

October 30, 2018

A special meeting of the Board of Education of the Oak Park and River Forest High School was held on Tuesday, October 30, 2018 in the Board Room of the high school.

Call to Order President Dr. Moore called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. A roll call indicated the following members were present: Fred Arkin, Matt Baron, Tom Cofsky; Jennifer Cassell, Craig Iseli, Dr. Jackie Moore, and Sara Dixon Spivy. Also at the table were Dr. Joylynn Pruitt-Adams, Superintendent and Gail Kalmerton, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board.

Visitors Over 300 community and faculty staff members attended this meeting.

**Opening Comments
By Dr. Moore** Dr. Moore thanked everyone for attending. This event was planned for this point in the IMAGINE process. She hoped to hear the diversity of responses and answer questions. She thanked the IMAGINE Workgroup as they did what they were asked to do and put in untold volunteer hours to do so. She asked the speakers to remember civility, be respectful, and that the volunteer group was the not the whipping boy.

**Opening Comments
By Dr. Joylynn Pruitt** Dr. Pruitt-Adams welcomed everyone and especially thanked the IMAGINE Workgroup, Perkins + Will, ICI, Dr. Robert Grossi and Elizabeth Hennessey.

On Nov. 16, OPRFHS lost the referendum by a small amount. People voted yes or no for various reasons. The district then reflected on the whole facilities, the pool, performing arts, the bigger picture, etc. In December, 2016, the administration petitioned the Board of Education to consider creation of a community engagement committee to make recommendations for a Long range facilities master plan. In January 2017, OPRFHS Board of Education passed resolution that charged administration to establish a community engagement committee to review previous processes, make recommendations, strengthen community partnerships and pursue district's goals of equity, academic performance, and facilities to supplement that. This is in order to ensure that the district makes the educational needs of the next generation of learners. In February 2017, the launch team was formed and was comprised of 10 faculty, staff, and community members representing the pro and con stances of the most recently failed referendum. They formulated the criteria and reviewed over 90 applications from Oak Park and River Forest. They crossed all Demographics, Black, White, Asian, Hispanic, people with children, homeowners, renters, those who did not, children, etc. Ultimately, the group consisted of 30 community and staff members. In August 2017, the Workgroup started.

Over the past year and half, the IMAGINE Workgroup has reviewed prior reports, including the West Field Option Report, the Stantec Report, the 2017 SP, etc. They conducted 100's of hours of focus groups with students, faculty, and staff and received feedback from over 1,600 stakeholders. They completed tours of this one million square foot facility, toured other districts, held five community engagement sessions

and offered 12 different conceptual plans. In an effort of transparency, postcards were sent to every household in Oak Park and River Forest making them aware of the opportunities to participate and provide input. Monthly reports were provided and those reports can be found on the district's website.

People have questioned equity. Equity for all is critical to the work of OPRFHS. It impacts gender, ADA, and racial equity. The Workgroup was told to do everything through a racial equity lens. The writing of curriculum is done by professionals who are skilled, but they were asked to look at classroom space, i.e., science, HVAC, etc. The recommendations from IMAGINE is a masters facilities plan. It is not a construction project or plan. The parameters around the footprint as far as the budget were not given to IMAGINE. The Board wanted to see the needs of the facilities, what they were, and the possible ways to address them in order to see that nothing was left to change.

Today is the time IMAGINE Workgroup passes the baton to the Board of Education. They completed the work in a stellar way. The first decision will be to accept master facilities plan in totality or in sequences on November 15. If they accept the plan, the Board of Education will have to determine the what and the how.

