

MINUTES OF A **REGULAR MEETING** OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 205, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS, HELD ON **WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2010** IN THE AUDITORIUM AT THORNBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL, SOUTH HOLLAND, ILLINOIS, BEGINNING AT 6:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. On roll call, Members Bradley, King, Lawrence and Penman answered. Members Banks, Burton and Williams were absent. Dr. J. Kamala Buckner, Superintendent; Mr. Tim Truesdale, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and External Funding; Mr. Steven Gress, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations; Mr. Jerry Doss, Director of Public Relations; Mrs. Maria Brunson, Director of Information Technology; Mr. Brad Beilfuss and Mrs. Dorith Johnson, Co-Principals of Thornridge High School; Mr. Steve Valant and Mr. Al Pearson, Assistant Principals of Thornridge High School; Mr. Tony Ratliff, Principal of Thornton High School; Mrs. Wanda Russell, Assistant Principal of Thornton High School; Mrs. Darcelle Williams, Principal of Thornwood High School; and Mr. John Relias, District 205 Legal Counsel, were also present.

ROLL
CALL

At 6:01 p.m., Mrs. Lawrence moved, Dr. Penman seconded, to go into **Executive Session** to discuss student discipline issues. On roll call, Members Bradley, King, Lawrence and Penman voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

EXECUTIVE
SESSION

At 7:00 p.m., Mr. Banks moved, Dr. Penman seconded to **Return to Regular Session**. On roll call, Members Banks, Bradley, King, Lawrence, Penman and Williams voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

RETURNED TO
REGULAR SESSION

Mr. Banks moved, Mr. Burton seconded, to **Approve the Consent Agenda**, which includes the following:

CONSENT AGENDA

- The minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 13, 2010. The minutes of the Executive Session of this meeting shall be confidential and closed to the public until such time that the Board of Education determines that it is no longer necessary to protect the public interest or privacy of an individual by keeping them confidential.
- The District 205 bills as presented for payment.
- The ECHO bills as presented by payment.
- Resignations: See Director of Human Resources
- Release: See Director of Human Resources
- Leave of Absence: See Director of Human Resources
- Employment: See Director of Human Resources
- On roll call, Members Banks, Bradley, King, Lawrence and Penman voted aye; Williams voted nay; motion passed.

MINUTES;
OCTOBER 13, 2010

BILLS

ECHO BILLS

RESIGNATIONS

RELEASE

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Gress reported that since the last Board meeting, seven Freedom of Information Act requests were received and responded to as follows:

FOIA

- The First FOIA request for certified payroll was received on October 11; a response was sent on October 14.
- The next two requests for administrative information were received on October 19 and 21; responses were sent on October 21.
- The fourth request for Board minutes was received on October 22; a response was sent on October 28.
- The next two requests for Board minutes were received on October 26 and 28; responses were sent on November 2.
- The last request for budget information was received on November 1; a response was sent on November 2.

None.

COMMUNICATIONS

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Darren Robinson (Harvey) stated that at the Teacher Institute Day the Board President stated that the Board and administration were on task and felt it was an inaccurate statement and that the taxpayers should be asked what they want; 1) he asked what is going on with the sports conference; 2) information should not have been printed that Thornridge would be a freshman center; 3) how much of the \$18 million has been spent and what will happen in 3 years when the 18 million is gone; 4) the Board is letting the public down as far as Thornridge being a freshman center.
- Shelly Taylor (Burnham) stated that at last week's football game a student was injured and there was no roster with emergency contact information available; also that there is no support for Thornridge.
- Lynette Mayberry (Dolton) asked: 1) is information available from the town meetings and 2) has a committee been formed with the stakeholders. Dr. Buckner responded: 1) the information will be available on the website and 2) a committee is in the process of being formed.
- Toni Williams (South Holland) asked why the Board is trying to remove her husband from the Board.
- Kenneth Williams (Board Member) stated that in a private meeting last Friday, Dr. King told Mr. Williams that Mr. Williams informed the newspapers that he had a prior conviction and he was running for office. Mr. Williams stated that 22 years ago he took the rap for his son's mother for something they had both done wrong. You can run for state representative with a felony on your record. You can also run for other seats. He believes since 22 years have passed, he has proven to himself and the public that he has changed. He feels there is a vendetta against him by the Board President to step down. The public elected him and if the public wants him off, he will gladly step down.
- Ronnie Lewis (Dolton Mayor) stated that Mr. Williams' background should have been checked out earlier. He resents that the Board decided to change the direction of the school and did not consult him and the Dolton residents about the freshman center. He has spent 33 years employed in the Chicago Public Schools system. A freshman center would bring in freshman from 13 towns. More police personnel will be needed for the school. Busing the students will cost a lot of money. He is still waiting for information about the grant language after his meeting with Drs. Buckner, King and Penman. There should have been public notification and hearings. Usually, when going for a grant, you have to get Board's permission. If this occurred, somewhere along the line the community would have known about it. A kid cannot be brought into high school who reads at 4th grade level and be expected to achieve something. You should start in elementary school; high school is too late. You have to make them want to learn. These students are doomed for failure and that's why they drop out. This money would be better spent on elementary schools and fundamentals. The Board is doing Dolton a disservice. Do not destroy the good programs such as biodiesel, athletics and band. Thornridge brings recognition to the Village of Dolton. The District is giving him all the problems; he doesn't need any more problems so please reconsider. He stated he was not making a threat, but that people have a long memory.
- Michelle Westgan (South Holland) is waiting for the budget she asked for 3 weeks ago. She has concerns about the security and wants to see how much is being spent. The Board meeting starts at 6:00 p.m. Please change the webpage to say 7:00 p.m. so the public won't have to wait while the Board is in Executive Session. Dr. King stated the website will reflect this notice.

