

## MINUTES OF FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Homewood-Flossmoor High School, 999 Kedzie Ave., Flossmoor

February 6, 2025

In attendance for all or part of the meeting were Ms. Jackson, Mr. Pauling, Mr. Anderson, Dr. Wakeley, Dr. Cook, Mr. Patterson, Mr. Schmidt, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Perozzi. Ms. Jackson attended via telephone audio conference until her arrival at 8:30 a.m. Mr. Edward Wright and Mr. Ryan Kelley, DLA Architects, were present.

Ms. Marilyn Thomas, HF Chronicle, was in attendance. Ms. Barbara Karstrom, community member, was also in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 7:36 a.m.

Approval of Minutes. The November 14, 2024, Finance Committee minutes stand approved as presented.

Comments. No comments were received.

### Capital Projects

- Science Addition/Culinary Renovation Update - DLA architects Mr. Edward Wright and Mr. Ryan Kelley presented a Science Addition/Culinary Renovation Update. Mr. Kelley reported the culinary renovation has been completed with only a few punch list items remaining. Consistent with information provided at the November Finance Committee meeting, the substantial completion of the Science addition has been trending to the end of February as a result of some unforeseen conditions that include utilities and material delays. Dr. Wakeley noted a ribbon cutting will most likely be held in April after the paving, scheduled for the first week in April, has been completed. Mr. Wright pointed out that the building will be accessible for use prior to the paving. Mr. Wright also noted as discussed at the November Finance Committee meeting, they are currently at ½ of 1% of change orders. He added that being at 5% of change orders would not be unusual. Due to change orders, in terms of dollars they are \$136,000 over the \$26 million project budget. However, they are anticipating allowances coming back to the district from various projects. The G Building roof replacement has been completed with \$20,000 coming back to the district through budgeted allowances. The district will also receive \$25,000 back after the paving project has been completed in April. It was noted that any government tariffs that may be implemented will not affect material costs. Mr. Pauling commented that the community members who toured the Culinary area shared that they were very impressed.

- Potential Future Capital Projects – Flossmoor Road Fencing - Dr. Wakeley spoke on a concern that a community member shared at the December Board of Education meeting. The community member referenced an incident that occurred in 1994 at Lincoln-Way High School when a car drove through a chain link fence on campus onto the soccer field striking three students with one student unfortunately passing away. In an effort to prevent an incident like that happening at H-F, the community member requested that the board consider as part of any other future construction projects, a way of adding barriers along the boundaries of the campuses to lessen the risk of injuries to students by vehicles that may go off the road onto HF's campus. Dr. Wakeley stated that he and Mr. Pauling had a prior conversation regarding a similar concern. Dr. Wakeley noted that the corners of Kedzie Avenue and Flossmoor Road as well as Governors Highway and Flossmoor Road, could pose a possible safety risk to students if a car should ever veer off the road onto campus at those locations. Dr. Wakeley presented a preliminary summary of the anticipated cost of construction for the addition of a perimeter ornamental fencing with decorative stone piers along Flossmoor Road and wrapping Kedzie Avenue and Governors Highway. He added that the fencing being proposed would mirror the other fencing around the campus. He added that the fencing will not go the whole length of the campus but it would protect the corners of the campus at the intersections that he mentioned and it would address the safety concern. Mr. Pauling requested that they look at alternatives, as evaluated by an expert, to create optimal safety to ensure that cars are completely stopped by the fence in the event they go off the road. Ms. Jackson suggested that this safety concern be tied into the Kedzie Corridor Project. Dr. Cook will continue to represent the district at future Kedzie Corridor Project planning meetings to ensure there is continuity and consideration given to all factors that may affect HF. The Kedzie Corridor Project is currently in Phase 1 of a 3 Phase project. Mr. Pauling suggested seeking possible funding opportunities to fund the safety fencing. Mr. Anderson emphasized that this needs to be 100% about safety and they need to be assured 100% that it will keep our kids safe. He added that they will need to be convinced that this will deter a traffic accident that could bring harm to HF students. Mr. Wright responded that there is a combination of measures that can be reviewed. This item will come back to the committee for further discussion in the future.
- Potential Future Capital Projects – Dr. Cook provided a list of potential future capital projects for the committee's review. Dr. Wakeley stated these are projects that they have been talking about under his leadership and strongly suggested that future recommendations should come from Dr. Norrell. He added she will be the one who will be, and should be, making these recommendations. He spoke on the recording studio that was brought to his attention by Ms. Wallace, Juice WRLD's mother. Possible options are being looked at to renovate space within either the existing library and TV Radio Studio area to create a student-centered Recording Studio/Sound Booth and

