

December 17, 2015

The regular Board meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on Thursday, December 17, 2015, in the Board Room of the OPRFHS.

**Call to Order**

President Weissglass called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. A roll call indicated the following Board of Education members were present: Fred Arkin; Jennifer Cassell, Thomas F. Cofsky, Dr. Steven Gevinson, Dr. Jackie Moore, Sara Spivy, and Jeff Weissglass. Also present were Dr. Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; David Ruhland, Director of Human Resources; Tod Altenburg, Chief School Business Officer; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant Clerk of the Board.

**Closed Session**

At 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 17, 2015, Mr. Weissglass moved to enter closed session for the purpose of discussing Collective negotiating matters between the District and its employees or their representatives or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2) and Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular District has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the District finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the closed meeting minutes 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11), and Student disciplinary cases 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(10) and The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the District or legal counsel for the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee or against legal counsel for the District to determine its validity. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1), as amended by PA.93—57; seconded by Dr. Moore. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

At 7:30 p.m., the Board of Education resumed open session.

Joining the meeting were: Michael Carioscio, Chief Information Officer; Amy Hill, Director of Assessment and Research; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; Dr. Gwen Walker-Qualls, Interim Director of Pupil Personnel Services; Karin Sullivan, Director of Communications and Community Relations; Sheila Hardin, Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair; and Hattie Grimm, Student Council Liaison Representative.

**Visitors**

Judith Alexander, Al Berggren, John Bokum, Chris Donovan, Kathleen and Frank Fiorito, J Harris, Bruce and Maureen Kleinman, John Mason, Amanda Massie, Rebecca Morrow-Nye, Jennifer Patridge, Gino Pisani, Mike Poirier, Claire Sofen, Amber Stitzel Pareja, David Towne, Karin West, Community, and Mary Haley, League of Women Voters.

**Hearing on  
2015  
Tax Levy**

At 7:40 p.m., Mr. Weissglass called the Public Hearing on the 2015 Tax Levy to order on Thursday, December 17, 2015 for the Oak Park and River Forest High School 2015 Tax Levy. This Levy was placed on display for public inspection on November 11, 2015 for 30 days per state code. Notice of this Public Hearing appeared in the Wednesday, December 9, 2015 edition of the Wednesday Journal newspaper. He asked for any written or oral comments to be received.

Mike Poirer, resident of 308 N. Elmwood, Oak Park, offered concern about the tax levy, even though acknowledging that for the past 2 years, taxpayers enjoyed a reduction of 9% the first year and last year a 1% reduction. However, a 21% increase wipes that away. Using the 2010 tax year, from 2011-2015, the district's contribution to property taxes has risen 40% or up 140% since 2010. The average compound rate of property tax increase was 7% during this time, while the CPI rose less than 2% and wages and salaries rose 2.1%. A 7% annual tax increase is an unsustainable position. The community needs to find new ways for revenue. He hoped the Board of Education would take his remarks into consideration. If taxes continue to rise at a 7% compounded annual for the next 5 years, in 2020, taxpayers will be paying two times the tax paid in 2010. He found this unhealthy for both the high school and the community.

Al Berggren, resident of 155 N. Elmwood, concurred with the previous speaker, noting that the district would have 130% of expenditure with the new levy. He asked the Board to consider 100% of expenditures instead.

At 7:46 p.m., Mr. Weissglass closed the Public Hearing.

**Hearing on  
the Proposal to  
Sell \$17,500,000 in  
Working Cash  
Fund Bonds for the  
Purpose of  
Increasing the  
Working Cash Fund  
of the District**

At 7:48 p.m., Mr. Weissglass called a public hearing to receive public comments on the proposal to sell \$17,500,000 Working Cash Fund Bonds (the "Bonds") for the purpose of increasing the working cash fund of the District and explained that all persons desiring to be heard would have an opportunity to present written or oral testimony with respect thereto.

The proposed issuance of bonds is to fund partially the pool project that the board has previously approved. The issuance of the bonds is also the subject of a petition to require a referendum in March of 2016. The period to challenge the petitions had not yet expired, but regardless of whether a challenge is made or is successful, tonight's hearing is a required step based on the resolution of intention to issue bonds.

No additional comments were made by Board of Education members and no written testimony concerning the proposed issuance of the Bonds was received.

Mr. Weissglass called oral testimony or any public comments concerning the proposed issuance of the Bonds.

