

December 19, 2013

The regular Board meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on Thursday, December 19, 2013, in the Board Room of the OPRFHS.

**Call to Order**

President Phelan called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. A roll call indicated the following Board of Education members were present: Thomas F. Cofsky, Dr. Steven Gevinson, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Dr. Jackie Moore, Sharon Patchak Layman, John Phelan, and Jeff Weissglass. Also present were Dr. Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; Dr. John Carlson and Dr. Frank Bogner, Interim Directors for Human Resources; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant Clerk of the Board.

**Closed Session**

At 7:02 p.m. on Thursday, December 19, 2013, Mr. Phelan moved to enter 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 negotiating matters between the District and its employees or their representatives or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2); seconded by Dr. Moore. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

At 7:30 p.m., the Board of Education resumed open session.

Joining the meeting were Michael Carioscio, Chief Information Officer; Amy Hill, Director of Assessment and Research; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Nathaniel L. Rouse, Principal; Dr. Tina Hallman, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; Karin Sullivan, Director of Communications and Community Relations; and Sheila Hardin, Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair

**Visitors**

Robert Zummallen, OPRFHS Buildings and Grounds Director; Robert Wroble of Legat Architects; Alan Stettler of Henry Bros.; Scott Metcalf of Franczek Sullivan; Kevin Bailey of Petron; Mary Haley of the League of Women Voters; John Bokum, Mary Rodrigo, and Kevin Peppard, community members; and Terry Dean of *Wednesday Journal*.

**Public Hearing on Levy**

At 7:37 p.m., Mr. Phelan called the Public Hearing on the Levy to order on Thursday, December 19, 2013.

John Bokum, resident of 629 S. Home Avenue, Oak Park, provided testimony noting that he had attended numerous board meetings over the past six years and that he wanted to commend the Board for not only appointing a committee to address the levy situation and the budget surplus but to educate both the Board of Education members and the community about this huge endeavor. If this Board of Education passed what he had been reading about in the media, it would gain the public trust of the Oak Park & River Forest taxpayers.

Receiving no further written or oral comments, Mr. Phelan closed the hearing at 7:40 p.m.

**Status of FOIA Reports** Ms. Kalmerton reported that three FOIA requests had been received and three were resolved.

**Student Council** No report.

**Faculty Senate** No report

**Superintendent Report** Dr. Isoye reported the following:  
 On November 21, the OPRFHS Environmental/ Biology Club was awarded a Village of Oak Park 2013 Green Award in a ceremony at the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Women’s Club. The award focused mainly on the club's "Herban’ Garden," which it designed, raised all funds for, built, planted, and maintained. The club donated the harvest to the Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry and the OPRFHS Food Service. All of the plants are organic and raised so.

Each year, communications assistant Linda Hayes organizes OPRF’s contributions to the local Holiday Food and Gift Basket program, which is run by the Community of Congregations. This year individuals or groups of students, faculty, staff, and administrators adopted 45 low-income families. On Thursday, December 12, Ms. Hayes, student activities assistant Latonia Brown, and six student volunteers from Gospel Choir delivered the gifts to United Lutheran Church.

The Huskie Special Olympics Basketball team went down to the United Center on Monday, December 16. They got a behind-the-scenes tour of the United Center and were able to shoot around on the court before the game and meet Benny the Bull. Then they enjoyed the Bulls versus the Orlando Magic game.

Among more than 800 students statewide, 14 OPRF students have been chosen to compete in the Illinois Music Educators Association state competition. The prestigious event will be held in Peoria in January. Congratulations to the following students:

**BAND**

Grace Alger—Clarinet  
 Sarah Blobaum—C clarinet  
 David Messina—Baritone Sax  
 Fiona Ryan—Bass Clarinet  
 Daniel Wheelock—Trumpet

**CHOIR**

Caroline Caffrey—Soprano I  
 Joseph Dennis—Tenor I  
 Sage Pope—Soprano I  
 Hayley Yussman—Soprano II

**ORCHESTRA**

Patrick Dugan—Double Bass  
 Jane Larson—Viola  
 Julia Swain—Viola

**JAZZ**

Jonah Phillion—Alto Sax  
 Evan Thompson—Piano

Coached by U.S. National Master William Aramil, the OPRF Chess Team placed first at the Fenton High School Tournament on November 26. Six schools participated. In addition, the team recently attended the West Chicago Invitational where Kyle Kent placed second, Conrad Manaugh placed third, Phil Linninger placed sixth, and Quinn Baker placed eighth.

