

December 20, 2018

The regular Board meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on Thursday, December 20, 2018, in the Board Room and Room 293E of the OPRFHS.

**Call to Order**

President Moore called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. In the Board Room. A roll call indicated the following Board of Education members were present: Fred Arkin, Matt Baron, Jennifer Cassell, Thomas F. Cofsky, Craig Iseli, Dr. Jackie Moore, and Sara Dixon Spivy. Also present were Dr. Joylynn Pruitt-Adams, Superintendent; Greg Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Roxana Sanders, Senior Director of Human Resources, and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant Clerk of the Board.

**Closed Session**

At 6:37 p.m. on Thursday, December 20, 2018, Dr. Moore 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; seconded by Ms. Dixon Spivy. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

At 7:35 p.m., the Board of Education resumed the open session in Room 293E.

Joining the meeting were Cyndi Sidor, Interim Chief School Business Official; Dr. Gwen Walker-Qualls, Director of Pupil Personnel Services; Michael Carioscio, Chief Operations Officer; Karin Sullivan, Senior Director of Communications

**Visitors**

Various faculty and staff and community members.

**Calendar Hearing**

At 7:31 p.m., Dr. Moore called the Public Hearing to order on Thursday, December 22, 2018 for the Oak Park and River Forest High School 2018-19 School Calendar. Notice of this Public Hearing appeared in the December 5 and December 12 editions of the Wednesday Journal and the December 6 edition of the Oak Leaves Newspaper. At this time, Dr. Moore asked for any written or oral comments to be received. No oral or written comments were made. Dr. Moore closed the hearing at 7:38 p.m.

**Tax levy Hearing**

At 7:38 p.m., Dr. Moore called this Public Hearing to order on Thursday, December 20, 2018 for the Oak Park and River Forest High School 2018 Tax Levy. Notice of this Public Hearing appeared in the Wednesday, December 12, 2018 edition of the Wednesday Journal newspaper. She asked for any written or oral comments to be received.

Kevin Peppard commented that the District could amend the levy after the calendar year to lower it. He had given a proposal about lowering taxes and raising bonds as a means to pay for facilities and pay bonds for facilities. This would give relief to voters. He did not believe there was enough time to encourage taxpayers to vote for a referendum. He suggested non-referendum bonds where they would be self-financed with the tax decrease. He did not believe that the District could live within CPI as was suggested by David Pope. The operating cost per pupil, from 2010 to

2017 grew at a rate of over three points per year. The expense rate is unsustainable if one wants to avoid a referendum. He suggested looking at expenses to see if OPRFHS could live within the CPI, but he did not believe it could.

Hearing or receiving no more comments, at 7:42 p.m. Dr. Moore closed this Public Hearing.

**FOIA Requests**

Ms. Kalmerton reported that eight FOIA requests had been received and eight were resolved.

**Student Council**

No report.

**Superintendent's  
Announcement**

Dr. Pruitt-Adams made the following announcements:

More than 240 Huskies have been named *Illinois 2019-2020 State Scholars*, who are chosen based on a formula using ACT or SAT score and unweighted grade-point average. Overall, approximately 10 percent of graduating seniors in Illinois qualify as State Scholars, compared to 25 percent at OPRF.

Biology teacher Faith Nelson has been awarded an Ecology Project International Summer Teacher Fellowship at Yellowstone National Park for this coming August.

Healthy Youth Peer Educators (HYPE) Club members presented 37 classroom workshops about the effects of marijuana and vaping. The club also held three De-Stress Days -- featuring fun and relaxing activities -- to help their peers manage stress during finals this week.

Congratulations to the 22 OPRF music students were selected for the 2018 Illinois Music Education Association (ILMEA) All-State Honors:

In girls' swimming, coach Clyde Lundgren was awarded the ISDA Swimming Sectional Coach of the Year, and senior swimmer Natalie Ungaretti earned All-American and 1st Team All-State honors.

OPRF faculty, staff, and students adopted 77 local families through the Adopt-A-Family Holiday Gift Basket Program, which matches Oak Park and River Forest families in need with sponsors who provide holiday gifts. Thanks to Outreach Coordinator Latonia Jackson for organizing the high school's annual contribution to this program.

Consent items D. Revision to the 2018-19 School Year Calendar and G. Board of Education meeting dates were pulled from the consent agenda.

**Consent Agenda**

Dr. Moore moved to approve the following consent items; seconded by Mr. Arkin.

- A. [Check Disbursements and Financial Resolutions dated December 20, 2018](#)
- B. [Monthly Treasurer's Report](#)
- C. [Personnel Recommendations, including New Hires](#), Transfer, Retirements, Leave of Absence and Releases
- E. [Calendar for the 2019-2020 School Year](#)
- F. 2019 [Summer School Dates and Budget](#)
- H. Policies for First Reading
  - 1. Exhibit [2:80-E Board Member Oath and Conduct](#)

