

**Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting of
Hawthorn Community Consolidated District #73, Lake County, Illinois
841 W. End Ct, Vernon Hills IL 60061
7:00 p.m. on the 17th day of October 2024**

CALL TO ORDER

President Robin Cleek called the Board of Education meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

The Board Secretary called attendance and the following members attended: Joel Finfer, Michael Engle, George Fievet, Robin Cleek, Karl Borchers, and Wes Polen. Also in attendance were Asst. Supt. of Finance & Business Operations Ms. Jennifer Akin; Asst. Supt. of Student Services Ms. Alicia Corrigan; Asst. Supt. of Teaching & Learning Dr. Allison Stein; Asst. Supt. of Innovative Learning Dr. Karen Maturo; Asst. Supt. for Human Resources Mr. Adam Palmer; and Superintendent Dr. Pete Hannigan. Board member Julie Clifford entered the meeting at 7:38pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment at this time.

RECOGNITION

Vice President Wes Polen and Board member Karl Borchers spoke on behalf of the recognition committee to formally acknowledge exceptional Hawthorn staff members. Allison Strakusek was recognized for her exceptional dedication and commitment to fostering a supportive, engaging, and inclusive learning environment. Her creativity, problem-solving, and teamwork have enriched the lives of students and colleagues at HSYL. She was awarded with a certificate of recognition.

The Hawthorn staff at Lincoln Early Learning Center were also recognized for achieving the prestigious Gold Circle of Quality award from the Illinois State Board of Education. Their commitment to excellence in early childhood education, dedication to fostering a high-quality learning environment, and continuous support for students and families has set a remarkable standard. The team was awarded with a certificate of recognition.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements at this time.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Robin Cleek reminded the board to RSVP to the Veteran's Day Breakfast at Middle South.

ED-RED REPORT

Mr. Joel Finfer reported that ED-RED will host its annual luncheon on Friday, October 18, 2024.

SEDOL REPORT

Mr. Michael Engle reported that the last governing board meeting was on August 7, 2024, and the executive board met on September 19, 2024. The FY25 budget review showed discrepancies that require revisions, with a final draft expected at the October meeting. Dr. Hackett and Dr. Thomas discussed the SEDOL CIP, focusing on aligning it with ELS review, setting goals, tracking indicators, and engaging stakeholders. The Assistant Superintendent of Business role remains open, and an additional interim CSBO will be sought. The SEDOL Foundation received two \$10,000 grants for the vocational department and backpack program. The next executive board meeting is scheduled for October 24, 2024 and the next governing board is scheduled for December 4, 2024.

SITE & FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. George Fievet reported that the Site & Facilities Committee held its last meeting on October 8, 2024. There were a number of topics that were discussed beginning with the Skyfold wall issue at Elementary North. A faulty installation tool led to cable slippage, causing the wall failure during its first operation. The installer will replace the wall at no cost, with installation planned in 12 weeks, and independent testing and inspections will ensure future safety. Regarding transportation, the district will pilot the My Ride K-12 App with iPads on buses, starting with Aspen next month. This app will enhance tracking for parents and improve routing for substitute drivers. The pilot will be free, with minimal ongoing costs. Mr. Fievet also shared that GSF adjusted its custodial contract proposal to meet district terms, which is up for approval on the agenda. Finally, the summer projects at Middle School North were discussed; a grant application and timeline for these projects are on the agenda, with project drawings expected at the November board meeting to allow timely bidding.

WELLNESS COMMITTEE REPORT

No report at this time.

PRESENTATIONS

Jennifer Akin, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Business Operations, presented the fiscal year 2024 audit presentation accompanied by Kevin Smith from EEC summarizing key points. The audit fieldwork went very smoothly, and the district received a clean, unmodified opinion on the cash basis of accounting. There were no new accounting standards that needed to be implemented this year. The district's fund balance decreased by about \$5 million, which was planned due to the capital projects underway. The general fund is at about 9.5 months of current year expenses, which is consistent with the district's historical range of 9-10 months. The debt service fund is at about 7 months, and the transportation fund is a little over 2 months, which is low but has been flat the last couple years. On the government-wide financial statements, there was a \$5.9 million increase, mainly due to the capital asset purchases. Overall, the auditor reported that the district's finances are in a strong, fiscally sound position.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Superintendent Dr. Hannigan discussed the LCSMART Intergovernmental Agreement. The Lake County Regional Office of Education (ROE) initiated efforts to enhance school safety in 2022 by launching the Lake County School Safety Conference and establishing quarterly meetings for school districts. Building on similar work by the Dupage ROE, Lake County ROE is developing a mutual aid agreement (IGA) to allow public agencies to provide additional resources, personnel, and equipment in emergencies. The IGA aims to address incidents like family reunification, mass casualties, grief response, and utility failures, with contributing districts providing annual financial support of \$250 for administrative needs, equipment, training, and supplies.

Jennifer Akin, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Business Operations discussed the 2024 Tentative Tax Levy which is recommended to be \$55,440,000, representing a 4.35% increase over the prior year's extension. The business office used estimated equalized assessed values (EAV) for existing and new property to calculate the levy, as the final EAV numbers won't be known until spring 2025. The district safeguards the levy by estimating new property EAV higher than the county's estimate to ensure it captures all available tax revenue. The levy increase is limited to the prior year's December CPI of 3.4% per the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL). A public hearing will precede board approval at the November 14 board meeting.