Bruce Kleinman read a statement from Maureen Kleinman. She reflected on the facilities planning meeting/workshop on Monday evening, participants were divided into discussion groups to collaborate on a list of desired educational experiences that OPRFHS students need to be prepared for the future, based on the premise that environments contribute to the educational process. The list included working collaboratively, gaining a global perspective, a diversity of experiences, and thinking critically and analytically. Among the wants and needs, every group mentioned the importance of having a flexible environment and adaptable technology to meet future needs. What was not listed was the ability to adapt to the environment. She felt that it would be a very important experience for the students to develop an understanding of the environment and its unique characteristics; to appreciate that resources are limited and that the community needs to work within the framework of these limited resources to satisfy diverse wants and needs. Because this is a landlocked urban environment a large indoor swimming complex may not be the best way to utilize limited land resources for the benefit of the maximum number of people. While the fund balance is large enough to bear the full financial burden, with or without a bond issue, it may not be the best way to utilize these funds. She then quoted Mick Jagger and Keith Richards: "You can't always get what you want. But if you try sometimes, you find you get what you need." Updated pools are needed, but so is parking and open space. She felt that the Board of Education needed to figure out a way to adapt to what is available.

Monica Sheehan, 626 Fair Oaks, Oak Park, read the following statement, "As an organizer of the Petition for Referendum, I am appreciative and grateful for the other organizers, for the many people who gathered signatures, and for those who notarized petitions. Against all odds, the Petition for Referendum collected signatures from more than 4300 registered voters of Oak Park and River Forest to force the bond issue of the partial-funding of the high school pool on the ballot. The 47.5 million dollar pool project with its parking and safety ramifications should be decided by every voter in Oak Park and River Forest, not just the seven voters who sit on the school board.

"Taxpayers have never been given the opportunity to vote on this massive project that would also level the school's only on-site, off-street parking facility. By zoning law, OPRF must provide at least 181 on site, off-street parking spaces. That number will certainly rise with the school's forecasted increase of up to 800 students within the next few years. The garage was built to serve the parking needs of the high school and the community, and the garage is heavily-used by both. Oak Park is not Hyde Park or another Chicago neighborhood. Our zoning laws reflect this difference. Demolishing a much-used parking garage makes no sense in suburban Oak Park where parking is scarce.

"Nearly a year and a half ago, I sent the first of several emails to the school board concerning the high school's aging pools. I suggested then and suggest now that the school renovate its existing pools as well as collaborate with the villages of Oak Park and River Forest to identify a place off-site to build a high

school/community aquatic center. It's clear from research from other communities across the country that such partnerships is how new pools are best built and maintained, such a collaboration would result in the best outcome for all stakeholders.”

Al Berggren, stated that the community had sent a mandate to the Board of Education via petition with 4,300 signatures to study alternatives such as building a new pool, refurbishing the present ones, placing a pool on the tennis courts, or offsite, etc. Costs should be attached to them and the community should then have the opportunity to vote on the alternatives. He felt this course of action would best serve the community and the school board. The pool was not talked about at all during the last election.

Amber Stitzel Pareja, an alumni, noted that the pools were old when she had attended the high school. She appreciated all of the meetings held by the Board of Education to consider what was best for the high school and the students and how to move forward and serve the needs of the community. She commend them for their work and many others agreed that they appreciated your work on this.

Mr. Weissglass then announced that all persons desiring to be heard had been given an opportunity to present oral and written testimony with respect to the proposed issuance of the Bonds.

At 8:02 p.m., Ms. Cassell moved and Mr. Cofsky seconded the motion that the hearing be adjourned.

A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Public  
Comments**

Chris Donovan asked when a decision would be made on any challenge to the petitions.

Sheila Hardin, a resident of 8129 Lake Street, Oak Park and teacher, read the following statement: “I would like to start by thanking the Board of Education for their work for our district and our students. While the Faculty Senate recognizes and supports OPRF’s need for a viable, safe pool space that meets both the academic and co-curricular requirements of our students, the current plan neglects several issues that pose serious liability issues, and risk the safety and security of our staff, as well as the status that OPRF holds in the community and beyond.