2. [Exhibit 3:40-E, Checklist for the Superintendent Employment Contract Negotiation Process](#)
  3. [Policy 2:120 Board Member Development](#)
  4. [Policy 4:170, Safety](#)
  5. [Policy 4:130, Free and Reduced-Price Food Services](#)
  6. [Policy 5:30 Hiring Process and Criteria](#)
  7. [Policy 5:60 Expenses](#)
  8. [Policy 5:100 Staff Development Program](#)
  9. [Policy 5:220 Substitute Teachers](#)
  10. [Policy 7:60, Residence](#)
- I. Open and Closed Minutes of October [25, 30](#), November [15, 29](#), and December [4](#) and [11](#), 2018 and a declaration that the closed session audio tapes of March 2017 shall be destroyed

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

### **Public Comments**

Margaret Brown stated that she had made comments to the Board of Education in April and that her comments were grossly inaccurately reflected in the minutes as to their intent. She stated that to disagree was not to hate. Her next comments were about Policy 7:10 which went from viewpoint-neutral to revisions this year. She wanted to see more equity between more protected classes of people, i.e., special ed, religions, and mostly the discussion was about race and achievement. She wanted equal time or close to equal time for addressing the achievement gap. She did not believe enough time was being given to addressing the gap. The CCB's recommendation was to hire a social justice person, yet the Board of Education only approved an engineer and a public relations person. She planned to complete a FOIA as to the disparity in time and effort and money spent on other things. She felt more issues were neglected and she wanted to have equity.

Burcy Hines stated that her constituents needed balance and fairness and she thought the students were being put second, and the District was going forward on just things that need the pool. The District has not held meetings and talked to students and parents, and there were misperceptions of what was going on. She asked to address balance and special treatment openly. She wanted in layman's language what was happening with the pool versus services for students.

Wyannetta Johnson felt the school was blessed to have a superintendent who works with everyone and that this was the best Board of Education in a long time. She hoped the pool would be built and that she needs to learn to swim. She asked that consideration is given to the culture and to consider all students needs for hair dryers, curlers, etc. so that students would not be embarrassed.

Kevin Peppard encouraged the Board of Education to discuss tax relief and to vote on it that evening. Some members want to get the cash balance down, but people are concerned about getting their money back. To transfer \$53 million for capital is not good. It is about generational equity. He suggested doing a tax swap. Why give back the money to only regret that decision in the future. These are two different sets of people and different time horizons. Some of those moving into the district now will pay nothing on the \$53 million. He felt the district was receiving

bad advice. He will write how to do this. He asked that this item is tabled, continue the discussion, and find another way to finance these projects.

Kitty Conklin asked that the Board of Education look at its policies regarding data retention and there were legal implications to keeping data that is no longer needed. She also noted that Hinsdale School District 86 is facing some of the same financial concerns that OPRFHS has. They have an out-of-balance budget, and special interests want a swimming pool. It has a section of their website named transparency, and it has moved forward to match up to the 2019 year-end requirements, there were useful analytical documents that were attached to the December 10 special meeting, which she distributed to the Board. One item was an analysis of all sports and clubs offered to students and a percentage breakdown by expense to arrive at a cost per student for each sport. The second is an analysis of the cost of the practice field and track. This breakdown is useful but more useful would be if the capital cost of swimming were included. The last document shows four options and presents the assumptions that were utilized to arrive at those costs. This standardizes the comparison. The one document she had hoped to find was the annual cost of operating each of the facilities used by D86 students for sports and clubs. This is critical to a comprehensive overview. She shared this information because it is easy to understand and it is the type of examples of information that would be critical to decision-making. As was discussed, OPRFHS will have annual operating deficit and shifts in expenses will have to happen. Tools such as these would be useful.

Monica Sheehan noted that the OPRFHS should have a policy on how to handle retiring data when it is no longer needed. She read the following statement:

“On Monday night, the Hinsdale School Board met to discuss its next steps following its second failed referendum in as many years. D86 board members stated that many people voted against the November referendum because of the \$39 million proposed spend on new pools at the two high schools. In response, the board voted and now supports 6-lane, 25-yard pools in place of the 40-yard pools that were earmarked for Central and South. Central’s referendum pool at 10-lanes, 40-yards was the same size as Imagine’s pool, yet this pool plan at \$67 million is even more expensive than Hinsdale’s two pools.

“The D86 board said its pivot on the pools was in direct response to the wishes of the community. One board member said, “Part of leadership is acting on the community will.” That is also what the D200 community expects from its board.

“D200’s efforts to push through a 50-meter pool and then a 40-meter pool failed. The Fako Report, the only scientific, statistically-significant voter survey on the high school’s pools and replacement options showed that a pool was not a priority for the community, and it rejected all three pool plans under consideration in 2016. Voters’ strongest rejection, 69%, was for the most expensive plan at \$68 million, essentially the same price as Imagine’s pool plan.

“Fast forward to tonight; the administration is recommending that you move \$20 million from the educational fund to a special fund to act as "seed money" for Imagine’s pool plan. This recommendation is an attempt to pressure you to commit to the plan, which the community will not support, based on the Fako Survey.

“Yet, you have two cost-effective pool solutions. The most pragmatic one would cost you and the park district less than \$15 million total, and D200 would cut in half its pool operating and maintenance costs every year, money that should go towards addressing equity issues and improving academic outcomes for all students. The park district and D200 already collaborate. The Adventure Ed gym classes already walk over to Ridgeland Commons and skate in its ice rink.