Earlier this month, more than 60 varsity teams and more than 70 novice teams competed at the Thomas Kelly High School Debate Tournament in Chicago.

Congratulations to the following students on outstanding performances:

- Mara Kupelian and Marty Pimentel, who were one of eight teams to break into quarter finals with a 4-1 record and placed 5th overall
- Matthew Testore and Connor Johnson, a novice team with a 4-1 record; placed 10th out of 72 teams
- Emma Dempsey, placed 15th out of 144 Novice students for an individual speaker award

Fifty-nine students submitted entries in OPRF's annual Martin Luther King, Jr., Assembly essay contest, the largest number of entries in recent years! In honor of the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington, the topic of this year's MLK Essay competition is, "What Would You March For?" Congratulations to the four finalists, who will read from their essays at the OPRF MLK assembly on Friday, January 17:

- Helen Susman, "I'd March For Women's Rights"
- Matt Lee, "Profiling In America"
- Tabrielle Matthews, "Equal Rights"
- Cassandra Bey, "I March For The Children"

Last Saturday, December 14 at the Glenbard District Comfy Classic, OPRFHS Huskie's Speech Team tied for 5th place TEAM honors out of 30 schools, bringing home 13 individual medals.

Congratulations to Girls' Swimming member Alanna Dasso, the first OPRF girl since 1999 to make it to the final round at the state meet. Congratulations to the following for their state meet performances:

- Hanna Blankemeier (freshman) for 24th 200 yd. freestyle and 24th 100 yd. freestyle
- Alanna Dasso (senior) for 14th 100 yd. backstroke and 12th 100 yd. freestyle
- Hanna Blankemeier, Chloe Guhlstorf (junior), Polina Bondarenko (freshman), Alanna Dasso for 21st 200 yd. freestyle relay
- Alanna Dasso, Polina Bondarenko, Emma Connell (senior), Hanna Blankemeier 20th 400 yd. freestyle relay

The following items were removed from the consent agenda:

- F. 2014-15 School Calendar;
- G. Tentative 2015-16 School Calendar
- H. Pool Feasibility Contracts
- I. Henry Bros. Bid Recommendations for Summer 2014-15 Capital Improvements
- K. Transfer of Funds from the O&M Fund to Capital Projects Fund

## **Consent Items**

Mr. Phelan moved to approve the following consent items:

- Approval of the Check Disbursements and Financial Resolutions dated December 19, 2013
- Approval of Monthly Treasurer's Report
- Approval of Monthly Financial Reports
- Approval of Personnel Recommendations, including New Hires, Resignation, and Stipends
- Summer School Dates and Salaries for 2014

- Summer 2014 Asbestos Abatement Contract
- Policy 3:60, Administrative Responsibility of the Building Principal
- Policy 5:50, Prohibitions on Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco in the Workplace
- Policy 5:90, Abused and Neglected Child Reporting
- Policy 5:200, Terms and Condition of Employment and Dismissal
- Policy 6:250, Community Resource Persons and Volunteers
- Policy 7:300, Extracurricular Athletics
- Policy 8:30, Visitors to and Conduct on School Property

seconded by Dr. Moore. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**2014-15 Calendar**

Mr. Phelan moved to approve the 2014-15 Calendar for the 2014-15 school year, as presented; seconded by Mr. Cofsky. Discussion ensued.

The Instruction Committee had reviewed and moved the approval of the 2014-15 Calendar to the Board of Education. Discussion included questions about starting school in the middle of August and ending the 2015-16 school year before Memorial Day. Dr. Gevinson asked how this affected teachers and staff. Having finals before winter break necessitates beginning the school year earlier. The previous Board of Education deliberated about moving finals before winter break and it determined that it was superior for both the students and the family. Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if consideration had been given to camp programs of Districts 90 and 97 and programs run by the Park District that employ high school students during the summer. Mr. Phelan cautioned against changing the paradigm as that could have a destabilizing effect in the community. Mr. Weissglass acknowledged receiving concerns about starting instruction in early August, noting that the 2015-16 school year would start three weeks before Labor Day. He felt if there were compelling reasons to start so early, the school needed to articulate that fact, as it is a significant culture change.

