

**Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,  
970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois  
January 11, 2011**

President Traczyk called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Present: Barber, Clouser, Reddy, Gates, Harton, Spatz and Traczyk

Absent: None

Also Present: Superintendent Al Roberts, Human Resources Director Trish Carlson, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations Therese O'Neill, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Kevin Anderson, Director of Special Services Mike Padavic, Communications Coordinator Chris Jасulca, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

ROLL CALL

**Public Comment**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ben Weinberg, an Oak Park BRAVO parent, talked about the festival that BRAVO students will be attending this week. He spoke on behalf of parent participation in the schools and shared that the district's investment shows a huge return. He explained how the parents are devoted to the BRAVO program and they support the program by volunteering their time and talents as well as through financial contributions. Mr. Weinberg concluded by reporting that the BRAVO board looks forward to working with the school board.

Debbie Fiegel, also an Oak Park BRAVO parent, read a letter from her son concerning the BRAVO program. In the letter, her son shared his experiences in BRAVO and emphasized how it changed his life. He shared how important the program is to help students transition into adulthood.

Craig Zeller, an Oak Park BRAVO parent, spoke on behalf of BRAVO by sharing a letter written by his daughter. The daughter expressed her concern regarding the elimination of BRAVO and the effect it would have on the students.

Heather McCammond Watts, an Oak Park CAST parent, reported that this year is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CAST program. She shared that the CAST council and parents are concerned as well as the school board. She shared how CAST helps children mature and speak their minds, and helps to decrease negative behavior. Watts expressed her opinion that art is not optional; that it is an essential component of the Oak Park schools and that students who participate in arts increase their power of education.

Rick Leary, Oak Park resident and BRAVO board member, expressed his understanding regarding the huge task in front of the board and spoke in support of the referendum. He expressed concern that cutting the arts is not the answer. He expressed that BRAVO is almost self sustaining, and reminded the board that the district benefits by publicity through BRAVO events. Leary concluded by asking how the district can use the connections with BRAVO to reach out to the community.

Aiden O'Leary, former BRAVO student, spoke on behalf of the program. He shared how the program changes students for the better. He shared that participating in the BRAVO program was an amazing experience.

**2.1.1. Approval of Minutes of December 14, 2010**

Clouser moved, seconded by Barber, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the minutes from the December 14, 2010 meeting as revised. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Clouser, Barber, Reddy, Harton, Spatz, Gates, and Traczyk

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

**Consent Agenda**

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

2.2.1 Personnel Action as presented

2.3.1 Bill Lists and Related Reports

Ayes: Clouser, Gates, Reddy, Harton, Spatz, Barber, and Traczyk

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

**2.4.1 Adoption of Referendum Resolution**

Gates moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the formal resolution providing for and requiring the submission of the proposition of issuing Working Cash Fund Bonds to the voters of School District 97, Cook County, Illinois, at the consolidated election to be held on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2011.

President Traczyk updated the Board on the current actions being taken by the state of Illinois. He lead the Board in a discussion regarding this uncertainty and how it might affect this resolution.

Member Spatz explained that the current state proposed bill would only pay what is currently due to the district from the state. He explained that the current projections were created assuming that the state would not pay the district what they currently owe. Spatz reminded the Board that even if the state passes this bill, the district will still need to run the referendum, but the Board would have more certainty that the district would be paid in full and paid on time. There is much uncertainty that the bill will be passed. Spatz reported that today the state voted against a cigarette tax increase.

After discussion, it was agreed that the PMA updates would be sent to the Board members electronically following the meeting. The Board also agreed to call a special meeting on Monday, January 17, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. Member Spatz and Therese O'Neill will give direction to Steve Miller and Liz Hennessy prior to the Monday evening meeting. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Gates, Reddy, Clouser, Harton, Spatz, Barber, and Traczyk

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

### **2.4.2 Adoption of Proposed Reductions**

Barber moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the list of reductions as presented at the December 14, 2010 Board meeting. This list will be implemented if the community votes to not approve the issuing of Working Cash Fund Bonds at the consolidated election to be held on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2011.

