

Meeting about the Kohala Schools Consolidation Report & Mr. Moore's Facilities Audit

Friday, June 25, 2010 Kohala High Library

Notes by W. Nickl and M. Lee; edited by R. Golden

Present: Task Force members Randee Golden (chair), Sunny Bratt, Janette Snelling, Danny Garcia, Joleen Soares, Jean DeMercer-Breese, Shiro Takata, Lakme Nishie, Peter Clapp, Duncan Anderson. Also DOE Assistant Superintendent Randolph Moore, Complex Area Superintendent Art Souza, and Representative Mark Nakashima

Introductions by Randee Golden: Board members, audience, DOE staff are thanked for attending and caring about the outcome of Kohala Schools consolidation study. Purpose of this meeting is to clarify the facilities study report Mr. Moore wrote after our Task Force report was submitted, based on his visit on May 4th and his research since that time. .

Approximately 20-25 community members were in attendance by the end of the meeting. Twenty-two in attendance signed in.

Procedure: Task Force members will ask questions, the community members are welcome to submit questions

History:

Golden: February was when the Task Force report was submitted to Mr. Souza, who agreed with our conclusion and submitted it to the Superintendent within 10 days. Early in May Kohala was notified of an IES Audit, to be done May 4th by Mr. Moore. Task for this meeting: Review and clarify Mr. Moore's draft of his facilities audit

Souza: A year ago, the task force formed; he explains the selection and work of the group

Moore: Upon Mr. Souza's request, Mr. Moore reiterated about the Dept. of Ed. Rule – process for school consolidation. No schools had been consolidated since the early 1980's. About 5 years ago, community and legislature concern over new schools in growth areas, and that the number of schools keeps going up without enrollment also increasing. No one wants to close schools. The Legislature introduced a bill patterned after the Congressional military closure commission. Governor vetoed this bill. Because of the economy, the Dept. identified about 20 schools who fell into the criteria for doing a study on the feasibility of closure.

Moore

Criteria for closing schools:

-1/3 surplus classrooms

-1/3 or more of school is subpar

-School enrollment is too small to offer necessary services

All three provisos require a nearby school to accommodate the closed school

Initially, priorities 1, 2, 3 applied

Board of Ed rules changed to have superintendent recommend and then have public hearing. Kohala decided to go with the previous task force configuration. Also Kohala Middle is due for renovation, so this hastened its placement into the highest priority category. Renovation for a school which might close is not prudent.

Golden: Asked Mr. Moore "What is the role of task force?"

Moore: CAS appoints task force – 7 items to be looked at. Admin, ed, social, facilities, implications looked at.

Golden: “So the Task Force’s role was to look at 7 criteria.” She asks what Mr. Moore’s role was.

Moore: To be available as a resource in the process

Souza: 6 month process – recommendation was not to consolidate. CAS supported this after review and recommended this to the Superintendent.

Moore: The Disconnect is that 15 days after CAS submitted his report, the Superintendent has 15 days to forward a recommendation to the Board. Superintendent’s conclusion – 3 million to save a million yearly.

Golden: Is this before she read the entire report?

Snelling: Indications are that the Superintendent has not read the entire report; she is waiting for the recommendation from Moore.

Moore: Superintendent wrote a memo requesting that Moore investigate the discrepancies in the Task Force figures vs. the DOE figures. The fact that a recommendation was not made by March 15 is a failure on our part. In May, Moore came to KMS to look at the facilities at all campuses. This took longer than I thought, my failure of time to get organized....the report is still in draft (he has not sent it to Matayoshi). When he came in May to look at facility thought it would be sooner but still not completed.

Golden: Moore said he would share conclusions with Golden after his visit. The basis for Moore’s figures and Moore’s reflections are the personal observations of what he experienced.

Moore: Uh

Golden: It’s hard to understand the total campus if you are reading your report.

Moore: You are looking for something that is not my task to do.

Golden: Reflection is figured through your lens – What is your impression of Kohala Middle?

Moore: Nice Comfortable place; His Concern- group is looking for something he was not tasked to do: “not pass judgment on school”, would love to teach in environment like KMS - he was a Middle school teacher at Central Middle School.

Takata: You were a Teacher – how long?

