



***WORK SESSION of the Greenbelt City Council held Wednesday, August 12, 2009, for the purpose of meeting with Dr. William Hite Jr., Superintendent of Prince George's County Public Schools.***

*Mayor Davis started the meeting at 7:35 p.m. It was held in the MultiPurpose Room of the Community Center.*

***PRESENT WERE:*** Councilmembers Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Edward V.J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

***STAFF PRESENT WERE:*** Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; Wendy Wexler, Senior Family Counselor/Staff Liaison Advisory Committee on Education; and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.

***ALSO PRESENT WERE:*** Dr. William Hite Jr., Bonita Coleman-Potter, Monica Coleson, Lawrence Fryer Jr., Ruppert McCabe, Prince George's County Public Schools; Jon Gardner, Marie Gueye, Veronica Martin-Frederick, David Whiteman, Greenbelt Advisory Committee on Education; Vijay Kowtha, Eleanor Roosevelt High School Parent Teacher Association; Emmett Jordan, Greenbelt Advisory Planning Board; and Amy Hansen, News Review.

### **Introductory Comments by Dr. Hite**

*Dr. Hite thanked Council for the opportunity to meet with them. He reported that the school system had lost \$228 million in funding over the past two years which resulted in the reduction of 1,500 full time school system positions. Dr. Hite noted that the reductions were kept as far away from classrooms as possible.*

### **Vision for Prince George's County Public School System**

*Dr. Hite reported his vision for the school system was to ensure every student that graduates from the school system is either college ready or career ready. He commented that 70 percent of state high school graduates require remedial English, math or science when entering college. Dr. Hite noted the need to prepare students better.*

*Mayor Davis asked if any consideration had been given to vocational education programs. Dr. Hite explained many career paths such as building and trades, culinary arts and hospitality services are being introduced into the career tech programs in the 9th or 10th grades. He reported there had been different expectations of students depending if they were on a career or vocational track, but now all students are on the same level.*

*Mr. Putens spoke of the necessity of parental involvement toward the success of students. Dr. Hite reported parent academies were beginning introduced in the Laurel area this school year to educate parents on how to assist their students be successful in school.*

### ***Parent-Liaison Program***

Dr. Hite spoke of the positive value of the parent liaison position in the school system, but noted approximately 160 of the 250 positions had been eliminated due to budget cuts. He said the remaining 90 positions would be responsible for multiple schools. Ms. Wexler added that the parent liaison would only be at Eleanor Roosevelt High School on Tuesdays.

*Mr. Gardner commented that the one on one relationship parent liaisons had with the students in their individual schools would be lost if each parent liaison is responsible for multiple schools.*

### ***Greenbelt Middle School***

*Mr. Fryer said construction on the new school is expected to start in January 2010. Dr. Hite commented that advocacy was still needed at the County and State levels.*

*Mr. Roberts asked about the existing middle school building. Mayor Davis commented there would be a work session scheduled on the existing school at a later date. Dr. Hite noted part of the funding obtained for the new school is to be used for restoration of the historic portion of the existing school.*

### **Vision for Eleanor Roosevelt High School**

*Dr. Hite commented that Eleanor Roosevelt High School was one of the highest achieving high schools and will continue to have their main programs, as well as their science and technical programs. He reported that an advisory program has been added for ninth grade students to assist with setting their short term and long term goals.*

*Dr. Hite reported the half time Russian teaching position had been reinstated at the school.*

*Mr. Kowtha reported other programs, such as German and some band programs, were no longer offered at the school. Dr. Hite reported that some classes are no longer offered due to lack of student interest.*

### **Greenbelt Students to Greenbelt School**

*Mayor Davis reported on an agreement made with the County Council many years ago assuring that Greenbelt students would always attend Greenbelt Schools. She also mentioned that the agreement indicated that an addition would be built to Eleanor Roosevelt High School if overcrowding occurred at the school. Dr. Hite said he had reviewed the agreement.*

### **Bus Transportation Problem**

*Mayor Davis said she had received a report of a problem with an overcrowded school bus transporting students from Lakecrest Drive to Greenbelt Middle School. Mr. Fryer reported an additional bus had been assigned to this route and there was no longer a problem.*

### **Other Issues**

*Mr. Jordan asked why students begin their school year prior to Labor Day especially with the current budget situation. Dr. Hite mentioned the number of school systems that have year long school programs and said he is a strong advocate of a longer school year and longer school day.*

*The meeting ended at 9:28 pm.*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Cindy Murray*