



## Blueprint Schools Program Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

March 8, 2023

Start Time - 6:00 pm

### Attendance

<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
Thomas Dernoga	PG County Council Chair	Jason Washington	OAIPD, PGPCS	Brandey McDonald	Fengate Asset Management
Mychael Dickerson	Chief of Staff to PGPCS Chief Executive Officer	Brittney Bennett	Brailsford & Dunlavy, Inc.	Michael Ricketts	Gilbane Building Company
Erica Berry-Wilson	Chief of Staff, DCAO for Health, Human Services and Education				

### Call to Order:

Called to order by Brittney Bennett: “Welcome to the 2023, Quarter One Blueprint Schools Steering Committee Meeting, I will hand it over to Mr. Mychael Dickerson who will call the meeting to order.”

Mr. Dickerson calls the public meeting to order.

### Meeting Logistics:

- Spanish interpretation access
- ASL interpretation – occurs simultaneously.
- Q&A function – disabled
- Questions can be submitted on the program website: [www.pgcpsblueprintschoools.com](http://www.pgcpsblueprintschoools.com)
- Public comments - will be called on in the order in which you signed up

Roll call for all attendees takes place.

- Council Chairman Dernoga was marked Present
- Mr. Mychael Dickerson was marked Present
- Ms. Berry-Wilson was marked Present

### Steering Committee moves to:

- Mr. Dickerson moves to approve the quarter four (12/14/2022) steering committee meeting minutes. Erica Berry-Wilson seconded. All Steering Committee members in attendance voted in favor with no opposition or abstention.





- Mr. Dickerson moves to approve the 3/8/2023 steering committee meeting agenda. Erica Berry-Wilson seconded. All Steering Committee members voted in favor with no opposition or abstention.

## **Director Report**

[See Attached](#)

### **Q&A:**

Committee:

Mr. Thomas Dernoga asks: (In regards to security and students putting holes in fences) “Is there a plan to deal with that in any way?”

Mr. Jason Washington responds: “The initial plan is that's not an activity, but this is a piece of equipment that's covered by Honeywell. Part of their maintenance plan is to ensure that everything is still in place. Now, they have what is known as a long term services budget, that they've outlined in terms of the cost of replacement at this time, ect. If there was repeated cutting, it would then be probably additional charges for PGCPs down the road. But initially, that responsibility would fall to Honeywell to ensure that the fences are still in place, kept up, that if they start to fall or fail, they will replace them. That's part of their bundle of responsibilities under the maintenance agreement. So initially it would be Honeywell. Now, if we have significant flagrant and repeated cutting, I think we probably would have additional discussions of what needs to happen, because they would probably request some adjustments to the fences and what we're using if that becomes the case. But that would be the initial approach, Councilman, and under their required responsibilities under the contract.”

Mr. Dernoga asks: “I'm pleased to see that everything's on schedule, but I've noticed in several of the reports, including the most recent monthly report, concern about the rooftop air handling units and the statement that those might be delayed, and currently evaluating the impact to the schedule that was in the most recent report, those in the prior reports. Are you confident at this point that you know the installation will be complete in time for those that will hold up the openings?”

Mr. Ricketts responds: “I'm all smiles on that one. We do have our rooftop units. We also got our electrical gear. So we have avoided delays in that delivery of that equipment through some pretty heroic efforts by a variety of team members. A lot of the delays came as a result of the Ukrainian conflict, where raw materials were not available to manufacture things like chips and certain components that were stainless steel. But we drilled down into the issues and the supply chains, and we're able to work with the suppliers to come up with new sources for the material and to expedite our delivery. So while they are later than what was originally planned, we have all of the product and all the material, and rooftop units are on tops of lots of the buildings. So we don't have any problems anymore.”





Mr. Dernoga asks: "I've been looking at each monthly report that's in the package, and the change orders are adding up. So at the moment, it appears that there's \$8.7 million of approved change orders and \$31 million of pending. So if I understand it, then \$492.5 million is the overall budget at the present?"

Mr. Washington responds: "No. There are two buckets here. There is a bucket of owner directed and needed directed change orders related to sites as well as accommodating new standards, those are the \$8.1M. In that \$30M is a bucket of what's being claimed as force majeure. And that's not for Prince George's county purposes. That's not being directed by this office. That's actually with purchasing and supply services. So it hasn't been approved because that is a claim that's been made that the Prince George's County Education and Community Partners is actually having with the purchasing office. But that's all built into the change order log that you're seeing."

Mr. Dernoga adds: "I see pending. And I also see there's a difference between owner requested and the other category. Was it UCL?"

