 123 allows the district to pay for first pick teachers. Boardmember Rutkowski also invited anyone to visit the Fountain Hills High School and see what the school had to offer.

Dr. Sweeney stated this was an item that would be revisited again and expressed his appreciation for the input. Mayor Kavanagh promised the Town would be available to help the District anyway possible and pointed out that Council had recently approved the "Park Place Development" and hopefully would bring in families with students.

3. UPDATE ON THE STATE TRUST LAND.

Town Manager Miller stated the "State Trust Land" is the last major area to be built out in Fountain Hills and explained that the land, purchased by "Ellman Properties", had gone into receivership and returned to the State Land Trust. Town Manager Miller reported Town staff met with State Land Trust Commissioner Lisa Atkins and her staff and it was determined that a new "Land Use Plan" would take six months to develop. He added that a meeting was scheduled in March 2017 to review the new plan. Town Manager Miller added he would request the land not be broken up into multiple parcels in order to allow for just one master developer so that all of the land would be developed. The Town's goal is to have higher density along with affordable family housing. He also stressed that only if and when a land use plan was approved, followed by a developer's interest in purchasing the property, would the project be placed out for competitive bidding or an auction. Town Manager Miller said that the Town wants one master developer in order to have a development agreement which would allow the Town to list all of the conditions related to infrastructure, services, and the Fountain Hills Sanitary District (FHSD).

Boardmember Dr. Barnard pointed out that the Town had created great parks and stressed it was important to continue that theme in new developments.

Councilmember Tolis asked how long was the school district's lease involving the middle school site and Dr. Sweeney answered the lease was good through 2066.

Mayor Kavanagh requested the FHUSD Board's support for the Town's plan for the State Trust Land and also for support to ask the State Trust Land Commissioners to keep the process moving in a timely manner.

Councilmember Yates suggested that a new land use plan creates the opportunity for a community pool that the school could use for a swim team.

4. DISCUSSION RELATING TO INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE TOWN OF FOUNTAIN HILLS AND THE FOUNTAIN HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT.

- a. RESOLUTION 2007-26 – INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT RELATING TO SHARED USE OF DISTRICT AND TOWN FACILITIES**
- b. RESOLUTION 2007-01 – INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT RELATING TO CONSTRUCTION, INSTALLATION, OPERATION, MAINTENANCE AND JOINT USE OF FACILITIES FOR RECREATIONAL AND ATHLETIC FACILITIES**
- c. RESOLUTION 2003-68 – INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT RELATING TO CHANNEL 99**

Town Manager Miller explained these Resolutions were items only to demonstrate the great working relationship between the Town and the FHUSD cooperating together.

5. DISCUSSION REGARDING PLACEMENT OF SIGNAGE RECOGNIZING THE FOUNTAIN HILLS HIGH SCHOOL STATE CHAMPIONS.

Councilmember Tolis explained that FHUSD's Athletic Director Mike Briguglio plan for signage to recognize the district's championship teams. Town Manager Miller added that currently the Town had two signs for this purpose located on Palisades Boulevard near the high school that was last updated in 2005. Staff is researching sign style and locations to recognize and promote the academic and sport accomplishments within Fountain Hills' schools.

Councilmember Magazine would like to see the FHUSD promoted by using outside help to focus on the positive. Dr. Sweeney explained that school funding could not be used for outside professionals to promote the school and mentioned that the district had created a "Communication Task Force" which recommended various avenues to improve the school's website, assist internal communications, and other ideas. Dr. Sweeney stated he also requested donations specifically for market and communication and acknowledged "Brokers Alliance" who kindly produced two videos, free of charge, for the school's website with plans to produce more in the future at their convenience.

Councilmember Magazine suggested using local retired marketing experts in the community for help and Councilmember Yates added that the District and Town could agree to an IGA to work on marketing techniques. Town Manager Miller responded staff could look at ways to help the District, but believes the Town and District were different in their focus

Councilmember Tolis supported the additional signage and also suggested high school stadium events where businesses and residents could come together.