IMAGINE

Rick Young of Perkins + Young, had worked with IMAGINE for one and a half years. A master facilities plan is tool to be used by the District and the Board of Education to provide information in order to make decisions as to how they want to proceed in the future. It is a holistic plan and it identifies as many of the needs and the shortcomings as possible. The district can then judge how to address these needs now and later. It is a roadmap. It identifies targets and locations to improve the facilities for the delivery of education. It couples with the needs, the possible solutions, in facilities projects or proposed intentional construction projects. It identifies spaces in the building where needs can be met and addresses constructional logistics. It takes into account replacing spaces and coupling them with the needs of prioritization that had been identified. IMAGINE went through all of the information and identified the needs, they visited other districts in order to compare them to this district, as many face the same issues. Many of the schools in this area were built a long time ago and added on to over time. The spaces were not designed to support the types of education happening today. In all of IMAGINE's investigations and interviews was to identify how the facilities were supporting or hindering the delivery of education.

IMAGINE presented and prioritized the issues to P&W and ICI and asked how to solve without sacrifices. As a result, different master plans were developed and debated the pros and cons and took these back to the stakeholders for their input. They culminated in the plan presented today. This plan is broken down into sequences 1-5 and then individual components, which can be discrete construction projects for consideration. Additional information were provided as to how the components relate to each other, budget costs, both the direct and indirect cost associated with project, i.e., surveys, architectural fees, soft costs for construction, furniture, etc.. The Board will then be armed with information if and when it wants to address a need and how that

will relate to other needs in the facility. This needs to be a living document. Perkins + Will have made predictions about cost and education but these needs will change over time, just as education will change. Because the priorities of the district will change, that is why the master facilities plan is broken down into different components. The District can then pivot and make changes. This is not the how this will be implement. Financial issues need to be made. The master facilities plan is intended to be a tool to give the Distinct and Board to make informed decisions about the facilities and how they intend to improve them over time.

Terry Fielding spoke about what the numbers mean. These are relative costs of what the work may entail. They are generally allocated sq. foot cost based on ICI's experience and the area. Other estimates will be developed and refined later on and get then it be closer to relative cost of construction might be for an area. Then the District will bid the work, and then the District will manage cost from the there. These costs will help the Board know how to allocate. ICI has had great success with budgeting. The numbers need to be updated every 2 or 3 years. We see escalation in the market, so the Board has to be rigid and diligent and go back to review to make sure they still make sense. Sequence 4 and 5 costs become more grey and are harder to manage to predict because they will need to be re-evaluated to address market conditions, etc.

Dr. Grossi has been working with school districts for the past 32 years, and worked with over 40 districts and he works closely with the ISBE and appointed to oversee financial struggling school districts. A master facility plan will be merged with other facility needs which is another part of the capital needs. Most of the effective school districts have a comprehensive capital plan, not necessarily addressed in entirety, or addressed immediately, but it is a living document that the boards consider in open meetings at the time of the budget to on when they want to embark on a project all at once. His task has been to consider what existing sources are available to do these plans. He provided a menu of options.

- 1) Policy calls for the fund balance reserves to have a target fund balance of between 25% and 75%. As such, the District could use approximately \$40 million from the Fund Balance.
- 2) Annual Capital Budget. The Board of Education could give \$2 million of this budget toward the IMAGINE budget. If so, an additional \$10,000 would be available to address plan.
- 3) Issue life safety bonds to address projects tied to health and safety risks for children.
- 4) Issue debt certificates equal to targeted IMAGINE projects less capital commitments. . This is a common form of borrowing to get money up front for capital projects. Interest would be paid on borrowing this money.

The maximum to be received in about \$40M. There is a cap on how much the tax levy can be which would translate to about \$156 per \$400 home. If the board of Education decided to pursue bonds, the maximum would be \$150 on a \$400K home.

If the district wants to pursue a deeper portion of the IMAGINE plan, they would have to go to referendum. That is not part of the recommendation, IMAGINE plan or initial decision of the school plan. That would be considered by the Board of Education at a later time.

Student Voice

A video was presented showing the accessibility needs of the school.

Public Comments

Ms. Sullivan reviewed the ground rules for public comment/questions.

