

OAK PARK AND RIVER FOREST HIGH SCHOOL  
201 North Scoville Avenue  
Oak Park, IL 60302

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Tuesday, September 8, 2009

A Finance Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, September 8, 2009. Chair Allen called the meeting to order at 7:36 a.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present John C. Allen, IV, Terry Finnegan, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Amy McCormack, Dr. Dietra D. Millard and Sharon Patchak-Layman. Also present were Dr. Attila J. Weninger, Superintendent; Jason Edgecombe, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Phil Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Cheryl L. Witham, Chief Financial Officer; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors included Kay Foran, Communications and Community Relations Coordinator; Doug Wiley, OPRFHS Supervisor of Finance; Linda Cada, Director of Special Education, Donna Sebestyen, Coordinator of Benefits; James Paul Hunter, OPRFHS Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair.

**Acceptance of Minutes of August 18, 2009 Finance Committee Meeting**

It was the consensus of the Finance Committee members to accept by acclamation the minutes of the August 18, 2009 Finance Committee meeting, as presented.

**Construction Update**

Mr. Zummallen provided the Board of Education members with a list of completed construction projects.

Ms. McCormack asked for information relative to why work had been performed in the stadium while in use on Saturday.

**Center for Psychological Services Contract**

It was the consensus of the Finance Committee members to recommend that the Board of Education approve the Center for Psychological Services Contract at the Special Board meeting following the Finance Committee Meeting, and that a report be given at the October Human Relations Committee on the of hiring firms with minority representation.

Ms. Cada noted that as the District moves to a Response to Intervention (RtI) Model, different job responsibilities were evolving. The psychologists will be most impacted as they will do considerable data collection in general education classes and consult with teachers on appropriate interventions. Thus, a contracted psychologist from Comprehensive Psychologist Services will do the initial testing for case studies. The ARRA IDEA Grant will pay for these services. OPRFHS has worked with Center for Psychological Services for eight years.

Discussion ensued about using firms that have minority representation. Discussion also ensued as to why these workers would be paid per diem rather than on a per student basis.

Ms. Witham and Ms. Cada, in working with the District's attorney, discovered that paying this company a per diem or daily rate would allow the school to track the work being done by this group more efficiently. Being accustomed to hourly rates, Ms. Patchak-Layman would have preferred a contract with specific costs and rates. Per the Board of Education's direction, Ms. Cada will look at hiring firms with minority representation and she will also provide the ethnicity of the 39 students who received these services last year. While District 97 has been cited for disproportionately of students of color in special education, OPRFHS had not. These students were hospitalized per the parents' choice because of emotional and sociological issues and this work provides wrap-around services to these students. Three students need these services immediately.

It was noted that the contract is not mutually exclusive and could be terminated at anytime. Ms. Cada stated that the contract was left open-ended because the school does not know how many students will be hospitalized, returns to the school, and/or screened for Special Education.

While Ms. Patchak-Layman was concerned about a non-compete clause, Ms. McCormack stated that it was a fair and common provision in these types of contracts.

### **Special Education Independent Workers' Contracts**

Annually, the Board of Education is asked to approve contracts with independent workers for the provision of social work services (initial evaluations and annual reviews), physical therapy, and occupational therapy services. The contracts presented were for occupational therapy and social work services. Lisa Vincent, the occupational therapist, has provided these services to the District for the past five (5) years. Patricia Woytek, the person recommended for providing social work services, is known in the building because she successfully completed her social work internship with the District during the previous school year.

The District has used contractual social work and occupational therapy services since the mid 1990's as a means of reducing its employee costs. The District's independent worker arrangement was recognized by the Internal Revenue Service in the early part of the century and has proven to be mutually beneficial for the independent worker and the District.

The hourly rate for Occupational Therapy remains the same as in 2008 – 2009 at \$72 an hour. The remuneration for social work service will be \$350 for initial evaluations, \$300 for re-evaluations, \$50 an hour for attendance at staffing, and \$27.50 an hour for classroom observations. The remuneration for social work services will be less than previous years given the inexperience of Ms. Woytek.

