

January 22, 2009

A special meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on Thursday, January 22, 2009, in the Third Floor Library of the high school.

**Call to Order**

President Conway called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m. A roll call indicated the following members were present: John C. Allen, IV; Jacques A. Conway, Valerie J. Fisher, Dr. Ralph H. Lee, Dr. Dietra D. Millard, Sharon Patchak-Layman, and John P. Rigas. Also present were Dr. Attila J. Weninger, Superintendent; Jason Edgecombe, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Cheryl Witham, Chief Financial Officer; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/ Clerk of the Board of Education.

**Visitors**

OPRFHS Staff Kay Foran, Pattie Collins, Charles and Mary Ann Smith, Carrie Cullin, Niall Collins, Mary Ann Howie, Linda Spain, Nancy Ristau, Joe Kostal, Vincent and Sharon Martinek, Milanne Bancroft, Lynn and James LeFevre, John Bokum, Judi Kowalkowski, Cindy McGuckin, Lark W. King, Amy Stanis, Patti Warren, Robert Collins, Suzie Ferrier, Elaine Hlavach, Archie McGee, Katie O'Keefe, Yeni Hart, Naomi Hildner, E. Cordero, Carol Ewald, Vanessa Hughes, Sharon Delius, Vince SanFillippo, Jay Fisher, Patricia Cheney, Louis Giovanni, Brian, Dan, Megan, and Eileen Riley, Gwen Qualls, Rena Mazundar, Maurice Perez, Linda Carlson, M. Rubio, Darlene Cubie; D..Dover, B. Holloway; Community members Nancy Heezen, Carmen Rosita, Jim Craig, Elizabeth Melaa, Peter Ferraro, Mary L, Terry Finnegan, Fred Valentini, Sarah Jimenez, Shaagh D. Smith, , David Valdez, John Costopoulos, Jim Baldwin, Daniel Greenstone, Richard Falen, Victor Guarino, Rosa Higgs, Harry Waltner, Frank Klein, Betty Boles, and Jim Balanoff; SEIU representatives Tim McDonnell, Gene Washington, Alfred Melinaro, Eva Gaslieniua, Susan Matta, Wayne Lindwall, Rachel Alebs, Erica Molinari, Carmen Perez, Paul Villancey, Kia Burns, Marguerite Feliciano, Madeline Martez, Sean M., Victor Sto, O. Alin, Nick Carone, Art Chaneluis, Thomas Kuchin, Paul Collins, Todd Ricker, C. Harper, J. Hanad, Dave Siegel, and Stephanie Subach; students Dan Knickelbein, Carl S., Ronald and Jack Lee, Myles B., Gante; Judie Wilson of the League of Women Voters, Terry Dean of the *Wednesday Journal*, and Christopher LaFortune of the *Oak Leaves*.

Mr. Conway thanked everyone for attending and noted that the purpose of the meeting was to hold a public hearing on the outsourcing of custodians. Board of Education did not intend to take a vote on the outsourcing of custodians that evening. The Board of Education had received countless emails with positive comments in favor of the custodians from those people who wanted to express their sentiments on this matter. He asked that the visitors limit their comments to three minutes. If something were longer than three minutes, he asked that it be given to the Clerk of the Board for inclusion in the minutes. He invited other Board of Education members to make comments.

Mr. Rigas reiterated that no vote would be taken that night. This is one of the first steps in a series of 10 steps that occur from that evening until June 25, 2009. He acknowledged receiving the emails and concurred that they were very favorable to the custodians with one asking that the Board of Education consider all aspects of this decision before making such an important change in the school's environment. He reiterated that no vote would be taken at this meeting.

**Public Comments**

Mike Hagins, 929 Clinton Avenue, Oak Park, a 1996 graduate, read the following statement.

“It recently came to my attention that the school board was looking at the possibility of outsourcing the Building and Grounds Department (B&G) at the high school. I am completely outraged by this!

