

**Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,  
970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois  
Meeting May 12, 2015**

President Gates called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Spatz, Brisben, Datta, Gates, O'Connor, Spurlock, and Felton  
Absent: None  
Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Al Roberts, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations Therese O'Neill, Senior Director of HR Steve Cummins, Senior Director of Special Services Mike Padavic, Director of Technology Michael Arensdorff, Director of Curriculum and Instruction Carrie Kamm and Helen Wei, and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

ROLL CALL

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Felton moved, seconded by Brisben, that the Board of Education move into Executive Session at 6:30 p.m. to discuss (Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees 5 ILCS 120/2/(c)(1), Discussion of Lawfully Closed Meeting Minutes 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21)). Roll call vote.

Ayes: Felton, Brisben, O'Connor, Datta, Spurlock, Gates, and Spatz  
Nays: None  
Absent: None  
Motion passed.

**OPEN SESSION**

OPEN SESSION

Felton moved, seconded by Brisben, that the Board of Education move into Open Session at 6:58 p.m. All members of the Board were in agreement. The meeting reconvened at 7:00 p.m.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Barbara Mularkey, an Oak Park resident, expressed her concern about artificial turf, and asked the following questions;

- 1) What information convinced District 97 that artificial crumb rubber turf is safe for children?
- 2) What double-blind research studies prove synthetic grass from tires is safe?
- 3) What U.S. schools or park districts, have removed or choose not to install fake grass from recycled tires?
- 4) What information convinced District 97 to install artificial black rubber grass at Irving?
- 5) What other District 97 schools, besides Irving, are candidates for fake grass from tires?
- 6) What are the ingredients in your artificial grass selection?
- 7) What safe alternatives exist that could replace chem grass?

Ms. Mularkey shared two articles titled, *Toxic Turf? Movement Grows Against Synthetic Turf*, and *How Safe is the Artificial Turf your Child Plays on?* She requested a copy of the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) on the Districts artificial turf selection, and suggested that the children should be encourage to do some of the research on this topic.

**ACTION ITEMS****2.1 APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

Felton moved, seconded by Datta, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the consent agenda as presented.

2.2.1 Approval of Bill List

2.2.2 Personnel Action as amended during executive session.

Ayes: Felton, Datta, Brisben, O'Connor, Gates, Spurlock, and Spatz

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

**2.2.1 APPROVAL OF INSURANCE PLANS / RATES**

Felton moved, seconded by Spatz, that the Board of Education of Oak Park District 97, approve the recommendation defined during the May 5, 2015 meeting which noted that the Medical insurance increase by 8 percent for HMO and 10 percent for PPO/HSA during the 2015-2016 school year. Dental insurance will be covered by Blue Cross Blue Shield, lowering the rate by 5 percent compared to the current carrier, and vision insurance will be covered by VSP, seeing a 7 – 10 percent decrease in cost over the current carrier. Additionally, Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) plan administration will be handled by Employee Benefits Consultants (EBC) effective July 1, 2015. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Felton, Spatz, Gates, O'Connor, Datta, Spurlock and Brisben

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

**COMMITTEE / WORK GROUP REPORTS  
2014 – 2015 PRIORITIES**COMMITTEE /  
WORK GROUP  
REPORTS**ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE**

The revised Contract /Intergovernmental Agreement List was reviewed. It was noted that additional information was shared today and will be included in the next rendition. Discussion continued regarding who will be responsible for maintaining this document. The Board agreed to check-in on the priority items periodically and use this document to build the Board calendar during the retreat.

It was reported that the transportation bid process is underway and should be ready for review by the Board on June 9, 2015, and approval on June 23, 2015. Additionally, it was reported that the Parking IGA and the Crossing Guard/SRO agreements will wait until the new superintendent can participate in the process. O'Neill reported that the MacAdams contract will be reviewed in the fall. She noted that due to the maintenance agreement with the Park District, this contract will need to look very different.