“For the record, the superintendent stated at last week’s meeting that “the curriculum does not impact the size of the pool. That is a misconception... We can look at the curriculum, but that has nothing to do with the size of the pool.” The push for an oversized pool is and has always been about the wants of a special interest group, the aquatic teams and the private swim club TOPS. An oversized pool is not a need of the school or a want of the community-at-large.

“Just as the recommendation to spend money on academic, special education and ADA facility needs is a “no-brainer”, so too is a joint collaboration with the park district to provide a year-round aquatic resource at Ridgeland Commons for the school and community. Take the pools out of the high school and renovate those spaces, three floors for each pool. Just “imagine” the savings.” and the possibilities. Thank you.

Amanda Massie, read the following statement: “Transparency.

“When this word is used in describing the D200 administration and school board, it means all of their actions should be honest, straightforward, clear and accountable. All actions should have integrity.

“The administration’s recommendation tonight to move 20 million of our taxpayer dollars out of the Operating Fund to a New Capital Reserve Fund is none of those things. The recommendation lacks transparency.

“Its intent is to set up a fund for Imagine’s 67 million dollar pool plan. Period. Her recommendation and the proposed reserve fund should be transparently labeled as such: “The 67 million dollar pool fund”.

“The needed renovations to the boys’ locker room and the ADA elevator in Component D would cost a few million dollars, tops, and they’re being held “hostage” while the administration continues to try and push through the extravagant 17-lane pool in a 600-seat natatorium. Every element in Component D, except this pool, can be addressed through repairs or renovation, and they don’t require the drastic demolition and rebuild of the structurally sound building. Only the oversized pool, an expensive want of a special interest group, requires that.

“Her memo states that at least 10 million dollars of private donations will help fund the pool. That’s not near enough. If private donors want to pay 67 million dollars for this pool plan, that’s fine, but don’t waste 20 million more of our tax dollars in the process. If private donors want this pool, they should fully fund it and also set up an endowment that will fully support its expensive operating and routine maintenance costs.

“No one, including private donors or the administration, should force this board or the next one to move ahead with Component D. There are cost-effective, common sense pool solutions that Imagine and the administration refused to consider in this latest process, and the administration previously refused to consider.

“Compounding the lack of transparency, the superintendent’s memo references the 2013 Finance Advisory Committee’s recommendation that 20 million dollars of the cash reserve be spent on facilities. Well, that 20 million dollars and 12.6 million more are already included in her first recommendation of the night. That money is earmarked to be spent on academic, ADA and other actual needs that will benefit all students. I support that expenditure. However, in regards to her second recommendation, just say “no” to using our tax dollars as seed money for the 67 million dollar pool fund. It’s not in the best interests of our students or taxpayers. Thank you.”

Mary Bird focused on the issue of transferring money from the Education Fund to the Capital Projects Fund. She passed around ISBE results and asked that they be put in the record that showed snapshots of disparities with regard the achievement, ELA, white and black. Reflecting on the information, she asked what OPRFHS was thinking. Did they believe that anything can be done to change these scores. Or, will the pool and the facilities take on a life of their own, so other options cannot be considered. She asked the Board not to transfer these monies.

Mike Poirier read the following statement: “Good evening. Two and a half months before the imagine team even met for the first time, Monica Sheehan launched an assault on our work in the form of an editorial placed in the Wednesday Journal. As you are at least partly aware, the well-orchestrated stream of attacks by Monica and her associates has been pretty much non-stop since.

“For me, all of that was water over the dam until last week. However, as part of her performance at your committee of the whole meeting, Monica made three statements which I am not going to let go unaddressed.

“First, she claimed that the outcome of the imagine team's work was pre-determined. This is a particularly absurd claim to come from a person who was chosen to be on the imagine team, thereby giving her an opportunity to directly influence the outcome of the work, but she refused to participate, and now has the unmitigated gall to falsely claim that the outcome was predetermined. In fact, the only things that were pre-determined in this whole process were Monica’s opinions. She decided well before we began work that she would not support the outcome, no matter what it was, and she has built her campaign of mis-information to reinforce this. To claim that our results were pre-determined is to say that our fifteen months’ worth of work was a sham. I cannot express in public just how offensive that is.

“Second, Monica made the statement that “nothing has changed” in the past three years. This comment is so ludicrous that it hardly merits a response, but let me just say this. Almost everything has changed in the past three years. The only two things that haven't changed are Monica's fixation with swimming pools, and her deep disdain for the group of professional educators who constitute the district 200 administration. By the way, she doesn't think much of you, either.

“Finally, and most importantly, Monica and her group claim that they represent the citizens of oak park and river forest. They say that if you take any action on the facilities master plan, you will be going against the will of the people. Thankfully, this is not true either. If you have any doubt of that, I refer you to the outcome of the April 2017 Board of Education election in which the two candidates sponsored by the pragmatic pool solutions group, Monica Sheehan, founder, placed sixth and seventh in an eight-person race.

“As a positive contrast to all that, we do have some folks here tonight who truly are representative of the community.

“You. You were each elected by the people of our community to your positions on this board. You are here because of your positive personal values, your sense of community, and your strong commitment to the students served by this great institution. You know your constituencies. You know what your supporters expect from you. Please act with confidence in that knowledge.

