

May 02, 2013

A special meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on Thursday, May 02, 2013 in the Board Room of the high school.

Call to Order

President Finnegan called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. A roll call indicated the following members were present: Terry Finnegan, Valerie Fisher, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Amy McCormack, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, Sharon Patchak-Layman, and John Phelan. Also in attendance was Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; Michael Carioscio, Chief Information Officer; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; Karin Sullivan, Community Relations and Communications; Cheryl Witham Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; James Paul Hunter, Chair of the Faculty Senate Executive committee; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors

Mary Jo Haley, League of Women Voters; Therese Brennock, Nikki Paplaczyk, Vanessa Hughes, OPRFHS Faculty, David Pope, Village of Oak Park President and family; Robert Spatz of District 97; David Boulanger of the Oak Park Youth Township; and Melanie McQueen; Mr. Moore and family, and Mrs. Cofsky and family.

Public Comments

Mr. Boulanger, resident of Oak Park, thanked the Board of Education and the administration for its collaboration with the Oak Park Township that focuses on youth. He thanked the current Board of Education for its support over the last four years and hoped that the new Board of Education would also be supportive.

Melanie McQueen, resident of Oak Park, has enjoyed meeting, working, and talking with the parent organizations and she now is a part of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee Task Forces. She welcomed the new Board members.

Minutes

Mr. Finnegan moved to approve the Open and Closed Minutes of March 21, April 16, 24, and 25, 2013 and declared that the closed session audiotapes of August 2011 be destroyed and that the closed session minutes from January 1, 1987 through April 2013 shall remain closed; seconded by Ms. Fisher. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Canvass of Vote

The Certificated results of the April 9 Consolidated Election of the High School were presented as follows.

Candidates	Percentage	Votes
Jackie Moore	15.29%	4,951
Jeff Weissglass	16.38%	5,302

Thomas F. Cofsky	12.77%	4,133
Steven Gevinson	11.17%	3,616
Steven R. Nations	3.39%	1,096
Beatrice Fung	3.03%	981
Barb Langer	4.4%	1,424
Melanie McQueen	7.46%	2,416
David Perkovich	1.92%	620
Eric E. Davis	4.67%	1,511
Julie MacCarthy	9.66%	3,126
John B. Bokum Jr.	2.43%	786
Terry Finnegan	7.45%	2,412
Total:	100%	32,374

Recognition of Retiring Board of Education Members

Ms. Fisher was thankful for everyone she had worked with the District. She had been involved in one capacity or another with the high school since the late 1990’s, at which time Mr. Prale, Ms. Hill and Ms. Kalmerton were here.

Ms. Fisher commented that the faculty was a fabulous group of people and to this day, she is so grateful to them for what they do. Both the faculty and the administration are devoted to what they do. She has served with twenty (20) other Board members during her tenure on this job and she has made some lifelong friends. She would recommend being a member of the Board to anyone. She was very pleased to come back for the last two-years to finish Jacques Conway’s term and she gave a “shout-out” to him as he is a “man of all heart and is irreplaceable.” She was pleased to contribute to the TIF agreement and to be part of the collaboration of the Intergovernmental Agreements with the Village and District 97 as well as the contract with the Collaboration for Early Childhood Care and Education.

Ms. Fisher noted that Dr. Isoye was a man of vision. OPRFHS works on a continual improvement model and that is about as hard as it gets. She told Dr. Isoye that no one could match his warm, the humanity, interest, and thoughtfulness to all of the issues that come forward. She appreciated the opportunity to work with him and everyone else.

Mr. Phelan noted that the District was losing nearly 30 years of institutional knowledge, he appreciated the opportunity to work with the retiring Board members over the past two years. He felt like the “new kid” and was inspired by their passion for education, children, and analytical minds. Mr. Finnegan

and he shared an interest in extracurricular activities because of the good it does for students, and he appreciated Mr. Finnegan's common-sense approach, listening to the debate, keeping an open mind and coming up with great decisions. He appreciated his leadership. He would look to Dr. Millard for the rest of his life. He remembered her conversations with him in trying to bring him up to speed, her kindness, and her devotion to the institution. It was inspiring. Originally, he spent more time with Ms. Fisher before she was a Board of Education member. While he had missed the opportunity to work with Mr. Conway, this result was the best. Ms. Fisher has an institutional history, a lawyer's mind, and is very pleasant. They had developed a trust and he would miss her. He hoped for similar relationships with the new Board of Education members.