- At 6:58 p.m., Mr. Burton joined the meeting.
- Shelly Taylor (Burnham) stated she has been coming to Board meetings for 3 or 4 years, and while the Board is trying to oust Mr. Williams, she has never heard of and where did Vanessa Bradley come from? Dr. King stated that it is not the intent of the Board to vacate a Board member. The Board is sworn to uphold the law. The court, not the Board, will make any determination. A vacancy was created by a Board member struggling with medical issues and resigned. Candidates submitted resumes, were interviewed and the Board selected a candidate.
- Keith Walker (Dolton) stated that the safety of the children is a serious issue and if a freshman academy is created a conflict will be caused. He asked why the Board wants a freshman academy. Dr. Buckner responded that the biggest concern is that approximately 43% of students (636) are entering high school at reading levels below 5th grade. There are only 32 months to bring students to 11th grade level to be ready for the ACT. Freshman academy was created in 2003 in each building. It is believed by some that all the freshman need to be brought together in one building. Mr. Walker suggested reading programs. Dr. Buckner stated that reading programs have been in existence for three years and that District 205 has no influence on the feeder schools' Boards or Superintendents.
- Tracy Brown (Dolton) stated her daughter was struggling with reading and was provided services while at Vandenberg School. She is currently at Thornridge doing well. Children need motivation. The District should reach out more to the feeder schools. When she asked who the Board works for, Dr. King stated the Board is elected by the people and works for the community and the children. When asked if relative to the grant, the Board is working for or against the community he stated the Board would never work against them. She also asked if the District is spending any of the money. Dr. King responded yes. She wants Thornridge to stay a 4-year high school. She asked why the case was moved from civil to federal. Mr. Relias, legal counsel, stated the lawsuit filed in state court. Because it involves federal law, it was removed to federal court. Federal court interprets federal law.
- Felita Crayton (Dolton) stated that three weeks ago, the Board promised that everything would be put on hold. Dr. King stated the Board did not vote on the issue. Mr. Banks stated that he made the suggestion that the Board back up and begin to get parents involved; that the process be slowed down until parents have involvement. Mrs. Lawrence stated that she suggested the grant be amended. Dr. Buckner stated that the amendment would be sent to the state. In response, Dr. Buckner added that the Dr. Monique Chism, ISBE, was sent the request for the amendment to the grant. Mrs. Crayton continued stating there are over 5,000 signatures that do not want the community turned upside down for \$2 million. She asked for verification that on October 19 at the parent advisory meeting, ISBE said if progress was not made during the first year, all monies would not be guaranteed. Legal counsel responded that he was not at that meeting. In response, Dr. Buckner stated that per the State of Illinois, the one-year period began July 1, 2010. The District was not notified until August about the grant. Mrs. Crayton stated there a lot of inconsistencies and the public waiting for information on the status of the grant? Mrs. Lawrence said we are in the process. Mrs. Crayton asked why anything is being done when the process is in court. Mr. Relias said that the legal action is seeking to have the process open and has nothing to do with the issuance of the grant. That is a separate issue. The lawsuit is whether or not there is a requirement of parental participation and if it was or was not done. It is a procedural issue. A motion to dismiss the lawsuit has been filed. Dr. King stated at the last Board meeting that suggestions were taken from the community. Mrs. Lawrence worked with Dr. Buckner and the Board sent a proposal to the State to change the grant. Mrs. Crayton said the Board is not representing the community.

