

**Official Minutes of the
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,
970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois
March 8, 2011**

President Traczyk called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Barber, Clouser, Reddy, Gates, Harton, Spatz and Traczyk
Absent: None
Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Al Roberts, Human Resources Director Trish Carlson, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations Therese O'Neill, Director of Special Education Mike Padavic, Communications Coordinator Chris Jasculca, Curriculum Coordinator Lisa Schwartz, Attorney Bob Kohn (8:57 p.m.) and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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Gates moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education move into executive session at 6:35 p.m. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Gates, Reddy, Harton, Clouser, Spatz, Barber, and Traczyk
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion passed.

OPEN SESSION

OPEN SESSION

Reddy moved, seconded by Harton, that the Board of Education move into open session at 7:03 p.m. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Reddy, Harton, Gates, Spatz, Barber, Clouser, and Traczyk
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion passed.

SPECIAL REPORTS

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WEST40 SPEECH TEAM PRESENTATION

Diane Pingle and Bill McGlynn, middle school speech team coaches, announced that the team won first place at the recent West40 competition. Brooks sixth grader Kellen Love and Julian eighth grader Maya Breitenstein performed for the Board.

MIDDLE SCHOOL & FIFTH GRADE DRUG AWARENESS

Kristine Raino-Ogden and Jackie Zdziarski-West provided an overview of the upcoming District 97 Substance Abuse Forums, parent events and the Middle School Action committee.

PERSONNEL UPDATE

Trish Carlson shared an overview of the personnel actions that will be acted on at this meeting. She outlined the guidelines that must be followed as directed by the state. Carlson explained the meanings of tenure/non-tenure and how seniority plays into non-tenured status. She explained each resolution that is coming forward for approval and explained the reason that each resolution must be approved by the Board. Carlson explained how some teachers needed to be bumped in order to secure a position for tenured staff whose positions were eliminated.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Freya Trefonides and Arne Olson, District 97 students, shared a letter expressing their concern over the teacher cuts. They reported that they are appalled at the cuts, especially Julian teacher Dr. Laura Swartzbaugh. They requested that the community keep Dr. Swartzbaugh in mind when voting for the referendum on April 5.

Carlos Kenig, Oak Park resident and parent, spoke in support of Dr. Laura Swartzbaugh. She is clearly his daughter's best teacher at Julian middle school. He expressed the need for Swartzbaugh's continued employment and dedication.

Christos Takeudis, Oak Park resident and former district parent, expressed concern about the teacher evaluation process. He noted that his son was bullied for months and the teacher was not aware. He is looking for accountability. Secondly, Takeudis questioned the district's test preparation practice, expressing his concern regarding the quantity of practice tests issued to the students. He asked the Board to consider how much focus is placed on test taking and not the actual performance.

Graham Brisben, Oak Park resident and parent of a fifth grader and a second grader at Longfellow, spoke concerning the release of teacher Sandra Arguello. Brisben noted that Arguello should be considered one of the best of the best. She has the most seniority among the Longfellow non-tenured teachers, is on the list of best practices teachers within the district and is also a minority. Brisben submitted a petition signed by 55 parents in support of Arguello's employment.

Susan Pierson, Oak Park resident and parent of a seventh grader and a third grader in the district, spoke on behalf of teacher Dr. Laura Swartzbaugh and expressed her concern about the referendum.

Dora Calkins, Oak Park resident and parent of two children at Longfellow, spoke in support of keeping teacher Sandra Arguello. Calkins explained how wonderful Arguello was with her third grader. She shared that she had other children in the district who did not have Arguello as a teacher. Based on those experiences, she believes that Arguello is a superior teacher.

Arlene Pedraza, Oak Park resident and parent of three boys in District 97, expressed concern about the loss of Ms. Arguello who always shows her warmth, passion and commitment to the children. She suggested that besides being an excellent teacher, reasons for retaining Arguello include that she is working on her national board certification, is Hispanic and bilingual. Pedraza asked the Board to reconsider their decision.

Kimberly Plaxton-Drobot, Oak Park resident and parent, spoke in support of retaining teacher Sandra Arguello. She read a letter that outlined why she felt that releasing Arguello would not be beneficial to the district. She shared how Arguello uses project-based teaching to motivate her students and makes first grade a fun place for them.

Jill Niewoehner, Oak Park resident and parent, spoke in support of Ms. Arguello. Being a teacher herself, Niewoehner understands the process but is concerned that it comes down to losing Ms. Arguello. She explained that her daughter has a medical condition and Arguello came to the house and tutored her during her recovery. Thanks to Arguello's dedication, the student was able to keep up with her classmates during her absence. Niewoehner expressed her support for the referendum.

