

OAK PARK AND RIVER FOREST HIGH SCHOOL
201 North Scoville Avenue
Oak Park, IL 60302

Adjourned FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
Thursday, January 20, 2011

An Adjourned Finance Committee meeting was held on Thursday, January 20, 2011. Ms McCormack called the meeting to order at a.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were John C. Allen, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Amy McCormack, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, and Sharon Patchak-Layman. Also present were Dr. Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; Michael Caroscio, Chief Information Officer; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; Lauren M. Smith, Director of Human Resources; Cheryl L. Witham, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors included Kay Foran, Community Relations and Communications Coordinator; James Paul Hunter, FSEC Chair.

Advisory Leadership Team (ALT)

Relative to the DLT's recommendation for the composition and the format of the ALT, Ms. Patchak-Layman felt the process should be open (the meetings announced or posted and minutes kept) and that it was important for not only the staff but the students as well to hear the conversation. She asked what was it that they did not want the people to hear.

Discussion ensued about FAC's unanimous opinion for transparency and has built in safeguards for that to occur but it also felt that the best communication would occur in the meetings were not open to the public. In the past when visitors have attended, some of the committee members were uncomfortable. The Committee was also open to hearing from others about "best practice." The stakeholders have a different responsibility than the Board of Education does.

Dr. Millard favored complete transparency, understood the committee's recommendation and wanted to provide the best opportunity for a most complete conversation. Ms. McCormack concurred with not stifling the conversation and felt there were many checks and balances in the model and that the conversation would be open at the Board of Education table. Ms. Patchak-Layman stated that if it is known that the meeting is open, then it is a known factor and suggestions can be made with that knowledge. If format is approved as presented, it was not conducive to her understanding of the Open Meetings Act (OMA) which says that any groups that provide advice to the Board of Education and its documents are open to the public and the FAC model would have to be amended as it had been approved by the Board of Education.

Dr. Lee questioned the assumptions: 1) elected officials do not and should not have the responsibility of saying whatever; when they do so, they must accept the consequences of having done so; 2) employees making recommendations to the Board of Education having to do with the welfare of the district should be able to say whatever they want to say without

fear of the consequences, unlike Board of Education members. He believed that anyone wanting to influence the welfare of the District should have the opportunity to say whatever is in the best interest of the district, and take responsibility for saying it. Having been a teacher, he understood that some teachers fear repercussions about what is said in a Board of Education meeting. He had done so and he had accepted the responsibility. He supported an open process and he hoped that the committee members had the courage of those convictions and that there were safeguards so that they do not have to suffer the consequences.

Mr. Allen noted that the proposed format was not covered by the OMA and, thus, it legally did not have to follow those rules. He wanted everyone to have open and free conversations and that the model did provide transparency. This body only makes suggestions in an open forum. He supported the proposal as presented.

This will be presented at the regular Board of Education in January for approval.

Adjournment

The Finance Committee adjourned at 12:19 a.m.