adjacent Podcast booths for teacher instruction and student check-out. Ms. Wallace is still interested in the possible funding of this project and DLA Architects have provided some schematics with costs that have been given to Ms. Wallace. Dr. Wakeley noted they are just in conversations but will go back and engage in future conversations with Ms. Wallace based on the board's and Dr. Norrell's approval to move forward. Reorganizing the existing bus pick-up and drop-off sequence at the South Main entry Door is still being worked on and the Traffic Study upon completion will be brought to the committee in April. Ms. Jackson requested that the cost of the traffic study be provided to the committee for their review in advance of the April meeting. Mr. Kelley indicated that information will be available next week and will be provided to the committee once it is received. Mr. Pauling recommended a Committee-of-the-Whole be scheduled in April. Dr. Wakeley noted that the rest of the projects listed regarding potential future capital projects are primarily wishes. He noted they do need to do something in the CTE area particularly with welding and woods as this area is not meeting the needs in CTE. Mr. Pauling suggested surveying the community to see what people are most interested in. Mr. Anderson asked Dr. Cook to stay aware of the district's bonding for the large projects as they will need to be financed and to work with Mr. Wright and Mr. Kelley on the long-range timeline. Mr. Anderson commented that they are not looking to accomplish these projects in the next 24 months but it does make sense to long-range plan over the next 5 years. Ms. Jackson requested that rationale on how these projects will make a difference and "move the needle" also be provided moving forward. Dr. Wakeley also pointed out that the Special Education is also on the radar for renovation as more space in that area is desperately needed.

### Contract Renewals

- Copier Renewal Agreement – Mr. Richardson introduced a proposal that outlines the need for replacing the district's aging copier fleet with new, modern models. The current fleet, with 15 units being 8-11 years old, is facing significant challenges. These challenges include dwindling parts availability, discontinued driver support (posing cybersecurity risks and compatibility issues with newer computers), and frequent breakdowns, resulting in increasing maintenance costs and operational disruptions. The proposal outlines the benefits of replacing these copiers with new leased models, emphasizing the long-term cost savings, increased efficiency, and enhanced security that this upgrade will provide. He pointed out that they have deferred a replacement in the past, but this is no longer sustainable. He is proposing replacing these 15 copiers with new leased models, 12 of which will be color-capable. While our current monthly copier costs

are \$14,381.46, the new lease will be \$17,580.80, a difference of \$3,199.34 monthly. However, he pointed out that this seemingly increased cost is offset by significant savings in other areas. Mr. Richardson also spoke on the convenience factors that includes: centralized color printing for our staff and teachers; creating more equitable access to color printing; the ability to release print jobs at any copier; and the faster printing and copying speeds the newer models will provide. Mr. Richardson noted that they will be able to gain better control by having the ability to monitor, track and address high volume printing. Mr. Richardson added that conversations with staff will continue during the transitioning of the new printers. This item will be on the February 18, 2025 board agenda for approval.

- Cleaning Service – Dr. Cook stated that the district’s cleaning service contract with RJB expired two years ago. Since that time the district has been in a one year optional service contract with RJB. Dr. Cook recommended that the district go out to bid because in that expired contract there is no mention of the fine arts or science additions. He added the new bid will include these areas and anticipates a price increase as a result. Mr. Patterson stated that they are satisfied with the quality of service RJB provides. The committee agreed with Dr. Cook’s recommendation to move forward with the bidding process for cleaning service.
- Traffic Control Company - Dr. Cook brought to the committee’s attention that the district currently uses 5 Star Valet services for traffic control during the morning. He noted that originally this was intended to be temporary but they have been providing traffic control services for two to three years at a cost of \$76,000 last year. Because the cost is over the \$35,000 threshold, according to law, the district will have to go out to bid. After a fulsome discussion the committee agreed that the district’s own security staff would provide traffic control moving forward on a trial basis and if necessary then going out to bid. Ms. Jackson expressed that the district’s own security staff should always be utilized in any safety activity.

