

Regular Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 15, 2024 6:00 PM

Harlem Administration Center
8605 North Second St
Machesney Park, Illinois 61115

MINUTES

1. Call to Order of Regular Board meeting at 6:00 p.m. by Mike Sterling, President
2. Roll Call: Larry Smith, Megan Hastings, Mike Sterling, Kurt Thompson, Aaron McKnight, Rebecca Carlson

Absent: Evelyn Meeks

Other Attendees:

Kris Arduino, Recording Secretary
Dr. Terrell Yarbrough, Superintendent
Dr. Shelley Wagner, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources
Dr. Michelle Erb, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction
Josh Aurand, Assistant Superintendent for Business & Operations
Jason Blume, Assistant Superintendent for Communications & Community Relations

3. Pledge of Allegiance: Windsor Elementary Students selected by classroom teachers

Presenter: Kasie Kosinski, Windsor Principal

Students: Nolan Stone, Arabelle Freeman, Hendrix Shaw, Addison Fink, Gavin Barnard, Maya Parker, Adrien Langford, Gabilela Fertita, Freya Burnett, Athena Farve, Vinny Peavler, Cal Kelly, Jace Leber, Jackson Freeman

**Nomination of Megan Hastings as Secretary Pro Tem in the absence of Evelyn Meeks
1st McKnight 2nd Thompson
All voted aye, Nomination approved**

4. Approval of Agenda

Change: Add student travel 12 (A) (1) and Consent Agenda 13 (B)

Larry asked that the Personnel Agenda be pulled into closed session discussion

Unanimous consensus to pull the personnel agenda into closed session

Megan asked that 14 B be pulled but it was determined it would be discussed at the time of recommendation.

Motion to approve Agenda with changes

1st McKnight 2nd Thompson

Sterling, Thompson, McKnight, Carlson, Smith, Hastings – 6 ayes

Motion carried

5. The Mission of the Harlem Consolidated School District, as a vital part of the community, is to help diverse learners realize their unlimited potential by providing an educational program dedicated to academic excellence and the development of strong character in a safe and respectful learning environment.

Presenter: Dr. Terrell Yarbrough, Superintendent

6. Conduct of Public Hearing concerning the intent of the Board of Education to sell \$5,750,000 School Fire Prevention and Safety Bonds of the District

Public hearing

President Sterling called the public hearing to order at 6:09 p.m.

a. Roll Call

Kurt Thompson, Aaron McKnight, Rebecca Carlson, Larry Smith, Megan Hastings, Mike Sterling

Absent: Evelyn Meeks

Other Attendees:

Kris Arduino, Recording Secretary

Dr. Terrell Yarbrough, Superintendent

Dr. Shelley Wagner, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources

Dr. Michelle Erb, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction

Jason Blume, Assistant Superintendent for Communications & Community Relations

Josh Aurand, Assistant Superintendent for Business & Operations

b. Purpose of the Bond sale

At 6:09 p.m. President Sterling announced that the next item for the Board of Education is to hold a public hearing to receive public comments on the proposal to sell bonds in an amount not to exceed \$5,750,000 for the purpose of conforming its existing facilities that house students to the building code promulgated by the State Board of Education of the State of Illinois, by altering, reconstructing and repairing said facilities and having equipment purchased and installed therein and explained that all persons desiring to be heard would have an opportunity to present written or oral testimony with respect thereto.

Any comments or written testimony – No comments or written testimony were noted by Board members or public

Mr. Aurand noted these bonds will cover HMS modifications and HH9 and Hoffman Campus projects this upcoming summer

c. Further comments if any – none were noted

d. Any written testimony – none noted for a second time

e. President asks public for any written or oral comments – no other comments noted

f. Announcement regarding any oral or written testimony – none were noted at this public hearing other than Mr. Aurand's note regarding projects covered

Motion and second to adjourn the public hearing by a roll call vote at 6:10 p.m.

1st Carlson 2nd Thompson

McKnight, Carlson, Smith, Hastings, Sterling, Thompson – all aye

Motion carried

Public Hearing closed and adjourned at 6:18 p.m.

7. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes: September 23, 2024 Public Hearing & Regular Minutes

Minutes in the approvals 13 D that there is a typo stating McKane and not McKnight which needs to be corrected

1st McKnight 2nd Hastings

Carlson, Smith, Hastings, Sterling, Thompson, McKnight – 6 ayes

Motion carried

8. Jason Blume, Assistant Superintendent for Communications & Community Relations

8.A. Awards and Recognitions

Presenter: Jason Blume, Assistant Superintendent for Communications & Community Relations

Harlem High School Student Newspaper – “Harlem Horizon” – Journalism students

The instructor addressed the Board regarding 14 students on the Journalism Team, Kaleb Blazer, Dominick Coletta, Madelaine Curry, Mason Hints were present. Harlem High School journalism earned a \$1500 grant to start off the new newspaper, “Harlem Horizon”. This grant will provide funds for students to attend conferences to do many other things to improve journalism skills. Harlem High school was one of 16 schools to be awarded the grant due to the letter that was written to the Illinois Press Foundation. Students plan to have a strong journalism presence and believe in the power of having a voice, All students need to have a fair and equitable opportunity to have a voice.

9. Comments from the Community

1. Evan Ecker, a senior, addressed the Board regarding funding for the Vivian Peterson Auditorium advocating for renovations to the auditorium. Students can have futures in the fine arts and received \$70,000 in scholarships last year. He asked why it is underfunded. It is a purpose for some students to go to school and dream.

Testimonies were read in from Alumni student. It brings people together and gives memories.

Fine Arts have equal impact as sports. There are only seven house lights available and much more is needed.

He requested that we work towards a common plan and be proactive about this for students.

2. Mason Hintz, a junior and journalism student. The auditorium has many uses and rentals to dance companies. The space needs to be improved so that students can shine. Lighting flickers have caused student stress. He joined in freshman year and it changed his life when he joined theater. He was able to show his passion and he has been accepted for the Allstate Show “The Prom” which is the biggest show you can get into. He suffered a short term memory loss and

being a part of the theatre helped him get through many tests last summer. He has done the sound, projections and lights.

3. Jeremy Hissong sent in a public comment by email on October 15, 2024, related to the high school auditorium lighting, in support of fine arts students and update of the auditorium which will be noted in the record, noting that future student careers are important in the arts as in the CTE programs.

4. Steve Palm, a district resident, addressed the Board, noting he is very experienced in sound and lighting, is a parent of three former Harlem students. Posted a letter on the Save Harlem Group on the FB web. The lighting counsel had died and there would be no lights. He volunteered and spent many hours and a couple of thousand of dollars so that kids could have shows that year. With his IT background he sees it as a lack of cohesive plan to keep that auditorium updated so students have the space so they can move on. It may be a lack of curiosity that people don't realize what the real state of this is. It needs a cohesive plan and many of the problems were by prior administrations. But as the School Board you should oversee the administration step up, assess and see the value with a cohesive plan being put together to spend money to obtain grant money which he understands could be up to \$50,000, donations with matching funds, or business that could help fund. He asked that the Board get a handle on what the condition is and the value of the space.

10. Approval of Bills

10.A. Payables Summary \$ 1,619,037.60

10.B. Voided Checks \$29,557.04

10.C. Payroll Voucher(s) \$6,965,010.17

10.D. Accounts Payable Warrants \$8,584,057.70 total

Mr. Aurand reviewed the expenditures split out by Fund totaling \$8,584,057.70

No questions were asked, clarification that it is \$8,584,057.70

Motion to approve Bills as reviewed

1st Smith 2nd Sterling

Smith, Hastings, Sterling, Thompson, McKnight, Carlson – 6 ayes

Motion carried

Kurt asked Josh to get information out on the auditorium and what has been done so far and is planned. Josh noted that last four or five years he has worked with Chris Engler and in 2021-2022 spent a quarter of million dollars on the control booth. We discussed that these were the priority and eventually working toward the lights. We are having conversations and the architect and engineer were there last week and he did the rerack in 2008. To his knowledge nothing has been denied but we are just working on the priority list. Kurt asked if the catwalk is a concern with potential fire hazards, there are some smaller things that could be taken care of now. Kurt asked if the Board can be made aware of the issues. Kurt noted the ADA access, carpet, lighting, the catwalk. Terrell noted that we will need to go back after tonight's comments to see where we are on this and have further discussion We do have life safety surveys done every year. Josh needs to have things brought to him if there is an issue. Some