Moore: 3.5 years

Golden: Reading from Mr. Moore’s report – KMS does not have facilities that modern schools have. No science lab, etc. (She read aloud current school description found in report.) Total cost would be well into 8 figures to renovate. There is not one positive element in this report when you describe the campus.

Bratt: A Science lab has been promised for years; it is not here yet. What you want to bring them to is less than what they have there. The facilities here (N building) would be not suitable for the students. Crowd them together into a configuration – you’re making it worse.

Snelling: I request that you remove the statement “If the middle school stayed, most of the facilities would need to be replaced.” “The reality is that it would be highly unlikely that any of the facilities would be replaced and the structure is in better condition than it was when I was in school>”.

Bratt: All the older buildings survived better in the earthquake than the new X building.

Golden: There is no mention of the respect and appreciation students and the community and teachers have for the school, that the windows offer light and air, that all classes have a space, that it is contained and safe, that the field is enormous. What do you think people will interpret this report to read (in describing the school)?

Moore: I have never made the suggestion that the middle school will be moved here.

Takata: Well, why don't you say you don't want to?

Souza: The Task Force report stands on its own merit.

Golden: Your reasons 2 and 3(?) for doing this study need to be made clearer.

Moore: My assignment was not to make a recommendation.

Golden: Your write up is not factual as information seems slanted.

Moore: That's your interpretation.

Snelling: Janette projects Mr. Moore's report with additional information from the task force report added for the purpose of discussion and seeing discrepancies. She also pulled sections from Mr. Moore's report and compiled them as a summary at the end to enhance clarity.

Snelling:

I have noticed inaccuracies in the figures that came from you. Mr. Moore; the 3-15 million range is a big deal to you. The Task Force report explains this range: Additional expenses would require 10.5 classrooms at 350,000 each. The 15 million figure came in if rather than portables, a permanent classroom building were built.. Those were the two figures. This process has taken so long and made us so weary. You said what you were doing was a more detailed study. Your report is not a more detailed study, but has studied similar things with only slightly different figures. So why was it necessary?

Moore's report states the need for \$4 million on 8 portables (classes in 6, office in 2). Snelling shared that Mr. Moore did not take into account the separate sizes of each class. Dividing by grade levels would result in a different figure.

These figures would still not cover the entire costs of what we provide at the middle school.

The Report was passed out. Scenario shared: *What would programs look like based on Moore figures 25:1 ratio?* The result would be that the High School could not offer the current program they have. They have 32 elective opportunities now – they would be able to have 9 electives with Moore's recommendation. To expect a small rural school to fit into an urban model is unrealistic.

Golden: The figure about the number of needed classes in your report is an insult to the work we did.

Moore: I hear you. It is not a recommendation.

Golden: Your report says we would do fine.

Nishie: Why are you writing this?

Moore: Potential savings and range of costs.

Nishie: Do you randomly set up 25 kids, or is this the rule of thumb. Your overview is important if the Superintendent does not have time to go through the report – we are all very busy like that in our jobs – we tried to give accurate and true information – your report blows all that hard work out of the water. She will depend on your recommendation.

Anderson: The Task force will answer the questions – the frustration is that all this work seems without purpose.

Nishie – We asked if it would be about dollars and cents – we were assured that this was only one of the factors.

Anderson: Does the Superintendent know we made AYP this year and our success is based on our campus atmosphere and feeling?

Moore: Yes, she is aware.

Golden: From your observations – The task force believed that the physical separation is essential to the middle school student. Please comment on the plan you have drafted on how to address the middle school needs on the main campus?

Moore:

Golden: Where did the enrollment figures come from?

Bratt: These numbers do not jive with the Kindergarten enrollment. Also additions from outside the district also are added. The DOE projections do not jive with Moore's report.

Golden: From what Lakme shared, this community is not decreasing.

Snelling: Even the most recent projections run below what the actual is. It's usually higher for the middle school. Is that a trend across the state?

Souza: This is not unique – we are losing kids.

Bratt: I've visited Kailua as a community – those families have grown, kids have left. The complexity of a k-12 consolidation is much more hurtful to kids – You jumped us from the third to the first row.

Golden: You state adding 6 classes and 2 portables for office space.. Where will these portables be placed on the elementary and high campus?