“As a student for four years I actually got to know several of the custodians. They were always friendly, professional, and hard working. Several of them have been with the school for decades. They are well liked and trusted by the students. It takes a long time to earn the trust that these employees have and I am sorry to say that nowadays you can never be too sure about anyone. Are our kids worth the risk?

“I'm reminded of the school motto ‘Those Things that are Best.’ I lived that for my entire academic career at OPRFHS. The education that I received there has carried me very far and set me on a great career path. I am very proud to be an alumni. Please keep the school motto in mind when passing down such a decision. Our students deserve the best facilities possible and our B&G team has a personal interest in the school that an outsourced company will not. Keep the B&G Department in house and keep ‘Those things that are Best’ at OPRFHS.”

Mary Ann Smith, 1142 S. Highland Avenue, Oak Park addressed the Board of Education.

Ms. Smith stated that she was the wife of a custodian and asked the Board of Education to think of them as part of school community. She was told this by her husband when she had two children with chicken pox and when there was a student at the door who needed to get to school and her husband responded to that request. Her husband left countless times to take care of a child in trouble. One of the biggest arguments they have is that he does not want to wear anything other than his uniform. She believed that this group of people has much pride in what happens at the high school. The students feel safe with them. She urged the Board of Education to keep the school community together.

Patti Collins, secretary of B&G, read the following statement.

“My name is Pattie Collins. I am secretary in the Buildings and Grounds Department and I serve as one of three Union Stewards in the Classified Personnel Association. Quite frankly—I am baffled. According to the FY 2009 budget, our revenue is more than \$77 million and our expenditures are \$66 million. If that were my household budget, I would be thrilled.

“Yet once again we find ourselves defending the jobs of our 28 Oak Park & River Forest High School custodians. According to the budget, the total salary and benefits expenditure is nearly \$36.7 million dollars. The salary and benefits for these 28 custodians amounts to roughly 1.9 million dollars.

“Our custodians clean over 1 million square feet of this school - day in and day out. Then of course there are all the set ups that need to be done on a regular basis. In addition to cleaning and routine set ups – they receive work orders daily. I looked at our work order system. From February 2007 through mid-December 2008, our custodial staff received 4,001 work orders. That amounts to approximately 178 requests per month. These are strictly custodial – Day Crew, second Shift, third Shift, and summer requests.

“When it comes time to collect the bids from the outside companies for cleaning services –you need to ask them how much they’ll charge for additional requests –

- Ask them what they charge to clean vomit from all over a bathroom in the middle of the day. Not just in the toilet – from all over the sink and walls.
- Ask them what they charge to pack up a staff member’s personal belongings when it comes time to remodel offices – guitars, lamps, skin lotions, q-tips, etc. They will need to carefully label the belongings because that person will be back in early August looking for their stuff.
- What will they charge when we ask them to change the trashcan liner because a student threw a stink bomb?
- And how much will unloading the commodities order cost for the Food Service Department?
- Please let them know they will need to remove graffiti at a moment’s notice.
- Sometimes we will ask them to drive Board members and job candidates back and forth between the hotel and school for special meetings, forums, dinners, etc.
- When fights break out – they need to get the broken glass removed as quickly as possible. They will have to follow the trails of blood from the South Café up to the nurses’ area and get that cleaned up and disinfected immediately.
- Tell them they need to take special care when cleaning the P.E. equipment – we want to prevent the spread of MRSA. We also have students with serious allergies – so we might need certain areas disinfected on a moment’s notice.

- Occasionally we will ask them to deliver food and equipment for Administrative meetings held off campus.
- Ask them to be sure to remove the chewing tobacco from the west wall of the west pool.
- There are several board deliveries that need to be made after the dock person has left – hopefully they will have a good running vehicle.
- In the nice weather when the teachers open the windows – they will need a large net to catch the birds that fly into the classrooms. While they are catching birds – ask them to be on the alert in case they need to catch a student falling from the Field House balcony. Ask them if there is a special charge for that.

“Forgive me if I sound angry, but I find it very upsetting that the Board and Administration thinks the custodial staff can so easily be replaced. Our custodians do all those things at no extra charge.

“On a recent work order – a request read ‘deliver to room 353’. It did not mention what was to be delivered. It turned out second shift had to unpack and deliver 30 new desks from the dock. After bringing them up on the freight elevator to room 353, they had to bring the 30 old desks to the attic. I never heard any complaints – I was just a bit surprised when I was closing work orders.

“One night a couple of weeks ago - we had boys’ basketball in the field house, wrestling in the 1 west gym, and a large swim meet with a banquet in the 2 east. When basketball was over, that mess was immediately cleaned up in order to set up for a large wrestling meet scheduled the next day. Of course, the swim banquet had to be broken down and all of that garbage removed. Again – no extra charge.

“These are not unusual occurrences – I understand we will have a similar circumstance this weekend. You should stop in and see our staff in action. Our Buildings & Grounds Department delivers service to suit every school day, every activity, and every event this building hosts. This is in addition to keeping our one-million square foot facility clean. Even when their jobs are being threatened once again – they continue to handle their responsibilities.

“Outsourcing is not the best thing for our school. We all know that. According to the OPRF 5 Year Plan – we are in good financial shape. I understand the need to be fiscally responsible. However, it is simply not fair to give certain groups huge raises while other groups pay such a steep price. We all contribute to Oak Park & River Forest High School.

“The *Wednesday Journal* recently ran a piece on District 200’s plan to explore outsourcing. The article talks about the fact that several custodians argued last year that they do more than maintain the building – they also interact with students on a personal level. Jason is quoted as stating,

*“There is the expectation that all of us will have positive interactions with students and adults. That’s what we expect from all employees.”*

“While you are attempting to lower the budget by outsourcing – you should lower your expectations. When all is said and done, the savings will not compare to what will be lost. Thank you for your consideration.”

Nancy Heezen, resident of 1154 S. Taylor, Oak Park, addressed the Board of Education.

After reading article in the *Wednesday Journal*, she felt the need to respond. The \$1.9 million in salaries and benefits paid last year are right in line; this is twenty-eight (28) people. A living wage enables an education, home repairs health, and giving back to the community. Because a contract has expired, it does not demand outsourcing. A contract is there to negotiate. OPRFHS has 28 well-trained, excellent workers, and it is to everyone’s benefit to keep them. There are no complaints. The school is one of the best-kept buildings in town and used by 3500 people every day. The school is 125 years. It looks better than some of the new schools do. The custodians do great. The school is used from early in the morning until 10 p.m. most weekdays and weekends too. We have students, athletics, grammar schools, community groups, and Triton College who think we have a wonderful school. The community always is proud; the custodians are loyal and do outstanding work. The custodial workers treat the high school as their jewel, and one can see that every morning and night. The high school is very important to this community and the custodians understand this and do their job. They are priceless. As a taxpayer, she was proud of the things OPRFHS spends their tax money on and this was close to her heart. The children are the most important thing this community has and it wants to give them the best. The first thing that Montessori taught her students is that when one hands a child a book, they learn to treat it as the best thing. When children come to school in the morning and it is clean, that tells them this is a great place in which to learn. This is not too much to pay.

Mary Jo Lopez, resident of 927 S. Clinton, Oak Park, Illinois, addressed the Board of Education.

Ms. Lopez said that she spoke last year on this subject and she was surprised to be here speaking about it again, especially when there is so much discussion about how many jobs are being lost in this economy. She understood that the Board of Education had a fiduciary responsibility, but she asked where it was. Many administrators are new, e.g., Dr. Weninger, Mr. Edgecombe, the superintendent for B&G, etc., and they did not originate from this community. Some of these people would be leaving the District after building their resumes as to what they had done at OPRFHS. She continued that the first thing President Obama did when he took office was to ask all of his administrators making over \$100,000 per year for a

pay freeze. She knew that the school's administrators got at least a 5 percent increase. What will they get this year? Will they take a freeze? Is that a fiduciary responsibility? Alternatively, is fiduciary responsibility just on the back of the custodians? If the District is going to outsource 28 out of the 41 positions, why would the Board of Education need five administrators to oversee 13 people. She saw the timeline online and felt it was perfectly laid out as to direction that this was going.

Milanne Bancroft, an OPRFHS employee and resident of Oak Park, addressed the Board of Education.

Ms. Bancroft, a homeowner and a taxpayer in Oak Park, owned her home and supported herself and her daughter for twenty years. She echoed Patti Collins' comments. B&G personnel are responsive, cheerful, and ready and able to get their jobs done. The District cannot get a quote from any outside company that includes those extras and that kind of care. She read the following statement:

"I oppose outsourcing custodial or maintenance services currently performed by OPRFHS. The high school belongs to the community and deserves to be cared for by people who belong to our school family and who take pride in delivering a valuable service to maintain an asset that is vital to the community."

Tim McDonnell, vice president of SEIU.

Mr. McDonnell took exception to the timeline. The first step was at the bargaining table in November when the administration delivered a letter stating that the Board of Education was looking to outsource this work. That was received over two months ago. There is no reason to outsource. Under the law, the District has the responsibility to show the same wage benefit package that is presently given. Nobody has shown where anyone in the custodial unit is not doing a great job in this 100-year old building; this is being done strictly to bust the union. If the District has to have a competitive bid with comparable benefits, why outsource. The work force does a great job. The community accepts the job that is done. There is no good reason to outsource this work. Over the holidays, the custodians worked extra long to make sure everything was finished. The District will not get an outside company that does the same work. Those will no longer be District employees and it will not know who comes into the building daily. They will not answer to the Board of Education or administration. Are those the people the District wants interacting with the children and the communities' children? Some of these employees have been here for thirty (30) years; as a reward, the District says goodbye. Where would the savings be if a company were found that would pay the same wages and the same benefits?

Gene Washington, SEIU representative, addressed the Board of Education.

Mr. Washington remarked on the tremendous turnout in support of the custodial staff. He stated that he deals with these individuals weekly and it is a group who takes pride in their work, abides by the rules, and does a tremendous job. Oak Park has a reputation in the western suburbs as being above average, trendsetting, and known for taking care of its people. He felt outsourcing would be a scar on Oak Park. If outside people were allowed in the school, the quality of the people will be reduced. All that is needed is just one incident with an outside company's employee. OPRFHS needs to keep its people. He deals with them often and they are great people. He asked that the Board of Education not do this to them.

Elizabeth Melara, resident of 521 S. Lombard, Oak Park, addressed the Board of Education.

Ms. Melara stated that she was a 20-year employee of the Village of Oak Park and she has seen many efforts in outsourcing in the name of budget operations. The last time the Village did outsourcing it did not work. The Village outsourced forestry and one can see how effective that was by the number of trees that were lost. These people do not have a stake in the community; they did not care about the trees, and many companies are paying prevailing wage and they are hiring undocumented people because they can exploit them. Currently, they fired the Teamsters before it went out for bid. The bids came back higher than what the Village was paying the Teamsters. This is not something of which Oak Park should be a part. She agreed with Mr. McDonnell that this was a union-busting effort and it had no place in Oak Park.

Danny Matos, OPRFHS B&G employee, addressed the Board of Education.

Even though public speaking was Mr. Mato's least favorite thing to do, he felt compelled to do so. During his thirteen years at the high school, mostly as a custodian, he did many things beyond the job of cleaning, e.g., acting as security, fixing a leaking roof, etc. Twenty-eight people clean 1 million square feet per day; that is 35,000 sq. ft. per person. The average home has 2300 sq. ft so that is cleaning your home 15 times per day and then having 3,500 students come through it. There is more to consider than the dollars. The 28 employees' years of collective service amounts to over 400 years, that is a lot of loyalty.

Toni Hagins, Assistant Head Custodian and chief, employee of OPRFHS 12 years, read the following statement:

"...I am here tonight to address the Board of Education of OPRFHS, on the issue to bid custodian services to third party vendor.

“Last March this Board of Education heard from numerous Faculty, Staff, and residents on the issue of outsourcing our custodial staff. The consensus to this resolution, a resounding No! Yet, we are here again facing the decision of this BOE to go outside for bids for our Custodial services. Your reasoning for this decision has been stated as fiduciary responsibility. I ask this Board of Education if you have any idea of what your custodians do to keep this aged building in the showplace condition you see. Is it so easy to take for granted a clean classroom, a shiny hallway, or an immaculate Board Room? What we do goes far beyond surface cleaning; dusting, mopping and sweeping. We are a team of professionals, a team of long-time, loyal employees, with a personal vested interest in the well-being of our school, our staff, and our students.

“Over winter break, I sent an email to this Board of Education giving you just a small snapshot of what we do and what was accomplished by your custodial staff in a very small period of time. Scrubbing and waxing of XP entrance, stripping and sealing of the main basketball court in the Fieldhouse, scrubbing, waxing and cleaning of North Cafeteria, scrubbing, waxing and cleaning of bookstore, scrubbing, waxing of Administration Hallway and stairway landing, stripping and waxing area in History department, scrubbing and waxing area in third floor library, shampooing all the carpeting located in the Childcare rooms 192 and 199. These are just a few examples of the preventative maintenance that we do that saves the District money. Our duties do not stop there.

“We orchestrate setups for our athletic teams. A good example would be on a Friday night a couple of weekends ago when we had a swim meet and their banquet was in the 2 East for 100 people. At the same time we had Varsity Basketball in the Fieldhouse and lower level basketball in 1 East gyms while wrestling was having matches in the 1 West. At the conclusion of Basketball in the Fieldhouse we cleaned it and readied it for a set up for a four mat wrestling match that was to take place on the next day. We cleaned up after the swim banquet, bringing back tables, chairs, and trash from the 2 East. All of this was done in a very small time frame. All of this would be an added cost to the District if done by an outside company. This is what we do, and we take pride in doing it right for our school and for our students.

“I have been fortunate enough to be part of the recycling program that includes faculty, staff, and students all working towards the common goal of making our school green. The plaque behind you recognizes our Buildings and Grounds staff for Going Green in our use of green chemicals for cleaning. We were all trained on their use.

“We are a loyal, dedicated, and knowledgeable workforce with one common goal; to make OPRFHS the best it can be. Outside companies will not have this dedication or vested interest in our school. At the March

20, 2008 Board of Education meeting, President Conway said, ‘The District could save tax dollars and they would be saved on the backs of the custodians. He knows from experience that owners of the outsourcing firms earn the profit and pay their workers the minimum with little benefits. He could not support that level of employment.’ Dr. Lee spoke about being paid well when he was a teacher here and slept well knowing he was higher paid than the other area teachers because of the job he did. He asked, How is it fair to the taxpayers if one pays someone more than the going rate? It depends on whether the judges feel they are getting their monies worth. There are seven judges sitting at this table.

“To this Board of Education, I want to say that tax dollars will not be saved by outsourcing nor are we, the custodians, being paid more than the going rate. My research of salaries for our counterparts from area schools shows we are not the highest paid custodians. Other area school custodians and skilled maintenance workers such as Proviso Township High School and Morton High School make more than we do. In the comparison group of the NWP (Northwest Personnel Administrators) that is being used for our negotiations, we sit in the middle of the pack.

“If this Board of Education’s reasoning for outsourcing is one of fiduciary responsibility, then it needs to be weighed with these facts. Your fiduciary responsibility should not only lay with the Union workers of this institution.

“We are an important part of this school community; or should I say family, and we show this daily through our commitment to make OPRFHS the best it can be for all. We rejoice together in our school triumphs and we grieve together when there are tragedies. Can a price be put on this? An outside company will be just that, outsiders with employees not of your choice or knowledge, but that of the company’s. They will have neither longtime school ties nor community commitment. They will not give the service and the dedication our custodians give to all. You will not have the security of having longtime employee presence in the building watching out for all students whether during the day or more importantly at night. Our school, our staff, and our students deserve the best.”

Eileen Riley, resident of 1037 S. Highland, Oak Park, and wife of B&G employee Brian Riley.

Mrs. Riley stated that when her husband came home and said they had been offered a salary with a substantial pay cut were told that the District may be replacing them, it was difficult to take. Naturally, it was refused. The last teachers’ contract had 6 percent raises and the administrators took 5 percent raises. The assumption is that there will not be a loss of quality with an outside company. Will there be more outsourcing? There is increased security in the building with District employees. In last week’s *Wednesday Journal* article referring to a prior meeting, several custodians argued that

they did more than just maintain the building and that they interact with the students, not a requirement of the job. People have said that the custodians give so much to the student body. She then showed a picture of Brian Riley and Chuck Smith with the caption beneath it “Two of the School’s Finest.” She hoped they would not outsource.

Suze Ferrier, OPRFHS faculty member, addressed the Board of Education.

Ms. Ferrier stated that she had been a math teacher at OPRFHS for ten years and felt the need to speak. She wanted the Board of Education to hear from someone who teaches at the school. She was concerned about her safety as she often works late a night. It is nice to know there are people in the school who are polite, respectful, and always very pleasant. She enjoys interacting with the custodians. She wanted the Board of Education to think about the time when it finds out that it was wrong to outsource, really wrong, whether it was worth it.

Wyannetta Johnson, 929 S. Oak Park Avenue, Oak Park, addressed the Board of Education.

Ms. Johnson commented on her trip to Washington, D.C., and the inauguration of the president. While most times she did not feel the Board of Education listened to her, she said that they needed to have lived her life. The administrators are making a lot of money and the students are not doing well at this school. Everyone needs each other and the custodians, too, are needed. When APPLE meets, the rooms are clean and the tables are set. She did not understand the importance of getting rid of this union; it is a protection. Teachers are dynamic because they have a union. She encouraged these employees to fight for their jobs.

Fred Valentini, resident of 718 N. Lombard, Oak Park, addressed the Board of Education.

Mr. Valentini stated that he had children attending OPRFHS and both he and his wife were involved in lots of volunteer organizations at the high school. Over the years, they had opportunities to work and do volunteer activities mostly on the weekends. Some of custodial staff have become personal friends of his and he feels that some go above and beyond what their job descriptions are. This is an important decision from a financial standpoint. His children have interacted with the staff and he was confident that the Board of Education would consider everything and make a proper decision.

Jim Balanoff, resident of 537 Belleforte, Oak Park, addressed the Board of Education.

Mr. Balanoff, while representing the custodians as an attorney, attended this meeting as a taxpayer, a 25-year resident of Oak Park, and as a parent

whose two oldest children graduated and his youngest is a senior at OPRFHS. He remembered when he first moved to the community of how impressed he was with the architecture of the high school, but even more impressed by the cleanliness and the beautiful way in which the building was kept. Other schools do not look like this. He did not believe the high school would be able to keep the same standards and pay less, as one usually gets what one pays for. He did not believe that throwing these people away and replacing their 400 years of experience was reasonable or responsible. The fiduciary responsibility is the Board of Education's charge and it needs to keep that in mind, but to think it will get better for less is irresponsible. He was sure that it was not anti-unionism that was going on in this case and that the Board of Education members took their jobs seriously. He stated that what the District has is valuable. He stated that the Board of Education should factor in the dollars and cents of the legal trouble it would buy for the District, the Village, the students, and the taxpayers if it were to pursue this avenue.

Naomi Hildner, District employee, addressed the Board of Education.

She thanked the Board of Education and the administration for this forum in which the statements given were eloquent, distinct, and important. She hoped the comments would be taken to heart. She acknowledged that it was the Board of Education's responsibility to listen to the money as it speaks to it, but in this case, she hoped that quality would also speak to it. She continued that anytime that "we" move closer to institutionalizing and moving away from family, "we" are taking a giant step backwards. That is what is at stake. In addition, she knew the custodians personally and that the high school was in the business of teaching and shaping young people. It would be remiss to think they were doing a good job of it by turning their backs on those who have done stellar work and were working without a contract. She said a disservice would be done if this course of action were continued.

Louis Giovannetti, District Employee, addressed the Board of Education.

Mr. Giovannetti began by thanking the Board of Education members for their service as he appreciated the difficult situations with which they have had to deal. He has taught at OPRFHS for six years. He was born and raised in Chicago. When he first came into the high school, he found it an awesome facility. It was the education and the community that encompassed everyone—the administration, the Board of Education, his teammates and the custodial staff. He moved his family into Oak Park because he thought his children were at a disadvantage by living in the Chicago, because of his experience of teaching at this institution. Some might remember the Freshman Seminar Program. There was an issue a long time ago and the Board of Education at that time cut it out because of budgetary reasons; the children suffered the ill wills of that action. Being a teacher of freshmen, he thought that class had taught character to freshman

students. Since then, the school has had to deal with quadruple attendance and disciplinary issues. He asked the Board of Education members what if they made the mistake the other Board of Education chose to make and eliminated a program that saved so many children from the repercussions. He noted that the high school was trying to get back to the Freshman Seminar Program.

Ryan Mullin, student and resident of 313 N. Oak Park Avenue, Oak Park, addressed the Board of Education.

Stating that he that was Student Council's representative to the Board of Education, Mr. Mullin reported that when he entered high school four years ago, not only were teachers and peers part of his family, but the custodians as well. No one does the job with such class and professionalism as the custodians. He spoke of the time when Ms. Hagins stayed with them after school until 8:00 p.m. to help with the new recycling program. She was courteous and gracious enough to help. Lonnie Brown took an interest asked about baseball and how his senior year was going. The custodians care about us. He asked the Board of Education not to look at this as a budgetary item, because they are family. He asked to take into consideration that the custodians were part of OPRFHS.

Donna Diederich, OPRFHS District employee, addressed the Board of Education.

Ms. Diederich testified to the dedication of the custodial employees, including the time that was mentioned by Ms. Hagins, and added that the next day they needed to get ready for a wrestling meet, an annual track and field clinic, and there was a snowstorm. Ms. Diederich, herself, was in the building by 4:30 a.m. and the custodians were here at 6:00 a.m. to get ready for the people scheduled to arrive at 8:00 a.m. She noted that the high school lends its facilities to the taxing bodies and she does most of the rental of the facilities. The police department wanted to use OPRFHS to give a written test for 200 to 250 people. Over 800 people attended and the Chief and Deputy Chief suggested that the high school lock its door at one point. However, the custodians made sure there was seating for all. The test ran longer than anticipated and the custodians had to clean up for the Gospel Choir and the eighth grade graduation dance. She stated the joke is that the high school is the Oak Park and River Forest Community Center and, by the way, it is also a high school. She continued that this happens regularly and the custodians are always available to help. OPRFHS is talked about as being a family. Ten years ago, she had cancer. Every night for six weeks, teachers, CPA, and B&G. delivered a hot meal to her house. This is what this is about; one does not throw family away and one does not desert them.

Mr. Conway closed the public meeting and thanked all of the people for sharing their thoughts.

**Adjournment**

At 8:36 p.m. on Thursday, January 22, 2009, Mr. Rigas moved to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Allen. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Jacques A. Conway  
President

Dr. Ralph H. Lee  
Secretary