Roberta L. Raymond, class of 1955 and resident, thanked the IMAGINE workgroup and wanted to acknowledge those people who were not part of a team, they needed a way to incorporate their views as they were not totally opposed to the plan. She was prepared to support Sequences 1, 2 and maybe 3. She believed that athletics and the arts were critical and often bring students together in a better way than academics. She supported swimming, as 64% of African-Americans do not swim and the District needs to teach everyone to swim and to protect those who are the most vulnerable. She wanted to see the present building preserved. She loved and supported the school in every way she could. This was a community project and they should not be divided.

Sara Siverson, a life-long resident and 2002 graduate, wanted OPRFHS to be a wonderful school, parents still live here and she would love to have her children stay here and see her grandchildren stay here. However, she asked the Board to prioritize the needs to maintain and reduce tax burden. She believed in equity but she was not sure that facilities would address it. The \$218 million price tag was shocking and the community cannot sustain this type of increase. It would require taxpayer approval. She disagreed with the things that were stated as being in disrepair. She asked that taxpayers be included at the beginning of the funding process, not at the end. Taxpayers want no more taxes and they wanted a voice.

Chris Teigen, a 15-year resident, had a daughter who graduated from OPRFHS and she intended on staying here. While the money will not scare them away, \$218 million seems to be a huge spend on a facility. He just finished watching *America To Me* and it influenced his thinking about the facilities plan. He felt there was a fifth category of resources availability. The plans are all laid out structurally, i.e., reorganization of classrooms into thematic areas. With the history of Oak Park and the needs that have been expressed by IMAGINE, and this plan, he felt that there was an opportunity to raise money by giving naming rights, just as do colleges and universities. He asked why the District did not have a development office. There are naming opportunities for clusters, performing arts, the library, etc. This could reduce the cost and bring some elevation to what is being done by educators.

Robert Douglas stated that the IMAGINE group was designed to provide a plan based on current usage with no regard to budget. Dissent to the process was heard loudly, and it worked out exactly as expected. The cost is unacceptable. It should start from scratch with a budget. He did not believe that would happen. this board or the

IMAGINE group showed any thought to cost. He spoke about previous proposals 1) he Stantec report at a cost of \$12 to \$15 million, 2) tearing down the parking garage, which was impractical and using non referendum bonds, and a 3rd proposal which did not call for tearing down the parking garage but cost of \$44.5 million and this was rejected by the voters. IMAGINE did its best job to give a proposal for a great facility, but phase 2 is more expensive than the proposal in 2016. He understood that the Board did not want to go for a referendum for funding. The IMAGINE proposal is more expensive than past proposals. He asked if the on-campus swimming PE curriculum made sense for OPRFHS.

John Duffy read this statement: “For the past seven years, the Committee for Equity and Excellence in Education has been working both inside and outside the school, advocating for genuine racial equity. We stand behind the many dedicated efforts to end long-standing inequities in opportunities to learn, discipline, curriculum offerings, and daily school life, and in hiring and retaining a racially diverse faculty and staff. Indeed, we have praised and supported recent administrative efforts around equity.

“In light of proposals before the Board around a facility plan and those projected expenses, we feel a responsibility to our students to remind this Board, this administration, and this community that for true racial equity, significant time and monies must be dedicated.

“We ask this Board and administration to recommit to these tasks that are central to OPRF's academic mission:

- hiring and retaining more teachers of color who are so important to nurturing our African American students' learning and uplifting their sense of place and purpose,

- developing the currently proposed Grow Your Own teacher development program to bring more of our talented students and adults of color back to OPRF to enrich the learning experience of all of our students,

- continuing the long needed professional development and application of best practices around restorative justice and social emotional learning, and

- funding recently developed and growing efforts under the Strategic Plan for racial equity in curriculum that will help end OPRF's classroom racial segregation and expand opportunities to learn for all of our students and to learn from all of our students.

