

JOINT EDUCATION AND SPECIAL CALLED COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
VIRTUAL WEBEX MEETING | CITY COUNCIL FACEBOOK
MONDAY, MARCH 15, 2021 | 12:00 P.M.

MINUTES

COUNCILOR DARRELL O'QUINN, COMMITTEE CHAIR
Councilor Hoyt & Councilor Woods, Committee Members

Councilor(s) Present: O'Quinn, Woods

I. CALL TO ORDER

Councilor O'Quinn called the meeting to order.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA / MINUTES (FEBRUARY 15, 2021)

Action Taken:

Councilor Woods: Moved to Approve.

Councilor O'Quinn: Seconded.

Minutes Approved.

III. VIRTUAL PRESENTATION: "SHORT THE SQUIRREL" - LITERACY FOR YOUNG CITIZENS
LITERACY INITIATIVE (MS. MONICA ANDERSON YOUNG / DR. DEE DUPREE BENNETT, CO-FOUNDERS)

- Ms. Young presented information to the Committee via PowerPoint about "Short the Squirrel".
- It is a literacy initiative for young children who are brought to courtrooms for various reasons.
- According to Ms. Young, 53% of children in the state of Alabama are not reading at grade level.
- Short the Squirrel is a way to get the children who are brought to and have to sit all day in court, a chance to improve their reading skills.
- It is an interactive program designed to occupy the youngest visitors to Alabama courtrooms; to educate children about the State's judicial system while also providing age-appropriate materials in an electronics-free court environment.
- The program is supported by Governor Kay Ivey.
- The main character is a squirrel named Short who lives outside of the courthouse.
- The pilot involved three-counties – Baldwin, Houston, and Mobile.
- It is hoped that the city of Birmingham will come on board this initiative to help our youngest citizens.

No Action – Information Only

IV. VIRTUAL PRESENTATION: COOLBUS – REDEFINING CARPOOL. IN COMMUNITY.

MR. JOHN WRIGHT, CEO, COOLBUS / MR. BRENT FUHRMAN, COO, COOLBUS

Brent Furhman and John Wright presented information on the mobile application

- This mobile application addresses the challenges of child transportation to and from after-school activities.
- CoolBus is not a rideshare for kids (e.g., uber) and they do not pick-up children for cash.
- Its four primary areas are:
 - (1) find a ride (where a parent will search for a ride)
 - (2) job board (where needs from others are posted)
 - (3) my stuff (a listing of all the rides and/or drives you or your family are involved with)
 - (4) grow my network (place to identify relationships).

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- The app is free to download and for new users it provides three rides. Afterwards, the cost is \$9.99/month and is available only at the Apple app store for now.

No Action – Information Only

V. OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

- a. Councilor O'Quinn reminded the Committee of the survey from the Birmingham Education Foundation to Birmingham City Schools parents regarding students' mental health. The Birmingham Education Foundation and the Birmingham City Schools will do a news release soon, which includes five policies from the Birmingham City Schools Board based on that survey to address students' mental health.
- b. Councilor O'Quinn stated that Mayor Woodfin and he toured the Pathway facility, which will be specifically for children experiencing homelessness. This is the first of its kind in the state and will initially house 18 children. They hope to increase that number to 50 moving forward. The zoning issues will be presented to the City Council within the next few weeks.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Woods: Moved to Adjourn.
Councilor O'Quinn: Seconded.
Meeting Adjourned.