MR. BURTON
JOINED MEETING

PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION,
Con't.

PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION,
Con't.

- Tiffany Moore (Thornridge student) stated that she has asthma and must obtain her inhaler from the school nurse. There should be contact information available on the field. No one is asking the students how they feel. There will be more fights. Why is Thornridge being shut down? Dr. Buckner stated that Thornton and Thornwood can hold more students than Thornridge.
- Kadija Spurlin (Thornridge student) stated that at a recent game there was a fight between Thornridge and Thornton students. If Thornridge students move to Thornton and Thornwood, there will be many more fights. She asked if the Senior Project information will be transferred to Thornton and Thornwood on time. Dr. Buckner assured her their information would be transferred.
- Felicia Coper (Calumet City) asked why the Board did not notify the public immediately when the Board was notified they received the grant. If you are working for us, why are we in court? Mr. Relias stated we are in court because parents filed a lawsuit. She had concerns about test scores. If the building houses freshman only, there will be no one for them to look up to. They need upper classmen to model after.
- Cheryl Jones (Thornton parent) stated she is very displeased with the Board. The freshman academy is not going to work and asked the Board to think this through again.
- Rose Taylor (Dolton) asked if the grant money was not received, what was the plan. Dr. Buckner responded that certified reading teachers were implemented in 2008. She stated that China has the best school system. Dr. Buckner agreed, adding that students were given an opportunity to receive assistance in reading.
- Destiny Thompson (Thornridge student) stated that some teachers do not have books for their classes. Why would the largest number of freshman go to the smallest school. Dr. Buckner stated that there currently are 1300 freshmen. What will happen to speech and band conference when they move to another school? Dr. Buckner said this is being worked on.
- Jerry Jones (community member) has three students that graduated from District 205. He heard that there were elected officials in the community who did not know about the transition. He stated they should have been made aware. Dr. King responded that due to the tight guidelines, there was not enough time to communicate with all the mayors. He asked if the community was notified. Dr. Buckner responded that a freshman center was being considered; nothing could be formalized until it was known if the grant was received. As soon confirmation was received, the community was notified. He was concerned of the amount of money being spent on Thornton.
- Wakeelah Ollie (Thornridge student) asked if activities be combined? Dr. Buckner has asked for input from Southwest Conference and from the school. She also asked if scholarships that are specific to Thornridge will still be available. Dr. Buckner stated that they will still be eligible for the scholarships.
- Timothy Jones (8th grader) asked as an incoming freshman, what will be the future of Thornridge students. Dr. Buckner responded that 5 communities attend Thornridge.
- Vivienne Williams (Dolton) asked how will the District determine which school upper classmen will attend. Dr. Buckner stated boundary lines will be changed and a committee will be formed. Mrs. Williams stated that with no traditional high school in Dolton, property values will go down. New Trier's model cannot be used for District 205 because we are not equal economically. Dr. Buckner stated that on average, students are progressing 2 years. Mrs. Williams added that programs have failed the money is being used improperly. Failing students should begin school early and stay late. The community is fighting for a traditional high school and will not stop until Thornridge is returned as a 4-year institution.

Mr. Burton moved, Dr. Penman seconded to **Approve the Capital Improvement Projects** as presented by Mr. Gress. The Finance Committee recommended the installation of an electrical heat pump system for heating and cooling; along with a peak shaving generator to operate the system when it is down, at Thornton Township High School for an estimated total cost of \$15,978,653. The Finance Committee also requested the District to apply for any and all grants to help offset the cost for the project. On roll call, Members Banks, Bradley, Burton, King, Lawrence and Penman voted aye; Member Williams voted nay; motion passed.

