

**Official Minutes of the
Oak Park Board of Education District 97
260 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois
November 10, 2020 Meeting**

This meeting was held virtually using Zoom during the time of the Coronavirus pandemic. Everyone participated via electronic means.

President Broy called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Kim, Liebl, Kearney, Moore, Broy and Breymaier (arrived at 7:03 p.m.)
Absent: Spurlock
Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Carol Kelley, Director of Communications Amanda Siegfried, Senior Director of Technology Michael Arensdorff, Senior Director of Human Resources Gina Herrmann, Chief Academic and Accountability Office Ebony Lofton, Associate Superintendent of Education Felicia Starks Turner, Senior Director of Equity Carrie Kamm, and Consultant Rob Grossi.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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Moore moved, seconded by Kim that the Board move into executive session for the purpose of Collective Negotiations 5 ILCS 120/2(C)(2) at 6:32 p.m.

Ayes: Moore, Kim, Breymaier, Liebl, Kearney, and Broy
Nays: None
Absent: Spurlock
Motion passed

OPEN SESSION

Kim motioned, seconded by Moore that the board move into open session at 6:57 p.m. All members of the Board were in agreement. The Board reconvened in Open Session at 7:01 p.m.

OPEN SESSION

RESOLUTION – SCHOOL BOARD APPRECIATION DAY – NOVEMBER 15, 2020

Dr. Kelley read a resolution recognizing the board members for their service.

Proclamation School Board Members Day

WHEREAS, The District 97 School Board members are elected to sit in trust for our diverse communities, and in that capacity are charged with meeting the community’s expectations and aspirations for the public education of their children; and

WHEREAS, The District 97 School Board members are entrusted with the guardianship and wise expenditure of scarce tax dollars, and they are responsible for maintaining and preserving the buildings, grounds, and other areas of the school district that the community has put in their trust; and

WHEREAS, The District 97 School Board members are responsible for providing leadership that ensures a clear, shared vision of public education for our schools, that sets high standards for the education of all students, and requires the effective and efficient operation of their districts; and

WHEREAS, The District 97 School Board members adopt public policy to give voice to that leadership and employ a superintendent to administer board policy, and are also responsible for the regular monitoring of the district's performance and compliance with state policy; and

WHEREAS, The District 97 School Board members selflessly volunteer countless hours to public service by attending board meetings, committee meetings and community meetings with no compensation; and

WHEREAS, Decisions made by school Board members directly impact the quality of life in our community, placing them at the front line of American democracy;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Administrators of Oak Park Elementary School District 97, that we proclaim November 15, 2020, as “School Board Members Day” as a way to honor President Keecia Broy, Vice President Jung Kim, and Board members Rob Breymaier, Katherine Liebl, Gavin Kearney, Cheree Moore and Holly Spurlock who devote their time and energy for the successful education of our children.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

SPECIAL REPORTS

D97 RETURN TO SCHOOL PLANNING

Dr. Kelley reported that the Superintendent’s Advisory Panel (SAP) has over 70 members. She explained the composition of the group and noted that many of them were in the audience this evening. She explained that the purpose of the panel is to assure that additional parent and community input is reflected in the back to school plan, and to explain the areas of the plan that need clarity.

SPECIAL REPORTS

Dr. Kelley shared the timeline for the panel noting two meetings with a high level of engagement. She reported that the panel will be divided into six work groups to generate questions, solicit ideas and clarify assumptions. The panel has met in small groups and drafted/designed a parent survey that will be launched from November 7 through November 12. Emails and phone calls have been sent out to remind people to reply by the deadline. The district is looking for one response per student with the goal of determining how many students plan to return to school in a hybrid model. The results of the survey will be shared with the board this coming Friday.

Dr. Kelley shared the frequently asked questions and information gathered from the surrounding district’s benchmarks. She reported that, for transparency purposes, the SAP meetings are being recorded and posted online, and meeting notes are being shared with the community. She reminded the board that this work has been underway since last May. She explained that the SAP panel is meant to make the conversations transparent. She asked the board to read the updates so they are aware of the hard work that is being done.

Dr. Kelley reported on some of the other activities that have occurred to date;

- Identified and explored the following areas of improvement/consensus themes as well the tradeoffs and challenges:
- Change current plan so students maintain current class/teacher
- Change proposed schedule outlined in current plan
- Address lunch to lengthen instructional day
- Consider in-person experiences for enrichment/socialization opportunities

Dr. Kelley shared examples of ideas that have been explored in a variety of categories, and reported that the panel’s next steps include;

- Next meeting on Friday, November 14
- Invite neighboring district leaders to share information on implementing in-person learning (lunch, safety and social distancing, capacity, staffing, etc.)
- Determine how to operationalize the possibilities
- Assess the use of the ThoughtExchange tool as a means to better understand students, parents and staff preferences
- Original transition team's members may be invited to the second November meeting. They will simulate the tool on Friday to see if it will be helpful

Dr. Kelley explained that this is a moment for every school district in the world to chart their own course. Administration is taking the current hybrid plan, listening to feedback, adjusting it, and making the process more transparent.