The administration explained the process/elements that are used to build the calendar.

- 1) Feedback was obtained from faculty and associate districts
- 2) Winter and spring breaks were coordinated with Districts 90 and 97
- 3) Final Exams were scheduled
- 4) Days of attendance were delineated
- 5) Parent/teacher conferences were delineated

An unknown amount of days will be needed for assessment in the spring semester; the number of students that must be assessed will also change. The Park District employees 50 high school students 2 to 3 percent of the junior and senior classes. Both the members of Citizens' Council and Boosters were positive about scheduling finals before winter break and students were happier, as they feel less anxiety.

August 14, 2014 is the date school is set to start for the 2014-15 school year. It cannot start later because Driver Ed requires an exact number of instructional minutes. The administration also considered the quality of instruction after winter break, which generally has been used for review.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked the administration to consider offering exploratory or interdisciplinary courses in January or to look at going to quarters or trimester classes

rather than moving the calendar earlier. August was a hot month and she preferred the community make use of the summer. If that is not the decision, then more conversation with the community is needed. Dr. Moore had observed that several classrooms were very hot and had to move to hallways, etc., in warmer weather. Mr. Prale noted that moving from semesters to trimesters would require full community and faculty involvement. Semester courses, versus yearly courses, tend to be elected courses and, thus, can absorb the disparity of first semester being two weeks shorter in length than second semester. Discussion will occur about making accommodations to cool some of the overheated rooms or move those classes.

Mr. Phelan supported the calendar for 2014-15 because the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction and Faculty Senate agreed that first semester is as short as it can be.

A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

#### **2015-16 Calendar**

Mr. Phelan moved to approve the tentative 2015-16 school year calendar as presented; seconded by Mr. Cofsky. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Weissglass reiterated the importance of having public conversation about this calendar schedule. He asked for the start dates of Districts 90 and 97 and how other districts around the state were calendaring items. Mr. Prale noted that fifty percent of schools in Chicago start mid-August because they have scheduled their finals before winter break. Districts 90 and 97 start dates are driven by their bargained dates; their commencements are held at the high school the first week of June. Further information will be brought to the Board of Education. Mr. Prale noted that some schools were moving away from the use of quarters to using online real-time periods.

A roll call vote resulted in six ayes and one nay. Ms. Patchak-Layman voted nay. Motion carried.

#### **Pool Feasibility Study**

Mr. Phelan moved to approve the Pool Feasibility Studies, as presented; seconded by Dr. Moore. Discussion ensued.

The feasibility study will be completed in the January/February timeline. The Board of Education will receive the final report in March and it will include the feasibility of each site, which site would be most appropriate, and a timeline with milestone dates. A question was asked if discussions were occurring about other sites in the community, as the Park District plan to discuss a master planning for two pools in March.

A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

#### **Henry Bros.**

Mr. Phelan moved to approve the Henry Bros. Bid Recommendations for Summer 2014-15 Capital Improvements, as presented; seconded by Mr. Weissglass. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Zummallen noted that the girls' locker room renovation was added to the original long-range plans. Thus, the percentage increase went from 3.8% to 5.2%. Improvements came in \$300,000 less than budgeted this year. Definite numbers have not been received for the work to be completed in 2016. Mr. Zummallen noted that the economy had allowed the District to receive better pricing and, as such, some projects

were moved forward earlier than planned, i.e., fan units were added, air conditioning daycare rooms and two science labs, as well as work in the Board Room, etc. By 2015, the hope is for every classroom to have air-conditioning. Ms. Patchak-Layman remarked that the budget should show an offset in future years because of that work being moved forward. Mr. Weissglass noted that the projections in the FAC report reflect that fact.