“Thank you for your time this evening, and thank you for your service to our community.”

Nick Bridge, spoke partly in the capacity of chair of the Village’s Environment and Emergency Commission and as a member of the steering committee for PlanetGreen. His interest in District 200’s struggle in this facilities plan is to advocate for solar energy. Reducing the carbon footprint is a major task that everyone should be focused on at the school as it spent \$500,000 on energy. Solar energy can immediately and dramatically reduce that. The Park District has saved 25% of its electrical cost at Ridgeland Commons, and in return for a multi-year contract, the cost of the solar panels on Ridgeland was paid. This happened before the recent state law was passed regarding recreation programs wherein return providers of renewable energy would be reimbursed through ComEd. It will save the Park District about \$60,000. He encouraged building solar energy into the plans because foresight can make it happen with construction plans and getting appropriate materials and electrical setups.

Dori Bernstein read the following statement. “My name is Dori Bernstein, and I am a resident of Oak Park. I request the board to abstain from doing any additional business with the architectural firm of Perkins and Will. This firm does not have the confidence of this community. There were conflicts of interest in the P&W request for quote process and throughout the Imagine process. There was a lack of transparency and bias in the P&W master plan.

“Imagine OPRF was promoted as unbiased, yet, in the P&W RFQ it was highlighted that “A significant portion of our Chicago office hails from Oak Park, several of whom are on this project team” and two Oak Park residents were promoted as project leaders on this project, Mark Jolicoeur and Rick Young.

“The Imagine OPRF team was promoted as unbiased, yet, in the P&W RFQ on August 7, 2017, it was stated, “We are intimately familiar with the needs of the OPRF communities as many of our staff are long term residents of these communities.”

“Imagine was promoted as unbiased, yet, the P&W RFQ stated that they had “focused natatorium experience”.

“Imagine was promoted as unbiased, yet, of the three top bidders, STR, P&W, and Cordogan, only P&W had a photo of a large swimming pool on the cover of their proposal. P&W was biased toward a natatorium before input from the community.

“The architectural RFQ for Imagine was approved for payment of \$21,000 on September 28, 2017. P&W had an ethical and fiscal responsibility to present fiscally sound alternatives to Imagine OPRF. They failed their ethical and fiscal responsibility to this community by coming in with preconceived ideas for a natatorium.

“P&W was not transparent with this community concerning the full cost of Imagine. Their refusal to be transparent about cost estimates through the process and their refusal to disclose the plan's total costs for months, until pressured by the community, shows an unacceptable ethical problem.

“The September 9, 2017 contract document from P&W indicated their task was to be a professional resource and adviser to Imagine. Their advice was biased toward a large pool before the Imagine team started. This is an unethical and expensive bias that this community cannot afford.

“The community lacks trust in this firm. There are conflicts of interest, a lack of transparency, and an unethical bias. I strongly urge the board to not accept bidding proposals for any Imagine master plan projects or extend any existing contracts.”

Marty Bernstein stated that in 2016, a referendum failed and he had seen nothing in two years to overturn that thinking. Why is District 200 wanted to move \$20 million or build a pool of that size because the people said no? Yes or no, \$68 million for a pool is beyond ridiculous, and it is not a real thing. Mr. Poirier seemed upset with Monica Sheehan, and it is difficult when someone attacks someone with true facts and figures and Mr. Poirier as part of the vote no team and now he was on the pool subcommittee as a co-chair.

Bruce Kleinman felt it was inappropriate and outrageous for an Imagine co-chairs to personally attack a citizen. Mr. Kleinman was impressed by the Board's focus on the academic needs of the school. It is getting back to the reason for school academic and vocational success. Sequence 2 or Component D is an extravagant want.

John Bokum reported on the lives of his four children who graduated from OPRFHS. His family had moved to Oak Park for its excellent education system. He continued that everyone has opinions and it was great that they can be expressed. He wished the Board Happy Holidays.

Leslie Sutphen read the following statement. “I missed the Committee of the Whole discussion due to a work conflict, but I felt it was really important to hear the Board members' and the Administration's opinions on what is being proposed to implement a few pieces of the Imagine plan.



“I want to comment on how difficult it is to find out what happened at the Committee of the Whole meeting in a timely fashion. The Board does not post audio or video recordings of most of their public meetings, and this makes it difficult to really understand what is going on. It is true that Minutes are later posted, but the Minutes are often high-level summaries and do not give the reader a thorough portrait of the discussion. In addition, the minutes tend to take a while to be posted. I had to submit an FOIA request to get a recording of the December 11 meeting and event that was difficult and required permissions before I could access the recordings. If the Board wants to be truly transparent to all its constituents, I suggest strongly that the Board make audio recordings available for all public meetings on its website, making it easy for all constituents to access the discussions.

“I want to ask for clarification on a point that came up at the Committee of the Whole meeting. Board Member Baron asked if the swim curriculum could be thoroughly examined before the Board determines if a pool of the scope of that proposed is necessary. Dr. Pruitt-Adams responded that the size of the pool is not dictated by the swim curriculum. Rather it is dictated by the requirement for Athletics and Club sports and if the Board wanted to address the pool size, it should discuss whether having swimming, diving, water polo, and club sports is necessary or not. If the size of the pool is not a function of the curriculum, I strongly believe that we should not be spending the \$67 million to tear down the south end of the building and rebuild the facilities to accommodate extra curricular activities. This is not a good use of the school’s assets when so many other issues of equity and academics are pressing.”