#### FY2025 Property Tax Relief Grant (PTRG)

Dr. Cook announced that the district qualified for the FY 25 PTRG. In accordance with the grant, the district is required to abate for two years. A resolution will be presented at the February 18, 2025 board meeting for adoption. He stated that if there is a decision by the board to approve the Optional Abatement it is combined with last year’s PTRG totaling \$1.9 million combined with the \$1.9 million mandatory to abate from last year’ PTRG totaling \$3.8 million back to our taxing body. The cost to the district is \$77,000. To date \$19 million has been given to the taxing body since 2018. The total cost to the district since 2018 is a little over \$500,000. Ms. Jackson strongly suggested providing this information reported by Dr. Cook to the community. Dr. Wakeley responded this

information will be a focus in a large mailing that will be sent out soon to the community. Mr. Pauling requested talking points in some detail for the full board on this so they can speak to it factually when asked by the community. This item will be on the February 18, 2025 board agenda for approval.

### Refund Levy

Dr. Cook provided information regarding the refund levy that has been in effect since 2021. In 2021, the law went into effect that returns missed money owed to the district from property tax appeals. In 2021 and 2022 the optional abatements could have been refunded to the district, however, in those years the board made a decision not to take that refund and it was extended to the tax payers. He pointed out the district did take the refund of \$547,651 in 2023 due to building projects. Dr. Cook stated that the optional abatement for 2024 is \$616,404 and if the decision of the board is to return this amount to the taxing body, a resolution must be passed by the board so that he can file it in March with the Cook County Clerk's Office. Mr. Anderson requested that before the committee makes a recommendation to move this to the board for approval at the February 18, 2025 board meeting seeing who the appealers are and who is receiving the money. He expressed that he is uncertain if he would support approving the resolution if the appealers receiving the funds are large corporations like Walmart and Target. He added that the board has no idea who is getting the refunds and does not feel the recipients are the small businesses or the average tax payers. Mr. Anderson added that with the optional abatement that is available to take again this year gives an overall total of \$31,342,580 back to taxpayers since 2018. Dr. Cook stated that regarding Mr. Anderson's request for information, he has reached out to the Township Treasure, Cook County Treasurer's Office, and attorney John Izzo. No information is currently available to share but he will continue to work on it and provide that information to the board when available. This item will be on the February 18, 2025 or March 18, 2025 board agenda for approval.

### Residency Update

Mr. Schmidt shared a residency summary. He noted that a tool is currently being built to monitor a broad range of data from year to year. They are currently tracking total enrollment for each year including new families to the district and transfers. Sub groups have also been developed (i.e., guardianship, McKinney Vento, shared residence) for tracking. He emphasized that they do not start from a point of denial. Their residency process is to guide families through it and all families are treated with dignity and respect. Mr. Schmidt noted that they want to find a way for a family to get in if it is legitimate. He added that they have gone to a more proactive approach which is easier for them to not enroll than to enroll and remove. There are approximately 60/40 or 70/30 who never make it through the enrollment process. He shared that last week there were five families removed and as of today six. Mr. Schmidt meets with residency officers once a week and new cases continue to be added. There are currently 39 McKinney

Vento families with a total of 44 students enrolled. Last year there were 47 McKinney Vento families with a total of 55 students enrolled. If they can identify that families are not McKinney Vento, those families do not move forward. Mr. Schmidt also stated that they network with other schools to gather information and also to share what HF is seeing. In addition, Mr. Schmidt is working with the Business Office investigating the benefit of using resources that are available through the collection agencies. Mr. Anderson thanked Mr. Schmidt for his update this morning.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 9:09 a.m.