A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Resolution to Transfer Funds from the O&M Fund to the Capital Projects Fund** Mr. Phelan moved to approve the Resolution to Transfer Funds from the Operations and Maintenance Fund to the Capital Projects Fund; seconded by Dr. Gevinson. Discussion ensued.

This request for \$6.4 million reflects a combination of capital improvement projects for 2014 as well as finishing projects from 2013.

A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Approval of 2013 Tax Levy**

Mr. Phelan moved to adopt the 2013 Tax Levy in the amount of \$55,019,413, as presented; seconded by Mr. Weissglass. Discussion ensued.

Dr. Moore observed that the option to give back \$10 million and the option to adopt a flat levy minus \$616,000 had the same result, except that the second option would provide tax relief for a longer time. While she understood the desire to return the funds to the taxpayers who paid into the fund balance, she looked at Oak Park as being a stable community. Whether the refund was a lump sum or spread over time, she felt it would affect mostly the same taxpayers and, thereby, sustain a lower tax rate. Mr. Phelan believed that while there is a low turnover, it does occur. The money has been collected over 10 years and during that time significant amounts of taxpayers have left. In addition, the FAC community members overwhelmingly recommended the \$10 million cut. This is a strong and important signal to the community that the District will not maintain such a large fund balance. He also observed that much of the financial cost containment efforts have happened because of defensiveness of the fund balance. Both pushing the levy out as far possible and having the FAC's recommendation were pivoting and the District will not have to be defensive. It will be reduced to a reasonable fund balance and OPRFHS will make reasonable decisions about the education of the children.

Mr. Cofsky considered option 5 a hybrid that would provide immediate relief to the taxpayer, which FAC strongly supported, as well as longer-term relief. Dr. Moore cautioned about the whiplash of having lower taxes followed by then higher taxes.

Dr. Lee opposed this motion and read the following statement: "I believe that the primary purpose of our consideration of a substantial decrease in our fund balance, is to show our taxpayers that our board is just as aware of their needs as we are of the current and future needs of our students, as well as their families. It is clear that a \$10 million reduction in the tax levy will most certainly result in a real, short-term political gain.

"My purpose is to try to convince each of you that we run the risk of making decisions now in the absence of real knowledge that we are capable of acquiring, as well as the

absence of credible financial projections that we are capable of making, provided that we are willing to do the work and invest the necessary resources for doing this.

“Here are some of the questions that we should be able to give reasonable answers to, and which we are currently incapable of answering:

1. If we allow our current expenditure patterns to continue, along with the current revenue reductions that are being recommended by the FAC, what changes will need to be made in our revenues in order to avoid destabilizing expenditure cuts?
2. Assuming that we might have to change our expenditure patterns in order to be able to sustain the kind of recommended revenue decreases, what would be the magnitude of the necessary expenditure cuts, and over what period? Don't the taxpayers have a right to know some of these answers before making drastic cuts in revenues?
3. The current FAC recommendations make a few vague references to future referenda that they assume will have to occur after we have supposedly demonstrated our newly-earned level of confidence. What is the projected level of the new tax increases that we would request? How close would those levels of taxation come to the current level? Don't the taxpayers have a right to know this? We cannot answer that now.
4. Experienced educational administrators are aware that while changes in revenue patterns are sometimes easy to make, decreases in expenditures are always far more difficult, and a considerably longer time frame is needed to do so without creating dangerous instability. How much time would be needed to change our spending patterns, should they be needed? Would adequate cash reserves make the adjustment more possible to accomplish?
5. Our board asked the FAC only for recommendations regarding our fund balance, not for comprehensive recommendations regarding our long-term financial management. Given the short period of time that a majority of our board, as well as our CFO, has had to learn the “ins and outs” of our financial system, why should the public have a great deal of confidence in our ability to take such a drastic course of action, in the absence of answers to the foregoing questions?

“We owe it to our taxpayers to show credible evidence that we adequately considered the details of our expenditure patterns in the context of our revenues; we have certainly given a great deal of thought to our fund balance, but we have not done the needed work that would be necessary to chart, not only: revenues, but the likely scenarios of expenditure management that would be necessary as a result of the revenue cuts, and any likely requests that we might have to make from the taxpayers for any tax increases.

