

August 25, 2016

The regular Board meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on Thursday, August 25, 2016, in the Board Room of the OPRFHS.

Call to Order

President Weissglass called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m. A roll call indicated the following Board of Education members were present Fred Arkin, Thomas F. Cofsky, Dr. Steven Gevinson, Dr. Jackie Moore, Sara Spivy, and Jeff Weissglass. Also present were Dr. Joylynn Pruitt, Interim Superintendent; Dr. Gwen Walker Qualls and Dr. Kennedy Dixon, and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant Clerk of the Board.

Closed Session

At 6:12 p.m. on Thursday, August 25, 2016, Mr. Weissglass 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 and the placement of individual students in special education programs and other matters relating to individual students 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11). A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

At 7:20 p.m., the Board of Education resumed the 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. Gwen Walker-Qualls, Director of Pupil Personnel Services; Karin Sullivan, Director of Communications and Community Relations; and Sheila Hardin, Faculty Senate Executive Committee Chair.

Visitors

John Relias, Jennifer Jones, and Ares Dalianis of Franczek Radelet; Jamelyn Lederhouse of Global Glimpse, Micheline Piekarski, Director of Food & Nutrition Services, Randy Braverman, OPRFHS Director of Campus Security, Oak Park Police Chief Tony Ambrose, Oak Park Police Officers Jonathan Larson, Dawn Carver, Korry Thomas, Anthony Razzino, Michael Kelly, Michael Rallidis, Charles McVey, Raphael Murphy, Manuel Ruiz, Sam Deuchler, and Sergeant Roger Grivetti; Students Carson McDonald, Courtney Crook, Pete O'Connell, and Mary Blankemeier; Bobbie Raymond, Kevin Peppard, Judith Alexander, and Maureen Kleinman, community members.

Recognition

The Board of Education congratulated Micheline Piekarski for being named by the School Nutrition Association as Director of the Year.

The Board of Education also recognized members of the Oak Park Police Department for their “Support and Investigative Efforts” on behalf of the high school: Sergeant Roger Grivetti and Officers Jonathan Larson, Dawn Carver, Korry Thomas, Anthony Razzino, Michael Kelly, Michael Rallidis, Officer McVey, Raphael Murphy, Manual Ruiz, and Samantha Deuchler.

**Public
Comments**

Kevin Peppard spoke about the Marcia Sutter contract, stating that he was the first person to find the obvious ethics breach, where public money was going to go to have her work with the Vote Yes political group. He had been prepared to watch the Board of Education hang yourself but Dr. Bruce Kleinman warned the Board of Education last week. The Ethics Policy is mandated by the State, via the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act. That title is a misnomer, because Article 70 of it forces the same prohibitions of political activities on the Board of Education. The four most senior Board of Education members passed the resolution in October 2103, when Jackie Moore was Chair of the Policy Committee. The state statute carries criminal penalties for intentional violations, but he was not saying that anything has been intentional yet. Mr. Peppard asked why the Board of Education would consider renewing the contract of someone who has already given fatally wrong advice on ethical matters with regard to a referendum. He FOIA'd the District to see if her past invoices showed giving support to the Vote Yes group. Response to another FOIA showed that no one signed the written contract for the \$14,000 paid to Fako for the phone survey. He felt the services of Sutter were not needed as virtually nothing can be said by the Board of Education or the Administration without walking a tightrope. One fact sheet is online and one is being distributed tonight. The District does not need to pay an outside consultant \$14,400 to do Ms. Sullivan's job as the Communications Director. If she can't, find someone else. He predicted that the Board of Education would approve the contract, because this District never admits a mistake, and is tone deaf to the public.

Judith Alexander, resident of Oak Park, addressed the Sutter proposal, noting that when she developed the 8/16/2016 proposal and included the Vote Yes Committee as the deliverables, she was not understanding the requirements of OPRFHS, after written recognition that the Board of Education and staff were only to provide information. Her proposal was unethical and illegal. On the basis of her poor judgment and poor ethics, Ms. Alexander urged the Board of Education not to approve the contract.

