

**Official Minutes of the
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,
970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois
Special Meeting on March 1, 2011**

President Traczyk called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Present: Clouser, Barber, Reddy, Gates, Harton, Spatz and Traczyk

ROLL CALL

Absent: None

Also Present: Superintendent Al Roberts, Human Resources Director Trish Carlson, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations Therese O'Neill, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Kevin Anderson, Director of Special Education Mike Padavic, Communications Coordinator Chris Jasculca, Principals and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

PUBLIC COMMENT

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None

ACTION ITEMS

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2.1.1 Approval of OPTA Memorandum of Understanding

Gates moved, seconded by Clouser, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the OPTA memorandum of understanding to accept a pay freeze for the 2011-12 school year.

It was noted that a side letter to the memorandum will be brought to the Board for approval during the March 8, 2011 meeting. President Traczyk recognized OPTA President Sue Tresselt, acknowledging the partnership between the OPTA and the district. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Gates, Clouser, Barber, Reddy, Harton, Spatz, and Traczyk

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

2.2.1 Approval of Capital Projects Bid

Harton moved, seconded by Reddy, that the Board of Education, District 97, award a contract to Dimensional Enterprises in the total amount of \$3,114,488 (base bid of \$3,033,343 and alternates totaling \$81,145) to complete summer 2011 Capital Projects as outlined in the memorandum dated March 1, 2011. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Harton, Reddy, Clouser, Barber, Spatz, Gates, and Traczyk

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

TOPIC REPORTS

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ENGAGEMENT LETTER FOR FISCAL YEAR AUDIT

Therese O'Neill explained that the contract with McGladrey and Pullen will be coming to an end. The firm submitted a proposal to continue as the district's auditors, and the proposal will be reviewed by FORC at its meeting this week.

The Board was reminded that FORC recommended that long-term contracts be reviewed every five to seven years. O'Neill will explore and review this recommendation.

TRANSFER RESOLUTIONS

On March 8, 2011, the Board will be asked to approve three resolutions.

- Resolution Transferring General State Aid (GSA) Dollars from Operations & Maintenance Fund to Capital Projects Fund
- Resolution Abating Working Cash Fund
- Resolution transferring dollars from Education Fund to Debt Service Fund

O'Neill explained that these are annual items that are brought to the Board for approval.

CAPITAL PROJECTS - ASBESTOS ABATEMENT

O'Neill reported that the bid for asbestos abatement will be brought to the Board for approval on March 8, 2011. She reported that Environ International, Inc. will be awarded the bid, which came in much lower than anticipated.

DISCUSSION OF FORC PROPOSAL

John Ide, FORC committee member, came to the table to introduce a proposal made by the committee. The committee recommended creating additional touch points between key District 97 activities and the FORC committee members.

In these roles, a community FORC member would be assigned to represent the FORC on a number of key activities they have significant financial implications for the district. The role of the FORC member would be to act as a conduit between the FORC and these key activities. Many issues would benefit from FORC input and occur on time scales that don't allow a committee that meets quarterly to effectively contribute. This mechanism is intended to help bridge this gap.

The Board recognized that there is a fine line between the responsibilities of the Board and those of the FORC committee. It was suggested that it be documented that O'Neill be entrusted with determining where that line is and make judgments accordingly. It was also suggested that the rules of engagement also be defined.

Concern was expressed regarding an individual committee member making recommendations to administration and/or the Board. The Board was assured that suggestions would be shared with the FORC committee as a whole. After vetting, recommendations would be submitted to the Board from the FORC committee as a whole, not a single representative.

It was suggested that a detailed report on the individual categories be included in the annual FORC report to the Board. Wendy Daniels, a former LAC committee member, was recommended as someone to reach out to. It was also suggested that the FORC review the dashboard items from the old working cash policy.

OMBUDSMAN DISCUSSION

The original strategic plan strategy 1, SER 9 was shared.

