

The Board meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on Thursday evening, November 20, 2008, in the Board Room of the high school.

Call to Order President Conway called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. A roll call indicated that the following members were present: John C. Allen, IV, Jacques A. Conway, Valerie J. Fisher, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, Sharon Patchak-Layman, and John P. Rigas. Also present were: Dr. Attila J. Weninger, Superintendent; Jason Edgecombe, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; Cheryl L. Witham, Chief Financial Officer; James Paul Hunter, Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair; Ryan Mullin, Student Council Board of Education Liaison; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors The Board of Education welcomed the following visitors: Kay Foran, Community Relations and Communications Coordinator; Jane Graham, OPRFHS faculty member; Iris Zaldivar of Citizens' Council, Wyanetta Johnson of APPLE; Lauren, Jacky and Manuel Gonzalez, Saleema and Kathy Rogers, Theresa & Phil Tencate, Betsy Tharp, Anne McCall, Debbie & John Figel, Kathy Wirtz, Patricia Meleedy-Rey, David Rey, Claire Austin-Kulua, John Bokum, Larry and Jill Haas, Nicole Cordero, Erin McKay, students and parents; Mitzi and William Irons; community members, Terry Dean of the *Wednesday Journal* and Chris LaFortune of the *Oak Leaves*.

Changes to the Agenda None

Student Recognition The Board of Education recognized the following students for being Illinois Illinois High School Field Hockey Association's second place state champions and congratulated the coaches Jane Graham, Lauren Przyborowski, and Selema Rogers:

Lauren Gonzalez	Ashley Egeberg
Taylor Tencate	Annie Quinn
Nicole Cordero	Jackie Huntley
Josie Rey	Ali Brozek
Hannah Weigel	Alyssa Lisle
Micheline Figel	Kristin Wirtz
Kaitlin Lisle	Olivia Thompson
Jenny Haas	Sara McCall
Emily Tharp	Megan Rogers
Erin McKay	Audrey Reardon

Board of Education Comments Mr. Conway commended the high school for hosting a dinner for the MUREE and FREE parents and students. At it, students gave testimonials as to how these organizations had helped them navigate through the high school. Police officers, social workers, teachers, staff, etc., have combined their effort to help these students.

Ms. Patchak-Layman offered to report to the Board of Education on the conference she attended on race and student achievement at another meeting. She also offered to help Mr. Allen and Dr. Weninger develop the agenda for the Board of Education's next discussion on race and student achievement. She reminded the Board of Education that many staff members have gone through a number of conversations on this subject and Mr. Rouse once had the benefit of hearing Dr. Singleton personally. She suggested that Dr. Singleton be contacted so that the school could personally hear from the one of the authors quoted at the last meeting. She suggested having an expanded subcommittee of the Board of Education to have these conversations in a preliminary way, in smaller groups, and then bring back the discussion to the entire Board of Education.

In regards to her continual request to go out for an RFQ on legal services, she noted that Illinois Association of School Boards has standardized forms for schools to use for this purpose, which is accompanied by a list of questions. She was interested in having the discussion. The contract that the Board of Education should have with its legal services should be transparent. The Board of Education has discussed legal services and she was uncomfortable about the closed session discussion and the venue about the Board of Education's legal services.

She noted the sad passing of student Devontae Green. She 1) appreciated Mr. Conway's participation, 2) was thankful for Mr. Rouse's kind words at the funeral and 3) happy about the compassion and comfort shown to students. She hoped that the school might honor those students who had died while attending OPRFHS by having a student Tradition of Excellence Wall.

Mr. Conway thanked her for her comments and he looked forward to her report on the conference.

Visitor Comments William Irons, a 20-year retiree of the OPRFHS maintenance department, addressed the Board of Education, asking that it authorize the insurance to pay for a titanium implant in his skull to help with his hearing. He referenced letters that he had sent to the Board of Education detailing the situation. This health situation forced him to accept early retirement at the high school.

The Board of Education noted that his case would be discussed in closed session and it thanked him for coming to the meeting.

Wyanetta Johnson, resident of OPRFHS, addressed the Board of Education regarding the letter she received asking her to participate in the African-American Leadership Roundtable. She asked the Board of Education not to take this approach at this time because this type of committee has not worked in the past because African-American will not air their personal problems. It took her over 20 years to earn the respect of people of color in the Village to trust her. She continued that the school already has an African-American parent group, APPLE. The school should use it. APPLE has been in the school for twenty (20) years and the past two years is the first time that the school has not worked with this group. She did not know what the school wanted these parents hesitant to say what they felt. She has had many phone calls from parents who are afraid to tell how they feel. She believed this to be a case of discrimination because it was only about African-Americans. She suggested having a town hall meeting. Parents are afraid to speak about their students for fear their students will be punished. It has been difficult working with this school as everyone has an opinion on what are the African-American problems. When African-American students are not educated, all students suffer.