of the things brought up tonight like no funding per Mike is news to him tonight. We did spend a quarter of a million dollars. Due to supply chain demands due to COVID, it wasn't that they were not going to fix the lighting board as nothing was available but no temporary fix was done so it was not rejected out of funding. Terrell noted that the bottom line is that we have heard the comments and we will get it done. Whether or not things have been brought to our attention before tonight we will get it done. Aaron noted that he would like to do a walk through with Chris Engler. Mike noted it will need to go through Business Services. Aaron would like to see it so when we do have the bids come in he would like to know what we are looking at it. Kurt noted we need to make sure we hear of things and know that everything is being done. Josh noted we need to make sure it is the right fix, make sure things are legal and we are looking at ways to fix the things that have been brought forward. There is a plan.

11. Communications and Committee Reports

11.A. Larry Smith, Board member

- Thanked the Windsor students and Principal for leading the Pledge. They are ready, responsible and respectful.

- Noted the public comments and noted that the time to discuss the auditorium and letting the people that made those comments know we are open to these things and we want what is best for students. The District does take responsibility for the students and facilities. If there is something like the playgrounds we put a process in place to take care of them. He appreciates the work of the Board and people coming out with comments.

11.B. Megan Hastings, Board Member

- Noted she did not attend the COTW meeting

- Journalism is great and kudos to the journalism kids that wrote the letter and last part of the speech

- Thanked Evan for his advocacy as she has followed online, standing up for something you love but seeing the purpose for others

- Thanked both Evan and Mason for bringing the advocacy forward, noting her favorite public comments are from students

- HHS culinary she was invited to see in action and adores this program and the students. Today they worked with Baker Street Burgers and the teacher has many connections to share with the kids

- Flag football team had an awesome season and it was amazing to watch these girls

- Parent Pac reached out to her to see if she could attend the internet and social media safety talk. One thing stood out noting she felt for everyone having young kids to have to deal with this. The devices in kids' hands is the issue and not the books.

- Special note to the Middle School there was all three assistant principals in attendance that evening at one time or another

- Tries hard to shout out about all the amazing things and programs which are incredible and so much good is being done not everyone realizes that no one else in the area is doing all of this

and pushed the administration to keep scream loudly about this and get the messages out and - Let's help folks find it.

11.B.1. Next Education Committee meeting: November 13, 2024 @ 4:30 p.m.

11.C. Michael Sterling, President

- Thanked the Windsor Wasps and Kasie for leading the Pledge

- Recognition of the Journalism Club and "Harlem Horizon" newspaper

- Noted the emails and messages are always read, wanting to let people know that so many board members reached out to students in admiration of what they are advocating for and the knowledge the board gains is critical so shining a light is a good thing. Evan noted that he is bringing this for all future students as they are too scared to address the Board. The student achievements are the Board's achievements

- He was not at the COTW meeting but did attend the Girls' Flag Football game and they did a good job for a new sport team, and commended all teams with Harlem hosting the event

11.C.1. Next Regular Board Meeting: October 28, 2024 @ 6:00 p.m.

11.C.2. Next Policy Committee Meeting: November 13, 2024 @ 4:30 p.m.