“In October 2017, in a somber report to the board, the District's chief financial officer told of the inevitable need for the Board to spend down its

cash reserve to meet projected, expanding operational costs through 2022, with the likelihood for an operating funds referendum by 2023.

“More recently, in May 2018, after lengthy discussion around fiscal responsibility and concern for the District's projected financial difficulties down the road, the board narrowly approved the resources for racial equity coaching with a 4-3 vote. For certain, the financial path forward for D 200 will be challenging. In facing this uncertain financial future, this board and future boards must not compromise commitments to racial equity goals our community is now embracing with an new urgency.

“We support the leadership of Dr. Pruitt-Adams and Principal Rouse in their current effort to bring a genuine racial equity policy lens, framework and protocols before the board for adoption. Such work, however, requires, as the Strategic Plan mandates-- strong, predictable, dedicated funding and personnel.

“The Committee for Equity and Excellence in Education remains steadfast in its commitment to racial equity at OPRFHS. More importantly, all students depend on you to lead with regard to genuine equity.

“We urge the Board, the administration, and the community to think seriously about its priorities and responsibilities to all students, and to act accordingly.”

Nancy Leavy retired from being a Board member after 8 years in 2003. She commended the IMAGINE workgroup for highlighting the needs, especially those of special education students, a handicapped-accessible bathroom, and the pool. She knew for decades that the pools leaked, were cold, and not well vented. The District needs to remedy some of the things identified by IMAGINE. IMAGINE understood that a long-term master plan is a living organism and they tried to project the needs into the future. The pool was built 110 years ago, and the District has to think now about doing a significant work in the building that will take it into the next century. That is where minds need to be--the future. It is a high cost and obviously, she was not saying do it all, but she stated that the journey of a 1000 miles begins with a first step and the committee did a good job of identifying the future.

Matt Klosterman, a resident of River Forest, had one child who graduated from OPRFHS and one child who was a current student. He thanked the Board of Education and IMAGINE Workgroup. It was a gargantuan job and thankless. They spent thousands of hours studying the challenges of the high school, from the physical plant to the instructional needs to the social and athletic components. They solicited comments from students, faculty, staff, and community members and experts. They dug in and put forth a detailed, comprehensive plan that will ensure the vitality and viability of the high school for the next 100 years. He wholeheartedly endorsed this plan. It is bold comprehensive and forward thinking. It comes with a price tag. I read enough to know from the comments in the Wednesday Journal who size on their price tag, the constant refrain of no. Where is the alternative plan? That one that would get the improvements for free. Saying no easy, but finding the path to yes be more

difficult. Taxes are high and unfortunate, but we can control the reason people choose to live as this is a vibrant, successful school. It would be harmful to the community if it were not upgraded. He asked for people to come together to find a way to say yes.

Ellen Edwards, a 1974 resident, noted that her daughter graduated OPRFHS. She was thankful for the community voice, as the taxpayers are paying for this. While she thanked the IMAGINE workgroup for being forward thinking and thorough, she did not know how they were differentiating between the wants and the needs. However much the taxpayers are in support of this school, they are tired of being taxed. She was fortunate that she could pay the \$150 per year more, but she asked what about the ones who cannot and will have to leave Oak Park. She noted that OPRFHS would be judged by posterity on how we keep the vulnerable. She agreed with naming rights and other “outside of the box” should be explored.

Greg Marcy, lived in Oak Park since 1991, commended IMAGINE on the work. He understood the complexities and deciding what you can afford, need and what you want to achieve. However, the price tag is enormous, and in light of failed refer to rebuild the pool, the general reaction will be “what are you thinking?” Asked to considered alternatives, private equity funding, and anything to use the large fund balance to avoid going for a referendum. The community is fed up with taxes. Last year I worked in assessors officers in March and August to process appeals, and 3,000 homeowners came through the office. The problem is real and when one sits next to someone who has lived here for 30, 40, or 50 years and they say they can’t afford to live here anymore and ask for help. The only thing one can do is to pay attention to when referendum comes forward and vote on them based on their availability. If one continues to push out hard, the Oak Park character will change and change forever. That needs to be considered.

