

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

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Thursday, November 9, 2006

A Finance Committee meeting was held on Thursday, November 9, 2006. Chair John P. Rigas called the meeting to order at 7:43 a.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were: Jacques A. Conway (arrived 7:52 a.m.), Barbara P. Fernandez (arrived at 7:50 a.m.), Dr. Barry S. Greenwald, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, Yasmin A. Ranney and John P. Rigas. Also present were Cheryl L. Witham, Chief Financial Officer; Jack Lanenga, Assistant Superintendent for Operations; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors included: Kay Foran, Director of Community Relations and Communications; James Paul Hunter, F.S.E.C. Chair; Joe Kostal, O.P.R.F.H.S. Math Teacher (arrived at 9:30 a.m.); Jacqui Charette-BassiriRad, Director of Bookstore; Robert ZumMallen, Director of Buildings and Grounds; student *Trapeze* reporter.

### **Acceptance of the October Finance Committee Minutes**

Hearing no amendments to the October Finance Committee minutes, the Committee accepted them as presented.

### **Introduction of New Buildings and Grounds Director**

Mr. Lanenga introduced the new director of buildings and grounds, Robert ZumMallen.

### **Skyward Report**

Mr. Lanenga reported that although Family Access for sophomores was scheduled to go into effect November 1, he delayed that a week to allow for grade entering and processing at quarter break. An explanatory letter to the sophomore parents will be sent out the week of November 9. Electronic access is being received well by freshman parents. In addition to grades, families can view their student's attendance records, discipline records, i.e., detentions and reasons for referrals (failure to serve detentions), etc. Parents are not able to view fee management, but they do receive paper statements. Parents are also unable to see their child's health records at this time, which includes immunizations and medication dispersed by nurse. Health alerts are included when parents have given information to share with the teachers such as allergies, bee strings, etc.

## **Construction Update**

Mr. Lanenga had provided the committee with a list of summer construction projects (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting). He reported that once the final breaching of the roof is complete, the new boilers would be installed.

Mr. Lanenga reported that all blinds on the lower level of the new windows have either been replaced or repaired. The arched window blinds are still not complete and he will continue to hold back final payment until it is complete.

Ms. Ranney was amazed at the amount of work that had been completed in such a short time.

## **Mall**

Mr. Lanenga provided the Board of Education with five areas of discussion regarding the mall. They were:

- 1) Is O.P.R.F.H.S. still focused on this project for 2007?
- 2) How much does the high school want to/can/should spend?
- 3) What about restrooms?
- 4) Who should be the general contractor or construction supervisor?
- 5) What are the pavilion options—cost vs. form?

Mr. Lanenga reviewed with the committee the background of the mall renovation. Originally, the renovation budget was \$600,000. While the first bid came in at \$1.8 million, value engineering lowered the bid to \$850,000 yet did not alter the landscaping. He has had discussions with CYLA, the landscape architect, about considering even more value engineering. The cost of concrete is significant and it was determined that it did not need to be “stamped” with a design.

Mr. Lanenga reported that he discovered a company that could provide a functional pavilion at a cost of approximately \$25,000, plus installation. It would consist of a roof and poles. It could be used for classes with the installation of picnic-type tables.

Regarding the fixing of the clock, once someone had been found, it should only be a minimal cost.

Discussion ensued. Mr. Lanenga reported the following:

- 1) The plans for lighting the mall remain as originally proposed.
- 2) The playlot has been relocated to next to the building.
- 3) Bike racks would be situated at every entrance.
- 4) The Village will make Scoville avenue more pedestrian friendly by adding pedestrian bump outs.
- 5) The gates on the mall would remain in their current locations.

While the Committee members considered keeping some of the aesthetics, Mr. Rigas stated that the Committee's goal was to make something that will be comfortable for the students. Ms. Ranney concurred that it should be useable, functional and should have longevity.

Mr. Lanenga felt that ultimately the mall could be renovated at a cost of \$550,000 plus another \$50,000 for the construction and installation of the pavilion building.

Committee members discussed the cost and installation of outside restrooms. Considerations included: 1) proximity of the fields to the buildings restrooms versus that of other schools, with O.P.R.F.H.S.'s being much closer; 2) housekeeping responsibilities; 3) how would they be made available for activities other than O.P.R.F.H.S. sponsored events; and 4) vandalism. Mr. Lanenga reported that the installation of the plumbing for outside bathrooms had been included in the bid documents, i.e., a riser for the sewer and water. It was the consensus of the Committee that no bathrooms be installed but that the plumbing for such should be installed.

Mr. Lanenga also reported that O.P.R.F.H.S. would be able to save money if a construction company supervised the construction. Wight has offered to do it for a 5.5 percent fee. Mr. Lanenga felt Wight would do a good job because it knows the costs and has stated that the project would be completed within the budget set forth by the school.

It was the consensus of the Committee members to renovate the mall with a budget of \$575,000 plus the Wight fees. Mr. Lanenga received the committee's approval to select a construction manager and to review the plans. The renovation will be a summer project and completed by the beginning of the 2007 school year. Mr. Lanenga will provide options on a pavilion.

### **Bookstore**

Ms. Charette-BassiriRad presented a written Books and Fees Report (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting). She highlighted the following points:

- 1) The Bookstore was doing well at keeping inventories low; thus, fewer losses and no overages.
- 2) Departments are being asked to give a one-year notice if a change in the curriculum is being contemplated in order for the Bookstore to have to time to sell the current books.
- 3) P.T.O. and Boosters helped put a state loan book into the system. The book on calculus should be relevant for a long time.
- 4) O.P.R.F.H.S. is an active member of the Global Alliance of Africa due to parent association with this group. Books in unusable condition and slated to be discarded are donated to this organization. O.P.R.F.H.S. cannot recycle books unless it has a truckload of them.