Mr. Conway responded that the Superintendent initiated this Roundtable. Ms. Johnson felt that the Roundtable would divide people rather than bring them together. If the school wanted to speak to parents privately, she volunteered to bring in fifty.

FOIA Requests

Mr. Conway reported there was one FOIA request and it was resolved.

Student Life

Student Council—Mr. Mullin reported on the following:

- 1) Huskiepalooza was excellent.
- 2) The recipients of the Tradition of Excellent Award were very kind about being selected and many Board of Education members were at the dinner.
- 3) OPRFHS will have a Turkey Morp on Friday, November 21. Tickets cost \$3 with food and \$5 without food. All proceeds will go to the Oak Park Food Pantry.
- 4) Student Council is participating in the Adopt-A-Family Program.
- 5) The efforts regarding the recycling project included:

- a. Every teacher in the school was sent a checklist as to what they do now in regards to recycling; and if they would be amenable to having another recycling bin in their classrooms, etc. The response has been very positive.
 - b. Student Council is meeting with the Division Heads to work out the logistics.
 - c. Student Council was still looking at a company to buy a dumpster. He welcomed others to participate in recycling.
 - d. He also reported that the Village was again meeting on the Stadium Lights and Student Council had representation that night. He hoped it went well.
6. Student Council discussed the issue of whether credit should be given for orchestra and band participation; it did not feel that credit should be given for that because it was unique and different to other classes, e.g., the setting, etc. He added that two Student Council members were also band members and supported this opinion.
 7. Mr. Mullin also noted that while Student Council members had yet to meet with Mr. Rouse and Dr. Weninger, the overwhelming response regarding graduation dress to keep it status quo. The students did not believe the arguments made by Becca Bloch were relevant at this time as people have the option of dressing how they want in most other situations.

Mr. Conway informed Mr. Mullin regarding Heifer International, an organization that buys animals throughout the world for families so that they may support themselves. Two hundred and fifty dollars will pay for a water buffalo. Often if these families lose an animal, they will starve to death.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Weninger reported that Mr. Rouse was not at the meeting because he had recently become a new father and that Mr. Lanenga was not at the meeting tonight because he was at the Village's Plan Commission meeting.

Dr. Weninger reported that the Tradition of Excellence Award recipients both spoke fondly about the high school and Mr. Cantafio offered to do a free benefit concert for the high school or a charity of the school's choice.

Dr. Weninger reported that Janel Bishop, Assistant Principal for Student Health and Safety, does fine work and most recently the

planning of the dinner for the FREE and MUREE parents and students.

Dr. Weninger reported that the OPRF Community Foundation would make a presentation at an upcoming committee meeting about the work it is doing with the money received from the Grand Victoria Grant and how the high school might work with it regarding student achievement initiatives.

Dr. Weninger reported that he is working with Bill Planek, president of Rotary, to implement an International Rotary Program called “Job I,” as Rotary has identified the achievement gap at the high school as a program for this year. This program will help students get training and jobs this summer.

Dr. Weninger reported that OPRFHS would be closed Thursday and Friday of the week of Thanksgiving.

Citizens’ Council Report— Iris Zaldivar, co-chair of Citizens’ Council, reported that the topic for the November 13 Citizens’ Council meeting was about what it means to be a school board member and their responsibilities what they actually do. Participants included former Board of Education members Nancy Leavy, Chet Stewart, John McCulloh, and Paul Wolfman, as well as Jeff Cohn of the Illinois Association of School Boards. Each former member talked about how they got on the Board of Education, their rewarding experiences, the long meetings, how they impacted and contributed to OPRFHS, how much they had learned, and how they came to consensus on all of the topics addressed. They went through the protocols of getting on the Board, e.g., the petitions, the paperwork to file, etc. The purpose of this presentation was to spark people’s interest in either encouraging people to run or to recruiting people to run for a position on the Board of Education. Many compliments were received on this presentation.

An overall picture of how boards of education worked was presented by Mr. Cohn.

Ms. Fisher stated that she recommended the job to anyone and offered to speak to anyone interested in talking with someone currently on the Board of Education.