Lynn Kaminesta stated that while in the “Trump Era” facts do not matter, she wanted to correct some of the things that were said earlier in public comments.

- The cost of the pool is being inflated. The actual numbers are in the plan.
- The 4-story, the 5-level new facility would not accommodate many needs of the school. The IMAGINE group spent time with students of color to get their views as to what was working and what was not working. They wanted new boys’ locker rooms (which cannot be done economically), a new dance studio as well as a multipurpose gym, new weight room, a three court gym, a pool, new PE and athletic offices, and a new elevator, which is an urgent need.

She urged anyone who had questions as to what actually happened in these meetings, to reach out to those who were there rather than trusting characterizations of those that were not there.

**2018-19 Calendar**

Dr. Moore moved to approve the revised school calendar for 2018-19 as presented; seconded by Ms. Dixon Spivy. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

**Board of Education Meeting Dates**

Dr. Moore moved to approve the Board of Education meeting dates for 2019, as presented; seconded by Mr. Baron. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

A suggestion was made to coordinate future meetings with other entities so that the District can communicate with other taxing bodies as much as possible.

**River Forest  
Community  
Calendar**

Mr. Pape of the Village of River Forest previewed a joint community calendar that was a project of standing collaboration committee comprised of an elected official and one staff member from each of the River Forest taxing bodies, including OPRFHS. The impetus for this was from a survey to River Forest residents about being more communicative and 49% of the respondents felt a community calendar would be helpful. These events are automated and populated from the taxing bodies' websites. The calendar will be launched in 2019.

**Initial Master Plan  
Recommendations**

Dr. Moore moved to approve issuing a request for qualifications (RFQ) for design services for Initial Recommended Components (Project 1), at a total estimated project cost of \$32,631,500; seconded by Ms. Dixon Spivy. Discussion ensued.

Dr. Pruitt-Adams reviewed the memorandum in the packet. "On Nov. 15, 2018, the Imagine OPRF Work Group made its recommendations to the Board for a long-term facilities master plan. The Board accepted those recommendations. It's important to note that a master plan is *not* a construction project, where design and financing of every portion is done at the start. Instead, a master plan is a living document that should be reviewed and modified as the impact of early projects is assessed, school needs change, and funding becomes available.

"In accepting the long-term facilities master plan recommendations, the Board accepted the facility needs that had been identified by the Imagine team; acceptance did not commit the Board to undertake any of the work nor the recommended sequencing of the projects. Now the Board of Education must decide what, if any, portion of the master plan to implement, when to schedule the work, and how to fund it.

"An overview of the first project was included for design and construction. The *Initial Recommended Components*, to be referred to in the future as Project 1, has an estimated total project budget of \$32,631,500 and includes renovation/construction of the following:

- 76 general education classrooms
- Classrooms, kitchen, laundry area, sensory room, and ADA-compliant restroom for the Special Education TEAM (Transitional Education with Access to the Mainstream) program
- First phase of student commons (east first, second, and third floors)
- Student resource center (library and tutoring center)
- South Cafeteria
- Main Entrance
- All-gender restrooms
- Three science labs
- Huskie Pups daycare facilities
- ADA-compliant elevator in the north end of the building

"This project would have a significant and immediate positive impact on students in terms of classroom spaces, ADA compliance, Special Education facilities, and collaborative learning while also taking into consideration the District's financial uncertainties, previous Board discussions, and community input.

“The administration recommends that the Board make additional commitments to ensure that other facility needs identified in the master plan as urgent, based primarily on physical condition, are addressed in future projects.”

Mr. Arkin was heartened to hear the report in this room. The IMAGINE process was supposed to end with the consensus of the community. He asked about what the first phase would include. It would include any renovations in reworking the main entrance, the elevator components, and modifications that need to extend up into the building because of the maintenance on the third floor.

Mr. Cofsky stated that the Imagine plan provided vision and now is the time go from vision to practicality and action. He appreciated the focus and scope of the recommendation, as a whole, the Imagine plan had no budgetary scope. What is presented allows the District to move forward with this project. While concerned with financial capabilities, he supported this recommendation.

Ms. Cassell thanked Dr. Pruitt-Adams and the IMAGINE team, and she was excited this was moving forward and coming into ADA compliance with the elevator and access issues for TEAM students, and the common spaces which will be safe and welcoming to students and families.

Mr. Baron felt it was a great start as it addressed the priorities of the communities.

Ms. Dixon Spivy was thankful to be at this point as it took four years to get there.

Dr. Moore was thankful to be at this point and thankful to this Board of Education for having the ability to digest information and move forward with recommendations. She also thanked Mr. Baron and Mr. Arkin for being the Board of Education liaisons. This is a big first step to building the facilities for students and staff.

Dr. Pruitt-Adams thanked the amazing members of the Imagine Workgroup who committed their time and energy, the architects, the administrative team, particularly Ms. Sullivan, who made this journey possible, and the Board of Education for the decision that will impact students yet to come.