Moore: Portables would be put in open spaces around the campus. The 2001 master plan was based on K-5 and 9-12 with a population projection that was considerably higher. The implication (for doing another master plan) was that you could come up with a flexible plan to meet the needs of k-12.

Bratt: We do not have the acreage for the construction you are talking about.

Snelling: To be brutally honest – you are the enemy of the State – why? I understand the business background, and the attribute to keep your cards close to your chest. In the absence of information that hasn't been shared, we have to make up stories about what you are thinking. I think you could make this process more palatable and agreeable if you could be more forthcoming

Moore – I agree and I apologize. There is no use in talking about hindsight – I accept the responsibility for more communication. KMN news will be running a story from Moore to be out tomorrow. I expect to finish this

over the weekend – When asked my personal opinion – moving a bunch of portables would not make any sense at all.

Golden: Your report does not read like that. I do not hear any other criteria besides finances mentioned.

Snelling – I went ballistic when I read your report. I took the liberty of making your summary for you. I took the information directly from your report –:

4 points:

1st – Moore states - consolidation would save 1.1 million annually. The task force said 1.5 million I garnered that the annual savings would be 600,000 thousand. The state would be savings 500,000 less a year than the report says.

2nd – fitting the middle school would cost 3-15 million – portables would be 4 mill, permanent would be _____
Snelling: the high school class and office space is not accurate.

Golden: Why is the computer lab and CSAP a non-classroom space? This does not make sense.

Moore: That comes out of our classroom utilization report which I do not agree with. I would like to change it.

Snelling: The 25:1 ration would not work in our area. Our reports are not that different.

Moore: Look at page 5 – 8 about the portables (6 classes, 2 for offices). There is not a place to put them all. This would not be desirable educationally. So I don't see how you could read this.

Snelling: Are you willing to add a summary?

Golden: Reading from Moore report about his statement concerning. Development of a new Master plan. This best solution is mentioned but with no serious criteria.

Bratt: Since I have been here, two master plans have already been written with nothing coming of them.

Snelling: I give credit to you. It speaks volumes – a master plan and follow up would be well into eight figures.

Moore: You have believed all along that my job was to close the school. I am in charge of the process. I do have a quota – to present a study a month.

Golden: The process has been really uncomfortable – to come in 4 months after the Task Force report was presented and to say 6 classrooms would suffice. It says that no consideration was given to the educational needs of our children.

Please do a reflection – it's an overwhelming position – if you only understood the hours of work and frustration – please do this in a pono way that does not jeopardize communities.

Moore: I do not disagree. The process is changing.

Souza: Mr. Souza describes the process as “One size fits all” and states that the process is amenable to urban areas. Rural areas have unique needs that do not fit a mold. The law needs to be looked at. Factors well beyond financial factors need to be looked at.

Moore: It's an administrative rule, not a law.

Takata: We need your help too.

Anderson: Could you please deliver your opinion to the superintendent?

Moore: It is not a recommendation.

Golden: So I hear that Mrs. Matayoshi will let us know after she makes her decision.

Moore: The Challenge is the protocol – The Board needs to know before the general public.

Golden: We are not the general public. Please tell Mrs. Matayoshi that this committee would really appreciate hearing her recommendation.

Snelling: What I am hearing you say is that you are open to revising your report.

Moore: Yes

Snelling: These dual reports – which one has more credence?

Moore: Mine only addresses facilities.

Golden: How can your report only address facilities? How can facilities be looked at without program consideration?

Moore: Our numbers are not far apart at all. Your savings are overstated. This does not say the task force did junk work.

Demercer-Breese: You can change your report by using different language.

DMB: Old does not mean bad. It could get on the Register of Historical Sites. It sounds so bad when you say the kids eat in the basement.

Snelling: The dining area was always there. .

Moore: What would you like me to say?

DMB: Lower level? ground floor?

K Takata: What side of the fence are you on?

Bratt: I was here when we were K-12 – they have more things than ever before. They had less opportunity when an ag and science class were partitioned off with a board. The report is not indicative of what we have.

Moore: I will fix the description.

Golden shares questions from audience: *What is the reason to decrease more than what was projected? What is the relevancy and accuracy of the projection when considering consolidation?*

Moore: We do not expect the enrollment to increase.