Interest was expressed in hearing more about live streaming. Dr. Kelley indicated that families who elect the remote only experience will probably be families of color. She indicated that it will be difficult for teachers to deliver both versions of teaching (in person and live streaming) well. She explained that the district has heard from the community that they do not want new teachers or classes, and that is how the suggestion for an artificial end of the year came about.

Dr. Kelley explained that the teachers may need to plan the work year based on student experience, meaning that part of the day the teacher will work with the remote students while the in-person students work independently, and vice versa, but the teachers would need a separate plan for each group.

CHILDCARE FINANCIAL SUPPORT DURING THE PANDEMIC

Financial consultant Rob Grossi reminded the board that they already approved up to \$1,400,000 to cover childcare for free and reduced lunch students during the pandemic. He reported that 383 children were enrolled in the childcare program, and of those, 94 were low income students. The current cost of the program to the district is about \$100,000. He explained that with the second semester approaching, he wanted to revisit the program and make sure that the community and providers understand that this opportunity is available to them.

Grossi recommended continuing the program into the second trimester for free and reduced lunch students. He asked the board to consider expanding the program to families that earn between \$39,000 – \$65,000. He noted that some of those families do not qualify for free and reduced lunch, but may need assistance. He explained that the next income bracket to consider would be the \$65,000 - \$99,000 income bracket. He suggested that the board might consider a 50 percent childcare scholarship for those families. Since no one knows how long the district will need to run virtually, he expects the extra cost to be about \$200,000 per trimester.

It was noted that the majority of the board agreed to continue to support the scholarship.

FINANCIAL FORECAST AND PRESENTATION OF THE TENTATIVE LEVY

Grossi shared an update on the financial forecast and projections for the next five years. He reminded the board that the district has a policy to maintain fund balances between three and six months. He explained that the district will levy taxes annually to capture the maximum CPI increases, which is 2.3 percent. The total expenses are projected to increase by 3.8 percent due to the unique circumstances related to the pandemic.

Grossi reported that during fiscal year 2022, the district is projected to spend \$1,000,000 on capital expenses. He explained that the district is expected to exhaust all referendum dollars upon completion of

the summer 2021 work. After that work has been completed, the 5-year facilities plan will consist of the following items;

- Accessibility improvements
- Library STEM projects
- Temperature controls
- Priority B life safety items
- Priority C life safety items (not immediately considered hazardous and not required by code)

Most of the projects on the list will need to be addressed over time. Grossi offered a few options for the board to consider. All of the projections include the tax abatement.

Projection 1A - Addresses the 5-Year facilities plan and excludes the Priority C items.

Projection 1B - Freeze one year of the tax levy example. By the last year of the projection period the district would drop below the three – five month requirement.

Projection 2A - Would result in fund balances falling below three month savings.

Projection 2B – Addressing all projects and freeze on 2020 tax levy would be down to one month of reserves by 2026.

Grossi informed the board that the district will have structural surpluses for the next few years, but it is not enough to cover all capital projects.

Member Breymaier arrived before 8:00 p.m.

Concern was expressed that the district is spending more on capital improvements than received in referendum dollars. Grossi explained that the amount of money that the board approved does not even cover all of the items on the B list. He told the board that there was a lot of work that needed to be done. Once everything is caught up, the expenditures would decrease. It was noted that the members of the Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC) are amazing and budget minded. Grossi was asked to make it clear that some of the capital expenditures are above what the referendum dollars will cover, and by how much.

Board comments included interest in seeing projections that include a partial abatement of the \$1,400,000 and projections that do not include the abatement at all. Grossi recommended that the board capture the full 2.3 CPI. He explained that FORC has not made a recommendation about the abatement yet. Concern was expressed that there are capital improvements being done that were not originally on the list.

Grossi explained that there might be substantial savings, but reminded the board that these are very uncertain times. There is a lot of work that will still need to be done and needs to be factored into the decision.

Grossi asked the board to consider the following when making a decision on the levy.

- Impact of the decision on the long-term financial condition of the District
 - How does the decision impact fund balance policy of maintaining 3-6 months of fund balance reserves?
- Impact of the decision on long-term quality of educational services in the District
 - Will the District be able to maintain fund balance reserve targets without adversely impacting staffing and programming?
- Impact of the decision on the condition of the district's facilities

- Will the District be able to address critical repairs in its buildings while both maintaining fund balance reserve targets and desired educational services?