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

## **Urgent Facilities Needs**

Dr. Moore moved to direct administrators to propose a funding plan for Component D (attached) no later than the May 2020 regular Board meeting. The administration’s funding plan should specify that the district’s objective is to align spending with revenue and that at least 50% of the estimated total project cost of \$65,367,600 will be covered by private donations of at least \$10 million, annual levy increases equal to CPI (Consumer Price Index), and \$20 million from capital funds; seconded by Ms. Spivy. Discussion ensued.

Dr. Pruitt-Adams reviewed the memorandum in the packet. “On Nov. 15, 2018, the Imagine OPRF Work Group made its recommendations to the Board for a long-term facilities master plan. The process of developing those recommendations included

prioritizing various needs of the building, with some needs categorized as urgent based primarily on their poor physical condition.

“The administration recommended the facilities components to be included in an initial RFQ for design services. While all the included components address important facilities needs, only the items for the Special Education TEAM (Transitional Education with Access to the Mainstream) program address issues that were identified by Imagine as most urgent. Administration based its recommendations on what would have a significant and immediate positive impact on students while also taking into consideration the District’s financial uncertainties, previous Board discussion, the size and scope of the urgent needs identified in component D, and community input.

“To ensure that the District makes a tangible commitment to addressing urgent facility needs in a timely manner, the administration recommends that the Board direct administrators to propose a funding plan for Component D (attached) no later than the May 2020 regular Board meeting. The needs addressed by this component are:

- Pool replacement (urgent)
- Locker rooms (urgent for boys and all-gender)
- ADA-compliant elevator in the south end of the building (urgent)
- PE/Athletic offices
- Dance studio
- Multi-court gymnasium
- Weight room

“The estimated total project cost for Component D is \$65,367,600. The administration’s funding plan should specify that the district’s objective is to align spending with revenue and that at least 50% of the estimated total project cost will be covered by private donations of at least \$10 million, annual levy increases equal to CPI (Consumer Price Index), and \$20 million from capital funds.”

Mr. Baron read the following statement: “Like my fellow board members, I am charged with representing the entire community and not just anyone or another special interest. I am committed to fulfilling the oath that I took when I was sworn into this board. Included in that oath is the following:

“I will respectfully listen to those who communicate with the Board, seeking to understand their views, while recognizing my responsibility to represent the interests of the entire community.

“Meanwhile, the Imagine team had a focused objective and was directed to dream big, with no budget constraints imposed on their process. They were directed to come up with a vision for this facility in the future. And they’ve done their job.

“Now, it’s time for us to do our job. And our job entails a much broader responsibility to represent the interests of the entire community.

“I also have a vision for the future of this institution. I can see being part of a board that approves well over \$100 million in capital expenditures over the next five to 10 years. Does it get closer to \$200 million than \$100 million? I don’t know about that,

though I do know that the concepts we have been presented would amount to nearly \$220 million, and that's only in today's dollars.

"I do support the \$32.6 million Initial Master Plan Recommendations that we just voted on. But I have strong concerns about this sort of non-binding "commitment pledge" that's been asked of us.

"My vision for OPRF High School includes how it fits into the bigger picture of our overall responsibility to the communities of Oak Park and River Forest.

"It's a fiscally sound future, one that acknowledges the rising tax burden on residents and business owners, and it's one that anticipates forces beyond our control. Forces like those with the General Assembly in Springfield, whose leadership for decades has fostered a culture of passing the buck—quite literally—billions of times over.

"As a result, our state is the poster child of financial mismanagement. Just one consequence of that is every year for the past five years, Illinois has declined in population. People are fleeing to states that demonstrate much more respect for taxpayer interests by serving as faithful protectors of their assets.

"We have been advised by our financial consultant, Rob Grossi, that of the many financial headwinds we are facing, one—just one of those factors—is that a portion of the rising annual pension obligations to teachers may well shift from the state to local governing units such as ours.

"Simple math, when applied to our statewide pension crisis, tells us that economic pressures are going to get much worse in Illinois before they get any better.

"So as urgent as these needs inside our building truly are, my greater urgency isn't about any one of these specific Imagine-crafted line items. My A-1 Urgent Priority is to have a clear-eyed view of where we are situated in time and space.

"So, looking ahead to May 2020, will I support Component D? Tonight, that's the question we are faced with, 17 months ahead of time. That's about as reasonable a request as mandating that the Imagine OPRF group, on the day that it first convened 16 months ago, commit to foregone conclusions about what they would eventually imagine.

"We obviously did not impose that on them—it would have been inappropriate, it would have been unfair, and it would have undermined their very reason for being. And that's how I view this request before us tonight."

Mr. Cofsky felt the urgent needs should be addressed and funded without impacting the taxpayers. How can the Board of Education do that by using the tax levy so that an operating referendum can be deferred? When the budget is balanced, then OPRFHS will not have to come back to the taxpayers.

Mr. Arkin questioned not having expenditures exceed revenue and struggled with committing at this time. He asked if the decision could wait until the administration

makes financial recommendations next May or June. He asked if this required Board approval at this time.