Ms. Jennifer Akin also discussed the custodial contract renewal. The district initiated an RFP in early 2019 for custodial services, leading to a three-year contract with GSF from July 2019 through June 2022, with four possible renewals. Amendments in fall 2020 covered COVID-related services and shifted the contract to a calendar year, with the current renewal ending in December 2024. To align with the fiscal year, the business office negotiated an 18-month renewal with a 3.2% increase. This renewal is the final one before the district issues a new RFP.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Hannigan reported that the recently released 2025 Niche ratings showed that most district schools ranked in the top 10% statewide, highlighting staff dedication and hard work. Hawthorn's diversity continues to distinguish the district, moving up to #2 in diversity in Lake County, with Middle North ranked as the #1 most diverse middle school and Middle South at #3.

He ended his report by reminding the board that the 2024 State of the District assessment report will be presented at the November 14 Board meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 7.1 Board Meeting Minutes from September 19, 2024
- 7.2 Closed Session Minutes from September 19, 2024
- 7.3 Mastercard Report from June 21, 2024
- 7.4 Amazon Expense Report from August 15, 2024
- 7.5 Expenditure Report from August 15, 2024
- 7.6 Treasurer's Report from June 2024
- 7.7 Personnel Report

8 New Hires:

1 Resignations:

2 Leave of Absence:

1 Change of Status:

8 New Hires: Grace Han, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, Aspen; Priyambada Kumar, Instructional Assistant, EN; Barry Litwin, Crossing Guard, DO; Bharathi Mutyala, Instructional Assistant, Aspen; Priyadharshini Sendil Kumar, Instructional Assistant, EN; Scott Swisher, Instructional Assistant, MN; Laura Tagliaferro, Instructional Assistant, EN; Saravanadevi Thambidurai, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, DL.

1 Resignations: Natalia Molski, Principal Secretary, EN, 10/15/2024.

2 Leaves of Absence: Andrea Malec, Social Studies Teacher, MS, 10/10/2024; Wayne Keen Jr, A/V Specialist, DO, 10/4/2024.

1 Change of Status: Carolyn Husnick, Principal Secretary, EN, 10/07/2024.

Joel Finfer requested to remove section 7.1 **Board Meeting Minutes from September 19, 2024** and 7.2 **Closed Session Minutes from September 19, 2024** from the consent agenda.

RECOMMENDED MOTION: Wes Polen moved that the Board of Education approve 7.1 **Board Meeting Minutes from September 19, 2024** and 7.2 **Closed Session Minutes from September 19, 2024** as presented; seconded by Michael Engle.

Roll Call Vote: Robin Cleek, Joel Finfer, Wes Polen, George Fievet, Julie Clifford, Michael Engle, and Karl Borchers.

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 1 abstain

RECOMMENDED MOTION: Wes Polen moved that the Board of Education approve the remaining **Consent Agenda** items as presented; seconded by Karl Borchers.

Roll Call Vote: Robin Cleek, Joel Finfer, Wes Polen, George Fievet, Julie Clifford, Michael Engle, and Karl Borchers.

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

Dr. Peter Hannigan reviewed Policy PRESS Issue 115. The Policy Sub-Committee convened on September 11 to review policy updates incorporated in PRESS Issue 115. The committee reviewed a total of 21 policies and exhibits. All policies included in PRESS Issue 115 are five-year reviews with no changes to the actual policies, only updates to references and footnotes. Additionally, two board policies were added to the PRESS 115 bundle including Policy 7:80, *Release Time for Religious Instruction/Observance*, and the new Policy on *Audio Recordings of Student-Related Meetings*, which were both highlighted at our last board meeting.

Ms. Jennifer Akin reviewed the last action item for board Approval to Apply for the FY25 Maintenance Project. Each year the district has an opportunity to apply for the school Maintenance Project grant. The business office is seeking board approval for the FY25 SMP grant in the amount of \$50,000. That's the maximum that an applicant can apply for to be used towards the replacement of flooring at Middle north during the summer of 2025. As part of our routine maintenance, the grant requires that the district pays an amount equal to or more than the grant. And based on rough estimates, the facility team is anticipating the floor replacement will cost \$750,000.

ACTION ITEMS

Policy PRESS Issue 115

MOTION: Wes moved that the Board of Education approve the Policy PRESS Issue 115; Julie Clifford seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Robin Cleek, Karl Borchers, Wes Polen, Julie Clifford, Joel Finfer, George Fievet and Michael Engle.

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

Approval to Apply for the FY25 Maintenance Project Grant

MOTION: George moved that the Board of Education approve to apply for the FY25 Maintenance Project Grant; Michael Engle seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Robin Cleek, Karl Borchers, Wes Polen, Julie Clifford, George Fievet, Joel Finfer and Michael Engle.

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Enrollment - Uploaded
2. FOIA Log, Dr. Hannigan reported that the District has received four FOIA requests since the last board meeting and has been responded to as identified in Section 9.2 of the Board agenda.
3. Media Clips

TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

No future topics at this time.

ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION

Pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11) President Cleek *read the motion(s) to adjourn to CLOSED SESSION for the purposes of:*

The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or specific volunteers of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee, a specific individual who serves as an independent contractor in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or a volunteer of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity. However, a meeting to consider an increase in compensation to a specific employee of a public body that is subject to the Local Government Wage Increase Transparency Act may not be closed and shall be open to the public and posted and held in accordance with this Act. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1).

Collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2).

With no further business to discuss, Karl Borchers made a motion to adjourn to Closed Session, seconded by George Fievet. The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m. **All in favor? Yes.**

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Flores

Robin Cleek, President

George Fievet, Secretary

Date Minutes Approved: _____