

**Official Minutes of the
Oak Park Board of Education District 97
260 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois
November 26, 2019 Meeting**

President Broy called the meeting to order at 6:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Broy, Kearney, Spurlock, Breymaier (arrived at 7:02 p.m.), and Moore
Absent: Liebl and Kim
Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Carol Kelley, Senior Director of Equity Carrie Kamm, Senior Director of Technology Michael Arensdorff, Senior Director of Student and Administrative Services Felicia Starks Turner, Chief Academic and Accountability Officer Ebony Lofton, Senior Director of Human Resources Gina Herrmann, Senior Director of Buildings and Grounds Jeanne Keane, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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Moore moved, seconded by Kearney that the Board move into executive session for the purpose of Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees or Legal Counsel for the District 5 ILCS 120/2(C)(1) at 6:00 p.m.

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

OPEN SESSION

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Kearney moved, seconded by Spurlock that the Board move into Open Session at 6:21 p.m. All members of the Board were in agreement.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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Joan Slanina, an Oak Park resident asked the Board to not capture the TIF dollars. She explained that this would be a struggle for senior citizens. She told the Board that as a retired District 97 teacher, she will be taxed out of the town.

Kitty Conklin, an Oak Park resident, read the following statement;

“Some of you may be aware that I started an online petition late last Thursday which encourages the various Oak Park taxing bodies to provide Oak Park taxpayers some much needed financial relief as your various 2020 budgets are finalized. This evening, I would like to share that 871 Oak Parkers have signed this petition. 871 of us are asking you and the other four governments who are taking all the TIF funds to provide us with tax relief without making any cuts to service, something that all of us know you have more than enough money to do. To the supporters of this petition, we are confident that we have voted yes every time you have requested money. You have not suffered during the TIF period. Taxpayers have done our part. But now we feel it is both egregious and immoral that District 97 is yet again taking a large amount of money from taxpayers. You are not operating in a vacuum. There are five of our units of governments that all appear to have joined in this plan to take TIF.”

“For those of you new to this board, two years ago, at about this same time of year, I was one of four residents, including other elected officials, who asked District 97 to not take the \$2,500,000 “mistake” that came your way due to the triennial reassessment. Yet you looked right through us and took it. Tonight, I would like to share some of our neighbor’s comments as to why they are asking you to provide taxpayers some relief.”

“There is no good reason for the taxing bodies to take this additional money. We have generously funded our community and we are not lacking. Additional monies will result in poor decisions being made, as well as broken trust between the boards and the community, when the pile of cash is too high. Have we not learned anything from D200 (high school) amassing \$125 million by over taxation?”

"I can no longer handle the taxes levied on my home in Oak Park. I have had to BUDGET my whole life to afford the things I needed and I do NOT believe that my Village has any understanding of fiscal responsibility. I also think my village does not understand how our taxes will push out long-term residents, those on fixed incomes, single parent households, and destroy diversity. There will be NO diversity in Oak Park because only the wealthiest will be able to afford our Village."

"We elect representatives to do the best by us, our investments in the community, our children. How are they fulfilling that responsibility while we are being pushed out of our homes by their fiscal irresponsibility? Give us back our tax dollars so we can continue living here. Bad enough nothing was returned after that referenda debacle."

"I'm signing because my taxes for my condo are almost \$7,000 and keep going up. This is honestly making me want to sell after only owning here for a year."

"I'm signing because absorbing the TIF into the ongoing levy is unconscionably underhanded politics—a way of unnecessarily increasing taxes while avoiding the appearance of doing so. This is a wonderful opportunity to actually (decrease) the average Oak Parker's taxes, with no cuts to services, and there has been little to no discussion by most of our public servants about doing so. The typical voter in Oak Park has historically been very generous about approving tax increases when brought to a referendum, so for the various boards to take extra money just because they can, with no immediate need to do so, suggests self-interest as opposed to showing good fiscal stewardship."

STATEMENT REGARDING THE TAX LEVY

President Broy read the following statement regarding the tax levy;

"On November 9, the District 97 Board of Education unanimously approved the estimated tax levy for 2019.

The Board has received messages from the community regarding this decision, some in support of the decision and some opposed. In response to those messages, the Board plans to review the process and share an update with the community after the holiday.

A public hearing will be held on December 10, 2019. A final discussion on the levy decision will occur at that time, followed by the Board taking action on this topic."

ACTION ITEMS

ACTION ITEMS

2.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 29, 2019 BOARD MEETING

Spurlock moved, seconded by Moore, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the minutes from the November 29, 2019.

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

2.2 APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

Spurlock moved, seconded by Kearney, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the consent agenda.