Carry Purins, Oak Park resident and parent of a first grader in Ms. Arguello's class, spoke in support of retaining the teacher. Purins reported that the district's parents are supporting the referendum, but if it is not successful, we will be depending on the classroom teachers even more. She shared that Arguello offers great differentiation in the classroom, keeps up with all the educational resources and keeps students excited to learn. Arguello participated in the summer program and the students always want to be in her group.

Claudia Delgado, Oak Park resident and parent, read a letter in Spanish in support of Ms. Arguello. Delgado explained that her children did not speak much English when they began in Arguello's class and they are now excelling in reading and math. Delgado also shared that Arguello is dedicated to the afterschool tutoring program and the children are successful.

ACTION ITEMS**2.1.1 Approval of Minutes of February 22, 2011**

Clouser moved, seconded by Barber, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the minutes from the February 22, 2011 meeting as revised.

A change was requested in the Board Concerns section to identify that Member Gates substituted for Member Spatz at the ED-RED meeting. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Clouser, Barber, Harton, Spatz, Reddy, Gates, and Traczyk
 Nays: None
 Absent: None
 Motion passed.

2.2.1 Consent Agenda

Reddy moved, seconded by Clouser, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the consent agenda as presented in the Board packet. Roll call vote.

2.2.1 Bill Lists and Related Reports
 2.3.1 Personnel Action as presented

Ayes: Reddy, Clouser, Harton, Gates, Spatz, Barber, and Traczyk
 Nays: None
 Absent: None
 Motion passed.

2.2.2 Non-Renewal of Administrative Contracts and Reassignment of Administrators

Reddy moved, seconded by Clouser, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the resolution of Non-Renewal of Administrative Contracts and Reassignment of Administrators as presented. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Reddy, Clouser, Barber, Gates, Harton, Spatz, and Traczyk
 Nays: None
 Absent: None
 Motion passed.

2.2.3 Non-Renewal of Assistant Superintendent Administrative Contract and Reassignment of an Administrator

Harton moved, seconded by Gates, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the resolution of Non-Renewal of Assistant Superintendent Administrative Contract and Reassignment of an Administrator as presented. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Harton, Gates, Reddy, Clouser, Barber, Spatz, and Traczyk
 Nays: None
 Absent: None
 Motion passed.

2.2.4 Non-Renewal of an Administrative Contract and Non-Reemployment as a Probationary Teacher

Barber moved, seconded by Spatz, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the resolution of Non-Renewal of an Administrative Contract and Non-Reemployment as a Probationary Teacher as presented. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Barber, Spatz, Gates, Reddy, Clouser, Harton, and Traczyk
 Nays: None
 Absent: None
 Motion passed.

2.2.5 Non-Renewal of an Administrative Contract and Release of a Tenured Teacher

Clouser moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the resolution of Non-Renewal of an Administrative Contract and Release of a Tenured Teacher as presented. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Clouser, Reddy, Barber, Gates, Harton, Spatz, and Traczyk
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion passed.

2.2.6 Honorable Dismissal of Teachers on Contractual Continued Service

Gates moved, seconded by Harton, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the resolution of Honorable Dismissal of Teachers on Contractual Continued Service as presented. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Gates, Harton, Barber, Reddy, Clouser, Spatz, and Traczyk
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion passed.

2.2.7 Non-Reemployment of Fourth Year Probationary Teachers

Spatz moved, seconded by Barber, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the resolution of Non-Reemployment of Fourth Year Probationary Teachers as presented. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Spatz, Barber, Gates, Reddy, Clouser, Harton, and Traczyk
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion passed.

2.2.8 Non-Reemployment of Probationary Teachers - revised

Reddy moved, seconded by Gates, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the revised resolution of Non-Reemployment of Probationary Teachers as presented. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Reddy, Gates, Spatz, Barber, Clouser, Harton, and Traczyk
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion passed.

2.2.9 Non-Reemployment and Reemployment of Partial Assignment Teachers

Harton moved, seconded by Spatz, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the resolution of Non-Reemployment and Reemployment of Partial Assignment Teachers as presented. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Harton, Spatz, Barber, Gates, Reddy, Clouser, and Traczyk
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion passed.

2.2.10 Non-Reemployment of Partial Assignment Teachers

Barber moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the resolution of Non-Reemployment of Partial Assignment Teachers as presented. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Barber, Reddy, Gates, Clouser, Harton, Spatz, and Traczyk
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion passed.

2.2.11 Approval of the OPTA Side Letter of Understanding

Clouser moved, seconded by Harton, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the OPTA Side Letter of Understanding as presented. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Clouser, Harton, Barber, Gates, Reddy, Spatz, and Traczyk
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion passed.

President Traczyk reported that the Board shares the community's concern about these action items.