Boardmember Dr. Barnard wanted to include in the recognition the schools' vex robotics, academic achievements, and all the scholarships awarded to students. Vice President Reed added that she would like to encourage more residents to get involved in the "Mentoring Program" activities in the schools and acknowledged this was a great asset to the community.

6. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE EAST VALLEY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (EVIT) FACILITY LOCATED AT THE 4 PEAKS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SITE.

Dr. Sweeney stated the school district was working with the "East Valley Institute of Technology" (EVIT) to open a central campus that would be available to the nine EVIT districts that included Apache Junction, Chandler, Higley, J.O.Combs, Gilbert, Mesa, Queen Creek, Scottsdale, and Tempe Unified School Districts. Dr. Sweeney reported that the building was in the process of being upgraded for an August 2017 opening allowing students to receive graduation credits and industrial certification to be work and college ready after graduation.

Vice Mayor DePorter believed this was fantastic for the surrounding neighborhood property owners and liked the usage that offered cyber security and coding programs that offer certificates and job skills upon completion.

Councilmember Leger asked if there were an age limit to attend and Dr. Sweeney explained that residents age 21 and under attend for free. Adults would pay to attend and expressed that this opportunity would also benefit the surrounding communities.

President Stock added the Fountain Hills' location of EVIT would encourage local students to continue their education in Fountain Hills.

7. DISCUSSION RELATING TO THE TOWN BUDGETED FOUNTAIN HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT'S RESOURCE OFFICER POSITION.

Town Manager Miller acknowledged the school's Resource Officer Jill Ochsner who interacts well and is respected by students and faculty. Officer Ochsner is also active with the "Fountain Hills Coalition Anti-Drug Program".

Vice President Reed added her appreciation for action taken by Officer Ochsner at a "Midnight Madness" student event. Dr. Sweeney expressed his appreciation for Officer Ochsner and thanked Council and Captain Letourneau for providing this service within the Town's small community.

8. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE TOWN'S PAID USE OF SCHOOL BUSES FOR SUMMER RECREATION PROGRAMS AND OTHER USES.

Town Manager Miller mentioned this agenda item was a potential IGA between the Town and the FHUSD where the Town would pay a fair rate to use the school district buses along with their capable drivers during school breaks and summertime. He added that this was common in other communities and

gave drivers a chance to work on their down time and Dr. Sweeney agreed. Vice Mayor DePorter proposed that shared vehicle fleets and facilities equipment would be cost effective for both entities.

9. DISCUSSION REGARDING WHETHER OR NOT REGULAR JOINT MEETINGS SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE FOUNTAIN HILLS TOWN COUNCIL AND THE FOUNTAIN HILLS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD AND AT WHAT FREQUENCY.

Councilmember Yates expressed this joint session was extremely productive with general information, ideas shared, and brain storming. Vice President Reed agreed and saw the success of the school district depends on help from the Town Council and suggested a schedule of regular meetings be proposed. Board member Dr. Wright appreciated the joint meeting and remembered when the school district and Council met regularly and got to know each other. President Stock also added her appreciation and explained that “Coffee with Cain” had an open door policy regularly held in a high school conference room and invited Council to participate and find out a lot about the district. Vice President Reed informed Council that the principals from the district’s schools give their updates on school programs, clubs, and general school data at the School Board Meetings and invited Council to these informational meetings. The general consensus is to meet jointly twice a year, with possible quarterly updates given at the Council meetings and School Board meetings.

Mayor Kavanagh suggested that everyone should subscribe to Dr. Sweeney’s newsletter and receive updated information and thanked everyone who participated in this joint session.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Kavanagh adjourned the Joint Session at 7:01 p.m.

TOWN OF FOUNTAIN HILLS

By _____
Linda M. Kavanagh, Mayor

ATTEST AND
PREPARED BY:

Nancy Walter, Acting Town Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Joint Session, held by the Town Council of Fountain Hills and the Fountain Hills Unified School District Board in the Town Hall Council Chambers on the 21st day of February, 2016. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and that a quorum was present.

DATED this 6th day of March, 2017.

Nancy Walter, Acting Town Clerk