“If we have credible evidence that the dramatic gesture of a \$10 million tax cut has been well thought out, we can easily make that gesture one year from now, from a position of reason, and not just wishful thinking.”

Dr. Gevinson had difficulty determining where he stood on this issue and that he had not been persuaded that the \$10 million cut was wise, although he did believe that approving a flat levy would be wise, as it was only for one year. He then read the following statement:

“Until very recently I was convinced that under tax cap law, as a matter of principle and strategy, it was best for a public school district to take the maximum permitted levy increase every year, because it would maintain the greatest taxing capacity for the District, and expenses seem always to outpace cost of living increases. And in the event that CPI would rise above 5% (and I can remember years of double-digit inflation in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s), under tax cap law a district’s taxing capacity could not even keep pace with CPI. Further, increasing the levy by CPI would mean only a modest tax increase for taxpayers each year. In fact, depending on the direction of housing values, it could even mean a decrease. I think I have that right.

“But I have been convinced by the work of FAC that this general principle and strategy do not make sense for District 200 under our current circumstances. What has convinced me, really, is the light FAC has shed on referendum politics. What I have gathered from FAC is that to optimize chances of passing the next referendum, whenever it comes, we would want to have a fairly small shortfall of revenue relative to expenses with a fund balance roughly three months greater than expenses. Jeff has called that the sweet spot. If we were to continue pushing out the next referendum as far as possible, we would almost certainly not pass it when we finally needed to because by the time the fund balance would drop to 25 to 40 percent above expenses, the difference between revenues and expenses would be huge, and the size of the increase in taxing power we would need would be prohibitive for taxpayers. Therefore, I agree that we should work to bring the fund balance down to the right level by the time we need a referendum on the basis of revenues vs. expenses, which FAC analysis says will be 8-10 years from now. I agree, too, that more frequent referendums are good for community relations, and if handled well, can build trust and support for the school.

“What is difficult, though, is deciding on the best way to bring down the fund balance. FAC has considered a number of options and mechanisms for doing so, and it has even provided two (or really three) recommendations for how to get the ball rolling this year. But the source of my difficulty is that FAC has not considered educational expenses in doing its analysis and making its recommendations. This is not a criticism of FAC – considering education was not part of its charge. But here’s the education issue as I see it:

“Dr. Isoye noted at our Dec. 10 Special Board Meeting that the FAC recommendations assume a status quo school. In other words, FAC has not anticipated additional educational needs, which we as a Board might decide are, in fact, quite worthy of additional expenditures. This is a very important observation, but I would take it even further.

“The status quo today is different than it was 6 or 7 years ago when the District began a major cost containment effort. As a result of that effort, we have, from what I can gather, and this is a short list:

1. Considerably higher average class sizes in major academic areas of the school

2. Fewer courses for students to choose to take
3. A hiring guideline that for the first time in our history eliminates from consideration some of the best teaching candidates because they cost too much
4. More rigid teacher retention guidelines, which have saved money but caused us to lose some excellent teachers

“This could be a long discussion, but just to talk about class size for a minute, from what I can gather on my own, honors English classes, for which about half of our students register, often have 28 or 29 students today. Before cost containment, the numbers were usually 24 or 25. In the early 1990’s, before a major cost reduction reorganization effort, such classes averaged 21 or 22. In Dr. Isoye’s old district, Maine Township, English classes are capped at 22. I could talk about other facts that indicate a likely drop-off in the quality of teaching and learning. But the point is that the recommendations not only do not anticipate improving the status quo, they also do not recognize the damage that has been done under cost containment, and what it would cost to restore the former status quo.

“In addition, we will undoubtedly want to commit new funds to meeting the goals of the Strategic Plan that this Board will almost certainly approve early next year. In particular, it will be costly to try to meet the equity and social-emotional learning goals in the plan. To see an example of the expenses to come, we need only look at recent increases in expenditures that the District has made to address the needs of students reading well below grade level. The Read 180 program, while apparently quite successful, is also quite expensive. The additional programs that might well be great ideas for helping our underperforming and at-risk students can also be quite expensive. I am thinking of the A.V.I.D. program, a high quality advisory program, an expanded resource center, and restoring Project Scholar. These are all important, proven programs that could provide excellent instruction and support to many students, and they are expensive.