**CONTRACT IMPLEMENTATION AND MAINTENANCE**

Member Brisben reported that the Board is in the process of finalizing the compensation packet for the new superintendent and information should be shared with the community in about two weeks.

## **STANDING BOARD COMMITTEES**

### **FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (FORC)**

It was reported that this committee met last night without a quorum. Steve Miller from PMA shared a presentation that included the Forecast 5 with comparable data. It was agreed that this information will be shared with the Board during the June 9, 2015 meeting.

It was noted that this committee will need to review their membership, and may need to appoint new members; however, this committee is not scheduled to meet again until August.

It was reported that FORC will review the Debt Policy and consider guidelines that define how much debt should be incurred. Additionally, the Board needs to determine what group (FORC, Financial Stability or Policy) should be responsible for moving this item forward.

It was reported that if any funds (budget to actual) changes by more than 10 percent, the district would need to submit an amended budget. It was suggested that the district consider a smaller percentage to use as a guideline. Member Spatz will work with Financial Stability group on this moving forward.

### **COMMITTEE FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION, INTERVENTION, AND MONITORING (CLAIM)**

President Gates reported that Chairman Greg Smith submitted his resignation. The next meeting of this committee is scheduled on May 21, 2015, where a backup chairperson will be appointed.

### **SPECIAL BOARD STUDY SESSION**

A special study session was suggested to discuss the effectiveness of the regular Board meetings, the superintendent goals, and a recap of the OPTA negotiations. Member Brisben will poll the Board and determine a date (prior to June 19, 2015) that will meet this need. It was suggested that if the next couple Board agendas are light, some of these topics could be added to them.

The Board agreed that President Gates and Vice President Felton will work on an agenda template to be considered by the Board.

### **REVIEW BOARD MEETING CALENDAR FOR THE 2015-2016 SCHOOL YEAR**

It was noted that the Collaboration Joint Board meeting has been scheduled for November 18, 2015, and has been added to the draft Board meeting calendar. This item will return to the Board for approval during the May 26, 2015 meeting.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

### **ROSETTA STONE / WORLD LANGUAGE UPDATE**

Helen Wei came to the table with Dawn Deaton, Anna Nieto and Karla Muñoz, who updated the Board on the success of the Rosetta Stone program. Wei noted that her son loves the program and speaks the language at home. She reported that the program allows the children to speak the language privately which builds their confidence.

The ladies reported that Rosetta Stone compliments the current Spanish curriculum by encouraging the children to speak the language and focusing on the plural form of the words.

Deaton reported that 125 additional middle school learners were added recently and the district may have enough Rosetta Stone licenses to allow the fifth graders to take their licenses with them when they advance to middle school in the fall.

Dr. Roberts acknowledged Deaton for her efforts to bring the program to life, and to the teachers for their support of the program.

## ROSETTA STONE / WORLD LANGUAGE UPDATE (Continued)

It was noted that Rosetta Stone appears as needing annual review on the Contract/IGA List and should be listed as paid and needing review every three years.

Deaton reported that the World Language team is considering the use of Rosetta Stone at the middle school level. The team will consider working with the PTOs and possibly offering time before school and during lunch for students to work on the program. Additionally, a foreign language club was recommended as a way to help the children spend more time on the program.

Nieto, who was the administrator of the Rosetta Stone program for the Arch Deices of Chicago, shared how her knowledge of the program has supported this process, and noted the need for incentives to encourage the children. She explained that reports can be generated that identify the amount of time children spend in the program and highlight their benchmarks. The reports can identify students' needs, allowing the teacher to add additional material into the classroom instruction. Reports can also be broken down by skill, lesson, etc.

Deaton reported that some students do not have internet access at home. They are being supported at school by allowing them to visit the library, work during school, homework help and teacher planning time.

Board comments included interest in how the team plans to move forward with this program.

## REVIEW OF THE CUSTODIAL SUPPLY BID

Therese O'Neill came to the table. The list of custodial needs for the 2015-2016 school year was shared and explained. O'Neill reported that prior to 2009, only one vendor was award the contract for all custodial supplies. Starting in 2009, the district began awarding multiple contracts and the cost of the supplies dropped drastically. The bid now includes greener products, and the total amount of the supplies is still under that of the 2009-2010 school year. Nine vendors will be awarded contracts when this item returns to the Board for action on May 26, 2015.

