

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 625
Saint Paul, Minnesota**

**COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD MEETING
360 Colborne Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102**

**January 9, 2024
6:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Vice Chair Ward.

2. ROLL CALL

Board of Education: U. Ward, H. Henderson, E. Valliant, C. Allen, J. Vue, C. Franco, Y. Carrillo
Superintendent Gothard

Staff: C. Long, A. Collins, Y. Vang, S. Schmidt de Carranza, S. Dahlke, J. Turner,
S. Gray Akyea, J. Danielson, A. Kunz, E. Wacker, C. Green, C. Anderson,
K. Morris, B. Schmidt, H. Nistler, T. Parent,, N. Páez, T. Sager, M.
McHenry, , K. Thao, P. Pratt-Cook, J. Grathwol, L. Olson

Community: L. Bolton M. Hart, S. Pumper, A. DeRosier, S. Strong-Allen, A. Oertwig, D.
McGalvin

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF THE MAIN AGENDA

MOTION: Director Ward moved approval of the Order of the Agenda. The motion was seconded by Director Allen. It passed by acclaim.

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Superintendent Gothard began the meeting by welcoming everyone, and provided a few, brief updates. He welcomed new board members, and congratulated those selected as officers at the Annual Meeting. He noted that he or his team will send information and coverage if necessary, as we work together as a team. He also noted this is the halfway point of the school year, and safety continues to be an emphasis, and preference for yellow buses. He then provided an update that some yellow buses were brought back in real-time right away, and as of Winter Break, Como Park Senior High is now back to yellow buses as well. Johnson and Creative Arts opted to keep their partnership with Metro Transit. He noted it is important to have heard the community and made the investment and decision to support their preference. He thanked Ben Harri, Director of Transportation, and his team, as well as Operations, for their incredible work in aligning the rigid schedule with three tiers of bus schedules.

Director Allen thanked Administration for their work in transitioning back to yellow buses. Director Valliant also thanked the team for their work and noted her experience with her family in riding Metro Transit buses

to school. Director Ward also thanked the team, and noted his first conversation on this topic two years ago and hearing about the importance of yellow buses from community, and it is clear that Administration responded to the concerns and addressed them.

5. UPCOMING CERTIFICATES OF PARTICIPATION SALE OF BONDS

Superintendent Gothard welcomed Executive Chief of Financial Services, Tom Sager, and Michael Hart from PMA to present this report. The purpose of the presentation was reviewed, including to provide background information pertaining to an upcoming bond sale for building construction purposes; review current requirements met, and requirements for future construction-related bond sales; timeline for next steps in the process, and the opportunity for questions from the Board. It was noted that a vote is not required for this topic, and that the 2023 MN Legislative session provided new R&C regulations related to COP funding for all school districts. This presentation tonight will satisfy all the new R&C requirements.

Background information was also provided, including:

- In June 2023, as part of the budget approval process, Fund 06 reflected plans to continue the SPPS Builds initiative, and the financing of related construction projects.
- Then, in August 2023, the Board approved an Authorizing Resolution to issue up to \$113.7 million in Certificates of Participation to continue financing the SPPS Builds initiative.

Requirements met to date include:

- SPPS has submitted all the required project information to MDE, and meets the standards for the Review and Comment process.
- A Review and Comment Notice was publicly posted in December 2023.

Information on Review and Comment for Future Projects included:

- For projects that exceed \$2.0 million at one site, SPPS will be required to submit a R&C, then publish, and hold a public board discussion.
- Those future processes will begin with the Board authorizing the submittal of the R&C report to MDE for review and approval.

Next steps for \$113.7M COP Sale are:

- January 31: All financial and legal documents prepared for bond sale. Rating call.
- February 14: Sale date. Award of Sale
- February 20: Board resolution ratifying the bond sale transaction.
- March 7: Certificate Closing. Funds received.

This new COP funding will be dedicated to the following construction projects:

- Hidden River Middle School
- Highland Park Middle School
- Barack and Michelle Obama Elementary
- Bruce Vento Elementary

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Carrillo requested information in terms of the results of the sale on February 20, and when we will know the interest, or will that be determined prior to the sale date? Response: In August

2023, the Board authorized the parameters resolution to proceed forward as long as the requirements are met of MDE and the parameters of that sale. The Board provided that authority to Administration to proceed with the process and execute the sale without the maximum exceeded. The interest rates are fixed and locked on February 14th, and the Board will be asked to ratify the sale, and further information will be shared at that time, as well as the results of the sale.

9. SPPS PROPOSED 2024 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Superintendent Gothard then welcomed Jim Grathwol, Lobbyist, to present the proposed legislative agenda. These recommendations for an SPPS 2024 Legislative Agenda include policy corrections, new policy provisions and minor education finance formula adjustments with a small fiscal footprint.

A document was also provided to the Board, and included in the BoardBook that reviewed:

- Legislative agenda items from the 2023 Agenda which were not enacted.
- “Clean” up provisions relating to 2023 Legislative enactments.
- New Policy Provisions annotated to indicate alignment with AMSD
- New Finance Provisions

He also reviewed in depth each of these areas.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Allen noted the need for a 400-year budget to offset equity problems, similar to what was enacted in Wisconsin. We need to be talking about the future, and create a significant amount of revenue for our Black and Brown children in order to close the gap.
- There was also further discussion on the clarifying language regarding the use of physical restraints, and the room for more discussion. Director Allen requested updates on this topic as legislative discussion unfold.
- Director Allen also requested further information on the hold harmless discussions, which is a high priority. The history of benefits was shared, dating back to 1996 and the new metrics,
- Director Henderson noted questions on what is the “next thing” and the vision to build beyond the gaps by filling those holes, and how we are planning in the present for the future. She also noted questions about the role of the district in working with partners and other positions of power, including legislatures. Mr. Grathwol noted that it is about looking at providing for future generations, and more, and to continue to work on that plan each year and refine it.
- Director Henderson also noted the frustration in continuing to sit in these spaces, and at what point is the expectation that revenue streams will be sustainable and efficient. It has been about filling the gaps since 20023, and there were historic investments last year, but they shouldn’t have been historic because they should be happening year after year, and wondering about what comes next.
- There was also further discussion on the MDH and Medicaid item within the document.
- Director Carrillo noted questions around the formulas and the modeling of the metrics by MDE.
- He also noted that he feels past formulas have left out certain metrics or aspects that affect our community members who are economically disadvantages, including housing and fuel prices.
- Director Franco noted questions around unemployment insurance, and other unfunded mandates from the last session. He also noted it will be helpful, as we approach the budget conversations, about the unfunded mandates, and what to expect in moving forward.
- Director Ward noted that every board member has been elected by the community and has the trust and respect of the community, and is entrusted with the best interest of our students, and

many have relationships with other elected officials, and what board members can do to help advocate. He also requested information on approaching situations on school-related items and their importance and impact, if not included on the legislative agenda. Mr. Grathwol noted the Board can bring that to Administration and Dr. Gothard and add a supplement to the legislative agenda, and to check and connect with each other.

- Director Allen requested the Superintendent to keep the Board informed about conversations, as conversations move quickly in the legislature, and there may be leverage, and ability to powermap for that leverage.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Director Ward moved to adjourn the meeting. Director Allen and Director Franco seconded the motion. It passed by acclaim.

The meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

10. WORK SESSION

The Board then conducted a work session regarding the planning of an upcoming Board Retreat.

For clarity and to facilitate research, these minutes reflect the order of the original Agenda and not necessarily the time during the meeting the items were discussed.

Prepared and submitted by:

Sarah Dahlke, Assistant Clerk, St. Paul Public Schools Board of Education