Dr. Roberts presented a PowerPoint that included suggestions for consideration during this discussion. He suggested the Board consider changing the name from Ombudsman to Parent Services Coordinator. He suggested this position could help parents navigate and understand the system in a way that benefits the students we serve. Dr. Roberts cited several examples regarding how this position could help, including; it would help the district live up to its commitment to success for all students, build an even greater positive public perception of the school district, give the district a competitive edge by actively addressing concerns, create greater capacity to fix problems expeditiously, improve the district's ability to track success or lack thereof relative to concerns or issues, positively impact the quality of corrective action, make it easier for parents and district staff to handle difficult conversations/situations, and provide quality oversight of the district's capacity to service students.

OMBUDSMAN DISCUSSION (Continued)

He suggested that job responsibilities might include assisting parents and guardians to successfully “navigate” the system by helping them understand the processes, procedures and the best way to advocate for their children. Additionally, this position could organize learning opportunities for students in the form of specific classes and interventions, technological applications/support and parent and child workshops, as well as develop a comprehensive and systematic approach to tracking the district’s response to concerns or issues.

Dr. Roberts identified potential concerns that would need to be addressed by asking; Is this a good time to be adding staff? Will the existence of the parent coordinator be an investment that saves the district money in the long run by making the district more effective? Can the district fund this position within its budgetary limitations? Can the district schedule this resource so that impact can be maximized?

The original definition of Ombudsman was identified as a representative to develop an on-going program to foster parent/guardian empowerment. Additionally, this person’s goal would be to address the need for parents to become knowledgeable ensuring their child is successful in school, and to create an environment where parents feel comfortable enough to admit that they don’t know something and need additional information.

After discussion on this topic, Dr. Roberts was asked to identify how the current in-house talent handles outreach and how the district is utilizing those team members? It was suggested that this position and the support that it offers be introduced as a tool to empower parents/guardians, not as a tool to fix something that is broken. Dr. Roberts suggested that the documentation of this position be written as clearly as possible. He noted the need to encourage all teachers at every level to be conscious of the need for parent communication. He noted that whether or not the money is available for this position, the need must be addressed. It was suggested that this discussion return to the Board during one of the summer meetings.

LAC DISCUSSION

Discussion took place around whether this committee would serve the district and the community better as a standing committee to be proactive about legislation or a Board committee with community participation. A survey had been conducted that solicited input from the district’s administrators, the Board and community members. Results of the survey were shared.

The Board members shared their views on this committee and asked Members Spatz and Gates to return to the Board with additional information. They were asked to use the information shared during this discussion and the original LAC charge to define the committee. Additionally, the Board would like direction on how it would measure the success of this committee. This topic will be brought back to the Board at a later date.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

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Dr. Roberts reported that the Pioneering for a Healthy Community Committee is teaming with local governances and focusing on policies that will affect the healthy living in the community. The committee is working on bringing the governances together to share a common vision for wellness by creating a plan that includes exercise and nutrition. Dr. Roberts shared that the Irving schoolyard project fits into the focus.

Dr. Roberts met with the mentor leaders. He was concerned about the last report and asked them to focus on instructional successes.

Dr. Roberts is in the process of principal evaluations. He reported that the system may need to be modified a bit for next year.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT (Continued)

The Early Childhood Collaboration Symposium was held last Saturday. Over 400 people were in attendance.

A drugs and alcohol presentation will be presented at the next Board meeting. Dr. Roberts reminded the Board that prevention begins here.

Dr. Roberts will be attending the State of the Village’s Dinner. President Traczyk, Vice President Barber, member Gates and member Spatz will also be in attendance.

BOARD CONCERNS

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It was noted that the Early Childhood Symposium was excellent and well attended.

It was reported that there is an anti-trust case against the Bank of America, of which Illinois has been identified to receive \$2 million. District 97 was identified as one of the Illinois recipients in that case.

It was reported that the ballot wording of the referendum has been questioned. It was noted that the wording was on the advice of Chapmen and Cutler. The Board acknowledged that due to the legal requirements, the wording of the referendum is unclear and that is why the forums are so important. It was noted that David Pope spoke eloquently in favor of the referendum.

BOARD RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT - None

RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT

ADJOURNMENT

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There being no further business to conduct, President Traczyk declared the meeting adjourned at 9:54 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be on Tuesday, March 8, 2011, beginning at 7 p.m. in the Mann School auditorium located at 921 N. Kenilworth.

Board President

Board Secretary