

**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 7th day of April 2026**

Board Members Present: Jennifer Akin Asst. Supt. of Finance and Business Operations, Stephanie Peters and George Fievet, 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 and remotely, Scott Pellock, Entel

1.1 Meeting called to order at 12:00 pm

1.2 Roll Call: George Fievet and Stephanie Peters in attendance

1.3 Public Comment: None

Discussion Items

2.1 Energy Coop-Virtual Solar Rebates

Mr. Pellock, an Entel representative, delivered a remote presentation outlining the cooperative energy program that Hawthorn 73 participates in, along with the key benefits of membership in the managed program. He also provided a current market update, noting a significant increase in energy demand driven by the expansion of data centers. This surge is contributing to rapidly rising capacity rates, which are affecting monthly charges. In addition, the committee discussed a demand response and community solar program as a potential opportunity. As a result of committee concerns, the committee will continue discussions to determine whether to proceed with presenting additional information, should the board of education express a need for it.

2.2 FY25 Tax Extension Discussion

Mrs. Akin informed the committee district's 2025 tax extension has been finalized at \$56,931,821, representing a 3.18% increase over the previous year. While this figure is slightly lower than the initial tax levy of \$57,630,000, it effectively captures significant growth in the community's Equalized Assessed Value (EAV), which rose by over \$119 million due to both property reassessments and approximately \$6.6 million in new construction. Despite a decrease in the PTELL tax cap rate to 3.2482, the resulting \$1.8 million in additional local revenue is positioned to cover increased operational costs, including newly negotiated salaries, benefits, and rising expenses for utilities and transportation. Overall, the full tax extension-including bond, interest, and SEDOL IMRF levies-totals \$64,404,807.18, successfully safeguarding the district's financial position against EAV fluctuations.

2.3 Resolution Discussion

Mrs. Akin advised the committee that a transfer resolution will appear on the April board agenda. The transfer is necessary to fund the final lease payment for student iPads. Accordingly, funds must be moved from the Education Fund to the Debt Service Fund, pending board approval.

2.4 Transportation Update

Mrs. Akin informed the committee the transition to First Student will formally be presented at the April 16th Board meeting with action needed for approval. On the technology front, the MyRide K12 app now serves 1,552 users, with the district actively sharing individual issues with Lakeside to ensure timely resolution and improved safety data. Additionally, the committee should note upcoming road resurfacing projects scheduled to begin after May 1st, specifically impacting Aspen Drive and sections of Route 45, which may require coordination for end-of-year activities and summer school schedules.

2.5 Food Service Update

Mrs. Akin reported a successful transition into the spring season, marked by the completion of POS training and a focus on operational accuracy in student counts. To ensure cost-effective service, snacks are currently being billed at cost without additional markups. Communication remains a priority, with Quest scheduled to present at the upcoming Wellness meeting and a specialized food service edition of the Digest set for release in mid April. Engagement efforts are also expanding based on direct feedback. A new elementary event for the Parent Advisory Committee is being planned for September to foster stronger community connections. Additionally, recent student council sessions at Middle North indicate high satisfaction with increased menu variety and improved food quality, providing a positive foundation for ongoing dining environment enhancements.

2.6 Grant Update

Mrs. Akin reported that for April 2026, instructional materials in native languages are being ordered, and purchasing has begun for the Hawthorn Heritage Faire using Title III ISEP and LIEP funds. She noted that the Title III Intent to Apply for FY27 was approved by ISBE on March 24, 2026, and reminded the committee that expenditure reports for all grants through March 31 are due by April 20, 2026. Regarding Title I, II, and IV, programming and fund monitoring continue, while schoolwide waivers for TL and MSN are currently being completed for ISBE submission. Additionally, Mrs. Akin highlighted that approximately \$45,274 was used for professional development, supporting staff attendance at the La Cosecha Dual Language Conference and the 2025 Multilingual Illinois Statewide Conference. Finally, she confirmed that data entry for the FY27 Consolidated District Plan is finished, with the plan set for Board approval following the April 16, 2026, meeting.

2.7 Technology Update

Kevin Kolcz reported that the technology department is currently undergoing a leadership and department restructuring to improve support systems, which included the addition of a new technician at the end of March. In terms of network infrastructure, Mr. Kolcz noted that UPS hardware was successfully installed over spring break and that re-cabling projects at EN, MN, and TL/DL are now complete as the district prepares for a transition to ICN and Comcast internet services.

Regarding security and compliance, Kevin Kolcz shared that iPad and MacBook OS updates are nearly finished, and a near-final Incident Response Plan is being prepared for the Board of Education.

Additionally, he highlighted a new initiative to clean up Google Workspace by identifying and managing abandoned users and groups to streamline the district's learning systems and applications. Collection of student devices was discussed with the committee. Committee members were in favor of this moving forward. Mr. Kolcz will provide updates as they become available.

Action Items

3.1 Approval of Site and Facilities Minutes March 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 1:11pm. Motion by George Fievet and seconded by Stephanie Peters.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Ezop

Jennifer Akin, Asst Superintendent
of Finance and Business Operations

George Fievet, Board Member

Date Minutes Approved:_____