

**Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,  
260 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois  
Meeting June 27, 2017**

President Spurlock called the meeting to order at 5:47 p.m.

Present: Broy, Spatz, Spurlock, Liebl, O'Connor, Breymaier (5:52 p.m.), and Datta (5:56 p.m.)  
Absent: None  
Also Present: Superintendent, Dr. Carol Kelley, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations Dr. Alicia Evans, Assistant Superintendent of HR Laurie Campbell, Chief Academic and Accountability Officer Dr. Amy Warke, Senior Director of Special Services Mike Padavic, Senior Director of Policy, Procedures and Communication Chris Jasculca, Sr. Director of Administrative Services Dr. Felicia Starks Turner, Director of Curriculum and Instruction Carrie Kamm, Managing Horizons facilitator Gil Herman and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

ROLL CALL

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Spurlock moved, seconded by Broy, that the Board of Education move into Executive Session at 5:47 p.m. to discuss (Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance or Dismissal of Specific Employees or Legal Counsel for the District 5 ILCS 120/2(C)(1), Pending or Probable Litigation 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11).

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ayes: Spurlock, Broy, Spatz, O'Connor, and Liebl  
Nays: None  
Absent: Datta (arrived at 5:56 p.m.) and Breymaier (arrived at 5:52 p.m.)  
Motion passed.

OPEN SESSION

**OPEN SESSION**

Broy moved, seconded by Liebl, that the Board of Education move into Open Session at 6:55 p.m. All members of the Board were in agreement. The meeting reconvened at 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Lynn Allen, an Oak Park resident and recent retiree from District 97, shared that she has been involved with the Multicultural Center for 14 years. She noted the importance of diversity and expressed concern about the collection being moved to the Public Library. She noted that diversity was featured prominently in the past three strategic plans, and it seems to be less important than in the past. She noted the history of Oak Park and how it dealt with white flight and suggested that when it comes to the Multicultural Collection, she feels that the district is dropping the ball and retreating when teaching tolerance is needed more than ever before. She suggested that respect for diversity must be imbedded in our culture. Allen expressed appreciation to the public library for adopting the collection.

She noted the importance of hiring African American male teachers and referenced an article about the benefits of children seeing teachers who look like them, and the benefits of other children to see diverse teachers.

She shared a calendar that identified the religious holidays, a book titled, *If she Only Knew Me*, written by Jeff Gray and Heather Thomas and the Multicultural Focus in Teaching guide that she prepared for New Teacher Orientation.

Allen challenged the Board to reflect on the long held cultural values of our community in future decisions, and to carefully consider how the tax dollars are being spent.

**PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING THE 37 DISTRICT RETIREES**

President Spurlock read a proclamation recognizing the 37 district retirees.

PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING THE 37 DISTRICT RETIREES

**DISCUSSION ON UPCOMING TAX BILL**

Alicia Evans came to the table with the Oak Park Township Assessor Ali ElSaffar, and William Blair representative Elizabeth Hennessey. It was reported that the State equalizer increased more than expected, causing the tax bills that will be mailed at the end of the week, to include a much larger increase than the District

DISCUSSION ON UPCOMING TAX BILL

### **DISCUSSION ON UPCOMING TAX BILL** (Continued)

expected. It was explained that legally, the district is entitled to keep the money, but a discussion on the district's options was recommended.

ElSaffar explained that some other districts opted for the refund option, but asked community members to fill out an application to be eligible for a refund.

After a detailed discussion, the following options were identified;

- 1) Refund the overage to the taxpayers. This would include printing 19,000 individual checks for distribution. It was noted that this is not the recommendation of the District's counsel as it would require court authority.
- 2) Abate the operating levy. This option could impact the district if the taxes are frozen in the coming years.
- 3) Use the money to pay down the current debt. Hennessey explained how the taxpayers would see the benefits of paying down the 1999 bonds by August, 2018.

It was noted that both Evans and Hennessey recommended paying down the debt as the process would be easier and would match dollar for dollar.

Board comments included interest in knowing what other districts that passed a referendum in April, 2017 are doing about this situation. Interest was expressed in knowing how much it would cost and how much time would be involved in refunding the taxpayers.

After deliberation, the Board expressed interest in supporting the refund option and asked the administration to investigate what would be involved in the process. Additionally, they agreed to have the paperwork ready to move forward with the pay down the debt option, so a decision can be made on July 18, 2017. The Board agreed to updates on the process between now and the next meeting and asked President Spurlock and Vice President O'Connor to make a determination as to if, or when the taxpayer refund option has become too expensive an option to consider. Some interest was expressed in hearing more about the application process.

It was noted that Chris Jасulca will be asked to help with communicating the final decision to the media. It was reported that the equalizer did not affect both referenda because the capital referendum was written to identify a specific dollar amount.

### **BOARD RETREAT**

#### **BUDGET 101**

Evans came to the table and led the Board in a group budget activity. She explained that the budget is used as a roadmap, and estimating what is important to the district. The budget is created by making assumptions, and is used as a planning tool. She noted that budgets are limited; there may be special interests, there may be conflicting views and the budget could be a catalyst for change.

The Board was divided into two groups, one focused on investments and the other focused on spending. They were asked to deliberate and make their recommendations on how to decrease the budget by 5 percent. They were asked what internal and external factors played into their decisions. After sharing their results, the teams were asked what lessons they learned from the exercise.

#### **DEVELOPMENT OF BOARD GOALS FOR SY18**

Gil Herman facilitated this part of the meeting. He explained that he spoke to each of the Board members individually prior to this meeting. During those discussions, they were asked to share the three most important things regarding their Board work.