“In other words, I want to see us consider a menu of educational options – perhaps pilot programs we would run for a few years to gauge their success here – and factor in their expense before I commit to any of the larger non-educational options or mechanisms for bringing down the fund balance.

“For that reason, I would like to do two things tonight with the levy vote. By voting for a flat levy for 2013, I would like (1) to signal to the community and faculty and staff that we are embarking on a major departure from past practice when it comes to taxation and building the fund balance, and (2) that we want to be as careful as possible to develop a plan that not only considers the best combination of levy reduction, debt abatement, and capital expenses for bringing the fund balance down, but, most importantly, prioritizes educational needs and includes additional educational expenditures in the plan going forward. After all, we are a school, and our community has always supported educational excellence and equity at a high level. That is what should come first, and that’s why I cannot support the larger cut at this time, but I will support a flat levy.”

Dr. Gevinson moved to adopt the 2013 Tax Levy in the amount of \$64,403,413, as amended; seconded by Dr. Lee. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Patchak-Layman was not in support of this amendment because the Board of Education needs to reduce the amount of the levy, bringing down the fund balance to 100%. The District can hold the line by reducing the levy and still leave a large fund balance. The state has an option to refund surplus to taxpayers who paid those funds. Combining the levy and the fund balance is murky. Reducing the revenue by \$10 million does not change anything on the expense side. It is still on same trajectory. It allows the Board of Education to do what it thinks is best with those funds. A flat levy will not lower the fund balance or the amount of revenue collected for this year or the following year.

Dr. Gevinson reiterated that approving a flat levy would allow another year to consider its options. Whether the Board of Education does it this year or next is inconsequential in the long term. If it were determined that \$10 million was good number, \$20 million could be reduced the following year. He saw no urgency in taking this action, other than to signal a dramatic cultural change.

Mr. Weissglass believed that all of Board of Education members' stated concerns about the levy had been considered by the FAC in the course of its deliberations. He believed taking the \$10 million reduction this year was the best course of action because he worked through FAC to get the District to a place where it is using its taxing authority with great responsibility, knowing that the community was taxed at a level that was higher than necessary. Related, but separate, is the rebuilding of trust with the community. All four options recommended by FAC got the District to the same place in 8 to 10 years, which addressed his largest concern of a hard landing. If the fund balance is not brought down and the District lives off it to cover expenses over time, the deficit will grow very large and put the District in a financial crisis, after 10 to 15 years. Fundamentally, OPRFHS is a great school and the Board of Education wants to both maintain and improve it. He believed, other than pilots for which it would be appropriate to use fund balance money, any changes would have to be incorporated into a pay-for revenue model. The fund balance paradoxically creates a danger. The District still has plenty of money for pilot programs, as opposed to capital projects. He did not know how a \$10 million cut would endanger that ability.

Mr. Weissglass believed in the work of the FAC. It incorporated into the projections the known expenditures more closely than in the last several years. He did not believe anything in this implied expenditure cuts or patterns and yet it still provided flexibility to experiment with pilot programs. This structure has a clear plan for a referendum to occur within 8 to 10 years when the fund balance is between 25 and 40 percent and the deficit is between 7 and 10 percent, so the size of the referendum would be in the 15 to 20-cent range. Those questions were answered to his satisfaction.

Mr. Weissglass believed that the "bounce back" was a concern. The \$10 million cut must go back to 2012 levels or the District will lose its ability forever to increase taxes and that could prove to be dangerous. For the medium house in Oak Park, the \$10 million translates into about a \$450 of savings for two years or \$900. When taxes go back up, they will go up by \$450. This must be clearly articulated to realtors and the community. He did not believe this was a dangerous conversation and bringing the fund balance down further and returning the money to the people who built it demonstrated a seriousness on the part of the Board of Education, goodwill in the community, and allow the work of the strategic plan and capital projects to begin.