Dr. Pruitt-Adams stated that the administration was asking the Board for \$20 million at this time, levying full CPI and for the interest in establishing a foundation. The administration wanted the Board to articulate this as was discussed at the COW meeting. She continued that if the Board did not want to vote to approve, what is its commitment? If they did not approve it, the Board could direct or charge the administration to do this. The administration is committed to a balanced budget, and she asked the Board to hold it accountable to do those things.

Mr. Iseli was committed to directing the administration to help the Board set parameters on how this is funded and a plan for a balanced budget. He was committed to urgent needs and did not wait to 2020. However, because of affordability, it is the right decision. While he was committed to this work during his term, he struggled with Component D being the baked-in answer. He thought this might be a default answer, but it may not be the only answer. He wanted to leave the door open to adjustments. In focusing on Component D, other things might come to light. Dr. Pruitt-Adams stated that the Board has the latitude to take or add items, but the items in Phase I have a domino effect. The plan will continuously be reviewed.

Dr. Grossi recommended moving \$20 million from the Education Fund to Capital projects because it should not be used for deficit spending. There is still \$180 million in capital projects to be addressed. It is prudent to set aside this money. In another part of the discussion at the last meeting was a general recommendation that was made about the pool, and the reality is that while the District can start a foundation, it is difficult to fundraise that is not tied to a specific project. Trying to collect money for a pool is a fundraising object. The Board could transfer for \$20 million for urgent capital needs or component D. Either way, the movement is not a binding obligation to spend the money. The reason for targeting this is to start addressing Component D. Mr. Iseli stated that from his perspective directing the movement of the \$20 million was a clear commitment to address these things.

Ms. Cassell thanked Dr. Grossi for the information regarding needing a project for which to fundraise, and based on the comments last week the Board of Education is committed to an aquatic program. The recommendation is to levy CPI and align expenses with revenues. The Finance Advisory Committee also recommended moving the \$20 million in 2013. She did not want to kick this plan down the road. She felt the Board of Education should support a project that will address the needs of the students.

Mr. Baron agreed that shifting the \$20 million was overdue, but asked if there was a downside to voting on this at a later time. The response was that it was the perception. Dr. Grossi said the \$20 million is just for capital projects, not necessarily Component D and future boards will determine how the money will be used. It will be spent on an as-needed basis.

Dr. Moore, regarding urgent needs, agreed with the rest of the Board of Education members. Her concerns were the pool, the locker rooms, and being ADA compliant. The pool would be a part of those needs considered urgent and would be a project for fundraising. Alumni have committed funds to the facility but they want to know where their money is going, and some want naming rights. Ms. Cassell stated that the Board of Education was putting the urgent needs as a capital campaign as well.

With regard to building a smaller pool, when the IMAGINE team looked at a smaller pool, ICI was asked to investigate the cost. By reducing the size of the pool, it relegates the pool for teaching space. Imagine thought the District wanted to provide the same amount of educational spaces and take the rest of the space and use an additional gym space. The cost difference was \$800,000. A smaller pool would not allow two different swimming activities to happen--not two swimming teams practicing, not a water polo or girls or boys' water polo to be on either side of the bulkhead, no separated diving pool and no diving and swimming events could happen one after another.

Dr. Moore moved amend the motion to have the Board of Education direct administrators to propose a funding plan for urgent facility items no later than the May 2020 regular Board meeting. The administration's funding plan should specify that the district's objective is to align spending with revenue and that at least 50% of the estimated total urgent project cost will be covered by private donations of at least \$10 million, annual levy increases equal to CPI (Consumer Price Index), and \$20 million from capital funds; seconded Mr. Cofsky. A roll call vote resulted in six ayes and one nay. Mr. Baron voted nay.

A roll call vote on the amended motion resulted in six ayes and one nay. Mr. Baron voted nay. Motion carried.

## **Capital Funds**

Dr. Moore moved to approve the resolution to transfer \$20 million from the Education Fund to the future Capital Projects Fund as presented; seconded by Mr. Iseli. All roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

About investments, Mr. Grossi stated \$20 million receiving an interest rate of 2% would be \$400,000 per year. Schools have very strict rules regarding investing.

Mr. Cofsky remarked that in December 2013 the Finance Advisory Committee, after much discussion, recommended moving \$20 million into a capital projects fund. He favored that and had raised that issue periodically. In the past, the District levied to the maximum in the Ed Fund and only in some other fund if needed because it gave the District more flexibility and "best bang" for the dollars. Has the District been spending from the Ed Fund and getting the best results? The spending has been 8:1 on human capital versus facilities. He felt the movement of these funds was overdue. If the District has not been effective in balancing the budget, the Education Fund was used to cover the gap. He believed this plan was sound and changes need to happen. He supported this action. Mr. Iseli concurred and added that this provided a levy of transparency and accountability. The Education Fund cannot be used as a bank. Mr. Arkin also concurred and added that summer construction alone could be paid for out of the Capital Projects Fund.

## **2018 Tax Levy**

Dr. Moore moved to approve the 2018 Tax Levy; seconded by Ms. Dixon Spivy. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Mr. Arkin supported the recommendation because 1) the Board of Education does not talk about the levy without talking about the tax relief grant and significant abatement of taxes in 2019 to taxpayers; and 2) a project is now on the table, and they do need to take the maximum CPI and will be giving more than it back via the tax relief grant by abating \$5.8 million and then receiving \$3.7 million and 2.1 levy. The net impact for a house worth \$400,000 will be a negative \$215.