3.2.1 Approval of Bill List

3.2.2 Personnel

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

2.3.1 APPOINTMENT OF ADMINISTRATOR

Spurlock moved, seconded by Kearney, that the Board of Education, District 97, appoint William Lee as the Assistant Principal at Julian School at an annual salary of \$82,111. Salary is prorated based on one hundred and twenty three (123) days with a salary of \$51,489.06 for the period commencing on December 2, 2019.

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

2.3.2 APPOINTMENT OF DISTRICT TREASURER

Kearney moved, seconded by Spurlock, that the Board of Education, District 97, appoint Mr. Patrick King as its District Treasurer for the period of time November 26, 2019 through June 30, 2020 per the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools.

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

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

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BEYE ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Jeanne Keane and architect Jennifer Costanzo came to the table. They reported that on May 14, the five year facility plan was presented to the Board; however, the Beye School ADA was not part of that report. Keane reminded the Board that they indicated at the approval of the five year plan that the district fully intended to make needed investments in order to make Beye physically accessible to students and families. Keane told the Board that the district, Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC) members, and STR have collaborated on how to best address accessibility at Beye School. Several iterations were explored and the recommended solution is to achieve vertical accessibility to the facility, accommodate accessibility at interior level changes, provide program equity, library renovations and a STEAM room, and provide handicap accessible toilet rooms on each level. This plan would include an elevator and ramps to classrooms. Some of the current staircases would be removed. Keane noted that this plan does not address all ADA issues at the school. Some minor changes, like door knobs, will be addressed in the long-term plan. Keane noted that this plan is for 2021, so the Board does not need to take action right away.

Costanzo noted that this plan is \$200,000 less than the last option presented to the Board. She explained that this option renovates the locker room space and creates a steam room. The cost would be \$4,983,293.

Keane told the Board that students who live in the Beye School district who are not serviced by the current layout of the school are moved to another school.

Board comments included interest in knowing how many children are impacted by the current school layout. Interest was expressed in maintaining the fifth grade penthouse, noting that the fourth and fifth grade classrooms could be switched if there is a fifth grade student who has a disability.

President Broy offered to reach out to the FAC committee and invite them to sit down with the full Board to discuss options.

This item will return to the Board for action on December 10, 2019, but can be tabled if necessary.

BROOKS AND JULIAN ILLINOIS QUALITY SUPPORTING RUBRIC

Carrie Kamm came to the table. She reported that both Brooks and Julian Middle Schools are eligible for the IL Empower school improvement grant. In 2020, Brooks will receive \$44,428, and Julian will receive \$46,566. Both schools plan to continue their work with their current learning partners: Midwest PBIS (Brooks) and IL MTSS (Julian). This item will return to the Board for action on December 10, 2019.

DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY

Keane explained that there is some old curriculum from Brook and Teaching and Learning, and some old library books from Hatch that need approval for disposal. This item will return to the Board for action on December 10, 2019.

STAGE CURTAIN BID

Keane reminded the Board that she submitted an RFP for stage curtains on October 30, 2019. She explained that purchasing new curtains that are pretreated with fire retardant only cost about \$2,000 more than having the existing curtains retreated. Keane noted that the full cost for seven buildings would be about \$151,000. She noted that there would be a net savings in the long-term. This item will return to the Board for action on December 10, 2019.

COMMUNITY WORKS SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT

Dr. Kelley reported that the Community Works Foundation has three arms; one being PlanItGreen. She explained that PlanItGreen is asking the Board to consider signing on to the climate letter of support. It was noted that PlanItGreen will be announcing the names of their early adopters on December 10.

Board comments included noting that climate change is a huge challenge, and anything that the Board can do to support such initiatives is helpful.

It was noted that a lot of the effort would be put toward considering strategies, although a lot of the support would be financial. Jeanne Keane reported that although solar energy is a big part of the PlanItGreen proposal, some of the schools can not support solar panels.

Board comments included noting that the 100 percent goal is highly aspirational. It was suggested that this initiative is committing the district to a process that would shrink the district's environmental footprint. It was noted that the Board has a policy that directs the district to consider sustainability. It was suggested that Gary Cuneen from PlanItGreen should be invited to address the Board on this topic.

Keane shared that she is currently attending most of the sustainability meetings, and recommended that the Board sign the letter of support. She noted that some of the initiatives defined in the plan, like greenhouses, are not feasible for the district. Dr. Kelley suggested that one of the Board members might like to attend the meetings as well.

One Board member suggested creating a list that would be complimentary to the PlanItGreen plan. Keane offered to reach out to other districts regarding their efforts in this area. The Board expressed interest in supporting the plan, and Keane offered to reach out to Gary Cuneen to let him know that the Board plans to sign the letter of support.