APPROVAL OF
CAPITAL
IMPROVEMENT
PROJECTS

Mr. Burton moved, Mr. Williams seconded to **Approve the Snow Removal Contract Extension** as presented by Mr. Gress. The proposal for the renewal included a 5% increase but after discussion about the District's decreasing funding sources, Four Seasons agreed to keep the pricing the same as the 2009-2010 school year. The Finance Committee recommended accepting the renewal of the Four Seasons contract with a zero increase from the 2009-2010 contract rates. On roll call, Members Banks, Bradley, Burton, King, Lawrence, Penman and Williams voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVAL OF
SNOW REMOVAL
CONTRACT
EXTENSION

Dr. Penman moved, Mr. Burton seconded to **Approve the City of Markham TIF Extension** as presented by Mr. Gress. The Mayor of Markham requested a 12-year extension to ensure the community has an economic viable force. At the request of the Board, Mr. Gress explained that a TIF District can be created by a local municipality with approval of local taxing bodies. They may request to freeze up to 23 years of the tax rate for all the local bodies outside the municipality. Any increase in the property value during that time goes to the municipal for improvements. The District will not lose money, but additional dollars will not be gained. The intent is to increase financial strength and recoup the dollars. The generation of more tax dollars is just delayed. We cannot go back, but the goal is to elevate the tax rate. Williams said we have no control over the money. Mayor Lewis answered some TIF questions.

APPROVAL OF CITY
OF MARKHAM TIF
EXTENSION

Mr. Burton moved, Mrs. Lawrence seconded to **Table the City of Markham TIF Extension** and referred the matter back to the Finance Committee for further review. On roll call, Members Banks, Bradley, Burton, King, Lawrence, Penman and Williams voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

Mr. Banks moved, Mrs. Lawrence seconded to **Approve the Driver's Education Modification** of the Illinois School Code as presented by Mr. Gress. The modification will allow the District to consider a three phase program by reducing the number of behind the wheel hours. The option would be available for the 2011-2012 school year; the waiver must be submitted by January 7, 2011. On roll call, Members Banks, Bradley, Burton, King, Lawrence, Penman and Williams voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVAL OF
DRIVER'S
EDUCATION
MODIFICATION

Mr. Gress presented the **2010 Tentative Tax Levy** in the amount of \$60,076,440, and explained the legal requirements under the Truth in Taxation Act. The tentative tax levy will be on display for 20 days prior to adoption as required by law. The tentative levy is 4.99% higher than the total 2009 extension. The levy will be presented for approval at the December 8, 2009 Board meeting.

PRESENTATION OF
2010 TENTATIVE
TAX LEVY

Mrs. Lawrence moved, Mr. Banks seconded to **Approve the Out-of-State Field Trip** as presented by Thornwood Principal, Mrs. Darcelle Williams, for 25 Thornwood cheerleaders to travel to Orlando, Florida to participate in the National Contest of Champions from February 24-28, 2011. On roll call, Members Banks, Bradley, Burton, King, Lawrence, Penman and Williams voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVAL OF
OUT-OF-STATE
FIELD TRIP

Dr. Penman moved, Mr. Burton seconded to Direct the School District's Attorneys to take all necessary actions to effectuate the removal and disqualification of Mr. Kenneth Williams as a Board of Education member of Thornton Township High School Dist. 205, Cook County, Illinois. Mr. Williams stated that he enjoys serving the children and community and that when the Board acts on this motion, it is acting on their own behalf and not the community. He will remain on the Board for his term and will run again. He further stated if the community wanted him to step down, he would do so. Mrs. Lawrence asked for clarification of the motion and in response Dr. King stated the motion would allow the judicial determination whether the seat should be vacated. On roll call, Members Burton, King, and Penman voted aye; Members Banks, Bradley, Lawrence and Williams voted nay. Motion failed.

CONSIDERATION
OF LEGAL ACTION

None.

MISC/SUPERINTENDENT
REPORT

Mrs. Lawrence moved, Mr. Banks seconded to approve the following disciplinary actions:

STUDENT
DISCIPLINE

Student Case #2H-1011-6(S): **Uphold the Suspension.**

Student Case #2F-1011-7: **Hold the Expulsion in Abeyance** through June 2011 and recommended placement in RISE.

Student Case #2B-1011-8: **Hold the Expulsion in Abeyance** through June 2011 and recommended placement in RISE.

On roll call, Members Banks, Bradley, Burton, King, Lawrence and Penman voted aye; Member Williams passed; nay, none; motion passed.

At 8:45 p.m., Mrs. Lawrence moved, Mr. Banks seconded, to **Adjourn the Meeting**. On roll call, Members Banks, Bradley, Burton, King, Lawrence, Penman and Williams voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT

President

Secretary