

**Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,  
970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois  
Meeting – November 29, 2011**

This meeting was held at Lincoln School, which is located at 1111 South Grove Avenue.

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

Present: Barber, Gates, Felton, Sacks, Traczyk, Spatz, and O'Connor

Absent: None

Also Present: Superintendent Al Roberts, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations Therese O'Neill, Director of Human Resources Trish Carlson, Director of Policy, Planning and Communications Chris Jasculca, Director of Special Education Mike Padavic, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

ROLL CALL

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

EXECUTIVE  
SESSION

Gates moved, seconded by Felton, that the Board of Education move into executive session at 6:32 p.m. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Gates, Felton, Traczyk, Sacks, Barber, O'Connor, and Spatz

Nays: None

Absent: None

Also Present: Therese O'Neill, Dr. Roberts and Sheryl Marinier

Motion passed.

OPEN SESSION

**OPEN SESSION**

Gates moved, seconded by Sacks, that the Board of Education move into open session at 7:12 p.m. All members of the Board were in agreement.

**Public Hearing to Sell Not to Exceed \$5,200,000 Working Cash Fund Bonds**

PUBLIC  
HEARING TO  
SELL BONDS

President Barber called the public hearing to order and Therese O'Neill gave a brief explanation of the bond sale process. No one accepted the invitation to speak on this topic and the hearing was closed.

**SPECIAL REPORTS**

SPECIAL  
REPORTS

**BEKIND-MANNKIND**

Michele Strimaitis (The Giving Project), Kristi Ross (The Giving Project), Nick Antista (Youtopia) and Demian Krentz (Youtopia) came to the table and asked the Board to consider curriculum-based service learning at the elementary school level. The not-for profit groups coordinate service projects both in and out of school. Curriculum is built to support the projects that focus on reading and math skills. Team work, critical thinking and collaboration play important roles in each project. Youtopia is a web and mobile application where students earn rewards for their good behavior, academic achievements

and service learning. It also facilitates the tracking and organization of activities that the students participate in. Both organizations were offering their services to the district free of charge. Youtopia explained that they may charge a fee in the future, but would not charge for their efforts at this time. They recommended that the district consider implementing service projects at all schools and explained that using their program eliminates additional administrative work. The organization will continue hosting monthly side projects throughout the school year with hopes of expanding to larger multi-school events.

Dr. Roberts explained that the initiative supports PBIS by holding many of the programs after school. He explained that some of the principals already have something similar in place.

Board comments included a suggestion to share this information with the PTO Council.

#### PERSONEL/STUDENT DATA REPORT

Trish Carlson reported that the Fall Housing Report indicates that the district is currently down two administrators and up two administrative support people from last year. Teaching staff is comparable and support staff is down a bit. Student data was shared as well.

It was noted that a multi-racial category had been added to both the personnel and student data reports.

Carlson explained that most of the out-of-district students are children with special needs who are placed in therapeutic day care facilities. They are placed out-of-district to better serve their needs.

Board comments included a request to view data that identifies if advanced degree training is being used in staff assignments and a request to see how the male teachers are distributed across the district. Interest was expressed in a brief explanation on the recruitment process, interview process and understanding how decisions are made.

Concern was expressed regarding the low number of minority certified staff, noting that they are not in line with the student population. Carlson noted that the district did not participate in the usual recruitment process last year because the district's focus was on the referendum. She reminded the Board that the number one goal is to hire the best, most qualified staff that the district can find. She reported that the approach this year will be similar to the past with a minority recruitment flyer, and recruitment fair in the district. Dr. Roberts noted that the district has a stronger Oak Park story to tell than it did in the past. He also reported that there will be no fast track hiring.

#### PRESENTATION OF LEVY

Therese O'Neill returned to the table to introduce the process for approving the annual levy. She introduced the timeline for approving the levy and explained how the levy funding is calculated. A discussion took place regarding West Suburban Hospital going

private and how that and other new growth will affect the district financially. It was suggested that any additional funds from the hospital be used strategically.

PUBLIC  
COMMENT

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

ACTION ITEMS

**ACTION ITEMS**

**2.1.1 Approval of Minutes of October 25, 2011**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Sacks, that the Board of Education, District 97, accept the minutes from the October 25, 2011 meeting. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Traczyk, Sacks, Gates, O'Connor, Barber, Felton, and Spatz

Nays: None

Motion passed.

**2.1.2 Approval of Minutes of November 8, 2011**

Felton moved, seconded by Traczyk, that the Board of Education, District 97, accept the minutes from the November 8, 2011 meeting. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Felton, Traczyk, Sacks, Gates, O'Connor, Barber, and Spatz

Nays: None

Motion passed.

