

May 30, 2014

A special meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on Friday, May 30, 2014 in the Board Room of the high school.

Call to Order President Phelan called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Friday, May 30, 2014. A roll call indicated the following members were present: Thomas F. Cofsky, Dr. Steve Gevinson, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Dr. Jackie Moore, Sharon Patchak Layman, John Phelan and Jeff Weissglass. Also in attendance was Steven T. Isoye, Superintendent; Tod Altenburg, Chief School Business Official; Philip M. Prale, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors Jacqueline Glosniak of the *Wednesday Journal*

Public Comments None

Closed Session At 5:10 p.m., Mr. Phelan moved to enter closed session for the discussion of 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; and 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 Mr. Weissglass. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

At 5:20 p.m., the Board of Education resumed open session.

Collective Bargaining Agreement Mr. Phelan moved to approve the Agreement Between the Oak Park and River Forest High School District 200 and the Oak Park and River Forest High School Faculty Senate, IEA/NEA, as presented; seconded by Mr. Cofsky. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Patchak-Layman made the following statement:

“Two years ago, the Board of Education passed a teacher contract with the Faculty Senate. It covered a short time frame because a strategic planning process was being conducted by the District. It was hoped that once there was a strategic plan, the next contract would reflect its content.

“The contract before us bears no relationship to the adopted strategic plan nor is this contract forward thinking in anyway.

“This contract is not focused on student outcomes and success. This contract has no binding commitment to the mission of this high school or to the goals of the Board of Education.

“This contract maintains the status quo of steps and lanes. It provides no opportunity for compensation for teachers to ascend a career ladder in instructional leadership while remaining in the classroom. It provides no opportunity for teachers to be compensated for their knowledge and skills.

“This contract continues the status quo of a 4-hour instructional day for teachers with 5 class periods of 48 minutes each for 168 days with 6 more days added for exams but no instruction. A supervisory period of 48 minutes is assigned but shall not include any responsibility outside of the assigned period. The opportunity to incorporate an advisory period for students cannot happen with this contract.

“This contract continues the retirement bumps of 6 percent for 5 years and other retirement enhancements, combined benefits that this community cannot afford and part of the reason that the state legislators have enacted pension reform.

“In an attempt to beat the clock and the state, our students were put second. I cannot support this contract.”

Mr. Phelan expressed appreciation for the bargaining teams on both the sides of the District and the Faculty. The perspectives of the taxpayers were kept closely in mind and both the faculty and the District showed mutual respect. He was proud to have worked with the faculty’s negotiating team.

A roll call vote resulted in 5 ayes and 2 nays. Dr. Lee and Ms. Patchak-Layman voted nay. Motion carried.

**Superintendent
Contract**

Mr. Phelan moved to approve the Superintendent’s Contract, as presented; seconded by Dr. Moore. Discussion ensued.

Any pay increases to the Superintendent’s contract would constitute amendments and, in the current state of the law, that is a technical flaw. As the Board of Education’s only employee, many of the members feel highly of him and want to retain him. Given that there is the opportunity to correct that technical flaw and provide him with pay increases that would leave room for the Board of Education to further incent him with bonuses or other pay to the extent that his performance merits it in the future, the Board of Education decided to take this action. Dr. Isoye’s performance has been exemplary in the past and Mr. Phelan looked forward to working with him in the future.

While Mr. Cofsky supported the work of the superintendent, he did not support the contract, as it added incremental compensation not yet tied to performance. Additionally, he felt the Superintendent's pension is lucrative and that a change was not necessary. Mr. Cofsky had supported the other contract revisions as they captured prior commitments.

Ms. Patchak-Layman recommended that the Superintendent say thank you to the Board of Education and then refuse this contract. As the leader of the school, because he is the highest paid employee at the school, because other staff, in particular the administrators were not afforded this pension opportunity, she did not believe it set a good example for all other employees at the school to have this contract reflect his individual benefits. She was disappointed that the changes to the contract revolved around pension benefits, knowing that the reason that state had gotten into pension benefits was, besides the financial benefit the state needs to be made, is that the pensions within TRS for some, not all, of its members are out of line with what the residents of the state who will need to support can sustain. They have no opportunity to be part of the dollars amounts that have become part of the TRS schedule, because of this metropolitan area, in particular. Recognition of these facts would be to maintain the current contract, not try to beat the clock, not think that OPRFHS is above the state laws being enacted, not think that everyone here is worth everything, and the rest of the state should pay for it. She was disappointed that so much time had been spent on this contract when students need that kind of energy and thought; they were not in the forefront of any of these conversations.

Dr. Moore stated that, as a Board of Education member, she was elected a few months following the approval of the Superintendent's five-year contract. To look at it as something that can be revised at this point is not appropriate and she felt that because the Superintendent was the Board of Education's employee, it can and will tie the Strategic Plan and the Board goals to his performance, and it will be discussed in ways that go beyond salary. It is not as accurate to say the Board of Education of OPRFHS is the only school considering these types of issues. She spoke of a mass email sent to UIC employees telling them that the pension reform law was not going to take effect as anticipated and that teachers and professors who had retired had the opportunity to return to similar jobs: everyone is trying to determine ways to show support for valued solutions. She felt it precarious to take the position that the State of Illinois knows best. The Board of Education is being valid and thoughtful. At no time did she feel she was taking her eye off this community as a Board of Education member. She hoped they could agree that students were the first priority. Mr. Weissglass noted that when the legislature passed the pension reform and set a June 1 date for its enactment, in particular, those multiyear

contracts already in place would be grandfathered, it put school districts across the state in the unusual position of having to look at making multiyear contracts because of their authority to do that. The Board of Education decided not to do that, but in those situations where multiyear contracts were in place, it made adjustments to comply with the intent of the law one would get the benefit for pension purposes. He supported all of the changes the Board of Education made and interpreted this increase to be cost neutral.

A roll call vote resulted in four ayes and three nays. Ms. Patchak-Layman, Mr. Cofsky and Dr. Lee voted nay. Motion carried.

Adjournment

At 5:25 p.m., Mr. Phelan moved to adjourn the Special Board Meeting; seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

John Phelan
President

Dr. Jackie Moore
Secretary

Submitted by Gail Kalmerton
Clerk of the Board