“The current proposal exacerbates the already strained relationship the school has with our neighbors. As difficult as day-to-day parking will be, events such as Back-to-School Night, Parent-Teacher Conferences, and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Open House will place an even greater burden on the school’s relationship with those who live in the immediate surrounding area. Additionally, the demolition of the parking garage will diminish OPRF’s status in the broader professional

community. The existence of ample, on-campus parking has logistically allowed OPRF to expand professional and student relationships with other schools, businesses, and professional associations. The lack of parking will limit our school's ability to host organizational district or state sanctioned events.

“The Faculty Senate respects and utilizes the joint committee process. Joint committees allow the administration, Board of Education and faculty to work together on important issues such as insurance, the calendar, discipline, and more. We are concerned that the board formed a Pool Committee that included all stakeholders and then failed to adopt the recommendation of that committee. The memo sent by the Board of Education Pool Committee chair on January 13, 2015, showed 4 options all with on-campus parking. The Faculty Senate recommends that the Board of Education adopt the recommendations of the Pool Committee and build on-campus parking in conjunction with the new pool.”

Al Berggren asked if the Board of Education could withdraw its proposal to go ahead without a referendum since the public has spoken clearly and loudly that they want a referendum.

Jennifer Partridge, a resident of 303 N. East, Oak Park, reiterated the need to find a solution to the pool and she suggested that the Board of Education take a more constructive path rather than an adversarial path.

**Status of FOIA Requests**

Ms. Kalmerton reported that 2 FOIA requests were received, and 2 were resolved.

**Student Council**

Ms. Grimm reported that students were in the midst of taking their finals week and that the tutoring center was being well used. HuskiePalooza was very successful and competitive, i.e., students against teachers, etc. After the winter break, Student Council is planning charity events and going to attempt to have other groups help with this endeavor.

**Faculty Senate Report**

Ms. Hardin reported that Faculty Senate was finishing the semester and working on the January 4, 2016 Institute Day Program. She thanked the administration and the Board of Education for all of its work, as the calendar year closes.

**Superintendent Report**

Dr. Isoye reported the following:  
Two hundred OPRF seniors, or roughly 25% of the class of 2016, have been named 2016-2017 Illinois State Scholars for outstanding academic achievement. Most high schools average only 10%.

Out of nearly 3,000 Chicago-area students who applied, senior Darrell Sanders has been named one of 10 Posse Scholars by the Posse Foundation. The prestigious award places groups of 10 students with extraordinary potential who might be overlooked in the college selection process in supportive, multicultural

teams at a single institution. Darrell will receive a four-year, full-tuition scholarship from Pomona College in Claremont, Calif.

Freshman Morgan Varnado was the winner in the annual MLK essay contest. This is the second year in a row that a freshman has won and only the second time a freshman has won first place. Morgan will present his speech at OPRF's 32nd Annual MLK Assembly on Friday, January 15, 2016.

OPRF faculty, staff, and students adopted 50 singles or families and purchased gifts for them as part of the Community of Congregation's annual Holiday Food and Gift Basket program. Thanks to Communications Secretary Linda Hayes, who organizes OPRF's contributions every year, and to the students who helped deliver the gifts.

On Wednesday, Mr. Bell's senior Shakespeare elective class conducted a live-streamed Q&A with an actor from the theater Shakespeare's Globe in London. This was an extraordinary opportunity for these students, as OPRF is the only school in the world that has this relationship with the Shakespeare's Globe.

The Theatre Department's October production of Little Shop of Horrors has been chosen to perform the show during the Illinois High School Theatre Festival at Illinois State University, January 7-9, 2016.

The following students will compete for a top spot at the Illinois Music Educators Association All-State Conference/Competition in late January: Regina Miller, Sage Degand, Jacob Schaidler, Ben Ellenbogen, and Allison Miller. In addition, Sage Degand and Mark Weissglass won multiple awards in the composition contest.

Swimmers Hanna Blankemeier, Genevieve Curry Alex Gill, Samantha M. Neilson, and Natalie Ungaretti won sixth-place team finish at the Girls' State Swimming and Diving Competition. Five new school records were set. In addition, swimmer Natalie Ungaretti was named the Chicago Tribune's Athlete of the Month.

The Huskie Booster Club has provided nearly \$60,000 in funds to 22 different student programs at Oak Park and River Forest High School as part of its annual appropriations of monies raised through parent fundraising efforts. This is a 10% increase over the amount awarded last year.

Dr. Isoye also wished everyone a restful break.