Mr. Cofsky believed that the District can and must balance the pursuit of educational excellence and be sensitive to the taxpayers. Historically, there has been tremendous support, but currently it is out of balance and corrections are needed. He too supported and appreciated the work of the FAC. FAC did not discuss educational programs, but it did have the educational interests of students' front and center. The FAC used data in its decision-making. Many cost cuts have already occurred in the areas of energy, financing, etc., but even with those cuts, expenditures have increased. The model being used by FAC, revised to represent more realistic conditions, still has adequate resources for an institution to put together specific educational programs. Over the next 5 years, the model has \$45 million of incremental dollars. The District's obligation is to use its resources wisely. If the District goes above those numbers, then the District will be at risk of having a lower fund balance in the future. To address the concern about status quo would be to use the money in the same way, but FAC was cognizant of the educational needs. He supported the original motion.

Mr. Phelan congratulated this Board of Education and he thanked the serving board members and the FAC for its careful work. His uncle was an all-state guard here, Mr. Phelan himself graduated from OPRFHS 30 years ago, and last summer he spoke at his daughter's graduation. The Board of Education has to think in both the short-term and the long-term. For him there were persuasive arguments on several of FAC recommendations. Establishing trusting relationships with not only the taxpayers, but also the people who work in the building was poignant to him. The District has been operating in an unnatural state both inside and outside of this building and it was important to restore balance. FAC was composed of skilled people, some of whom studied hard for a long period and in a transparent fashion, planned for OPRFHS to have a soft landing in 8 to 10 years.

A roll call vote resulted in 2 ayes and 5 nays. Dr. Gevinson and Dr. Lee voted Nay. Motion failed.

A roll call vote on the original motion resulted in all 5 ayes and 2 nays. Dr. Lee and Dr. Gevinson voted nay. Motion carried.

**Resolution to Abate Working Cash Fund**

Mr. Phelan moved to approve the Resolution Abating the Working Cash Fund of Consolidated High School District Number 200, Cook County, Illinois, and abating the taxes heretofore levied for the year 2013 to pay debt service on the General Obligation Limited Tax School Bonds, Series 2005, and General Obligation Limited Tax School Bonds, Series 2009, of said School District; seconded by Mr. Weissglass. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Minutes**

Mr. Phelan moved to approve the Open and Closed Session Minutes October 24, and November 21, and a declaration that the closed session audiotapes of May 2012 be Destroyed, and a declaration that the closed session minutes of January 1, 1989 through November 30, 2013 shall remain closed seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Ms. Patchak-Layman suggested including on the closed session agenda the closed minutes at the time of the six-month review.

**Supplemental Educational**

Mr. Phelan moved to approve the contract with All Students Succeed/Sylvan Learning for the 2013-14 school year; seconded by Dr. Lee. A roll call vote

## Services

resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

The District contracts with 8 to 10 other resources for this tutoring, but the contracts are much smaller. All eligible students have been notified of this opportunity and any desiring it were receiving it.

## **Advisory Leadership Team (ALT) and Finance Advisory Committee (FAC)**

Mr. Phelan moved to dissolve the 2013 FAC for fund balances and to dissolve the 2010 FAC Budgeting Model (ALT), approved on November 18, 2010; seconded by Dr. Moore. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Phelan noted that the FAC budgeting model was created to demonstrate that the District was fiscally prudent and it was cutting costs. Some of its recommendations were the same as those stated by Dr. Gevinson. It is now time to signal to the public and to the school community that the Board of Education is ready to take on the balance of controlling expenditures and improving educational outcomes.

Ms. Patchak-Layman asked if something else would replace the Quality Review Committees (QRCs), individuals and groups within the building that would look creatively at ways to meet the needs of students. Mr. Phelan noted that the administration was capable of marshaling the employees of the District to do better. Once better trust is established within the building, individuals will take it upon themselves to find ways to do things better. This action would not prohibit the administration from continuing those groups or other groups; it just removes the Board of Education's mandate to do it in a certain fashion.