## **CONCLUDING ITEMS**

CONCLUDING  
ITEMS

### SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Roberts reported that 10 candidates were interviewed for the Brooks principal position, and three of them will return for a second interview tomorrow. He reported that the interview team will focus on finding someone with the ability to provide superior instructional leadership. Once a candidate has been identified, the school based team will participate in a site visit.

The OPTA was ready to sign a letter of agreement on contract differences, however, the stipends were reviewed today and a couple additional discrepancies were identified in the contract language. A meeting with the OPTA leadership will occur in the near future, and stipends will be paid in June.

The administrators met with STR today, and the office furniture and office layout were considered. Additionally, discussion on electrical and security occurred during a separate meeting.

Helen Wei has prepared an ELA sustainability document. It will be shared with the Education Council during their next meeting, and the Board in the next weekly report.

The Ad Leadership team is meeting next week. The main topic of discussion will be the district goals for the coming year.

#### SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT (Continued)

Dr. Roberts commented on the artificial turf, noting that the material that will be used at the middle schools is called Nike Grind and is made from ground up shoes, not tires. He noted that the community in general is pleased with the results of the Ridgeland Commons and Irving field. Dr. Roberts will respond to Ms. Mullarkey's concerns.

Dr. Roberts shared a picture of the Irving field that demonstrated what the field looked like before and after the renovation.

#### BOARD CONCERNS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Early Childhood IGA Governing Board met last Wednesday. Member Felton was the president of this board for the past year. The presidency now rotates to Jeff Weisglass at District 200. The highlight of the meeting was a presentation from the Collaboration and Chapin Hall on the progression of the database. It was reported that the process is moving as planned. A document will be posted on our Website for the community to review.

The Illinois Supreme Court determined that Senate Bill 1 (pension reform bill) is unconstitutional. Two bills were submitted that ED-RED has called for action on. They have been forward to President Gates and Greg Smith of CLAIM to determine if the district wants to take action on them. One states that state aid would be determined on a per student basis and not a percentage. The other would call for a tax freeze and would apply to home rule districts, which would include Oak Park.

O'Neill will confirm when the 50 percent completion design documents will be presented to the Board.

Administration is still working on the PERA report and will present an update to the Board during the June 9, 2015 meeting.

Concern was expressed regarding the Whittier families who lost so much in a recent house fire.

It was reported that the Youth Baseball and Kindergarten T-ball is entertaining, and those in attendance were encouraged to attend.

The IGOV Assembly met last Saturday and all who attended were thanked for their participation. The Board Secretary was also acknowledged for her assistance. It was noted that the PowerPoint from this meeting will be posted on the district Website.

The Board was reminded that June 7, 2015 will be the Day in Our Village event. Pencils and erasers have been ordered for this event. Also on June 7, 2015, at 9 a.m., the elected officials are invited to a breakfast at the library.

President Gates shared a temporary committee assignment list to be used until permanent assignments are made.

#### BOARD RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Roberts will respond to the public comment request.

#### PREVIEW AGENDAS

The draft agenda for May 26, 2015 was reviewed and modifications were recommended.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

EXECUTIVE  
SESSION

Felton moved, seconded by Brisben, that the Board of Education move into Executive Session at 8:18 p.m. to discuss (Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees 5 ILCS 120/2/(c)(1)). Roll call vote.

Ayes: Felton, Brisben, Datta, Gates, O’Connor, Spurlock, and Spatz  
Nays: None  
Absent: None  
Motion passed.

**OPEN SESSION**

OPEN SESSION

Brisben moved, seconded by Datta, that the Board of Education move into Open Session at 9:03 p.m. All members of the Board were in agreement.

**ADJOURNMENT**

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to conduct, President Spatz declared the meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

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Board President

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Board Secretary