11.C.3. Motion to appoint the 2024 IASB Delegate to the 2024 IASB Delegate Assembly on behalf of the Harlem School District. (vote by consensus)

Nomination of Kurt Thompson as the Delegate by Aaron, seconded by Mike

Nomination of Aaron by Rebecca – Kurt conceded he will be the Delegate, no second

Consensus taken and unanimous to appoint Kurt Thompson as the IASB Delegate

11.C.4. Motion that Kurt Thompson, as the appointed 2024 IASB Delegate be granted the authority to vote on the IASB Resolutions at the 2024 Delegate Assembly solely in accordance with the consensus of this Board of Education on October 15, 2024. (vote by consensus)

1st McKnight 2nd Sterling

Hastings, Sterling, Thompson, McKnight, Carlson, Smith – all yes

Motion carried

Motion to move the IASB Resolutions consensus to October 28, 2024

1st Carlson 2nd Sterling

Sterling, Thompson, McKnight, Carlson, Smith, Hastings – all aye

Motion carried

11.D. Evelyn Meeks, Secretary – absent given by Mike

11.D.1. Next Equity & Social Justice Meeting: November 13, 2024 @ 4:30 p.m.

11.E. Kurt Thompson, Vice President

- Thanked the public comment individuals

- Thanked the Windsor students and principal
- Adding to the Journalism grant is fantastic, the NSLD did an article about the District as a tie in to the grant and having the paper come back is fantastic
- Noted it was great seeing the comments especially from students and others bringing the awareness
- Having Baker Street come in and help students is wonderful, as well as the Ice Hogs, fine arts students sang the National Anthem to a full house at the Ice Hogs game and it was wonderful
- Great news with electric bus grants from the COTW, some great opportunities for two potential buses via some grants, installation of the charging courts and other ways to save money over a gas bus and it will be a great trial run
- Seeing how electric buses could help power homes in Florida during the Hurricane was really impressive and it would be a great option to help out in an emergency if one exists

11.E.1. Next Business Services Committee meeting: November 13, 2024 @ 4:30 p.m.

11.F. Aaron McKnight, Board member

- Noted he loves having the students come in to lead the Pledge
- Noted that having the students address the Board was awesome
- Culinary Program is fantastic and he has a daughter that competed today
- The things we are doing in the District are awesome
- He is committed to see what is going on with the auditorium so when it comes back to Business Services he will understand the jargon. Steve Palm offered to go on the tour with him, and Aaron noted he wants this scheduled sooner than later. It is a pathway program and we need this updated as scholarships also revolve around this. Hats off to the students to garner support for their advocacy He was not aware of the issues before the meeting
- Encouraged everyone to cheer for Guilford as they knocked our team out and they have a very high ranking in the State
- We need to get it out there about what is going right with this District

11.G. Rebecca Carlson, Board member

- Thanked the Windsor Wasps for buzzing in to lead the Pledge and personally state their names
- Noted that Evan did an outstanding job
- Noted she can't wait to read the Harlem Horizon with the scoops on people
- Noted she had a blast at Parker Center reading to four classes and kids are just enthralled
- Noted she wants to see a board member shadow someone at the middle school as she was concerned about space and congestion – but she would like to see the whole Board to go to see

12. Administrative Reports

12.A. Dr. Michelle Erb, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction

12.A.1. Recommendation to approve Student Travel Requests: Overnight travel for Cross Country if they qualify for Sectionals this weekend

12.B. Josh Aurand, Assistant Superintendent for Business & Operations, Chief School Business Official

12.B.1. Recommendation to approve Resolution Declaring Surplus Property: HAC, Loves Park Elementary

12.B.2. Recommendation to approve Facility Requests: Six Flags Hurricane Harbor for training

12.B.3. Recommendation to approve ARC Design to provide design and work drawings for Olson Park Elementary and Harlem Middle School parking lot repairs, and Harlem High School varsity baseball field backstop and fence

Josh noted that these items were in the budget that the Board passed and Dr. Yarbrough and himself went over to view the fencing a space.

Megan asked about the netting and fencing so wants to know the actual. Josh noted that the exact plan would be drawn up and it was walked with engineers, removing the rusty fence, putting some feet of concrete in and some netting system. She asked for the total number. Josh noted that we used just the engineers for this to save money and we budgeted \$100,000 and they were told that. Megan asked to split the item out as voting items as 14 B.5

12.B.4. Recommendation to approve a proposal with Easy Archive for digital document archiving service at a cost of \$16,680 and an annual fee for a cost of \$2,400 in order to keep all plans by location in one place for all contractors, architects, engineers and digitally archived

12.B.5. Recommendation to approve the estimated annual 2024 Tax Levy

Mr. Aurand reviewed highlights as follows:

Timeline – October 9, Business Services Tax Levy Presentation levying under 5%, November 13, Business Services, Tax Levy Discussion and on November 18, 2024 Board meeting Adoption of 2024 Tax Levy

Limiting Rate Calculation 2023 Extension Base 50,880,195.71, EAV New 1,892,374

Annual CPI which is 3.4% for 2024, Estimated Limited Rate 5.5135

EAV projected to go up 13.25%, then the tax rate comes down from 6.129 to 5 to 5.3 ballpark estimated

Projected Rate Setting EAV 956,104.578 (13.25%) that does not mean an increase of 13%

County Estimated Rate is approximately 5.53, last year 6.12, so a reduction of .599

Recommendation is to levy under 5% , amounts below do not reflect \$1,790,709 Property Tax Relief Grant Abatement

Totals – 2023 Levy 53,539,117, 2023 Extension 53,543,960, 2024 Levy 54,705,701

Reviewed the comparative EAV 2009-2023

Carlson asked where the district is saving money or we need to cut the spending or where do we find some lower costs or cuts as she was asked by a community member. Josh noted that we talked about this at the budget presentations but this is one of the only forms of revenue keeping up with the cost of living and health insurance cost is a huge impact. These funds are critical in the benefits and cost of living in salaries year to year

Megan noted that when we start talking about salaries it is our educators and the reason why we are here as they are frontline with our students and should be last on the list of cuts or decreases. We need to say to people that they are providing a service to educate or kids and responsible for the most important things in our lives

We have tons of projects and these projects are crucial and not projects that can be cut but when we address these types of questions we have added up the dollars with Josh and Kurt and Aaron are always on the lookout to cut costs

Aaron noted we are using engineers in some things instead of architect and using civil engineers for HVAC projects to save money by cutting out middlemen, so we are changing the way we do business. Kurt noted we have creativity and skill in our administrators for all of these costs and projects and we need to keep our edge as the investment is our kids. Mike noted that we are not doing anything to overspend. She noted that this particular building is spending a lot in salaries from this persons' point of view. Aaron noted she needs to bring examples in order to discuss this. Josh has found many unique ways so the COTW is an important meeting to make sure you have the correct message to attend the meeting. If there are suggestions from someone bring it to Josh or the appropriate administrator to research, community solar is a great investment, the bus recycle plan, We are constantly looking for avenues to save money yet provide quality for our students

12.B.6. Recommendation to approve an Independent Contractor Agreement with Jannice Bubnack to provide tutoring services for students who attend Concordia Lutheran School for the FY25 school year for a total of \$5,000, paid with ESEA Title I Funds

12.B.7. Recommendation to approve Engagement Letter with Chapman and Cutler LLP for bond counsel and disclosure counsel services related to the issuance of School Fire Prevention and Safety Bonds, Series 2025.

Josh noted that the PMA Agreement and this Agreement work together for bond issuance for the roof repair work

12.C. Dr. Shelley Wagner, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources

12.C.1. Recommendation to approve Personnel Agenda & Addendum

Review by Dr. Wagner

19 Employments, 6 Transfers

12.C.2. Resignations – 12 since the last meeting

12.D. Dr. Terrell Yarbrough, Superintendent

12.D.1. Freedom of Information Act Request (FOIA) submitted by the Harlem Federation of Teachers requesting information relative to emails and librarian's schedule, and the District's response sent with inclusive documents dated October 8, 2024

Motion to go into closed session to discuss Employment of Personnel (5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(1)

1st Carlson 2nd Sterling

Sterling, Thompson McKnight, Carlson, Smith, Hastings – 6 ayes

Motion carried

The Board took a brief recess at 7:37 p.m., went into closed session and returned to open session at 7:52 p.m.

Motion to go into closed session to discuss Negotiations (5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(2) at 7:53 p.m. at 7:52 p.m.

1st Sterling 2nd McKnight

Thompson, McKnight, Carlson, Smith, Hastings, Sterling – 6 ayes

Motion carried

The Board returned to open session at 7:56 p.m.