**2.3.1 Approval of Bill List**

Gates moved, seconded by Sacks, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the bill list as presented in the Board packet. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Gates, Sacks, Traczyk, Spatz, Felton, O'Connor, and Barber

Nays: None

Motion passed.

**2.4.1 Approval of Standby Generator Bid**

Gates moved, seconded by Sacks, that the Board of Education, District 97, award the standby generator bid (two generators) to Meany Electric in the total amount of \$73,500 and installation work to Whoosh Drain and Sewer Openers in the total amount of \$6,211 as presented in the attached memorandum dated November 29, 2011. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Gates, Sacks, Traczyk, Spatz, Felton, O'Connor, and Barber

Nays: None

Motion passed.

**2.4.2 Reaffirmation of Custodial Supply Bid**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Felton, that the Board of Education, District 97, reaffirm its award of the 2011-12 custodial supplies contract in the total amount of \$89,196.76 to the following companies, as delineated in the memorandum to the superintendent dated November 2, 2011. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Traczyk, Felton, Gates, Sacks, O'Connor, Barber, and Spatz  
Nays: None  
Motion passed.

#### **2.4.3 Approval of Vision Statement**

Sacks moved, seconded by Gates, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the following statement as the official vision of District 97. "Oak Park Elementary School District 97 will be nationally recognized for preparing students to pursue college and career opportunities through purposeful and respectful learning experiences." Roll call vote.

Ayes: Sacks, Gates, Spatz, Traczyk, O'Connor, Felton, and Barber  
Nays: None  
Motion passed.

#### **2.4.4 Approval of Field Trips at Holmes and BRAVO**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Sacks, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve an overnight field trip request for the fifth graders at Holmes Elementary School and an out of state field trip for the Brooks BRAVO students. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Traczyk, Sacks, Gates, O'Connor, Felton, Barber, and Spatz  
Nays: None  
Motion passed.

#### **2.4.5 Approval of School Improvement Plans**

Gates moved, seconded by O'Connor, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the School Improvement Plans (SIP) to be submitted to the Illinois State Board of Education by December 1, 2011 for Julian, Brooks and Holmes schools.

Felicia Starks Turner updated the Board on the status of the SIPS, reporting that they were all reviewed by West40 and that suggestions were provided to the schools. Principals revised the plans and resubmitted them to the district this afternoon. Dr. Roberts completed an initial review of the three that need to be approved, noting that they were all well written, and changes were made for clarity only, and the substance remained the same. Everyone who participated in the process was acknowledged for their efforts.

Board comments included concern over chronic truancy. It was noted that administration will review and advise the Board on this issue.

Roll call vote.

Ayes: Gates, O'Connor, Traczyk, Felton, Sacks, Barber, and Spatz  
Nays: None  
Motion passed.

**TOPIC REPORTS****C.L.A.I.M.**

Peter Barber announced the members of the CLAIM committee as Chairman Anne Desmond Warren, Brandon E. Bell, Rupa Datta, Linda Francis, Sanford Greenberg, Peggy Kell, John Moss, Deacon Wiley Samuels, Meredith Schacht, Greg Smith, Carol Song, Jassen Strokosch, and Carol Threlkeld. Warren was invited to the table to introduce herself to the community.

Member Gates reported on the agenda for the committee, which includes establishing eight priorities and identifying several key start-up tasks for the committee.

**FAST FORWARD RECOMMENDATION**

Dr. Roberts introduced the follow-up discussion on data analysis of the Fast ForWord program. Harla Hutchinson, Mike Padavic and Duane Meighan came to the table. Hutchinson shared data that indicated that most children, no matter if they were on grade level or below, showed about the same amount of growth after the pilot program. She shared attendance data and a comparison of changes in RIT and RPI scores. A chart was shared that indicated that the students in the pilot program for the most part did not experience summer loss.

It was reported that the district currently does not have a tool that addresses cognitive skill. Dr. Roberts reported that the district is looking to purchase the program at a cost of \$477,000 to avoid unnecessary remediation; potentially paying for itself in three to four years. An annual investment of \$4,500 per school would be ongoing for updates and reports. He reminded the Board that Fast ForWord is an intervention that might reduce the need for current interventions that the district continues to pay for annually. He explained that the district could minimize the special education testing annually, resulting in significant savings in the long run. However, he reminded the Board that the learning return on investment is more important, noting that the administration anticipates growth in the sub-groups that they worry about the most, and would thus see growth in terms of AYP.