## **Consent**

Mr. Weissglass moved to approve the following consent items:

- A. Check Disbursements and Financial Resolutions dated December 17, 2015
- B. Monthly Treasurer's Report
- C. Donations and Gifts
- D. Construction Bids for Summer 2016

- E. Calendar for 2016-17 School Year and Acceptance of 2017-18 Draft School Calendar
- F. Auditorium Sound System Bid
- G. Personnel Recommendations including New Hires, Resignations, and Retirements
- H. Employee Benefit Insurance Broker
- I. Summer School Dates, Stipends, and Budget
- J. Policies for First Reading
  - 1. Policy 2:150 Committees
  - 2. Policy 2:200 Types of School Board Meetings
  - 3. Policy 4:170 Safety
  - 4. Policy 5:90 Abused and Neglected Children Child Reporting 1542909.1
  - 5. Policy 5:100 Staff Development Program
  - 6. Policy 6:15 School Accountability
  - 7. Policy 6:50 School Wellness
  - 8. Policy 6:60 Curriculum Content
  - 9. Policy 6:160 English Learners
  - 10. Policy 6:310 High School Credit for Non-District Experiences
  - 11. Policy 6:315 High School Credit for Students in Grade 7 or 8 (NEW)
  - 12. Policy 6:320 High School Credit for Proficiency H.
- K. Open and Closed Session Minutes of November 18, and 19, 2015, and a declaration that the closed session audiotapes of May 2014 be destroyed.

seconded by Dr. Moore. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Adoption of  
the 2015 Tax Levy**

Mr. Weissglass moved to adopt the 2015 Tax Levy, as presented; seconded by Dr. Gevinson. Discussion ensued.

This same report was presented at the Finance Committee and at the Special Board meeting on November 10, 2015. The administration recommended returning to the levy of \$65,019,413 with no CPI and no new growth/new construction factored into the calculations. At that Special Meeting, Mr. Altenburg was asked to develop 3 scenarios which are below.

- 1. A return to the 2012 levy of \$65,019,413 with no CPI and no new growth/new construction factored into the calculations;
- 2. A return to the 2012 levy of \$65,019,413 with only the CPI of 0.8% factored into the calculations. New growth/new construction has not been factored into the calculations; and,
- 3. A return to the 2012 levy of \$65,019,413 with the CPI of 0.8% and estimated amounts for new growth/new construction factored into the calculations

The numbers generated by Levy Scenario #3 were used to populate the Truth in Taxation Hearing and Public Notice of Proposed Property Tax Increase that will appear in the December 9, 2015, edition of the Wednesday Journal. It is also important to note that for Levy Scenario #3, certain assumptions had to be made

in terms of total EAV (Equalized Assessed Valuation) and the amount of new growth/ new construction because those exact values will not be known until late March/early April 2016. In order to make the most informed estimates on EAV and new growth/new construction, consultations occurred with the business officials in District 90 and District 97, the assumptions used in the PMA five-year financial projection model were reviewed, and the Oak Park Township Assessor was contacted, and rough estimates were received. An important factor is the application of the Loss and Cost factor by the County's tax extension office. For all taxing bodies, Cook County adds a factor, known as Loss and Cost, to the final tax levy that is submitted by the last Tuesday in December. In short, the county adds 3% to the levy amount requested in each of the funds. The reason the county does this is so that taxing bodies receive their full levy amount under the PTELL law in the event that there are taxpayers who don't pay their property taxes, i.e. foreclosures, short sales, delinquent tax receipts, etc.

At the special meeting, a request was made to show the different levy scenarios for 5 and 10 years and that was included in the packet.

Mr. Cofsky moved to amend the motion refer to Option 1--a return to the 2012 levy of \$65,019,413 with no CPI and no new growth/new construction factored into the calculations; 2012 levy without CPI or new construction fees with loss and the 3% cost add; seconded by Mr. Arkin. This option is consistent with the 2013 FAC recommendation. This scenario holds the funds lower by an aggregate of \$5 million dollars.

When the FAC made its recommendation, it included two years of a significant drop in property taxes, which has been experienced, to revert back to the 2012 level and not max out the levy, a past practice as well as an important philosophical point. The pictorial helped the Board of Education members to help them understand that Option 1 was not detrimental to the District's health.

A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Resolution  
Abating the Working  
Cash Fund of  
District 200**

Mr. Weissglass moved to approve the resolution abating the working cash fund of Consolidated High School District Number 200, Cook County, Illinois, and abating the taxes heretofore levied for the year 2015 to pay debt service on General Obligation Limited Tax School Bonds, Series 2005, and General Obligation Limited Tax School Bonds, Series 2009, of said School District; seconded by Mr. Cofsky.