3. Consent Agenda

13.A. Approve Personnel Agenda & Addendum

13.B. Approve Student Travel Request(s)

13.C. Approve Facility Request(s)

Motion to approve Consent Agenda 13 (A)(B)(C)

1st McKnight 2nd Sterling

Carlson, Smith, Hastings, Sterling, Thompson, McKnight – 6 ayes

Motion carried

14. ACTION ITEMS

14.A. Motion to Approve Resolution Declaring Surplus Property

1st Carlson 2nd Sterling

Smith, Hastings, Sterling, Thompson, McKnight, Carlson – 6 ayes

Motion carried

14.B. Motion to Approve ARC Design to provide design and working drawings for Olson Park Elementary School & Harlem Middle School parking lot repairs

1st Smith 2nd Sterling

Hastings, Sterling, Thompson, McKnight, Carlson, Smith 6 ayes

Motion carried

14 B.5 Motion to approve ARC Design to provide working drawings for High School varsity baseball field backstop and fence

1st Thompson 2nd McKnight

**Sterling, Thompson, McKnight, Carlson (abstain not sure should be spending the money, Smith yes, Hastings (no) – 4 yes, 1 no and 1 abstain
Motion carried**

**14.C. Motion to Approve a proposal with Easy Archive for digital document archiving service at a cost of \$16,680 and an annual fee for a cost of \$2,400
1st Carlson 2nd Sterling
Sterling, Thompson, McKnight, Carlson, Smith, Hastings – 6 ayes
Motion carried**

**14.D. Motion to Approve the Estimated Annual 2024 Tax Levy
1st Thompson 2nd McKnight
Thompson, McKnight, Carlson (no), Smith, Hastings, Sterling - 5 ayes 1 no
Motion carried**

**14.E. Motion to Approve an Independent Contractor Agreement with Jannice Bubnack to provide tutoring services for students who attend Concordia Lutheran School for the FY 25 school year for a total of \$5,000, paid with ESEA Title I Funds
1st Thompson 2nd Hastings
McKnight, Carlson, Smith, Hastings, Sterling, Thompson – 6 ayes
Motion carried**

**14.F. Motion to Approve Engagement Letter with Chapman and Cutler LLP for bond counsel and disclosure counsel services related to the issuance of School Fire Prevention and Safety Bonds, Series 2025
1st Thompson 2nd Sterling
Carlson, Smith, Hastings, Sterling, Thompson, McKnight – 6 ayes
Motion carried**

15. Announcements and Discussion: Megan Hastings noted that Dr. Yarbrough will follow up on the auditorium and thanked everyone for the discussion

Rebecca thanked everyone as well for the discussion on the auditorium and appreciates the camaraderie on the Board.

16. Executive Session to discuss Employment of Personnel (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1), Negotiations (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2), Selection of a Person to Fill a Public Office (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(3), Pending Litigation (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11), Student Discipline (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(9), Placement of Individual Students in Special Education Programs and Other Matters Relating to Individual Students (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(10), Purchase or Lease of Real Property for the Use of the District (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5), Setting of a Price for Sale or Lease of Property Owned by the District (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(6), Self-Evaluation, Practices and Procedures or Professional Ethics (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(16), Sale or Purchase of Securities, Investments or Investment Contracts (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(7), Security Procedures (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(8), Establishment of Reserves or Settlement of Claims as provided in Local Government and Governmental Employees Tort Immunity Act (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(12), and Discussion of Lawfully Closed Meeting Minutes (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21).

17. ACTION ITEMS AFTER CLOSED SESSION

17.A. Motion to Approve Memorandum of Understanding between Harlem Board of Education, Harlem Federation of Teachers (HFT) and Harlem Federation of Support Staff (HFSS) relative to full-time Registered Nurses working conditions.

1st Thompson 2nd Hastings

Smith, Hastings, Sterling, Thompson, McKnight, Carlson – 6 ayes

Motion carried

18. Motion to Adjourn

1st McKnight 2nd Thompson

All voted aye, Motion carried

The meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kris Arduino,

Recording Secretary

ATTEST:

President

Secretary

Dated: _____