

**MINUTES OF JOINT MEETING OF THE
TORRANCE CITY COUNCIL AND THE
TORRANCE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance City Council convened in a joint meeting with the Torrance Unified School District Board of Education at 7:02 p.m. on Monday, November 9, 2009 in the Toyota Meeting Hall of the Torrance Cultural Arts Center.

ROLL CALL

Present: Torrance City Council: Councilmembers Barnett, Brewer, Furey, Numark, Rhilinger, Sutherland, and Mayor Scotto.

Torrance Unified School District Board of Education: Dr. Ernst, Mr. Lee, Mrs. Ragins, Mr. Steffen, and President Muratsuchi.

Absent: None.

Also Present: City Manager Jackson, City Attorney Fellows, City Clerk Herbers, and other staff representatives.

2. FLAG SALUTE/INVOCATION

The flag salute was led by North High School JR ROTC.

Councilmember Rhilinger gave the non-sectarian invocation.

3. REPORT OF CITY CLERK ON POSTING OF THE AGENDA

City Clerk Herbers reported that the agenda was posted on the Public Notice Board at 3031 Torrance Boulevard on Thursday, November 5, 2009.

School Board Member Lee reported that the agenda was posted on the Public Notice Board at 2335 Plaza del Amo on Thursday, November 5, 2009.

4. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mayor Scotto welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed the hope that this would be the first of many joint meetings.

School Board President Muratsuchi also welcomed everyone, relating his understanding that this was the first time in 40 years that a joint meeting of the entire City Council and entire School Board has been held.

5. **STAFF PRESENTATION OF JOINT PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES/
DISCUSSION BY CITY COUNCIL AND BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Recommendation

Recommendation of the City Manager that City Council provide direction to staff based on concurrences achieved regarding partnership opportunities at the joint meeting of the City Council and the Torrance Unified School District Board of Education.

Assistant to the City Manager Chaparyan reported that at the direction of the City Council's Citizen Development and Enrichment Committee, staff from the City and TUSD collaborated to develop an extensive list of partnership opportunities. With the aid of slides, he reviewed current partnerships and the following partnership opportunities:

COMMUNITY SERVICES:

- **Library Resources** – Joint purchase of books/database sharing. Provide a library card to every TUSD student.
- **Joint Publications** – Sharing of adult education class information via City's on-line sources.
- **Recreation Services** – Opportunity to reduce duplication of services in recreation classes and adult education. Review assignment of fields for recreation services.

FACILITY SUPPORT & FIELD MAINTENANCE:

- **Field Lighting** – Assist with changing lights at campus fields. Further exploration of energy savings.
- **Mowing** – Field mowing at Victor Elementary, Anza Elementary, Hickory Elementary.
- **Tree Trimming** – Explore expanding current City contract to determine if City can achieve more service for the same amount.
- **Facility Maintenance** – Joint painting, roofing, slurry seals, sidewalk grinding.
- **Green Waste Program** – TUSD has need for green waste pickup.
- **Hazardous Waste** – Joint disposal of hazardous waste.
- **Graffiti Removal** – Expansion of current City contract.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY/ AUTOMATION

- **Information Technology/GIS Sharing** – Purchase of software and maintenance agreements. Access to City's GIS system.
- **Agenda Automation** – Possible sharing of Granicus to generate School Board agendas/minutes.
- **Reverse 911** – Utilization of the City's reverse 911 system to notify parents during emergencies/ natural disasters.
- **Mass Email** – Possible collaboration opportunities with regard to the email subscription service being developed by the City. Use of CitiCable to promote school events.

PURCHASING

- **Fleet Services** – Develop early notification strategy to coordinate the City's routine vehicle replacement schedule with TUSD needs.

- **Compressed Natural Gas Filling Station/ B20 Testing** – TUSD may be able to use the compressed natural gas filling station being developed at the City Yard. City may pursue bio-fuel in the future.
- **Fuel Purchase** – Joint purchase of fuel.
- **Joint Purchasing** – Tires, fuel, batteries, auto supplies, office supplies, printer, cartridges, custodial materials.

YOUTH SERVICES

- **Transit Ambassador Program** – Explore ways to introduce students to public transportation by utilizing existing bus routes to assist with local field trip transportation. Encourage high school students to utilize the Torrance Transit System.
- **Youth Employment/ Training** – Potential opportunity for TUSD and the City to obtain grant funding from local workforce development agencies to assist with youth employment and training.