District Liaison & Community Reports Faculty Senate—Mr. Hunter hoped all enjoyed their holidays. He noted that Faculty Senate enjoyed the conversations with some of the Board of Education members.

Concert Tour Association—Ms. Patchak-Layman reported that Concert Tour Association met earlier this week and reported that it added \$1700 to its bank account from the music festival. CTA was also preparing for its spring break trip. There will be no trip to Europe this year, because of the economic situation with the exchange rates of Euros and Pounds. Instead, approximately 70 students will take a bus trip to Atlanta to play at former OPRFHS band director Scotty Jones’s school, and then proceed to St. Petersburg, Florida to take a five-night cruise ship where there will be a music fest, workshops, and other activities. The cost will be \$1700. The dates are Friday, March 27–April 5, 2009.

Ms. Patchak-Layman is always reminded of the great system, the CTA has to allocate dollars for those who participate in fundraising to help offset travel, music lessons and music camps.

Consent Items

Mr. Rigas moved to approve the consent items as follows:

- approved of the following consent items: the Open and Closed Minutes of October 13 and November 12, 2008 and a Declaration that the Closed Session Minutes dated January 1, 1989 through November 1, 2008 shall remain closed;
- Personnel Recommendations;
- Resolutions Ratifying and Confirming Execution of Certain Vouchers and Payment of Certain Bills and Expenses;
- Resolution Authorizing Execution of Certain Vouchers for the month of November;
- *The Crying of Lot 49* for the English Division;
- Check Disbursements dated November 20, 2008;
- Monthly Treasurer’s Report;
- Contract with Jewish Council for Youth Services; and
- Approval of 403 (B) Plan Document and Board Resolution;

seconded by Mr. Allen. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Acceptance of Donations & Gifts

Dr. Millard moved to accept with gratitude the gifts, as presented (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting); seconded by Dr. Lee. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Acceptance of 2008 Levy and Place on

Mr. Rigas moved to accept the 2008 Preliminary Levy as presented and to be placed on Display in the Business Office,

Display

Room 270A; seconded by Mr. Allen. A roll call vote resulted in six ayes and one nay. Ms. Patchak-Layman voted nay. Motion carried.

For the 2008 Levy, the CPI used is 4.1% and EAV for new property is estimated at \$20,000,000 plus \$21, 339,170 in TIF carve-outs. The Village of Oak Park has not given notice concerning the carve-outs due from the 2007 levy or for the carve-out due for the 2008 levy. This levy includes an assumption that the Village of Oak Park will carve-out the full value. The estimate of the 2008 aggregate tax Levy is 105.6 percent of the Actual 2007 Levy.

The total actual 2007 Levy was \$58,464,808 and the Preliminary 2008 Levy is \$61,752,377.

The timeline is as follows:

November 12	Finance Meeting	Present Preliminary Levy
November 20	Board of Education Meeting	Adopt Preliminary Levy
November 20	Display	Preliminary Levy on
December 18	Notice of Truth in Taxation Public Hearing	in local newspaper
December 18	Board of Education Meeting	Truth in Taxation Public Hearing
December 18	Board of Education Meeting	Final Adoption of Levy
December 19	Board of Education Resolution	filed at Cook County Clerk's Office

Given the economic situation the in country, as a whole and locally, Ms. Patchak-Layman felt the school needed to do what it could to make things easier for the taxpayers in the community. If the District were able to hold expenses from last year to this year, then the District could be able to let the community know that the high school was doing its part to ease their burdens. The District has the fund savings and these are extraordinary times. Ms. Patchak-Layman recommended holding to the current tax levy amount.

TIF Agreement Update

Ms. Witham reported that OPRFHS received two checks from the Oak Park Village, one in the amount of \$174,000 for the Madison Street TIF settlement and \$313,000 for the Downtown TIF settlement. OPRFHS did not receive a check for the carve-outs. Discussions will occur about the carve outs and that agreement. It was still unknown as to whether the Village would carve out property for 2008. OPRFHS has not received the funds for the 2007 carve out, which is due in 2008. The settlement payments are now current.

When asked if Ms. Witham was satisfied with the transparency about the use of the TIF funds in terms of operational costs, she responded that she did not feel a great deal of transparency between the high school and the village and was waiting for Joint Review Board meeting and its report for 2007.