Dr. Roberts expressed the importance of a good implementation plan that includes fidelity. He explained that, in the initial phase, some schools will use a Response to Intervention approach while others will offer the program at a specific grade level. Data will be accumulated and reviewed. Results will be shared with the Board and a final, district-wide implementation plan will be recommended. He reported that the staff reaction to the programs was mixed. Teachers have shared several recommendations and concerns. He reported that some teachers are eager to get started, noting that a certified staff member is not required to implement the program.

Board comments and concerns included a suggestion to share the results from the What Works Clearing House. Interest was expressed in hearing different payment options and the possibility of a refund if the district wants to change its mind in six months. It was noted that the cost for the annual fee is only \$10 per child. Concern was expressed regarding the importance of consistency throughout the district and the time it will take

to train staff to use the program with fidelity. Interest was expressed in understanding staff buy in.

Dr. Roberts explained that he cannot find any other programs that show the results that Fast ForWord does. He believes that it can make life easier for the staff members and he will be making a recommendation for the Board to purchase this intervention. He will bring the contract to the Board for approval in January.

#### STUDY SESSION – BOARD GOAL 3 – FACILITIES

President Barber explained that this session is focused on discussing the facility needs of the district office and warehouse. Four options were identified.

- 1) Fix Admin Building
- 2) Admin + more
- 3) Partner with somebody else
- 4) Numbers 2 and 3 combined

The majority of the Board members identified option three as their top of choice followed by option four.

Board comments and concerns included a note that the administration building could function well with only 1,300 square feet of space. It was noted that the district has an obligation to respect the sale/leaseback agreement by cutting the district's footprint on Madison and cutting the cost to the taxpayers. Concern was expressed regarding the inclusion of a therapeutic day care within the building as it might need a referendum to approve. Interest was expressed in partnering with the Park District. It was noted that if the district sells the buildings on Madison Street and they become taxable real estate, the district would see \$500,000 a year in new income, which could far exceed the expense of the new building.

Highlights of Board comments were noted as follows;

More/define that admin "vision" interface with schools

Timing still

Can be landlord/ tenant/something in-between

Community interest/demand

Partner = creates retail demand, also easier citizen services

Members of the Facilities Advisory Committee who were in attendance, shared that the committee agrees that something needs to happen quickly because the administration building is deteriorating. They promoted sharing with the Park District and/or the Public Works, noting that it would result in amazing savings. It was suggested that maintenance in an old building could cause a snowball effect. A multi-level partnership was suggested and that the Board reconsider retail space rental.

Park District representatives in attendance reported that the two bodies are already partners as they currently co-manage facilities. It was noted that the Park District is willing and able to partner with the school district.

The Board agreed that the next step would be to ask the Facilities Advisory Committee to do a more refined study on partnerships. This item will be revisited in January.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

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REPORT**

The district will have a small team in attendance at a Gates Foundation event next Monday that was recommended by Member O'Connor.

Member Felton was thanked for digital inclusion strategy observations.

Dr. Roberts reported that an Institute Day was held before Thanksgiving. Dave Weber was the guest speaker and his message was well received. Weber noted that one of the most important aspects for student achievement is a healthy building climate.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS/BOARD CONCERNS**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS /  
BOARD CONCERNS**

It was reported that the Board's votes on the IASB resolutions was in line with other districts.

A Facilities Advisory Committee meeting will be held next week.

A workshop attended during the Triple I conference suggested that the key question about one-to-one computer was when, not if. Another workshop attended was on collective bargaining.

Copies of the Data Task Force feedback were shared and direction was requested for next steps.

A suggestion was made to consider contracting out for some of the data studies.

January 21, 2012 was identified as phase 2 and 3 of the Data First Workshops, suggesting that the workshops should be held at Julian from 8 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

A handout was shared regarding communication from another district.

The IMPA.C.T. Drug and Substance Abuse Forum was held at Julian.

The Board was reminded that a SEIU negotiation timetable will be necessary in the near future.

Dr. Roberts noted that the District was part of a settlement agreement from the Bank of America and will be receiving funds.

Dr. Roberts and President Barber attended the Wellness Council meeting, noting that it was a healthy and productive conversation. It was suggested that the Board might consider a food waiver if the PTOs pursue healthier choices.

**BOARD RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**BOARD RESPONSE  
TO PUBLIC  
COMMENTS**

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to conduct, President Barber declared the meeting adjourned at 11:04 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be held on Tuesday, December 13, 2011, beginning at 7 p.m. in the administration building located at 970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Illinois.

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Board President

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Board Secretary