Al Bergrenn’s family has been in this area for over 100 years, and his four children graduated from OPRFHS when there were over 4,400 students enrolled. OPRFHS had always been one of the top scholastic schools in the state, but now it is not even in the top list of Illinois schools. When talking about equity and closing the achievement gap but the District wants to spend \$250 million on a pool and athletic facilities that will mostly benefit the achievers. OPRFHS has approximately \$100 million in cash, and that should put into the underachievers so that they can be successful. Many parents hire private tutors because they are not learning from their teachers on staff. Many who cannot afford tutors are having trouble. Why not pay for tutors to pay for all kids to get tutoring? OPRFHS has one of the highest tax rates in Chicago and people are moving out. He did not know anyone who would move here for a pool, but many people would move in if the educational excellence was restored.

John Bokum, a 40-year resident, had four children go through the high school. His property taxes started at \$1,000 and have risen to \$16,000. Many residents are leaving. Many referendums have been passed and only a few who have not passed. D97 when had a referendum to build two juniors highs but the academics have not improved. He was against brick and mortar. He would rather the money be spent on programs.

America to Me has opened eyes on this community, and it needs an equity position for all students as well as a fair and equal education. The District needs to prioritize education vs. bricks and mortar and to think outside the box. *America to Me* pointed out the difference between the administration and the teachers--they are not listening to each other.

Peter Ryan, an Oak Park resident, spoke in support of the IMAGINE's proposals and he understood that there were concerns about the costs and adopting the plan. However, he did not believe a better plan could be designed, not for anyone. He felt the Board of Education had everything it needed to move forward.

Lisa Reed, parent two children, thanked the IMAGINE workgroup for the thankless job and the Board of Education for this conversation. She is pro-OPRFHS and saw room for renovation. Her question was, what was being prioritized in the sequences. That video made her mad about special needs and accessibility and she asked that those be priorities one. Classrooms should move up as well. As you consider this master plan, she asked for put outcomes increasingly up front and money up front and go from there, i.e., ADA, special needs and more welcoming environment and the things that go beyond the physical structure.

Kerry McClain, the parent of 3 children, had been very involved in the community and spent countless hours volunteering for PTO, the Housing Commission, Citizens' Council Committee, and she has worked in Village renovating homes. She is appalled by voting this price tag in without knowing how it will be paid for. OPRFHS needs to look at this comprehensively. Her daughter is looking to buy a home, and the home prices have fallen drastically. People who have the kind of money that needed to live in Oak Park have other options. They do not want to spend \$2,000 a month on taxes. They can find a high school with a 10-rating in many places. Students spend four years here, but homeowners are here for 20, 30 40 years if they can afford the staggering tax burden. OPRFHS is not the only taxing body in the Village. All of them have to prioritize. They need to determine how something is paid for and then go to the voters with a specific plan.

Michele Major, a 14-year resident, thanked the IMAGINE Workgroup and the Board of Education. She noted that it was fiscally responsible for having a plan and that she favored this because it was well thought out. She did not believe that not having all of the pieces worked out should preclude the Board from approving it. She was the president of a condo board, and they had a plan like this. Not everything is planned out in all sequences, but the sequences can be done as needed, and changes can be made. She is a taxpayer also, and she felt that adopting a plan was being fiscally responsible. She liked the naming rights concept as a way to fund this and that it would be well accepted by the community.

Fred Hess, a resident of River Forest, commented about the IMAGINE plan. He taught in CPS for 12 years, and his students think about vocational jobs, rather than college. He asked if any consideration had been given about training for office jobs, plumbing,

electricity, carpentry, and technology as it is no longer about not a hammer and a nail. They are more advanced, and if students could be provided with that opportunity for a career so that they could start their own businesses, it would have more bang for the buck.