Mr. Washington responds: "Unknown land conditions. So Clay and all of that stuff. Yes. So right now, we are anticipating from the owner directed side and from what we are required, per the ULCs, is right around 2-3% of the cost of the program, which was right around \$450-455M, I think, was the capital. That's where we are targeting to land, as it relates to that. Fingate is working because this will be added per the contract, we have the ability to refinance that. Which will still, we believe, be under the affordability cap. Our affordability cap was \$32 million. We closed at \$29.5M. So we have that built in buffer to ensure affordability. We don't know for sure, and we won't know for sure what that final number is until the schools in this program is closed. That will be the fall of 2024. We have to knock down Walker Mill and build a field. So there is a chance of some unsuitables and unknown land conditions under the existing school. But right now, that's how it's structured. That's where we are. But I just want to provide that distinction between the pending versus the approved."

Mr. Dernoga adds: "If everything was approved as pending, that would have a 10% increase in the overall budget?"

Mr. Washington responds: "Yes. I would say, 50 out of 450, that's probably about 10%."

Mr. Dernoga adds: "So those references to dispute resolutions, is that where the pending ones go to? Is that the dispute resolution?"

Mr. Washington responds: "Yes. The dispute resolutions are spelled out in the contract that we have, which is literally us engaging and talking through the issues and coming to a resolution. We're not on our way to court."





Mrs. Erica Berry-Wilson asks: “Mr. Washington, if you can give us an update. I know you've done this pretty much in most of our steering committee meetings. An update on MBE compliance. Where are we at this point?”

Mr. Washington responds: “I am happy to report that our latest report, I believe we're at 107% of the requirement. We have exceeded the 30% requirement that was set forth in the contract. To bring everybody up to speed, that's just for the design build portion. It restarts at the services for the next period of time. I thank the hard work of Gilbain and their partners for drilling down. I don't know if that number will go up. I don't know if everything is bought out yet. So there may be a little bit more there. But to hit that number with more months to go into construction, I'm very pleased with their intentionality and their focus on that.”

Mrs. Berry-Wilson asks: “I understand there's a court case involving the misclassification of workers at the high school and middle school job site. Can you talk a little bit about that and give us some background on that?”

Mr. Ricketts responds: “It is a legal matter that is pending. Typically with contracts, particularly for large firms like us, we rely on subcontractors and sub subcontractors. This particular dispute involves lower tier subcontractors that did not appear to follow the correct wage reporting and wage payments that are required. Gilbain believes in making sure people get paid the right wages. And we are working through that process to make sure that the employees get correctly paid, and that the subcontractors that didn't pay the correct wages, handle that correctly. With pending litigation, I can't get into too many of the details, but it is something that we take very seriously and we enforce with our subcontractors. We do have a program that monitors not only the MBE participation, but also monitors the payments and wage participation with our subcontractors. And when something shows up in those reports that's not correct, like if they have underpaid somebody, we red flag it and go back and pay them. There have probably been six or seven instances where a subcontractor did not pay the proper wage and where it's been flagged. And we've been able to go back and make restitution. On the employees that made a claim to a subcontractor, the information that we saw, we were reported that they had been properly paid on our reports, but apparently that's not the case. So we may have gotten some incorrect documentation.”

Mrs. Berry-Wilson adds: “How does it all impact the delivery of the school or the workflow? Does it impact that at all?”

Mr. Ricketts responds: “No, it's really a sidebar issue that, as I said, we've had seven other instances where something came up and we were able to flag it. We identified what the problem was. We went back and had the subcontractor make restitution to the subs. In this instance, these individuals took a different path. But it's not delaying the work and it's not impacting what we do on a day to day basis. We want them to get the proper payment. If they didn't get paid correctly, they will get paid correctly.”





Mr. Dernogas asks: "I must say I'm pleased with the MBE progress. That is commendable, certainly compared to historical data. But I want to be clear on one thing, because I know I'm not going to hear this from my colleagues. I'm looking at the February 8th report on MBE. So it sounds like you've got an update to that because your numbers are higher. So I'm assuming there's an update. The MBE on this report for the awards was 32.4%, but county based business, it looks like it's 13% county based MBEs. Is that basically correct?"

Mr. Ricketts responds: "The data that is in the monthly report and that shows up online is usually about a two month lag. So the information that was recently sent to Jason was updated as of the end of February, and it will show up in the next monthly report that will come out in a few days. So there's more up to date information than what you're seeing in January."

Mr. Dernoga adds: "My question is the total MBE number is really good, but just my colleagues are going to ask me about the county based MBE. You have the dollar number, but not the percentage. But it looks like it's tracking 12-13% percent generally from report to report."

Mr. Ricketts responds: "That may be the case. I don't have those figures in front of me, so I can't use specifically, I know that our requirement was 20% of the MBE was supposed to go to county based businesses. And the last report I saw, we were tracking in excess of that for county based businesses."