- Clarity of roles and boundaries of board versus administration
- Balcony versus dance floor
- On boarding of new members
- Challenges
- Clarity of communication protocols
- Help new members understand context of what went on before
- Help tenured members see value of new ideas and priorities
- Clarity of goals and creation of a work plan

#### DEVELOPMENT OF BOARD GOALS FOR SY18 (Continued)

- Measureable milestones
- Defined as calendar w/specifics
- On programs and next steps
- Confirm what gets on Board agendas
- Decision making protocols and closure

Each Board member was asked to identify three things (issues, goals, values) that matter most to them regarding the district.

- Student Achievement (kids are thriving) – Broy
- Whole Child – Liebl, Broy
- Equity – Datta, Liebl, Spatz, Breymaier, Broy and O’Connor
- Teachers (developing a diverse culturally aware) – Professional Development - Broy
- Leveraging teachers – O’Connor
- Every child is getting what they need – Datta, Spurlock
- All major stakeholders feel like they have a voice (teachers, parents) – Datta, Liebl, Breymaier, and O’Connor
- Learning organization with measurements to prove it – Datta, Spatz
- Teachers feel valued and have what they need to be successful – Spurlock
- Everyone feels like they are an important participant - Spurlock
- Sustainability and smoothing it out. Continual improvement – Spatz
- Discipline and culture changing punitive to restorative – Breymaier

It was noted that financial stewardship and working with partnerships (Village, D200, Hephzibah, etc.) were not identified in the list, but everyone agreed that they are always part of the focus.

President Spurlock shared a draft list of goals that included targeted strategies and suggested. Herman introduced the idea of GOSPA (goals, objectives, strategies, plans and actions).

#### GOAL 1 – Align with and Support the District Goals:

Confusion was expressed on how the Board supports the goals as identified in the report. Confusion was expressed on what the Board members might be denying when they approve something else. Interest was expressed in knowing what questions or discussions would need to be asked if the Board wants to understand the context better.

#### Board Comments

- Interest was expressed in knowing how the Board can help whoever is asking for money to share the content that the Board needs to hear. It was noted that a lot of what the Board approves is strictly for transparency, not because the Board needs to delve into each item in detail.
- It was suggested that the Board needs to figure out where they can appropriately insert themselves into the decision making process.
- What are the Boards responsibilities and actions in the big picture items?
- Interest was expressed in needing to trust and have the oversight
- Consider linking the list above to the goals
- Consider family engagement that will help the families support the classroom learning at home (home visits)
- Things change during the year and the Board needs to shift priorities from time to time
- The Board has a much bigger role to play when it comes to community engagement
- The need to communicate priorities to the community, so they can be supportive, allowing the Board to be more productive. The Library Assistants were used as an example, noting that the Board did not identify a tradeoff.

It was suggested that the Board think five years out and identify what the shifts will be and how they will occur. They might consider laying the ground work now for the items that are still three years out. Dr. Kelley was asked if there are any topics that the Board should discuss so they can help the community understand them. Interest was expressed in understanding the long-term vision; knowing what the buy-ins are, and seeking

opportunities to highlight the district as a leader. It was suggested that the Board celebrate the district's successes.

Community engagement was discussed, noting that it will not be useful unless the Board shares information that the community is interested in hearing. It was noted that the Committee for Community Engagement (CCE) is going to release a survey in the near future to gather community interest.

It was suggested that the Board tell the story and plan, and then ask the community what else they would want the Board to talk about. It was suggested that each Board member hold a town hall type meeting within a designated period of time, but concern was expressed about the need to have a long-term plan and a narrative on what will happen in the next three to five years. Interest was expressed in understanding where support is needed (What are the priorities? What are the most sensitive topics?), and understanding how the Board can be the conduit between the district and the community. It was noted that communication is a team effort (Board, staff, PTOs, religious leaders), and the Board should figure out how to leverage these groups. It was suggested that the CCE might have a plan by September to share with the Board, and Dr. Kelley agreed to share more information on the vision on August 15, 2017.

Board comments included the need for a work plan and a calendar of staff committee meetings. It was suggested that this information be added to each Board meeting.

It was agreed that President Spurlock will share the revised draft of goals with the Board, and it was suggested that if the Board holds a work session on a topic, the Board will need to discuss how they will support that item and make sure that their goals are reflective of the Board support.

It was suggested that each month, a committee be invited to share a presentation with the Board, updating them on the committees work and share how it supports a goal and how they are moving forward toward that goal.

**4.1 APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

**ACTION ITEMS**

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

- 4.1.1 Approval of Bill List
- 4.1.2 Approval of Personnel (revised)

Ayes: Datta, Breymaier, Spatz, Spurlock, Liebl, O'Connor, and Broy  
 Nays: None  
 Absent: None  
 Motion passed.

- 4.2.1 **APPOINTMENT OF SENIOR DIRECTOR OF EQUITY**
- 4.2.2 **APPOINTMENT OF SENIOR DIRECTOR OF EQUITY**
- 4.3.1 **APPROVAL OF CONTRACT – 541 MADISON STREET**

All three items were tabled.

**CONCLUDING ITEMS**

**CONCLUDING ITEMS**

**BOARD REMARKS**

President Spurlock asked the Board members to send her topics for the work sessions, including what trimester they would like the discussion in and to identify the items as necessary or topic of interest.

**BOARD MEETING AGENDA FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

The draft agenda for the July 18, 2017 Board meeting was reviewed and modifications were recommended.

**PARKING LOT AND LONG-TERM CALENDAR**

Vice President O'Connor is working on an updated Parking Lot procedure.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to conduct, President Spurlock declared the meeting adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board Secretary