Mayor Scotto invited comments from the Council and the School Board.

Councilmember Sutherland asked about the possibility of assisting TUSD with the building of a gymnasium at Hull Middle School, relating his understanding that additional funds may be needed.

Dr. George Mannon, TUSD Superintendent, reported that the proposed gymnasium will be built along with the new school only if funding is available within the amount budgeted for the project.

Councilmember Brewer suggested the possibility of intra-library sharing of materials, whereby a Torrance student could request a book at a Torrance Library, which would then be delivered to the student's school library. He also suggested that staff explore the use of high school tennis courts for City recreation programs.

Dr. Donald Stabler, TUSD Deputy Superintendent, agreed to look into this, noting that City and TUSD staff were already exploring a joint use agreement for athletic fields.

Councilmember Brewer noted that the Calendar of Events on the City's website is available for schools to promote upcoming events.

Councilmember Furey recommended that consideration be given to consolidating City and School Board elections in order to cut costs and improve voter turnout.

Councilmember Brewer suggested that the use of mail-in ballots also be explored.

Councilmember Numark requested that staff look into the possibility of expanding school use of Cultural Arts Center facilities, including the Armstrong Theatre.

School Board Member Lee voiced his opinion that this was a unique opportunity to improve efficiency and save money without sacrificing the quality of service residents of Torrance have come to expect or veering from core competencies.

School Board Member Steffen expressed appreciation for the assistance the City already provides to TUSD. He stressed the need to thoroughly investigate any proposed collaborations to ensure that they benefit both sides and everyone involved, noting that the goal is not to save money at employees' expense.

School Board President Muratsuchi related his belief that this public sharing of ideas was invaluable; noted that the goal is to better serve the community and students; and recommended that the City and School Board look to models in other communities, such as Irvine, where there have been successful collaborations. He emphasized that the School Board was not seeking to eliminate jobs but rather looking for win/win solutions.

Mayor Scotto noted that tonight's discussion was only the beginning of a long process. He requested that staff to look into whether the City could aerate fields at elementary schools without added expense and investigate the possibility of installing athlete field lighting at a school in southeast Torrance.

6. PUBLIC INPUT

Mayor Scotto invited comments from the public.

Joseph Martinez, SEIU (Service Employees International Union) representative for TUSD, stated that his organization supports cost-saving efforts as long as it does not affect employees and welcomes the opportunity to partner with the City and the School District to accomplish this goal.

Michael Wermers, Torrance, explained that he and Todd Hays first brought up the idea of collaboration between the City and TUSD during discussions of the City's Strategic Plan and it was subsequently adopted as a goal. He commended City staff and everyone involved for moving forward with this idea.

Todd Hays, Torrance, reported that survey data gathered for the Strategic Plan update indicates that the quality of schools is paramount to Torrance residents, therefore he and Mr. Wermers lobbied to have a greater emphasis placed on schools in the current Strategic Plan. He noted that he previously submitted written material to be distributed to the Council and the School Board, which includes a list of on-line resources for this type of collaboration.

Melissa Wright, Torrance Education Foundation, stated that in the past, there appeared to be friction between the Council and the School Board and she was pleased that this was no longer the case. She discussed efforts to raise funds for Torrance schools and stated that the Foundation looks forward to working with the City and the School District to implement improvements, noting that upgrading technology and before/after-school care are areas of focus.

Rosie Weider, Torrance, reported that massive budget cuts have eliminated almost every kind of enrichment from Torrance schools and suggested that the City could help by providing part-time recreation staff to organize structured play during the lunch hour or assist with PE instruction in elementary schools. She voiced support for Councilmember Brewer's suggestion regarding the sharing of books between City and

school libraries. She encouraged the City and the School District to include the PTA and the Torrance Education Foundation when considering collaboration opportunities.

Dee Hardison, Torrance, noted that the list of potential collaborations is extensive and suggested that the Council focus on a few of the most practical ideas and move forward. She reported that the possibility of consolidating School Board and City Council elections was explored when she was mayor and it was complicated by the fact that their terms do not coincide, however, she believes there are savings to be realized if the details can be worked out.

Mayor Scotto reported that the Torrance Library currently offers an on-line program to assist Torrance students with their homework and encouraged residents to become involved in it.