It was reported that this is a working list, not intended to be a detailed list that would underline the necessary cuts. In order to implement any item on this list, additional Board action would need to take place.

Dr. Roberts read a statement regarding the process undertaken to prepare the list. He explained that if the district needs to act upon the reduction list, the district would not be able to remain a fantastic district. The list protects the academics/core and assists in lowering the budget. The administration has made every attempt to make sure that this list is not considered as a threat. Dr. Roberts recognized the CAST and BRAVO representatives who spoke during public comment. Dr. Roberts requested that a special Board meeting be scheduled as soon as the referendum has been approved by the community to initiate reinstatement letters.

Member Spatz reported that the state just approved the income tax increase.

Roll call vote.

Ayes: Barber, Reddy, Gates, Harton, Clouser, Spatz, and Traczyk

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

### **TOPIC REVIEW**

#### **BUDGET AUTHORITY / RESOLUTION**

TOPIC REVIEW

Therese O'Neill explained that the approval of the budget authority resolution is not required by the Board, but has been a tradition of this Board. O'Neill explained that she will complete all the routine work prior to the election and finish the process when she knows the election results.

#### **POLICY REVIEW**

Chris Jasculca explained that the policy committee is implementing an occasionally used exception by having the Board review both the Working Cash Referendum Bond policy and the administrative guidelines. Ultimately, the Board will only approve the policy. The policy was discussed and several changes were suggested. This policy will return to the Board for additional discussion.

Discussion took place regarding the administrative guidelines. Modifications were suggested and discussed.

#### **SUPERINTENDENT'S GOALS**

Because Dr. Roberts is new to Illinois, he is required by the state to complete a new superintendent's mentoring program. This process requires him to prepare a list of goals. Those goals were introduced to the Board and will be used as his goals for this school year.

Discussion took place regarding a superintendent evaluation process. It was suggested that the policy that defines the superintendent's evaluation process be reviewed. Vice President Barber and member Clouser will update the Board on the evaluation process during the next regularly scheduled meeting.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Roberts reported that the Lincoln school construction project is on schedule.

Dr. Roberts reported that the district is considering a new demographics study.

Dr. Roberts reported that Cabinet members met with representatives from the League of Women Voters. They were very helpful in answering their questions. Based on the questions and comments, Dr. Roberts believes that the district has their support.

**BOARD CONCERNS**

**BOARD CONCERNS**

It was requested that the referendum timeline be shared with the citizens committee.

It was requested that the board add a discussion regarding the LAC and the Ombudsman prior to the April meeting.

The list of what the Board members can and cannot do in relationship to the referendum was requested. Discussion took place regarding the limits of \$3,000 in Board or district spending in relationship to the referendum. A detailed list of expenses as they occur was suggested. Chris Jасulca will contract legal for direction.

Vice President Barber read a statement noting that this is a momentous night and a momentous undertaking. He invited the community to do their part. He reminded everyone that requesting a referendum is a sacrifice. He reported that this Board and past Boards have done a great job of cutting costs, allowing hallmarks for our community like CAST and BRAVO. These programs would not be in place now if it had not been for the due diligence up until now.

Member Clouser asked the Board if the superintendent should reach out to those who made public comment and tell them about the citizens committee.

**BOARD RESPONSE TO  
PUBLIC COMMENT**

**BOARD RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT** - None

**Executive Session**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Gates moved, seconded by Barber, that the Board of Education move into executive session at 10:12 p.m. Roll call vote.

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

**Open Session**

**OPEN SESSION**

Gates moved, seconded by Barber, that the Board of Education move into open session at 10:42 p.m. Roll call vote.

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to conduct, President Traczyk declared the meeting adjourned at 10:37 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be on Tuesday, January 25, 2011, beginning at 7 p.m. in the Beye Elementary School Auditorium, located at 230 N. Cuyler.

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Board President

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Board Secretary