Ms. Cada stated that the salary for the occupational therapist will be allocated under the stimulus funds; the high school plans to add services of intervention before students are screened for Special Education.

Special Education has resources for independent contractors. Because of the vulnerability of this student population, Ms. Cada only selects the most reputable companies. The process of hiring independent workers will be discussed at a future Human Resources Committee meeting.

It was the consensus of the Finance Committee members to recommend to the Board of Education that it approve the Independent Workers' Contract for Lisa Vincent and Patricia Woytek at its regular September Board of Education meeting.

### **Insurance Broker Recommendation & Agreement**

It was the consensus of the Financial Committee members to recommend to the Board of Education that it approve at its Special Board meeting following this meeting CBC as the high school's insurance broker for one year beginning January 1, 2010, based on the administration's recommendation.

It was noted that it had offered the most comprehensive cost savings program for the District, approximately \$124,000 for the next year. Ms. Witham and Mr. Edgcombe had provided a chart comparing the three proposals received. Because of the January 1, 2010, renewal date for the broker, there was an urgency to consider this now.

Discussion ensued about the proposals. Vista seemed explicit in its offerings and CBC explicit in its savings (\$250,000). While it was the consensus of the Committee to go forward with CBC, next year the school will include in the bid dental, wellness, online services as well as others, i.e., open enrollment, supplemental wellness, etc.

Mr. Hunter complimented Ms. Witham for bringing this opportunity forward. For many months, the high school had been asking the GCG, the current broker, to bring these opportunities forward, but it was told that this was impossible.

Ms. Witham explained that the high school did a modified RFP on these services because of the time limitations. The Insurance Committee had been advised of the presentation to the Board of Education. The Village of Oak Park uses the same broker and District 97's new business manager is familiar with CBC, but has used the same broker for 30 year and does not intend to change at the moment. In addition, six other NWPA schools use this broker.

### **Property Identification Number Consolidation**

Per the Board of Education's direction, Ms. Witham explored consolidating the Property Identification Numbers (PINs) of the high school. When this was explored, it was discovered that the three PINs are in three distinct subdivisions and the County's policy will not allow a consolidation of PINs. The options available would be 1) submit a subdivision consolidation application with the Village of Oak Park; 2) consolidate the PINS with existing PINS in their current subdivisions, or 3) not consolidate at all. After consideration of these options, Ms. Witham reported that it was her recommendation not to consolidate as there were no other obvious PINS to consolidate within the subdivisions. The Finance Committee members concurred.

### **Audit Update**

Ms. Witham provided the Committee with an update on the audit being conducted by Crowe Horwath for the first time. She stated that the preliminary work in May tested the internal controls. During that time, the following recommendations were made: 1) annually, employees should sign acknowledgements that they have received and read the employee manual; 2) the District should develop a formal fraud risk assessment program; 3) the District should develop an approval process to approve payroll tax wire transfers before sending rather than a review after sending.

The audit team returned in August and will complete its work the second week of September. It discovered that the District had received Federal funds faster than expended and therefore collected interest income on those funds. Thus, the District owes the Federal government \$500 in interest income. The grant submittal process has changed and the Business Office will work more closely with the Special Education division when it submits its applications.

The Comprehensive Annual Financial Statements and a formal audit report will be presented to the Board of Education in October.

### **Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer's Report for July will be submitted for approval at the regular September Board of Education meeting.

### **Monthly Financials**

The Board of Education will be asked to approve the July 2009 Financial Reports at the regular September Board of Education meeting.

The Board of Education asked to be provided semi-annually with a list of the contracts (between \$10,000 and \$25,000) that the high school has entered into with other businesses semi-annually. The list would include the name, term of the contract, amount of the contract, etc., and. Ms. Witham, responding to a concern about working with new vendors, noted that requests for placement on a bid or quote list are always honored. In addition, the Purchasing Coordinator provides opportunities for new vendors. The purchasing coordinator position has internal controls and has been tested by the auditors.

### **Adjournment**

The Finance Committee adjourned 9:01 a.m.