Mr. Dernoga adds: "Right. Well, there's county based businesses, which on this report shows 19.7%, which is good, but county based MBE seems to be a separate category, like a subset of each. That's tracking a lot lower based on the numbers, but not terrible. Like I said, my colleagues are very interested in that particular figure."

Mr. Washington responds: "And rightfully so. We've heard from a few of your colleagues, sir, that have wanted us to be a little bit more intentional and more focused on it. But, yes, you're correct that those are differentiated. And once I get that update, the 10th of every month, we get a new report. So we will get the February report March 10th. And then if you would like, I can send that over, but I usually just attach it to the quarterly report, but that's when I will get the official updated information to pass along."

**Public Comments:**

Mr. Michael Amakor comments: "My question was about what happens if or when the students begin school and they find out that the building is not designed properly or there could be some changes that needed to be made. Is there any accommodation in the budget or planning to redesign the schools after they are delivered, or is it final? Would it be final?"

Ms. Charisse Vickerie comments: "My comment is as normal, and Jason hears this monthly. I am not happy with how we will be having these young children move over the course of a Thanksgiving break into a brand new





school. We found out over the past month that not only will we have elementary students there, so PreK-4 through 5th grade, but we'll also have 6th, 7th, and 8th grade, and we'll also have autism program there as well at Colin Powell. And to have the teachers, have the students, have the parents, I'm a parent of a child with special needs. Move us into a school over a four/five day break after we've been at another school for three to four months, and now you expect my child to recognize a brand new school with hallways and everything. It's just ridiculous. I understand that there was ground saturation. I understand that there were issues with the delivery. That makes sense to me. What doesn't make sense to me is opening a school after Thanksgiving break. You can literally wait two and a half, three weeks and open that school at the top of January. You will provide us better opportunity to prepare our children for this new school. You'll give our teachers time to pack up their classrooms and move their classrooms appropriately. It's just absolutely inappropriate and horribly designed and not logistically appropriate. So I implore the committee to work with the leadership at PGC Public Schools and talk about a different plan about that. It's horrible."

Mr. Antonio Leon comments: "I was hoping to be able to get answers tonight during this session, but I'll look for something on the website. I've asked this question in the past, and I hadn't seen any response, but I don't have my comment as I wrote it sent to you in front of me. But basically my concern had to do with this public private partnership, and looking at how public private partnerships have resulted in other areas of the government. I had a concern with this one, being the first one in the country related to schools, and I wanted to know if the contract, the agreement that's involved in this can be posted somewhere so that the public can actually read it. Because I have not been able to find it anywhere. When I've asked for it in the past, I've got no response. And I think the taxpayers should be able to see this very important document. These type of partnerships in other projects sometimes have failed, and we know that the private side of the partnership is looking to maximize their profits and returns. So that is a concern with us in the public here. So, if possible, if all people involved can put that somewhere so the public can see it. That's all I have. Thank you."

Mr. Jason Washington responds: "I will step in to answer this, because this is about ensuring transparency. Mr. Leon, the contract fully, all of the exhibits, etc, are at [pgcps.org](http://pgcps.org) under Blueprint schools, Colin facilities. At the bottom, it lists all of our quarterly reports, all of our newsletters, all of our construction notices. But under year 20-21, there is a hyperlink for the project agreement and all of the attendant exhibits all the way through Exhibit EE. And so that has been posted. It is available for anyone to see. And so you would go to [Pgcps.org](http://Pgcps.org), type in Blueprint Schools, it's Colin Facilities, and under 2020-2021 you will see the project agreement, all of the exhibits, as well as all of the presentations that were provided in the board action summary, etc. My apologies if we did not respond to provide that information, but it is on the website now, and it is available for you to view.

Mr. Brennan Tanner comments: "The big concern we have at Hyattsville Middle School right now is we are a creative and performing arts school, and we do not have an acceptable performance venue for a creative and performing arts school. Hyattsville Middle School has one of the largest ESOL populations in the county, but we





also house a creative and performing arts school for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade. And I'm trying to understand, after all the work and protesting we did at the beginning of this, why we do not have an acceptable performance venue in Hyattsville, which is a town that celebrates the arts. The question that was brought to me today also about a security concern, is in the back of the building. The delivery portal for the building is in the back alley. Is there going to be a gate there to prevent entrance of unnecessary vehicles during the school day? That was presented to me today by one of the people who lives in a house adjacent to that back alley. So those are my two comments. Thank you.”

There were four additional public comments, the commenters were not present at the meeting

**Non-Agenda Items:**

- Mr. Jason Washington discusses school tour dates, possibly in beginning of April, prior to next steering committee meeting

**Next Steering Committee Meeting:**

5/17/2023

**Meeting Adjourns:**

Mr. Dickerson motions to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned

