

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

Committee of the Whole Meeting
September 17, 2019

A Committee of the Whole Committee meeting was held on September 17, 2019. Dr. Moore called the meeting called to order at 6:34 p.m. in the Board Room. Committee members present were Matt Baron, Tom Cofsky, Craig Iseli, Ralph Martire, Dr. Jackie Moore, and Sara Dixon Spivy. Also present were Dr. Joylynn Pruitt Adams, Superintendent; and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board of Education and FOIA Officer.

Also present were: Michael Carioscio, Chief Operations Officer, Karin Sullivan, Director of Communications; Greg Johnson, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction; Chris Thieme, Senior Director of Technology; Roxana Sanders, Senior Director of Human Resources; Dr. Gwendolyn Walker Qualls, Director of Pupil Support Services; and Cyndi Sidor, Interim Chief School Business Officer; and Lynda Parker, Assistant Principal of Student Services.

Visitors

Susan Johnson, Director of Student Activities, staff members Becky Thompson of Nania Energy Advisors, Deanne Hermann, community member, and Steve Schering of the Oak Leaves.

Student Summer Travel Experiences

Reports were given on the 2019 Summer Travel experiences, including the Costa Rica Tropical Ecology Field Course, Spain, Ireland, and The Global Leadership Summit. Susan Johnson introduced the reports. Pictures were displayed of the students participating in activities, local fauna and wildlife. The Costa Rica trip was presented first. The lead chaperones were Kristen Snow and Christina McKittrick. They visited San Jose, Corozalito, Monteverde, and Sarapiquí. The students participated in a service project, took a dance class at the University of George, and went to a chocolate plantation, among other exciting things.

Next was a report on the trip to Spain which was an art history and cultural trip. The lead chaperones were Mark Collins, Manuel Gonzalez and Patricia Valenzuela. Some of the activities they highlighted included visiting the ambassador to Spain's house, shopping, participating in a scavenger hunt, and visiting the Alhambra in Granada. They also visited Seville and Madrid.

The students who participated in the trip to Ireland visited Westford House, hiked, saw a bog, learned about James Joyce, listened to lectures every day and worked alongside other people who were seeking their doctorates, etc., and traveled the countryside.

The students on the Global Leadership Summit said they traveled to Helsinki, Finland, Estonia, and Davos, Switzerland. The theme this year was "Power of Communication." They were charged with creating a problem and presenting an elevator pitch. The winning piece of the summit was placed in the Nobel peace prize museum and that was OPRFHS's own David Hog. They also met Ann Currie. The students thanked their sponsor Tyrone Williams.

All of the students spoke about how life changing these trips were.

Dr. Moore noted that the students were the perfect ambassadors and asked them to spread their knowledge and excitement to other students.

Public Comments

Deana Herrmann spoke about what the Long-Term Facilities Plan considered urgent. No monies had been allocated to address this school’s lack of usable and accessible bathrooms. Not having them is a violation of the ADA and it was hard for her to see how funds could not be allocated to these modest project. She asked that a deadline to these upgrades take place before summer school in 2020.

Minutes

Ms. Harris moved to approve the Committee of the Whole meeting minutes of the August 13, 2019, as presented; seconded by Mr. Dixon Spivy. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

UMOJA

It was the consensus of the Committee of the Whole members not to recommend that the Board of Education approved the contract with Umoja Student Development Corporation at its September 26, 2019 meeting but asked for additional information.

The amount of the contract with Umoja is \$25,150 and includes the following:

A.	Restorative Justice Course (English Division)	\$6,250
B.	Advanced Circle Keeping Training (1st-year cohort participants Part II)	\$4,500
C.	Circle Intensive Course for TCT Leaders	\$6,000
D.	Dean Team Thought-Partnership & Consulting (Code of Conduct)	\$4,200
E.	Interdepartmental Team Coaching (MTS Teams)	\$4,200

The administration also estimated \$15,000 for substitutes.

These services are in support of the following strategic plan goal strategies: Implement school-wide restorative practices and create a welcoming environment for all students, staff and families. The tactics to achieve these strategies are:

- Train English Department in foundational restorative practices as a key lever to reach all students
- Continue to cultivate the “Year One” cohort of restorative leaders through advanced circle training to become “resident circle keepers” in the OPRF school community
- Train TCT leaders in a Circle Intensive Course and support them to enhance their leadership by incorporating circles into their practice and the existing spaces they lead
- Consulting and thought-partnership within the bi-weekly Dean Team meeting to support incorporation of restorative practices into school systems and structures for discipline
- Cultivate an interdepartmental team led by Director of Student Services that promotes and tracks relational practices across the school

The core areas of support are 1) Social and Emotional Learning; 2) Restorative Justice; and 3) Post-secondary Readiness.

Last year UMOJA did a year-long PD series for 25 staff members. The trainings focused on 1) foundations of Restorative Justice; Community Building Circles: A Proactive Restorative Practice; Check Yourself: Cultivating Self-Awareness; Restorative Conversations: A responsive Restorative Practice. .This year 15 of those staff members will return as facilitators. They are in various departments, i.e., security, social workers from General Education and Special Education, CITE, MTSS coordinator, counselor, behavior specialist, English and Special Education history teachers. Half who are in classrooms and half who are not. They know their work is to continue throughout the building.

Students need to feel as though they belong to a community of learners and that their academic self is a “true” self. A long line of research evidence shows that having a sense of belonging in a school or classroom improves a student’s academic performance. “Students who perceive their relationship with their

teacher as positive, warm and close are motivated to be more engaged in school and to improve their academic achievement.”

Definitions/explanations of social-emotional learning, SEL and equity, and Restorative Justice were reviewed and included in the packet. Note Restorative Justice is a mindset that values relationships at the center of community life. Restorative Practices are what is done to practice this mindset.

Zero tolerance disciplinary policies have disproportionately impacted students of color, low-income students, LGBTQ+ students and diverse learners.

- Exclusionary discipline is a key factor in the school-to-prison pipeline.
- Restorative practices offer an alternative to punitive discipline and an opportunity to create community and support equity.

OPRFHS is attempting to create a Culture of Warmth (COW) within the school community. If the adults take better care of themselves, they will take care better care of the students. Everyone in the building is involved. The Advanced Circle Keepers will go through 12 hours of training this year. In their last session, they will be doing the work with oversight from UMOJA. They will be training their peers in Divisional Team meetings and in their classrooms.

Noting that the Board of Education wanted to see some measurable outcomes on student achievement/student discipline over the next 3 to 5 years, the administration was asked to provide guidance on the measurable outcomes so that it could determine if the program is being effective or not. The administration noted that the restructuring of the Code of Conduct will make a difference in discipline. The administration said it has seen how restorative justice is affecting students.

Questions arose. What are the accountability measures? Was 15 out of the original 25 returning for additional training typical? The administration was unsure if the original 25 participants had known about the continuation of the work. However, all of the current participants know exactly what will next occur. How will this training reach the classroom? Is it systemic? What were the deliverables from last year? Is there a report from UMOJA for last year? Mr. Carioscio noted that UMOJA had provided a multiple year plan of implementation that might change the culture as it relates to the Strategic Plan. Dr. Moore stated that Board of Education found it problematic that the recommendations were not based on last year’s performance. In terms of an investment, she did not know how the Board of Education could understand what informs the plan in this building. In terms of metrics and fidelity and in terms of coaching, etc., there should be deliverables and surveys should be conducted. It is UMOJA’s responsibility to inform this process and it is not in the contract. Mr. Martire stated that a supportive summary should have an evaluative piece. A strong evaluative program will determine how to move forward with next steps. Dr. Moore felt impatient as this has been a board goal for years and it is needed sooner rather than later. As this is rolled out, every piece needs research and evaluation. This is a systemic change and the administration cannot afford to be anecdotal. Mr. Cofsky agreed that UMOJA should be forthcoming with recommendations and that it has deliverables. A summation of their work should include feedback on deliverables, what the District owns in terms of materials, a recap and feedback on the deliverables, an evaluation of trainings, attendance data, etc. The administration will ask UMOJA for this information, but the Committee was informed that the work has already begun and the dates of the trainings are set.

Energy Services Contract

It was the consensus of the Committee of the Whole to receive more information relative to conducting a reverse auction and entering into a contract for electric energy services if the parameters stated in the materials were met.

The administration explored using different energy service providers as it had used Vanguard Services for the past 5 years. Energy service providers serve as a risk management service to allow greater predictability in energy costs as a hedge against market fluctuations. In that exploration, the administration found Nania Energy Advisors that serves over 9,000 clients in both public and private sectors in Illinois, Maryland and other markets. While the typical service is offered, it also provides users the option to purchase energy versus a reverse auction. This process was explained. The District would have the option of accepting or not accepting the low-bid price. The administration anticipated significant savings for one year over the current costs. In addition, the District has the ability to choose Green Energy versus Brown Energy at a modest increase in costs.

Becky Thompson of Nania has been in business for 20 years and offers education and guidance on auctioning, forecasting, contracts, and results-driven purchasing.

Discussion ensued. The ask of the Board is to authorize Nania to conduct a reverse auction and enter into a contract for electrical energy services if all parameters are met as stated therein. The procurement laws do allow auctions. All contracts are required payments, material, or bandwidth. Supplier is based on the past two years and purchases for up to 36 months. Bandwidth is 100% and is required. The contract can be terminated but the buyer of the energy could present early termination damages. It is better to blend and extend a contract if the market drops to get a lower rate. Schools are considered commercial entities. For the term of the contract, the rate will remain status quo but the number of kilo used might fluctuate. The buyer is taking a financial risk in longer term contracts because it is a backwards market right now.

Mr. Baron supported a shorter contract. Mr. Iseli was supportive of doing this for one year only. In his opinion, the forecasters setting the price to be lower in 3 years, not higher. Dr. Moore asked how this fell into the purview that vendors be evaluated every five years. Ms. Gust stated that traditionally the District has looked at this every three years. Mr. Cofsky stated that a 3 year contract would mean that fees would exceed \$25,000. The memorandum should reflect those points to make it more transparent.

The meeting recessed at 8:09 p.m. and resumed at 8:18 p.m.

Update on Long-Term Facilities Plan Timeline Options

Mr. Carioscio presented an update on the Long-Term Facilities Plan Timeline. The items discussed were:

- Timeline - Phasing and Sequencing
- Budget review - first draft
- Next steps

After consideration of the conversations previously the administration brought back option 1.5 which would start in June 2020, the Project 1 work would substantially be completed by August 2022 and would impact summer school. Mr. Carioscio reviewed the timeline chart in the packet.

IMAGINE put the needs together as well as rough estimates. As to what needs to happen is the reason for the variances. The reasons for the variance included:

1. Original estimate included 12% Design/Construction Contingency; Pepper Construction Company (PCC) estimate includes 15%.
2. Original estimate of square footage varies from current design and PCC estimate.
3. Original estimate included 50% new construction and 50% renovation for the South Cafeteria and Student Resource Center; Current Design and PCC Estimate include 100% new construction.
4. Current Design/PCC Estimate includes a new 4-stop elevator, which was not included within the Original Estimate.

5. Current estimate includes significant mechanical, electrical and plumbing (MEP) re-work not considered in the original estimate.

Next steps were:

October--Preliminary “operational impact” of school and building functions during construction

November--Design presentation

December--Update of timeline and budget

Discussion ensued about ADA and accessibility and Life Safety. All of the areas of Project 1 will be brought up to meet the current accessibility code. The only instances where it will not is where it is technically unfeasible. Project 1 has 76 classrooms to be renovated and will be ADA accessible, but the corridors into the classroom may not be ADA accessible. The Project 1 budget did not include new doors for the classrooms. No provision had been made in terms of dollar estimates. Special Education rooms are in the scope of the plan and will be renovated. If the District wanted to pursue this, further discussion would have to occur and could be on the list of other things to be considered. However, OPRFHS will be in compliance given the age of the building. Ms. Dixon-Spivy hoped to get estimates of additional work. Mr. Carioscio stated the administration had ordered an accessibility study. One member was concerned that these items had not been taken into account previously. Dr. Pruitt-Adams noted that this scope was not on the initial plan nor on the wish list.

One member asked what else might be coming to the Board for evaluation. Mr. Carioscio wanted to understand the differences. The District needs to stay within the budget. A timeline, scope, and parameters were inherited. One of the architects did not think anything else would come forward and stated that accessibility is at top of mind for them at this time.

Dr. Moore asked that any additional questions be sent to Ms. Kalmerton. Regarding the outward facing piece, the administration needs to provide clarity to the community as this is being called the IMAGINE project and Dr. Moore did not want to distance the work by the committee and slip in what it did and what the Board did. Communication is important.

Pepper Construction noted that when they were putting estimate together, questions arose about hazardous materials. The consultant will look for materials and pricing, but 1.5% or \$700K is a placeholder as they did not have enough information.

Dr. Pruitt-Adams noted that IMAGINE did what was asked of them. With any project, unknowns always become known. Perhaps the administration should have been more specific before the items came forward, i.e. the doors. As construction projects come forward, the administration must be more conscious of the other questions as well.

School Resource Officer

This item was removed from the agenda.

Fourth Quarter Variance Report

Last year’s budget and actuals versus this year’s budget and actuals. Both for expenditures and revenues. A board member asked for a note explaining the drop in revenue from \$57 million to \$54 million and asked that this be considered when creating the five-year forecast.

ESSA Consolidated Plan

Mr. Johnson explained that the ISBE made the new grant application to be have more breadth. This plan needs to be approved by the Board of Education. A program evaluation for the major funding allotment

was presented to the Board in April for reading and mass support program, but in addition to IDEA supports teaching mentoring, summer school program, and Title I and Title II.

Board of Education Goal Discussion

Discussion ensued about formulating the Board of Education's goals for the 2019-20 school year. Dr. Moore had reviewed last year's goals to see if the Board had met them. The monitoring of the Strategic Plan has been a discussion and the Board of Education indicated it wanted to be more descriptive in terms of accountability and metrics. The retreat might help the Board of Education determine how to do that work. The procedures for the racial equity policy is in development and includes restorative practices.

Points discussed included:

- 1) The goals in progress could be maintained as goals with more definition and a different scope.
- 2) Does the Board want outcomes and the timeline for achieving those outcomes and then creating an accountability tool.
- 3) Board of Education accountability with regard to policy.
- 4) Strategic Plan goals.
- 5) Board of Education development on issues of racial equity in order to be able to look at things through a racial equity lens in order to direct the goals for the District. Mr. Martire noted that District 90 was challenged to find a provider for ongoing professional development for staff three or four times per year and its board went through the same training. Eliminating racial bias is difficult and policies need to be put in place for a system change. The trainings that have occurred have been good, but more depth is needed. It is a time commitment, so the work must be prioritized, given that it is the cornerstone of the Strategic Plan. The Board of Education has had challenging discussions and members have talked across each other in racial equity. This is a safe space and the Board of Education can be more informed with the proper facilitation. Ms. Harris felt that ongoing conversations would be more difficult unless the Board engages in systematic work together. It is a process of uncovering what it does not know and learning about how to affect system changes. This work would need to be ongoing. Ms. Harris had some suggestions for this type of training that she would send to Dr. Moore.

The goals will be discussed again at the October Committee of the Whole meeting.

Ms. Harris hoped that the Board of Education could engage in different ways and demonstrate what it meant to create a community in a new way. The community that is commitment to equity, the process, and furthering relationships to dig deep is not there. This is an opportunity for this Board of Education to develop deeper relationships. She asked that the Board of education do whatever works, even in uncomfortable conversations, that would allow these members to accomplish the goal of equity. She would like to see this Board of Education address things unspoken. It is an opportunity for a circle meeting to build relationships inside the circle. Mr. Iseli stated that would be difficult to do in a public meeting and it is unclear how one would create the environment to have that conversation to build that depth of relationship. Ms. Harris responded that it would be about setting agreements, learning how to communicate, and how to share. It is not a hindrance that it is an open forum, as it is an opportunity to model. In other communities, multiple governing bodies sit in circle and have what comes up based on culture, community members, and looking at how they are personally affected, how they are making decisions. That could be determined here. The goal could be phrased as the Board could engage in racial equity literacy with the goal of building this community and the work it wants to accomplish with bullet points added as to how to get there.

Future Agenda Items

None

Adjournment

At 9:30 p.m., Dr. Moore moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Ms. Dixon Spivy. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Submitted by:
Gail Kalmerton, Clerk of the Board