Dr. Millard deeply admired the stellar, paragon administrators. She was a student at the Board of Education table and she relied on them to tell her what she needed to know. She thanked her Board of Education colleagues who challenged her, disagreed with her, and helped her to see things in a broader vein. It is not easy to make these decisions. Sometimes Board of Education members want to vote on both sides of the issue.

Dr. Millard told the members of the community and those sitting in the audience that she appreciated the discussions as they had developed a good give and take. She had served under three superintendents and she felt that her greatest success was finding a superintendent that could lead the District and take it to the next level. However, she warned them that Dr. Isoye could not do it without all of their help. She felt the best was yet to come if the communities rally around his leadership. And, while she enjoyed being a Board member she will now have more time for herself.

Ms. Patchak-Layman thanked the retiring Board members for their service and participating in the democratic process in the community. The diversity of opinions expressed at the table bode well for the community. She had greatly appreciated the discussions as they gave her family much to talk about at the dinner table. She hoped they would enjoy their hours after they leave the Board of Education.

Ms. McCormack was bittersweet about leaving the Board of Education. Being a board member is a "tough gig" for families and she was grateful to her family forgiveness of missed dinners and events. Being a Board member is more challenging than she expected. While she felt every pain personally, there was much joy. She felt blessed to have her fellow board member as friends. OPRFHS is an exceptional school and she was grateful her children had attended. Future students are also very fortunate. She was grateful for all of the help from the people at the table. Being an administrator is a very difficult job and they work very hard at it. She appreciated their work greatly and she knew

that others in the community did as well. She was grateful that Dr. Isoye was at the helm and that he has a wonderful team.

Ms. McCormack watched the end of the Wizard of Oz, noting that she did feel like she was leaving home and OZ. She thought about the good witches, the bad witches, and the many friends on the yellow brick road. She thanked Ms. Kalmerton for being her scarecrow, noting that none one could do that job better.

Ms. McCormack believed the district was more effective now in carrying out its mission than when she joined the Board of Education. She expected that process to continue with the people at the table.

Ms. McCormack thanked her fellow board members. She was grateful to Mr. Finnegan, Dr. Millard and Dr. Lee for their leadership. Being the president of the Board of Education is the hardest job on the Board.

Mr. Finnegan stated that the Board of Education members are stewards and serve the community and, as a community, he thanked every professional in the building for what they do for the students.

Dr. Isoye presented a plaque of appreciation to each of the retiring Board of Education members. He acknowledged that their work was difficult, voluntary, and that they had to put in the time, energy, and effort. While there is a tendency to tease about the length of the Board of Education meetings, the reason was because they had deliberate discussions and questions. Some decisions are easy and some are hard. As a Board, they were all good about listening and working together. They also laughed together and that should not be forgotten.

Dr. Isoye stated that the president's role is about guidance, meetings and determining how to work through various discussions. One must have a fire when it comes to the school, a clear passion, and an interest in making sure all students are served in the best way. Mr. Finnegan showed steadiness. Dr. Isoye thanked him in his leadership in moving forward the work of the District.

Dr. Isoye appreciated Dr. Millard being part of the Board of Education that hired him and her 2-year presidency. He appreciated her leadership and guidance for the new role. Dr. Millard provided leadership in terms of the board meetings and in giving a clear understanding of the community, both internally and externally. She helped him understand the District and the needs of the community. He thanked her for her leadership, passion for students, and the trips to India.

Adjournment

At 7:00 p.m., Mr. Finnegan moved to Adjourn Sine Die the Board of Education; seconded by Dr. Millard. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Amy McCormack
Secretary

By Gail Kalmerton
Clerk of the Board