Councilmember Sutherland, referring to Ms. Wright's remarks, stated that he did not believe there was friction in the past between the City Council and the School Board and the reason this collaboration has been given new emphasis is because the economic downturn has made it a necessity.

Councilmember Brewer noted that the list contains some items, such as joint purchasing, where savings would seem to be easily realized while other items will require a lot more investigation.

Councilmember Furey expressed support for this collaboration, noting that many residents don't realize that Torrance schools and City government are controlled by two different entities even though they share the same boundaries. He related his understanding that the last School Board election cost \$280,000 and suggested that this money could have been better spent on programs for students. He indicated that he favored considering all of the items on the list in order to maximize savings and encouraged residents to offer suggestions because there is a wealth of knowledge in the community.

Councilmember Rhilinger indicated that she favored moving forward with the most practical items and building on that success. She suggested the following items: joint purchasing; reverse 911 system; mass email subscription service; and youth employment training grants. She noted that some grants are only available when government agencies are involved and suggested the possibility of sharing the City's grant-writing expertise with TUSD. She also expressed support for joint elections and expanding the library's online homework assistance program.

Councilmember Numark recommended that staff from the City and TUSD do an analysis of what it would take to implement each item and forward the information to the joint committee of the City Council and School Board so that they could prioritize the list.

Councilmember Barnett noted his agreement with his colleagues' remarks and commended staff for compiling a comprehensive list of potential partnership opportunities. Referring to Mr. Martinez's comments, he expressed the hope that some of the things that were tried in the past without success, such as the mowing of fields, could now be accomplished.

School Board Member Lee suggested the possibility that practices for Parks and Recreation basketball/football teams, which are typically organized based on the schools the players attend, could be held during lunch hour or PE classes, thereby allowing more time for homework and other after-school activities. He stated that he believed there is great opportunity for joint purchasing since the City and TUSD purchase a lot of the same supplies and equipment and there may also be an opportunity for equipment borrowing in the event equipment breaks down or is only needed for a short duration. He voiced support for holding joint City Council/School Board elections.

School Board Member Steffen indicated that he was inclined to defer to staff and have them recommend a few items that would be the easiest to accomplish and then move on to more ambitious projects.

School Board Member Ragins stressed then need to learn from the past in order to avoid pitfalls that prevented some of these items from being accomplished when they were previously attempted. She recalled that there was friction between the School Board and the City Council when she was first elected six years ago, however, that is no longer the case as evidenced by the success of the joint effort to get school bonds passed. She stated that the fact that the City and the School District share the same boundaries is unusual and provides a rare opportunity for collaboration. She noted that the Torrance Education Foundation is currently focused on upgrading technology and it would be very helpful if the City could assist with joint purchasing, installation and repairs.

School Board Member Ernst noted his concurrence with his colleagues' remarks. Referring to agenda material, he pointed out that that the list of current partnerships is more lengthy than the list of proposed collaborations and the School District and the City already enjoy a collaborative relationship, which is especially strong in the area of Community Services.

School Board President Muratsuchi stated that while both the City and the School District are facing challenges due to the State's fiscal crisis, the School District's situation is more dire because 94% of its funding comes from the State and \$27 million has already been cut from its budget over the past two years. He recommended that City and School Board staff be charged with the task of identifying the most likely to succeed cost-saving measures on the list, noting that every dollar that can be saved is important in order to minimize the effect of budget cuts on the classroom.

Mayor Scotto stated that he was encouraged by the fact that this joint meeting was being held even though the City is facing its own financial challenges. He noted that some of the items on the list are long-term goals which will take years to accomplish and expressed the hope that both the City and the School District will be in better financial shape by that time.

It was the consensus of the Council and the School Board to direct their staffs to work together to identify 6-10 items and develop an action plan to be forwarded to the joint committee of the City Council and the School Board within 90 days.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:25 p.m. the meeting was adjourned.

The Torrance City Council adjourned to Tuesday, November 10 at 5:30 p.m. for an executive session with regular business commencing no earlier than 7:00 p.m. in City Council Chambers at 3031 Torrance Blvd.

The Torrance Unified School District Board of Education adjourned to Monday, November 16, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. in the Board Room in the Educational Materials Building at 2336 Plaza Del Amo.

Attest:

/s/ Frank Scotto

Mayor of the City of Torrance

/s/ Sue Herbers

Sue Herbers,
City Clerk of the City of Torrance

Approved on December 15, 2009