Nishie: Then could you add in that the population is stable and that decreasing enrollment is an island wide occurrence?

Bratt: Our clean air is healthy – a lot of your numbers are sort of fluffy anyway – could you add that in?

Souza: Please dig and find out what the current state demographics are – via real estate, business, etc.

Moore: The big growth areas are south Kohala and Kona.

Bratt: But Bad air is a big deal to many families. (Our air here is good.)

Moore: I have not looked at reports for so long.

Nishie: Waikoloa was the foreclosure capital of this island.

Bratt:

Souza – perhaps that's where the work is.

Golden –Regarding the food service van. What would happen to the Senior citizens and others who also get fed from this van? Also regarding the lawn mowing – would the state have that facility not be maintained? Soccer groups use the field; the community uses the middle school field a lot, as well as the students.

Snelling: That has been a concern; what will happen to the facility?

Moore: The DOE does not sell the properties– they could turn it over to DLNR.

Snelling: So there is no benefit to the DOE on the facility if it's closed?

Moore: Wailupe School belonged to the city – it was returned to the city.

Takata:

Moore: If the DOE closes a school – before it turns it over to another entity – charter schools must be offered that site.

Golden: A request is made to change wording on the information about the science lab.

Moore: I will change that.

Golden: Reading from Moore's plan – within this physical plan there is a statement that he will outline what will happen to the middle school program.

Moore: That would be in the master plan.

Golden: That's not what your report was supposed to do.

Moore: The portables are not a good idea.

Golden: I would really like that to be clear. This understanding doesn't flash out to me.

Snelling: The summary is basically in your words.

Moore: Please send it to me.

Snelling: Correction Page 7 - the task force did not assume that the small school adjustment would disappear with consolidation. Reference to table in consolidation report and additional study. The difference between the two reports is \$17,000.

Moore: were you are assuming a k-6 and 7-12 combo.

Snelling: Other corrections I made were in classroom utilization and distribution.

Golden: Did the other principals have time to review this document?

Bratt: You list that the 21st Century grant has an office – it's a storage room. It will be used for something else and it definitely is not a classroom.

Snelling: I have two portables – I clarified that the separated portable are not two separate classrooms – I do not have 3 portables.

Moore: This system says you have 3 portable classrooms – not 3 portables. Didn't they get the 3 figure from you?

Snelling: No, I made the correction.

Moore: okay, I understand

Golden: A question from a teacher at the school: *When will the recommendation be made?* (It would be nice to have some kinds of resolution.)

Moore: I intend to work on this over the weekend and have a report ready by Monday. I cannot speak for the Superintendent but I believe she would like to have it done next week. There is no timetable for the Board to rule on this. In the past administrative services, they will meet 2nd Sunday of the month and make recommendation to the full board. (1st and 3rd Thursdays). Public testimony is taken at every committee and board meeting on any topic. An item will only be discussed if the item is on the agenda.

Golden: Will we be notified?

Moore: Meetings and agendas are posted on DOE site 6 days before meeting.

Bratt: Sunny shared they are working to have the August BOE meeting at Kealakehe rather than at Waiakea. She spoke to Herbert Watanabe.

Souza: Toguchi picks the sites –it will be a benefit to email Toguchi for consideration to move this meeting to Kona

Snelling: Clarifies process, after the Superintendent makes her recommendation, then the next hurdle would be at the board of education meetings.

Moore: Committee meeting

Snelling: And it is our responsibility to find out about this meeting? So there will be two opportunities for representation?

Golden: When will we find out about the BOE recommendation?

Moore: You will clearly get a reveal – second week (2nd Monday) of August
It is possible for the Superintendent to get her recommendation by July 6th.

Once the Superintendent makes her recommendation to the board, it is up to the board to decide if they want to make is public earlier than the meeting time.

Golden: We want the DOE recommendation, not the Board's.

Moore: That would not be her call – protocol.

Snelling: My biggest worry is your intentions. You have shared what your personal feelings are. Can I trust that what you are saying tonight is what will end up in the report, or do I need to be reading something else into this.

Clap: Can you account for his lack of trust – would it be possible for a task force member to review your revisions?