For the past three tax levy years, the Board of Education has approved a resolution to abate the Bond and Interest Levy that is necessary to make the annual payments for principal and interest for debt service. In other words, rather than levy a direct tax, the Board of Education has abated this amount and made the payments from the district's Working Cash Fund rather than the County Clerk extending the necessary amount via the property tax levy



to make these payments. The FAC had recommended the continuation of this abatement as well.

A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Student Discipline** None

**New Graduation Requirements - CIVICS** The Instruction Committee unanimously recommended moving the report on the new Graduation Requirement - Civics to the full Board of Education as an informational item.

**Articulation Work** The Instruction Committee unanimously recommended moving the report on articulation work to the full Board of Education as an informational item.

A request was made for more articulation about the transition, placement, testing, and how decisions are made when placing students.

**Update on Park District of Oak** Mr. Weissglass read the following statement:

**Park Community Center Feasibility Study** In 2014, the Park District of Oak Park developed and approved its ten-year Comprehensive Master Plan. One of the goals identified in the plan was in 2016 to conduct a feasibility study for an indoor recreation center. In planning for the feasibility study, the Park District Board of Commissioners suggested that the Park District invite a representative from each of the other government bodies to be a part of a task force to conduct a feasibility study for a community recreation center. The joint effort would encourage open dialogue and assist in identifying other potential facility needs of the sister agencies. Additionally, the joint task force would support the community's desire to have Oak Park government entities collaborate and would ensure that amenity needs are reviewed jointly versus in silos.

In November, the Park District reached out to each Oak Park governmental entity to gauge their desire to participate in this process. Participating government entities include the Village of Oak Park; the Township of Oak Park; District 97; District 200; and the Oak Park Public Library. All groups agreed to have their voices be at the table to discuss their entities as well as the community's facility needs and to assist in the execution of a feasibility study for a community recreation center.

An RFP was issued by the Park District in November. The task force has met twice; once to review the proposals and a second time to conduct interviews of firms to lead the joint agency and community input process to create a feasibility study for a community recreation center. The deliverables of this engagement include: 1) a determination of amenities to be included in a community recreation center; 2) an identification of potential site locations for a community recreation center; and 3) a formulation of probable costs.

The feasibility study will launch in January 2016 and is expected to conclude in mid-2016. During this time, the consultants will conduct a series of focus group meetings, community input sessions, as well as meetings with individual agencies and key stakeholders.

The task force will be meeting throughout the process for updates and to provide feedback on the progress to date. Updates will be shared with the community as well as the Board as appropriate. The goal is for the process to begin in January with completion in June or July.

Dr. Gevinson congratulated the people who ran the petition drive as its success was unprecedented. It is a democratic accomplishment. He acknowledged the disappointment and anger at very aspects of the pool issue as to parking, cost, size, and the perceived lack of a voice as well. He added that the feasibility study and the timing of the petition drive might be fortuitous because the reason he voted for the pool was because he thought and had been convinced that there was no better option than the very bad option of knocking down the garage and building the pool there. He was excited that the study of a possible community center that would include a pool, and he was hopeful that steps are taken to be careful and thorough to figure out if a community pool could be included and allow the district to hold its competitive swimming off-campus and do PE swimming differently. A community center could involve every aspect of this community. Every taxing body could have a great interest in this and he hoped it could come together, if feasible.

Mr. Arkin concurred with Dr. Gevinson that this was an exciting concept. The village needs a focal point for the youth and that all of the governmental entities could benefit from it. He hoped that such a center would be in addition and not a change in philosophy of diverting from neighborhood recreation centers, i.e., this would be a supplement and not in lieu of the neighborhood centers.

**District Reports**

Monthly reports from the following school-sponsored parent groups were embedded into the agenda: Alumni Association, APPLAUSE!, and Huskies Booster's Club.

**Closed Session**

At 9:07 p.m., the Board of Education resumed closed session. At 10:07 p.m., the Board of Education resumed open session.

**Adjournment**

At 10:08 p.m., Mr. Weissglass moved to adjourn the regular Board of Education meeting; seconded by Ms. Spivy. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Jeff Weissglass  
President

Sara Dixon Spivy  
Secretary

Submitted by Gail Kalmerton

Clerk of the Board