Marty Bernstein, the 25-year resident, just finished *America To Me*, noting that ten years ago he was an assistant coach for the little league team and Kendall McCoy was on that team. Mr. Bernstein read the following statement: “I thank the Board for holding this town hall meeting. My comments about the Imagine plan are: In 2017 the board created the Imagine team with instructions to not consider cost in their work. This means that the work produced by Imagine is only a list of things that could be done. It is the Board’s job to review this \$218 million dollar plan and reduce it to something economically feasible. The plan is so expensive that it is hard to imagine this board taking it seriously. Approximately \$150 million of the \$218 million estimate are earmarked for P/E and athletics or 69% of the total spend.

“The Board needs to thank the Imagine group for its service and wish them well and then send the plan back to the architects with explicit instructions to remove demolition of the south end of the building and start over from there, keeping the existing structure in place. This is necessary because the plan ignores the results of the 2016 referendum.

“Immediately after the referendum, District 200 sought a workaround to the referendum vote. Is this how District 200 wants to teach our children that no means no? Or are you satisfied with teaching no means yes?”

Steven, Schuler, a 1980 graduate and lifelong resident, a product of two teachers, and one of six siblings, loves this Village, and it inspires him. As he looks back, in the 1920s a unique stadium was built, and in 1927 the Fieldhouse was built due to inspiration and foresight. In 1968, OPRFHS was one of the first high schools to have science labs, etc. The community needs to think forward, imagine the future as to what OPRFHS can be. That is what this community is about. The masters facility plan is expansive. He favored putting it to the Board to decide the elected officials. He believed in a representative democracy and not going to referendum on everything so that nothing gets done. There were great comments about priorities, how to go about it, naming rights, and he will be the first to join a committee which has this charge. He asked those to think about what this Village can be and not be a naysayer.

Monica Sheehan thanked the IMAGINE Workgroup for the plan and the Board of Education for hearing the public. She favored prioritizing needs. In the fall of 2015, she and her husband attended the public hearing on transportation held at the high school to hear concerns on the parking issue when the parking garage was under discussion for demolition. A student made a statement that she still remembers to this day and the reason she is hear. The student said the high school did not need a huge pool and questioned why money was being spent on a pool when it should be spent on education. She thought she saw that same student when she watched *America To Me*. On behalf of Keyshawn and the 3,200 students not part of the aquatic teams, her

question is in the wake of *America To Me*, is it an appropriate legacy to spend \$67 million of limited education dollars to accommodate the building of a 17-lane swimming pool?

Robert Graham thanked the IMAGINE workgroup. He asked the Board of Education to be cautious about spending large amounts of money after losing a referendum, At some point in the future, you will need to ask for more money for operational expenses. The District needs people behind them, and they need to have a voice at the beginning. He suggested using the money the District already has.

Ben Erring stated that the community had done surveys in the past and they wanted the governing bodies to work together, and they want a community pool. Health is a concern with the pool. Did OPRFHS talking about a joint community pool and if yes, what was discussed and what was the outcome? If no, why not and would the Board be willing to consider that in the future.

Jack Powers, resident of Oak Park, loved the community. Board members need to understand that D200 and D97 influencing taxes colors people's thoughts. In the last 30 years, had voted against every referendum until the District 97 referendum which caused his taxes to increase \$2200. His 1.5 story home sits on a 37-foot lot. His taxes are \$16,000. Years ago, previous Boards of Education caused a \$100 million surplus, and now the taxpayers are being told that this money will be spent without voter approval. This is like saying "Thank you sir, may I have another."

Mr. Powers thought most people wanted a new pool for the school but the scope and scale was the issue at \$68 million. Racism is probably the biggest problem, and it is everywhere. Equity includes all of the children here, including the ones who might have to leave because their parents cannot afford to continue to be here as well as those who want to be here but can't because they cannot afford it.