Moore: I will be happy to send it to you.

Golden: Can this community be assured that the middle school will be open in 2010 -2011?

Stuart: So fiscal year 2012 would be the earliest?

Moore: That's right.

Golden: Audience question asks about the *Community use of DOE facilities*.

Moore: Use needs to be compatible and users must share costs.

Golden: Another community question: *What does Mr. Moore need to present a holistic report and not a numbers formula?*

Moore: Let me give this some thought. The present language does not prohibit this consideration. I think the present language encourages this discussion.

Golden: Community question: *What is the BOE policy for middle school student needs?*

Moore: DOE adopted a middle school policy in the 90s.

Bratt: A and B offenses are dramatically down. We have done much better than Ka'u in terms of graduation rates, etc. since moving to the middle school construct.

Moore: Looking at other k-12 constructs.

Bratt: Mr. Watanabe was an ally in forming the middle school. Running a k-12 school is not a one person job, it would be stepping back to the dark ages.

Golden: Audience question: *Next week, if the Superintendent decided not to consolidate – is it still necessary to go to the BOE?*

Moore: It is not her call.

Moore: John Pennebacker heads the committee this goes to – DOE website has members of each BOE committee. DOE home page, left side.

Golden: Audience Question: *What is the DOE policy to return land to DLNR?*

Moore: No policy

Bratt: Sunny mentions that the Makapala facility lease was renewed for twenty years with no community input.

Moore: DLNR

Golden: You will be revising your report. You will be sending it to Janette asap. Is there a way to give feedback on your revisions?

Moore: I will welcome response from Janette. I don't think the report should go all over the country side. I don't think we should prolong this any longer.

Golden: Audience Question: *Has the DOE considered closing any of the 39 administrative offices?*

Moore: 39 administrative offices? I'm not sure – We have 6 administrative branches, not in the same building.

Golden: Audience question: *How does the DOE turn land over to DLNR?*

Moore: If the facility goes to a charter school, it does not go to DLNR.

Golden: Did you consider how cars and busses for 200 more students and their staff be impacted?

Moore: I did not address that as a facility consideration.

Golden: Don't you consider that a facility concern?

Anderson: Do the BOE members visit campuses?

Moore: Lex Brodie visited all campuses – I'm not sure about the other members.

Golden:

In summary, you will take back our concerns about skewed figures – you will send that to Janette who will have a chance to respond. Mrs. Matayoshi will hopefully make a decision this week., Protocol may be she can not reveal her decision to any other persons besides the BOE.. The Committee on Administrative Services will review the reports – John Penebacker is the chair.

Moore.- I intend to work on and turn in the report on Monday. I believe the Superintendent would like it to get this done next week. Then it goes to the Board. There is no time table. Report goes to the Administrative Facilities Committee, which meets on 2nd Monday of the month. Then it goes to the full Board, which meets the 1st and 3rd Thursdays. Public Testimony is taken at every Board meeting at any topic, only time you have to discuss an item is when that item is on the agenda. Agendas are posted on DOE website 6 days before meetings. They don't do video opportunities for inclusion of neighbor island people.

Golden: We request to know when the recommendation is sent. Can Mrs. Matayoshi be asked? Souza will ask.

Moreno: (Community member) Has safety been addressed?

Souza: Extended question – if consolidation does happen, when will construction happen?

Moore: Portable work can be done in the summertime. Major work cannot be done in 7 weeks.

Anderson: In your opinion, is it good to consolidate?

Moore: I think that moving a bunch of portables onto this campus is not a good idea.

Lyla Berg: I appreciate all your efforts – stay vigilant and there was a misinterpretation given to our schools. Charter schools are a possibility.

Linda –

Golden: Asks for clarification about whether the BOE has a prerogative to sit on this.

Moore: I don't think this will.

Audience member: If a decision is made not to consolidate could the BOE open this up again?

Moore: They can.

Moore: In closing, I really appreciate the time you have spent from June 26, 2009, the task force report is very good. My report will be significantly improved because of your input.

Golden: Encourages everyone to stay away from negative, people's past; stay focused on this issue... She encourages everyone to be positive and visualize the outcome we want to have. She says if you have questions to contact her.

S. Takata – Why go through the process... (said earlier)