BOARD ASSIGNMENTS

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STANDING BOARD COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORT FOLLOW UP (as needed – FAC, FORC, CCE and CLAIM)

COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (CCE)

President Broy reported that the committee is going to discuss financials, and brainstorm ways to educate the community around finances. She indicated that there might be opportunities to engage the community throughout the years.

She reported that the committee is interested in sharing feedback on future projects. They discussed how this might be done, and expressed a need to bring in different Board members who might have expertise in the area the committee is focused on to share updates and discuss options. It was suggested that CCE might need to be thought of in a different way. The Board members in attendance expressed support.

CLAIM

It was reported that the CLAIM committee met in early November. They talked about data sharing with D200 that would be similar to that of a unified school district. They talked about keeping an eye on the potential property tax freeze and how that might impact the district. The pension shift was also discussed.

At the IASB conference those in attendance talked about the Capital bill. We should consider what the options are for us. Consider talking to Don Harmon to see if we are on the list. The district should also see if it is eligible for grant funding and see if we are shovel ready. IASB is creating a construction taskforce for groups that are interested in this. It was reported that IASB offered three different sessions on legislative changes during the Joint Conference.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL LIAISON REPORT FOLLOW UP (as needed – IGOV, PTO council, CEC, OPEF, IGOV

During the last meeting of IGOV, the governing bodies discussed the implementation of the new cannabis laws, but no conclusions were drawn. Issues related to marijuana was also discussed. IGOV also discussed renewable energy and what the different groups are doing in this area. The Park District found some great programming to purchase solar energy at a great cost. The group also participated in a short discussion on the levy.

PTOC

It was reported that the PTOC met last night.

CEC

The next meeting is scheduled for December 5. It is the tri-board meeting and will be held at the high school. Member Spurlock shared that she judged the poetry slam at Julian middle school today.

POLICY COMMITTEE

Member Kearney reported that the committee met with Jeanne Keane, Gina Herrmann and Jim Hackett. They talked about sustainability, and the background check process. The committee agreed that it does not make sense to publish procedures related to the background check process, but agreed to develop language stating that the district supports parent participation, and if they have concerns about the process, they can reach out to the district. The conversation would remain confidential.

Member Kearney reported that the committee also started reviewing a large quantity of PRESS updates that will come to the Board soon for review and approval.

It was suggested that the Board may want to talk about policy at some point, considering what they would like to see in policies, and allowing them to be proactive. It was agreed that this topic should be added to one of the January agendas.

CONCLUDING ITEMS

BOARD REMARKS

CONCLUDING
ITEMS

A Board member asked for information related to the Lobby Guard system. Dr. Kelley explained that a pilot program is currently being run, and it is the same system that is used at the high school. She shared that all the schools have been asking for something. With the pilot program, the goal is to learn. Dr. Kelley suggested that if anyone wants more information, they should be directed to Jim Hackett, the district's security coordinator. It was suggested that the district should educate the community instead of answering questions one at a time. The administration was asked to think about the impact on a person who comes to the school without their ID. Dr. Kelley explained that other groups that use the facilities should have their own process in place.

It was suggested that Hackett include an update on the pilot in the weekly report to the Board sometime in December.

Member Spurlock left the meeting at 7:36 p.m.

One Board member expressed his opinion that we are living in the safest of times and the schools are the most secure, but another Board member disagreed with the statement, but suggested that checking people's IDs might make them feel less welcome in the schools. Interest was expressed in seeing the collected data from the pilot to see if it addresses the questions asked by the Board. Dr. Kelley asked the Board members to send the questions on this topic to her.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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Patty Flannery shared that she has children who attend school in the village, and expressed interest in talking about the tax consequences to the middle class in Oak Park. She told the Board that she is a single parent, and when she purchased her home, it cost \$596,000, but today it is valued at \$528,000. She is currently paying \$36,000 a year for her daughter to attend college. Although she has lost about \$100,000 of equity in her home, her taxes have risen from \$12,328 to \$19,000. Flannery explained that she is one of eight kids who grew up in Oak Park. She assured the Board that she is fiscally responsible, but the increasing taxes are such a burden. She noted that with all the governing board increases, her taxes have increased by 60 percent. Flannery told the Board that she loves the diversity of Oak Park, but she would not consider purchasing a home in this community right now, and there are so many people who feel the same way. She asked the Board to consider that the average income is only \$87,000. She has a friend living with her who she would not be able to live in Oak Park on her own. Flannery finished by sharing the taxes listed on the Cook County website.

AGENDA MAINTENANCE

The draft agenda for December 10, 2019 was reviewed and recommendations were made.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to conduct, President Broy declared the meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Public

Board President

Board Secretary