2.3.2 Approval of Engagement Letter for Fiscal Year Audit 2011, 2012, 2013

Clouser moved, seconded by Barber, that the Board of Education, District 97, enter into a renewal engagement with McGladrey & Pullen, as its audit firm, for completing the FY 2011, 2012 and 2013 annual audits, at a respective cost of \$49,500 for FY 2011, \$51,500 for FY 2012, and \$53,500 for FY 2013 as outlined in the memorandum to the Superintendent dated March 1, 2011.

President Traczyk explained that this topic was discussed in detail at a prior meeting. O'Neill reviewed the policy and there is nothing in it to identify a specific timeframe for review. O'Neill asked the FORC for a period of time that they would recommend. It was suggested that a review take place every five years. Additionally, FORC recommended that if the district keeps the same audit firm, they should request a different principal. At the end of this contract, the district will ask for a three-year contract. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Clouser, Barber, Gates, Reddy, Harton, Spatz, and Traczyk
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion passed.

2.3.3 Approval of Transfer Resolutions

Harton moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the formal attached three resolutions abating the Working Cash Fund (bond proceeds) to the Education Fund, transferring General State Aid from Operations & Maintenance to Capital Projects Fund, and transferring dollars from the Education to the Debt Service Fund as outlined in the memorandum to the Board dated March 1, 2011. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Harton, Reddy, Barber, Gates, Clouser, Spatz, and Traczyk
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion passed.

2.3.4 Capital Projects Bid – Asbestos Abatement Work – Summer 2011

Gates moved, seconded by Barber, that the Board of Education, District 97, award a contract to Valor Technologies in the total amount of \$140,000 as outlined in the memorandum to the Board dated March 1, 2011. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Gates, Barber, Reddy, Clouser, Harton, Spatz, and Traczyk
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion passed.

TOPIC REPORTS

FOOD SERVICE & STUDENT INSTRUCTIONAL FEES

O'Neill reported that the food service program is sustaining and administration is recommending no increase in the food service fees and the student instructional fees for the 2011-12 school year.

TOPIC REPORTS

POLICY – FIRST READING

Chris Jasculca came to the table to discuss policy 9150 (School/Classroom Visits). He explained the changes that were made to the policy. Discussion took place regarding videotaping in the classroom when approved by the principal and the need to protect the children whose parents have not given approval for photo and video taking. It was suggested that the policy specifically mention YouTube and Facebook as Internet locations where posting video should be cautioned. The difference between community volunteer and parent volunteer was discussed and suggested that a clear definition could be included in the procedure. It was agreed that this policy must be as clear as possible, and understood by all teachers.

SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION DISCUSSION

The revised evaluation document was shared. Because this year’s goals are based on Dr. Roberts’ personal goals, rankings indicating his personal involvement were removed. This document will go online within a week. Dr. Roberts shared that goal number three will not be completed for another week or so. Board members were asked to complete the document by March 17 for review in executive session on March 22.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

No report was given.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

BOARD CONCERNS

REFERENDUM WORDING

Attorney Bob Kohn came to the table to discuss the ballot wording of the referendum. President Traczyk shared that there has been some concern regarding the wording and it has been implied by community members that the wording is incorrect. The local Township assessor is questioning the dollar figure that is being used in the ballot questions.

BOARD CONCERNS

Kohn explained that the bond counsel was responsible for drafting the statute, and after review, Kohn reported that the language in the statute is in line with other districts. Kohn spoke to the legal counsel for the Cook County Clerk’s office and reported that it is too late in the process to change the wording; however, the statute has a saving clause, therefore an error in the proposition would not invalidate the proposition. Kohn reported that all 13 other referenda on the ballots for April 5 are written the same way. He shared that early voting starts on Monday and the electronic machines and absentee ballots have already been distributed.

The Board agreed that besides trusting those who wrote the law, District 97 sought advice from legal counsel. They agreed that there are no inaccuracies in the ballot. The wording on the ballot is in line with the law, as well as in line with other districts in the state of Illinois. The Board and legal counsel agreed that there is nothing to be changed as the concern is a language technicality and the numbers are accurate.

ADDITIONAL BOARD CONCERNS

A document was sent to the Board members earlier today regarding consolidation.

The Board individually shared that they are proud to be citizens of Oak Park.

BOARD RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT

President Traczyk explained the process for responding to public comment.

BOARD RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT

Traczyk noted that if the referendum does not pass, the district is obligated to apply some of the pay freeze savings to bringing back some of the teaching staff.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to conduct, President Traczyk declared the meeting adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be held on Tuesday, March 22, 2011, beginning at 7 p.m. in the Administration building located at 970 Madison Street.

Board President

Board Secretary