Maureen Kleinman, resident of Oak Park, has been confused by the Board of Education decisions as they related to pool for over three years. The Board of Education wisely tabled the decision to extend the Sutter contract to provide information on the referendum proposal. The original contract included campaigning, etc. No district resources can be used to advocate or support the referendum. Later in that Sutter proposal, she added a pro referendum group by name, the “Vote Yes Team, community meetings hosted by the “Yes Team,” etc.

The proposal was re-submitted and included some of the same information. It is poisoned. She had indicated a connection to the Vote Yes team, so even though the words have been removed, the intent has not.

Status of FOIA Requests

Ms. Kalmerton reported that 13 FOIA requests were received and seven were resolved.

Faculty Senate Report

Ms. Hardin reported that Faculty Senate had started the school year. It was happy to have productive time with the new teachers, time in the divisions and that the Institute Day was appreciated.

Student Liaison

Ms. Cofsky stated that Student Council's first meeting would be next Wednesday. Good comments have been received about the new 1:1 Chromebook. Students are not wasting time going to a lab to use the computers. One negative comment was that the devices were are not being used as much as expected in the classrooms. Students felt the year started great.

Superintendent

Dr. Pruitt commended the Educational Technology department for overseeing a successful rollout of the 1:1 Chromebook program. By the end of the first day of classes, 96% of our 3,290 on-campus students had received their devices. She congratulated and thanked the ET department members Mike Carioscio, Chris Thieme, Amit Martin, Jon Wells, Christian Fountain, Marci DiVerde, Earl McLaurin, Andy Boland, Marsha Shipley, Jason Hatchko, Asad Gerald, Denise Paul, Karen Ury, Tim Hasso, Rochelle Bryant, John Angelini, and Linda Spain.

Dr. Pruitt reported that each year, the Chicago section of the American Chemical Society allows chemistry teachers to nominate two students to take its annual examination to compete for scholarship awards. She congratulated teacher Cheryl Rulis; out of 85 local students to take the exam, both of her nominated students both won awards. Yiyang Wang placed second and received a \$5,000 scholarship, and Jonathan Banks placed fourth, earning a \$1,500 scholarship. Also, one of teacher Bill Grosser's nominees, Ayush Pandit, won honorable mention.

Congratulations to senior Tamsen Cronin on winning the inaugural Hemingway Foundation student writing competition, open last spring to all OPRF juniors. Tamsen will receive a \$1,000 college scholarship and has a writing mentorship with the foundation's writer in residence this year. Also, Megan Carraher and Fiona Casper-Strauss were chosen as the second and third place student finalists. All three students had their essays published in Hemingway Shorts, a journal celebrating new voices in creative writing. The goal for this new competition was 20 entries, which was surpassed with 29 submissions. English Division Head Helen Gallagher coordinated the effort for the high school.

Junior Leah Kindler won the 2016 High School Creative Writing Competition, a very competitive process hosted by the Luminarts Cultural Foundation, which comes with a \$1,000 prize. Leah has had Naomi Hildner and Liz Fox for her English classes.

Last Friday, English teacher Paul Noble was selected as the author of the weekly essay in the New York Times Well blog section called Ties, which looks at “the complex connections of modern families.” Entitled “A Wish for my Daughters,” Paul’s piece is a reflection on letting children swim in deeper waters, both literally and metaphorically.

Best Buddies was holding its car wash Saturday, August 27, from 10:00 to 11:00 am. This annual kickoff event raises money for the club’s year of events and provides a chance for the buddies to get to know each other. Donations are welcome.

Global Glimpse

Bobbie Raymond, president of Alumni Association, spoke about the OPRFHS’s association with Global Glimpse. OPRFHS was chosen as one of the ten high schools in the Chicago area to implement Global Glimpse. The program originally started in New York. It will gain momentum at OPRFHS and bring a great deal of credit to teachers and students. This year, 15 students and three faculty members were involved. She introduced Jamelyn Lederhouse of Global Glimpse. Ms. Lederhouse noted that she had spoken to the Board of Education in January. Global Glimpse is a global education leadership program that works with students through their junior year and arranges travel abroad during the summer. Students reported on their individual experience with this program, and all stated they were trips of a lifetime and breathtaking experiences. Students who participated in trips to Ecuador, Dominican, and Nicaragua were Pete O’Connell, Carson McDonald, Taylor West, and Mary Blankemeier.

The other high schools in the Chicago area are District 113, Deerfield and Highland Park, Evanston, Hinsdale South High School, GCE Lab Schools in Chicago and Kenwood Academy and one in Englewood and Noble St College Prep and Pritzker College Prep in the City.

The following items were removed from the Consent Agenda: D. Personnel and E. Motivational Mentor.

Consent

Mr. Weissglass moved to approve the following consent items:

- A. Check Disbursements and Financial Resolutions dated August 25, 2016
- B. Monthly Treasurer’s Report
- C. Monthly Financials
- D. Personnel Recommendations, including New Hires and Resignation
- E. Motivational Mentor Coordinator

- F. Educational Technology Equipment Purchase
- G. All-Ways Medical Transportation Contract
- H. First Student Contract Extension for Field Trips/Extracurricular
- I. Special Education Systems Contract
- J. Multi-Functional School Activity Bus Bid
- K. Xerographic Paper Bid
- L. District 97 Extension of Food Service Intergovernmental Agreement
- M. Contract with Boom Entertainment for Homecoming
- N. Resolution for Mass Transit Exclusion
- O. Policies for First Reading
 - 1. Policy 2:70, Vacancies on the School Board
 - 2. Policy 2:260, Uniform Grievance Procedure
 - 3. Policy 5:20, Workplace Harassment Prohibited
 - 4. Policy 6:100, Using Animals in the Educational Program
 - 5. Policy 7:20, Harassment of Students Prohibited
 - 6. Policy 7:180, Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment
 - 7. Policy 7:270, Administering Medicines to Students
 - 8. Policy 8:110, Public Suggestions and Concerns
- P. Policies for Amendment
 - 1. Policy 6:40, Student Travel
 - 2. Policy 7:220, Bus Conduct
 - 3. Policy 7:300, Extracurricular Athletics
 - 4. Policy 7:310, Restrictions on Publications
 - 5. Policy 7:325, Student Fund-raising Activities
 - 6. Policy 8:10, Connection with Community
 - 7. Policy 8:30, Visitors to and Conduct on School Property
- Q. Open Session Minutes of May 17, 2016, and a declaration that the closed session audiotapes of December 2014 and January 2015 be destroyed; seconded by Mr. Cofsky. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Personnel

Mr. Weissglass moved to approve the personnel recommendations as presented; seconded by Dr. Moore. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Cofsky read the following statement. “The recommendation for hire of a new history teacher brings me back to the whole discussion which started this past June. At that meeting, members of the history division reached out to the Board of Education directly to override the recommendation of the administration in the hiring of a veteran teacher described as a “nationally recognized classroom superstar” in their communication directly to the media on this issue. In the article, it was noted that the teachers speculated that the board’s decision not to consider this candidate was due to cost concerns, but they pointed out that the Board of Education didn’t tell them that cost would be a criterion before they began vetting candidates.

“While I have tremendous respect for these individuals as history teachers, I have serious concerns with how information was communicated, and where it leaves us today. To me it pointed out challenges in these areas:

- 1) Confusion on the role of the board versus that of the administration.
- 2) Under representation of the facts in painting this board and its interest of our students
- 3) Lack of understanding of the execution of the hiring process, as well as transparency by all in this process

“From my perspective, having the school board get involved in the specific hire of a faculty member is not school board work. Our job is to recommend the hire of one employee – the superintendent - and either accept or reject the recommendations of the administration. A history teacher is not the superintendent! As I would expect our history teachers to have a solid knowledge of how governance works, I must interpret their request to weigh in on a specific hire as a request to examine policy associated with this issue, which is board work.

“Policy concerns related to this topic center on 1) our faculty compensation policy, and 2) our hiring policy and practices, inclusive of staffing planning. As it relates to the hiring process, I will state there are tremendous opportunities for improvement that must be driven by our administration and specifically HR group but will focus the rest of my attention on the compensation concerns.

“Faculty compensation: In June the history teachers requested that we hire the very best teacher that was available (regardless of cost), based on their performance. I say here -Let’s move forward on a policy that encourages the hire and retention of the best faculty available! I believe the teacher in question at that time warranted ~\$130,000 in salary to come to OPRFHS. It has been said that he indeed is a “superstar” and would be an asset for our students. Let’s also make sure that any policy allows us to recruit superstars, but also assures that all are receiving “superstar pay” are truly performing as superstars. If all indeed fit the description of the superstar cited, then we already have a system in place today that assures we pay for the best, and collectively we have the most amazing teaching staff in the country – with 35 nationally recognized superstars! If not, we are paying some/many as superstars without getting superstar performance. I appreciate the teachers bring this forth and welcome a discussion of changing our compensation policy to allow us to recruit and retain excellence by paying for it. However, we cannot choose to pay for excellence in one situation but not do so universally.

“If indeed the issue is more a desire to hire more experienced (versus performance) faculty, a review of compensation structure is needed as well. The current structure calls for faculty to be hired in at an average of a Masters 5 levels, with a base salary of \$70,000 last year. Changing where individuals are hired into the structure is a

change to this whole financial model that the district uses to manage long-term finances.

“Our current structure rewards years of experience and additional education. There are other compensation models, such as that in New Trier, that are designed to reward teacher mastery and leadership. Such a system has Master and Leader level positions instead of the traditional educational lanes and teacher/ administration committees that determine who the master/ leaders are.

“So I encourage a policy dialogue on teacher compensation. In the interim, we have before us a request for a history teacher hiring in at \$105K; He is listed as a lateral change. I would appreciate understanding what this is. Additionally, I asked how we were performing versus our targeted financial level and received information from the district, but do not see how the average shown was received. I calculate it at \$80,000 this year.” The administration responded that this was an internal hire and thus it is a lateral move. A special education teacher who has been in the District for many years selected to go into regular education.

**Motivational
Mentor**

Mr. Weissglass moved to approve the job description of the Motivational Mentor position; seconded by Dr. Gevinson. Discussion ensued. This is a revision of the job description to highlight the level of supervision and coordinator that this position will perform and will make a clear cut distinction between a title similar to a title in the CBA. This position will supervise the position in the CBA. The revision will have no impact on the search decision or the qualifications as that search is closed.

The motivational mentors that are with students during lunch have a different position than this. Ms. Horton had recommended making a distinction between the Faculty Senate position and the one in the Classified Personnel Association. The person in the CPA position only works 3 to 6 hours per week during lunch. Once it is approved, another person will be hired. The hope is to grow the program in a different way. Having supervision in the lunchroom should enhance the mentoring.

**Certification
Of Summer 2016
Graduates**

Mr. Weissglass moved to certify the Summer 2016 Graduates; seconded by Ms. Dixon Spivy. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Minding Your
Business**

Mr. Weissglass moved to table the vote on this agenda item until later in the meeting; seconded by Ms. Spivy. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Referendum
Questions &
Answers**

Mr. Dalianis distributed and reviewed a summary of do's and don'ts for the Board of Education regarding referendums, which was posted to the website. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Dalianis noted that the hiring of an outside consultant to educate the community was common. His office had reviewed the Sutter contract.

Board of Education members often have to use their best judgment. When someone hosts an event at his/her house and invites a neighbor board member to talk about the referendum, that Board of Education member can say that he/she is speaking as a taxpayer, not as a school board member, and then make his/her case on the referendum. School Board members have to be comfortable wearing the hat of the taxpayer, and they have to think in the context of this community.

Minding Your Business

Mr. Weissglass moved to bring back the motion to approve the contract with Minding Your Business; seconded by Dr. Moore. Dr. Pruitt noted the revision in the contract language, removing the name of the Vote Yes Committee and noting that the contract was not to exceed \$14,500 after reviewing the number of weeks remaining before the referendum.

Several members felt that the contract had the appearance of advocacy and that this position was unnecessary because it seemed that the school should have its resources for providing information without hiring someone from the outside. Optically, it seemed like a bad idea to hire someone for this responsibility. One member was concerned about Ms. Sutter's judgment. The public's perception is legitimate, and it has created problems.

Mr. Arkin stated that the administration brought a proposal to the Finance Committee, public comment occurred, and the contract was sent back for revision. The full Board of Education is now reviewing; that is transparency in government. The system is working. He felt that the additional work would be a tremendous burden on Ms. Sullivan, and Ms. Sutter has done a great job with the community engagement process and has intimate knowledge of the District's plans, the architects, etc. She is capable of putting together the information needed for the community. Ms. Sutter's service is the most logical and most cost effective route to go.

The District has an obligation to provide information and educate the community about the plans and the reasons behind the plans, it is not just a legal nicety. It must educate the 50,000 people who have not been at these meetings as they have to vote on a major public works decision. It will require more than a paragraph, a link or a Huskie email. There is much work to do. If Ms. Sutter is not hired, it will be because of the Board of Education's concern about politics. Mr. Weissglass and Mr. Arkin have witnessed Ms. Sutter's work and have great respect for her capabilities. While she would be a tremendous asset to the district, the politics of the mistake are a big issue. Ms. Spivy reiterated that the work would be accomplished, and while she did not feel as if she had been strong-armed, she

questioned how the contract came from someone who was supposed to know about these things.

Dr. Gevinson reflected that the District had not hired consultants before for this type of work and the District has resources to do what needs to be done. The Vote Yes Committee could hire Ms. Sutter.

A roll call vote resulted in five nays and one aye. Mr. Arkin voted aye. Motion failed.

Student Discipline None

Student Participation The Committee of the Whole recommended that the 2015-16 Extracurricular Participation Report be forwarded to the whole Board of Education as an informational item.

RF TIF Mr. Altenburg provided an update on the River Forest TIF since his report to the Board of Education on June 23, 2016. During the River Forest Village Board of Trustees meeting on June 27, 2016, the Board directed Village staff to amend the TIF plan to address concerns about eminent domain voiced by residents. At its August 8, 2016, meeting, River Forest Village Board of Trustees approved an amended plan regarding the proposed Madison Street TIF and made it available to the public. As mentioned earlier, based on feedback received from concerned residents, the amended TIF plan now includes language that explicitly states that eminent domain will not be used on single family dwelling units that do not front Madison Street. A date for a new public hearing and a new Joint Review Board (JRB) meeting will be set at the River Forest Village Board of Trustees meeting scheduled for August 22, 2016.

The Districts are working on an IGA that would be of benefit to the school districts both with immediate revenue and monies down the road. The budget in the TIF report sets aside money for land assemblage and property acquisition. It states the Village will not touch apartment buildings, commercial entities that the village would consider as eminent domain. Questions: In analyzing the financial impact on the District, how does the Board of Education evaluate it? Is the Village providing numbers? What is the Board of Education's role? Mr. Dalianis stated that the Village had provided the current and project EAV. It does not show expectations. The village hopes to incentivize developers singular or plural once the development is in place. What about lost revenue to the District? When the TIF is created, all tax bases are frozen. The EAV growth is only available to the Village for development.

Mr. Arkin was concerned with the Hines Lumber property that already has plans for Development. If there are underperforming properties and the EAV is low and the

idea of a TIF is to invest in new projects and new capital to bring the EAV up in 23 years; a development plan already exists for much of that property. All of the EAV will go into the TIF, and the District will not realize any of that for 23 years. He asked if there could be an agreement that some of the EAV be distributed before the 23-years. Mr. Dalianis stated that discussions are occurring about this. In 2017, a reassessment of the South Triad will occur. In 2016, a reassessment of the North and Northwest suburbs had almost a 20% increase. The school districts are asking the Village to share any additional revenue from the TIF after they have paid their expenses.

**Transition from
PARCC To SAT
For State
Testing 2016-17**

The Committee of the Whole recommended that the Report on the Transition from PARCC To SAT for State Testing be moved to the full Board of Education as an informational item.

**District
Reports**

November 4 is the date of the Tradition of Excellence celebration.

Adjournment

At 9:11 p.m., Mr. Weissglass moved to adjourn the regular Board of Education meeting; seconded by Dr. Moore. A voice vote resulted in motion carried.

Jeff Weissglass
President

Sara Spivy
Secretary