**Specialized
Instruction
Provided by
Non Certificated
Persons**

Mr. Rigas moved to approve the submission of the applications for Specialized Instruction provided by Non-certificated Persons; seconded by Dr. Millard. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

These applications are being submitted because the high school has not been able to hire Certified Teachers for the part-time Japanese and Chinese positions in the World Languages Division or for the Automotive Program.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if this was the first year this person was teaching the classes Automotive Tune-up and Advanced Electricity/Electronic and Digital Circuits. Would that person be able to get a substitute-teaching certificate? Could this class be team taught so that a certified staff person is in the same classroom? Mr. Edgecombe responded that the application is a request for provisional certification and serves the purpose of giving the teacher the certification for that school year. While, the District will continue to try to find a certified person to teach these classes, the District may request these certificates annually. Dr. Weninger noted that this was something routinely done at other high schools. Team teaching has not been explored for these courses, and it would cost more. However, a mentor is always assigned.

**2009-2010
School Year**

Mr. Rigas moved to approve the 2009-10 School Year Calendar for second reading (attached to and made a part of the meeting of this meeting; seconded by Ms. Fisher. A roll call vote resulted in six ayes and one nay. Mr. Allen voted nay. Motion carried.

Mr. Edgecombe reported that this calendar designates November 6, as the observed day for Veterans' Day. In December, the Board of Education will be presented with approving a waiver for observing this day on the same day as Districts 90 and 97. District 90 no longer observes this day. It will be beneficial to have it on a designated day because there will then be two full weeks of instruction before the week of Thanksgiving. Mr. Allen noted his preference to observe the holiday on the November 11, 2008, no matter when it falls.

Ms. Patchak-Layman was concerned about instructional flow and suggested that the staff development day be added to the second week of September. She also suggested increasing the number of days taken at spring break and limiting the number at winter break because there are so many exchange trips taken at spring break. Mr. Edgecombe stated that while there has been no conversation about expanding spring vacation and contracting winter break, OPRFHS tries to coordinate days with the two feeder districts. She asked that it be discussed at the Instruction Committee.

**2010-2011
School Calendar**

As an informational item, The Board of Education was provided with a preliminary calendar for the 2010-2011 School Year (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting).

**Board of
Education
Meeting Dates
2009**

Mr. Rigas moved to approve the Board of Education dates for the 2009 Calendar year as follows: January 22, February 26, March 26, April 30, May 28, June 25, August 27, September 24, October 22, November 19, and December 17; seconded by Mr. Allen. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Ms. Kalmerton explained that the Organization Board of Education meeting, as per past practice, would follow the Retiring Board of Education meeting on April 30, 2009. At the organizational meeting, the new Board of Education would approve the Board of Education dates for the balance of the year at that time.

GSA Artworks

The Administration recommended that the Board of Education approve the loan agreement with the SGA for the 32 WPA artworks on site, as submitted. Dr. Weninger explained that over the course of the District's history, it either acquired or was loaned a number of valuable WPA artworks. In 1982, these lithographs were mated and framed through a grant from the Village Art Fair Board and added to the high school's art collection. These lithographs hang in the Library, Heritage Room, and are a part of the larger District's art collection, which numbers over 400 pieces. The GSA has asked OPRFHS to confirm their existence and their condition.

Several Board of Education members questioned from where these pieces of art originated and how it was known that they in fact did not belong to OPRFHS. Documentation was requested to substantiate the government's ownership.

This item was tabled until further information could be provided.

**Non-agenda
Items**

Mr. Rigas stated that Mr. Cantafio had reiterated in personal correspondence to him his offer to do benefit concerts, one for students, and one for the Alumni Association to help fund some of their summer enrichment programs. Dr. Weninger noted that Assistant Principal for Student Activities Cindy Milojevic was following up on that offer.

Mr. Conway reported that the Park District was going to plant a tree in Devontae Green's honor and the school had been approached about dedicating a tree in his honor as well.

Closed Session

At 9:04 p.m., on November 20, 2008, Dr. Millard moved to go into closed session for the purpose of discussing the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the District or legal counsel for the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee or against legal counsel for the District to determine its validity. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1), as amended by PA.93—57; Collective Bargaining and/or Negotiations; Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular District has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the District finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the closed meeting minutes 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11); seconded by Dr. Ms. Fisher A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

At 11:06 p.m. on Thursday, November 20, 2008, the Board of Education reconvened its open session.

Adjournment

At 11:10 p.m. on Thursday, November 20, 2008, Mr. Allen moved to adjourn the Board of Education meeting; seconded by Mr. Conway. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Jacques A. Conway
President

Dr. Ralph H. Lee
Secretary