Discussions have occurred about taking fee payments on line. Logistically that may be easy to do, but they would not be linked to Skyward and thus not recorded. Finance Committee members suggested the continued review of how this might be accomplished. The Committee was assured that the high school was exploring new point of sale, software, etc. Presently three computer systems make the process somewhat cumbersome. Mr. Conway was complimentary to the bookstore's student staff on being very helpful.

### **Five-Year Plan**

Ms. Witham presented the Five-Year Plan (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting), noting that its format remained the same as in the past. The last time the Five-Year Plan was presented to the Board of Education was March 2006. Since then the FY 2005 audit results, the FY 2006 amended budget, the FY 2007 original budget, the November 2005 enrollment projections, the 2005 final levy, the January 2006 approved initiatives and the October 2006 staff levels were included.

New legislation has allowed schools to change the maximum cap per fund in the levy. Ms. Witham raised the Operations and Maintenance Fund levy amount in order to transfer utility costs from the Ed Fund to the O & M fund one year early. While that does not change the total levy, the difference will come out of the Education Fund, because that was where the costs were indicated. All previous assumptions of revenue being capped at 5 percent or CPI are the same. The Life Safety Fund rate also changed with the new law. The high school borrowed \$8 million to replace the roofs and the previous maximum rate at 5 cents was only adequate to cover the cost of debt. However, increasing the levy to the new maximum rate of 10 cents could allow the high school to perform some life safety projects, but it would reduce the Education Fund levy. She projected CPI at 3.5%, for 2006, 3.5% for 2007, 3.0% for 2008, 2.5% for 2009, 2.5% for 2010 and 3% thereafter.

An assumption was made that state and Federal revenue remained status quo. State funding is flat.

Ms. Witham discussed the high school's expenditures, noting that the largest components were faculty and staff salaries and benefits, i.e., retirements. Health insurance was trending at 10 per cent per year. Other expenditures included supplies, capital outlay, tuition, and utilities.

Ms. Witham noted the student enrollment projections and the new costs related to the initiatives. The Five-Year Plan reflects not having to go to a referendum until 2018. Around the year 2015, expenditures will exceed revenue. The District is purposefully accumulating fund balances so that it can sustain appropriate fund balances until 2018. At that time, the TIF and most of O.P.R.F.H.S.'s debt expires. The Board of Education at that time can re-evaluate the situation.

Ms. Witham provided a written discussion of each fund (attached to and made a part of the minutes) and reviewed some of the highlights in her oral comments.

The 5-year plan will be updated in March 2007.

Ms. Fisher inquired about the new mandates that will now require the local public school districts to pick up the expenses for special education services for private school students who do not reside in the district. Ms. Witham was informed that District 200 would not be dramatically impacted. Both Trinity and Fenwick High Schools have a minimal number of students with special education needs. Mr. Hunter added that private high schools do not accept students with IEP's and, thus, those students go to public high schools in their own districts. Mr. Rigas stated that the new law has made it harder for parents who had been happy with the services received in Chicago to maintain them. He felt the law would push more students into the public elementary schools as those who need serious help do not go to private schools.

### **2006 Preliminary Levy**

Ms. Witham presented the Committee members with another opportunity to look at the levy (attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting). The Board of Education will vote to approve this levy at its regular meeting in December.

### **Student Achievement Awards**

Ms. Witham expressed thanks to Ms. Bowman for providing elucidation regarding the various academic awards given throughout the building in the memory of individuals closely associated with O.P.R.F.H.S. Over the years, the selection of winners and monetary amounts had become confusing and inconsistent. In 2005, the awards approved by the Board of Education were as follows:

- Ernest Hemingway Writing Award - \$50 first place, \$40 for second place, \$30 for third place, and \$10 for honorable mention.
- Percy Julian Chemistry Award - \$50
- Frank Lloyd Wright Architecture Award
- Dr. Alexander MacKay Schmidt Award for Interdisciplinary Achievement in Science, Technology or Society – Certificate

Instructional Council recommends changing the monetary awards to book awards whose content would reflect the works or interests of the honored individuals, i.e., Ernest Hemingway, Frank Lloyd Wright, Percy Williams, etc. and to add a book award to the Dr. Alexander MacKay Schmidt Award certificate.

It was the consensus of the Finance Committee members to accept this recommendation and to provide the recipients with a certificate. Ms. Fernandez suggested including a recognition page for the person receiving the award in the front of the book.

## **Report on the Township Treasurer's Office**

Dr. Greenwald noted that he had not made contact with District 97's Board of Education president regarding the signing of a joint letter enumerating their expectations for actions to be taken by the Township Treasurer's Office. He asked Ms. Fisher to attempt contact. Ms. Fisher agreed and stated that the districts need to pursue this issue and to support O.P.R.F.H.S. Chief Financial Officer's attempts to focus on the Township Treasurer's issues and problems.

Ms. Witham informed Ms. Ranney that the only accounts the high school can monitor are the ones at Harris Bank, although she is working to get the rest of the transactions flowing through the account. She has contacted the state to redirect the District's revenue into its own account. Ms. Witham is in contact with the District's attorney about its rights and options. The Business Manager at District 97 is not confident with its fund balances presented to the Trustees. The people presently working in the Township Treasurer's Office are focusing on the serious needs of other districts first. Ms. Fisher reiterated the seriousness of this situation for all school districts and the need to be vigilant about keeping the focus as more negative information about the office continues to come forth. Ms. Witham noted that she would continue to attend all meetings scheduled by the Township.

## **Adjournment**

The Finance Committee adjourned at 9:39 a.m.