## **Tax Relief Grant**

Dr. Moore moved to approve the submission of the ISBE application at the maximum property tax relief level and that such application be submitted to the Illinois State Board of Education before the January 7, 2019 deadline for filing; seconded by Mr. Cofsky. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

The Administration further recommended that if the Illinois State Board of Education allocates grant revenues in future years that the Board of Education considers future tax abatements at a level equivalent to the value of the grant.

The Property Tax Relief Grant was established by Public Act 100-0465 and revised by Public Act 100-0582. The Grant was created to provide property tax relief in those school districts with high tax rates. The FY 2019 budget of the State of Illinois has funded \$50 million to subsidize the property tax relief provided by school districts via this Program.

As the State prioritizes approval of the Grant application by this tax rate, it is likely that the District would receive the grant if the application were made. Based on information provided by the Illinois State Board of Education, the maximum possible property tax relief OPRF could provide under this Grant is \$5.804 million. If the District elects to abate this entire amount, the State of Illinois will provide the District with a Property Tax Relief Grant for \$3.754 million.

This grant would then become part of the “base funding minimum” for purposes of future general State aid payments. This would mean that the District would receive approximately this same \$3.754 million annually so long as the State continues to increase funding to schools. This continued allocation of State dollars is not contingent on the District abating taxes beyond this FY 2018 levy year.

ISBE will notify school districts by January 31, 2019, if they are eligible for the Grant. If the Grant were awarded, the District would need to file a tax abatement resolution by March 30, 2019, to lower its tax extension by the \$5.804 million amount. If approved, the full \$3.754 million grant from the State is expected to be distributed to the District on May 20, 2019.

The net effect would be that the abatement would drop and bring the gross taxation level back to the 2000 level. Before .08 of average growth. The growth of tax as it relates to this district is very low, even negative, and very few schools have a tax levy that is the same as it was in 2000.

Mr. Cofsky thanked Dr. Grossi for his leadership in the state, and the no-nonsense way of working in trying to run a school and be responsible to taxpayers. Even



saying taxes were below 2010, these communities are number 15. The fact that OPRFHS is eligible for this relief supports what is heard from the taxpayers. This is very positive move and it is appreciated.

Mr. Arkin too thanked Dr. Grossi for his leadership. Regarding the grant amount, if the District continues to give an abatement to the taxpayers, how does that affect the ability in future years to maintain the ability to levy? In 2014, the Board of Education abated \$10 million, and the law required that the District bring it back up or otherwise lose its ability to levy. Would there be an exception to this? Dr. Grossi stated that the law says next year to add back the abatement. Because the District is debt free, it cannot lower the bond levy. The law currently reads if a District keeps the levy down for three years that is the base. He will try to get legislation that eliminates that hurdle. It is a disincentive to make that decision because of a one-year timeline, but if it affected the long term, districts would shy away from it. This may be considered each year. Dr. Grossi said that he would never abate before the money was received from the state. The abatement only has to be done for one year. The District could not continue to abate \$5.8 million as it would have to find the difference of \$1.5 million by other means.

**Summer Construction** Dr. Moore moved to award the recommended bid for the Summer Construction 2018 Capital improvements to Frontier Construction; seconded by Ms. Dixon Spivy. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

Bids were opened and read aloud on November 19, 2018, for the 2019 Capital Improvement Construction Work at OPRFHS. The District starts this design process in March of the prior construction year to receive better pricing during the bidding process. It also allows us to get the submittal process going ahead of all the other construction projects that are going on in the summer timeframe. This work was included in the \$4.6MM scope of work approved by the board of education in April 2018.

The difference in scope from the original approval in April was because IMAGINE provided clarity on the scope and this was amended based on its recommendations. One member was frustrated that this fact was not included in the report. The lowest bidder did not comply with all of the requirements of the bid. This is the first time OPRFHS is working with this vendor, but some of the subcontractors have been working in this building for 5 to 7 years and are favorites. A tally of the savings was suggested because of the overlap with IMAGINE. With the scope of Component D, that money will be used. The administration stated that this is captured in the 10-year plan.

**Asbestos Work** Dr. Moore moved to award the recommended bid for the Summer 2019 Asbestos Abatement Work to Cove Remediation LLC; seconded by Mr. Baron. A roll call vote resulted in all ayes. Motion carried.

One member was confused as to why the Board of Education had to approve additional project money.

**Informational Items** The following reports were presented as information, as they were presented at the Committee of the Whole meeting on December 11, 2018.

- A. Five-Year Analysis
- B. Data Framework Presentation
- C. Racial Equity Curriculum Pilot

**District Reports** District Liaison reports were embedded in the agenda.

**Future Agenda** None.

**Adjournment** At 10:29 p.m. on December 20, 2018, Dr. Moore moved to adjourn the regular Board of Education meeting; seconded by Ms. Cassell. A voice vote resulted in the motion carried.

Dr. Jackie Moore  
President

Jennifer Cassell  
Secretary