Grossi shared the estimated impact on tax payers.

- The tax extension for non-bond and interest funds will increase 2.3 percent versus the prior year.
- This represents an increase an annual increase of approximately \$120 for the portion of the tax bill due to Oak Park Elementary School District 97.
- If the District does not abate the non-referendum levy, it will increase the tax bill of a \$400,000 homeowner by an additional \$90.
- The maximum extension plus extending the non-referendum bond levy would increase the tax bill of a \$400,000 homeowner by approximately \$210 (4 percent)

Grossi expressed concern about the financial status of the state, noting that the state may need to consider cuts to education. He suggested that the fiscal future of Illinois will be defined by four events:

- Magnitude of federal bailout slide
- Passage of progressive income tax ballot questions
- Pace of economic recovery
- Investment performance of pension funds

Grossi recommended that the board make its decision on the tax levy with consideration to;

- The district’s fund balance targets
- The district’s capital needs and wants and
- The financial threats that may emerge from Springfield.

Grossi explained that the board will be asked to approve the tentative levy today, and approve the posting for a public hearing on December 15, 2020.

Board comments and discussion continued related to the state’s pension situation, and how enrollment might be affected by the pandemic.

Grossi recommended that the board try to maintain fund balances without needing to go to referendum. He told the board that the risk of the state impacting the district is serious enough that the board should capture the full 2.3 percent.

ACTION ITEMS

6.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE OCTOBER 27, 2020 BOARD MEETING

ACTION ITEMS

Kearney moved, seconded by Kim, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the minutes from the October 27, 2020 board meeting as presented.

Ayes: Kerney, Kim, Breymaier, Moore, Broy, and Liebl
 Nays: None
 Absent: Spurlock
 Motion passed.

6.2 APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

Breymaier moved, seconded by Kearney, that the Board of Education, District 97, accept the consent agenda as presented.

4.2.1 Bill List

4.2.2 Personnel

4.2.3 Approval of Amended Minutes from the June 16, 2020 Board Meeting

Ayes: Breymaier, Kearney, Moore, Kim, Broy, and Liebl

Nays: None

Absent: Spurlock

Motion passed.

6.3.1 APPROVAL OF SECOND QUEUE – HANOVER RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Moore moved, seconded by Kim, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the amended agreement with Hanover Research allowing them to simultaneously undertake two strands of research projects throughout the school year at an additional cost of \$40,000.

Ayes: Moore, Kim, Breymaier, Broy, Kearney, and Liebl

Nays: None

Absent: Spurlock

Motion passed.

7.3.2 ADOPTION OF THE ESTIMATED LEVY FOR THE 2020 TAX YEAR AND AUTHORIZATION TO PUBLISH FOR THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR DECEMBER 15, 2020

Kim moved, seconded by Broy, that the Board of Education, District 97, adopt of the Estimated Levy for the 2020 Tax Year and Authorization to Publish for a Public Hearing for December 15, 2020.

Ayes: Kim, Broy, Breymaier, Moore, Kearney, and Liebl

Nays: None

Absent: Spurlock

Motion passed.

BOARD ASSIGNMENTS

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INTERGOVERNMENTAL LIAISON REPORT FOLLOW UP (as needed – IGOV, PTO council, CEC, OPEF, Community Council, Tri-Board on Equity, Policy, and Self-Evaluation
COLLABORATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

The board was reminded that the joint board meeting with D200, the Village of Oak Park and the Collaboration for Early Childhood is scheduled to be held virtually on November 18, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. President Broy indicated that she will not be able to attend this meeting, but the other board members confirmed that a quorum will be present.

POLICY COMMITTEE

Member Kearney reported that discussion continued on policies 7:50 and 6:280. Legal is working on the language to make both policies clearer. The expectation is to share the revised policies with the board on December 1.

BOARD GOAL SETTING DISCUSSION

President Broy reported that this item should be added to a future self-evaluation meeting. She offered to share the current goals with the board members and asked them to share items that they would like to see identified in the goals.

CONCLUDING ITEMS

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BOARD REMARKS

Dr. Kelley was congratulated for earning the IASA Superintendent of Distinction award, and member Liebl was thanked for representing the board at the IASB delegates meeting for the last three years.

AGENDA MAINTENANCE

The draft agendas for the December 1, 2020 meeting was reviewed and revisions were recommended.

ADJOURNMENT

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There being no further business to conduct, President Broy declared the meeting adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Board President

Board Secretary