

**Minutes of the Site and Facilities Committee Meeting of  
Hawthorn Community Consolidated District #73, Lake County, Illinois  
841 West End Ct, Vernon Hills, IL 60061  
12:00pm on the 10th day of March 2026**

Board Members Present: Jennifer Akin Asst. Supt. of Finance and Business Operations, Dr. Pete Hannigan, Superintendent, Stephanie Peters, George Fievet and Robin Cleek, Board Members

Absent: None

Others Present, Jennifer Ezop, Executive Assistant, Kevin Kolcz, Executive Director of Technology, Mike Labbe, Director of Facilities, Cindy Hooten, Business Coordinator, Jenna Stern, Principal, Rich Nowicki, Regional Vice President, First Student, and Dean Suhri, Chief Operating Officer, First Student

1.1 Meeting called to order at 12:00 pm

1.2 Roll Call: Robin Cleek, George Fievet and Stephanie Peters in attendance

1.3 Public Comment: None

**Discussion Items**

**2.1 Lakeside transition**

First Student representatives, Rich Nowicki, Regional Vice President and Dean Suhri, Chief Operating Officer explained that First Student continues to work closely with the Lakeside team as part of the transition, providing training and introducing staff to their operational practices and safety standards. This new partnership will give the district access to enhanced safety protocols, innovative technology, and expanded operational resources. One of the first visible changes families will notice is that drivers and monitors will begin wearing First Student–branded bright yellow safety vests as part of their uniform. These high-visibility vests will make it easier for families and students to identify transportation staff and will further enhance safety during student loading and unloading, particularly in low-light or high-traffic conditions. There will be no changes to the existing contract and we can expect to see no changes for the remainder of the school year. The district will still continue to utilize the Libertyville operations location.

**2.2 County Facility Sales 1% Tax Resolution**

Mrs. Akin reviewed the slides that will be presented to the board on March 18th. The presentation outlined the proposed County School Facility Tax (CSFT), a 1% sales tax subject to voter approval that would be used exclusively for school facility needs. It would apply to most retail purchases while exempting essentials such as groceries, medications, and vehicles, with costs shared by both residents and non-residents. Based on current estimates, the tax could generate approximately \$3.6 million annually for District 73 to support maintenance, safety, and long-term infrastructure improvements. School districts must first adopt resolutions requesting the CSFT be placed on the ballot, with approval required from districts representing at least 51% of countywide enrollment. These resolutions are then submitted to the Lake County Regional Office of Education, after which the County Board places the measure on the ballot in the fall of 2026.

## **2.3 Contract Renewals**

Mrs. Akin reviewed the annual contracts to be presented at the March 18 Board meeting, including waste disposal (10%), food service (6%), and landscaping (0%) increases.

## **2.4 Custodial Bid Overview**

Mrs. Akin shared the results of the recent custodial bid opening with a presentation. The presentation reviewed custodial staffing needs and bid proposals, highlighting an increase from 26.4 to 30.5 FTE due to facility changes, retirements, and expanded support needs. A total of eight bids were received and reviewed, with two vendors meeting the criteria for final consideration. Among them, GSF offered the lowest annual cost at approximately \$1.35M compared to ABM at \$1.39M and was recommended based on overall value, strong performance history, and continuity of service within the district. The proposed contract aligns staffing levels with current operational needs and maintains reliable custodial support across facilities.

## **2.5 Transportation Update**

Refer to item 2.1 Lakeside transition

## **2.6 Food Service Update**

The committee discussed ongoing operational challenges related to recent staffing changes by Quest, which have impacted meal preparation capacity and service timing across buildings. Feedback from 13 parents at the February Parent Food Advisory Committee meeting at Middle North reflected similar concerns, including insufficient meal quantities and limited alternative protein options.

## **2.7 Grant Update**

CDP has opened and assistant superintendents are working on the grant application plan. This will be brought to the board in April.

## **2.8 Technology Update**

Kevin Kolcz announced a new technology hire, which will be included in the March 18 personnel report. The department is currently evaluating its staffing structure, with anticipated changes in the near future, while also preparing for upcoming summer projects. In collaboration with Impact, device updates are planned and a pilot program will begin soon. Mr. Kolcz is continuing to monitor tech tickets and will be working with the technicians to be more efficient for the end user. Two of the 8 buildings have been updated with the new printers. Favorable feedback has been received regarding the quality of the new devices.

## **Action Items**

### **3.1 Approval of Site and Facilities Minutes February 10, 2026**

Motion by George Fievet and seconded by Stephanie Peters motion to approve 2 ayes, 0 nays.

#### **4.1 Future Meeting Topics**

Quest Representatives to attend a future committee meeting

With no further items to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 1:25pm. Motion by George Fievet and seconded by Stephanie Peters.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Ezop

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Jennifer Akin, Asst Superintendent  
of Finance and Business Operations

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George Fievet, Board Member

Date Minutes Approved:\_\_\_\_\_