Mr. Phelan noted that because the FAC did a commendable job, the Board of Education could move forward. A perception exists that this committee has more to do and that harkens back to the prior FAC. The dissolution of the committee will dispel that perception and will help establish trust within and outside of the building. While an additional FAC meeting was in the process of being scheduled to continue a discussion on policy, it had not been finalized. FAC's recommendations were in sufficient form and the Board of Education's Finance Committee is capable of making good use of those recommendations going forward. Mr. Phelan again thanked the members of the FAC for the wonderful job they did. Mr. Weissglass added that any additional discussion about policy would not need to happen until the next levy year when the Board of Education would determine next year's levy as part of the budgeting process. Mr. Weissglass did not see the dissolution of this committee endangering any further recommendations regarding a fund balance policy. Mr. Cofsky felt the Finance Committee was ready and eager to bring a financial policy to the Board of Education.

While Mr. Cofsky noted that the FAC felt communication was critical, Mr. Weissglass did not think FAC had any particular expertise in communication. However, there were people who have experience in communicating on financial issues and that will be shared with Ms. Sullivan and the administration.

Mr. Weissglass stated that the work of the committee was extraordinary. It was a honor for him to be part of it. It included great analysis, good advice, and disagreements about the right course of action. His biggest hesitation in dissolving it was the relationship aspect and while it would be difficult to resolve that without meeting again, he understood and supported the concern that the committee's ongoing work could feel like deeper cost containment. He gave the caveat that the administration, the Board of Education, and FAC do have to watch costs. However, the Board of Education and the administration need to reassert their leadership around finances.

Dr. Moore noted that FAC's commitment to meet twice per month was exceptional and that the Board of Education should honor its commitment to end in December.

A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

## **Information**

### **Instruction Committee**

The following reports were presented at the Instruction Committee meeting on December 10, 2013, and the Committee supported moving them to the entire Board of Education.

MSAN—Mr. Prale noted that Devon Alexander and Latonia Brown chaperoned students to the MSAN Student Conference in Amherst, Massachusetts where they had outstanding conversations. Each student had a defined perspective, which was unique and informative. They will again present to the Committee in February about their progress.

Mr. Cofsky appreciated the sharing of this with the entire Board of Education as it is important for students to have the opportunity to engage with the Board of Education.

Dr. Isoye noted that the number of Districts that are MSAN members does fluctuate.

Sabbaticals—The Board of Education members were asked for their thoughts on the number of sabbaticals they would entertain next year.

Mr. Phelan stated that last year's sabbatical reports from James Bell and Raffaella Spilotro convinced him of the worthiness of such a program and, thus, he would support two sabbaticals next year.

When the question arose as to whether this should be considered by the Finance Committee as to how it fits into the budget, the response was that many items would fall under multiple committees, but there was hesitancy to send this yet to another committee.

It was suggested that different scenarios be reviewed as to what the District would spend or save, depending on who was taking a sabbatical. The administration noted that the timeline was to publicize this to the faculty and have the Board of Education approve the applications in February.

Dr. Gevinson noted that the issuance of the 403(b) match makes it less financially attractive to the District to support sabbaticals, and while he concurred with supporting two sabbaticals for next year, he would be hesitant to turn down another if it were good and it was strategically used to retain teachers. He felt some good teachers had been lost in the last two or three years.

**Policy, Evaluation, and Goals Committee** supported moving forward the Board Calendar to the entire board. This is a dynamic, ongoing-type of document and contains action versus informational items. It had evolved to being more interactive with committees. It is not yet complete as it does not have the evaluation of superintendent, Strategic Plan, checks, Treasurer's Report, or any retreat items, etc.? The Board of Education should consider this a calendar of targets. Ms. Kalmerton has a working calendar that will be used to build agendas.

**Board Committee**

Mr. Phelan noted that while no requests for training of Roberts' Rules of Order had been received at this time, any future request should be sent to Ms. Kalmerton.

Mr. Phelan asked for suggestions for agenda formats for committee business. Chairs should continue to work with their administrative liaisons on agenda items. Mr. Phelan will bring forth a revised flow chart for discussion at the next meeting. Suggestions included:

- 1) Place new business on every agenda as a standard protocol.
- 2) Include times for each agenda item.

Mr. Phelan will send forth proposals for doing business to the Policy, Evaluation, and Goals Committee.

**Adjournment**

At 10:15 p.m. on Thursday, December 19, 2013, Mr. Phelan moved to adjourn this meeting; seconded by Mr. Cofsky. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

John Phelan  
President

Dr. Jackie Moore  
Secretary