Valerie Lester thanked IMAGINE for the work it did as it was a stellar job on the direction. She questioned the direction that was given the IMAGINE workgroup. The Board asked for the ideal, and that is what it got. IMAGINE was not asked for an ideal or a budget-constrained option. It was not asked to look at the OPRFHS community and to work across the community to share dollars and resources with the park district, the library and other services. If the Board has determined that it cannot afford this, what are the priorities by which it will be scaled back? Each sequence is built on the next. If something is removed, she was unsure that the next phase could be completed.

Josh Vander Berg, a resident of Oak Park, and parent of three children who will graduate in 2027, 2029 and 2039, commended IMAGINE Workgroup for its hard work and dedication to improvement OPRFHS facility. It produced a vision if money were no object. This plan is similar to building concept cars--a One of a kind dream vehicle. But they are handed off to the practical engineers who must create a feasible design. Similarly, the IMAGINE plan must be adapted to suit the needs and values of the Oak Park and River Forest community. This plan dramatically overemphasis athletics

wants to the detriment of academic needs, spending over 60 percent of the \$218 million on PE and athletics. Athletics should be a component of any master plan but four times more is unacceptable. The total plan estimate of \$218 million cannot be funded in any reasonable timeframe without significantly impacting the taxpayers. I urge the Board to use the IMAGINE vision as starting point to create an affordable long-term facilities plan and subjects any future tax increases to voter approval.

Philip Fertik asked the Board of Education to answer Ms. Sheehan's questions and asked why it thought it could justify this plan to itself when it had been told nay so many times. The naysayers think it a bad priority to put a pool first. If one has been told nay, he did not know how they could justify doing this. It has been said this is a living document. Yes, it is a zombie. It has killed over and over again. It should be replaced by a plan that makes sense to this community. It does not need athletic facilities or bathrooms as suggested in the propaganda, but it does mean that the actual needs should be considered. For those children who have to have "super" facilities, not just "very good ones," they should find other means, and many have. It is not the basis for a final decision.

Corey Wesley, a 7-year resident, was appalled at the conditions that exist in the high school when it has a fund balance of \$100 million. Was the condition of the high school in the film being exploited for propaganda or negligence? Why can't students get into the bathroom when there is \$100 million in the bank? This building was the subject of a documentary on the inequality of the educational institution, and he has attended Board meetings where inequity was discussed. Yet, the discussion at this meeting is about a \$250 million swimming pool. Has consideration been given to how an increased levy will disproportionately affect the elderly, the middle class, and minorities? What happens when these people are forced out of the village? The results of this plan due to the enormity of it will be that of a less diverse population. If no one is left, no one will be here to complain about inequity.

Kitty Conklin, a 15-year resident of Oak Park, too asked why the items in the video were not fixed and paid for out of the monies set aside for maintenance each year at one meeting. No real answer was given at the meeting, but since then email communication from the superintendent stated that these types of situations are normal wear and tear. A leak in the roof was being repaired, and the plumbing issues were similar. Ms. Conklin felt there was confusion around priorities. District 200's first mission should be to educate children. As part of that, the community wants to help. For her to have listened to a selected presentation by Dr. Grossi saying that the 5 sequences will raise taxes for the average homeowners by only \$150 for \$400,000 house is ludicrous. District 200 is spending more than it is taking in. The fund balances are declining. If D200's own projections say there will be an operating referendum in 2023, how much sooner will the District need to go for a referendum if \$20 million is taken out of the fund balance?

Amanda Massie read the following statement: "As elected Board members, you were elected to make decisions based on what's best for the whole community, student and

taxpayers. The majority of this plan and costs are athletics drive, not education or equity drive. Most of the athletics costs are driven by the want to have a pool with spectator seating for 600. Any way you look at that, it is not a need. It is a want. We can cover Ridgeland Commons for under \$20 million and create what OPRF needs for swimming and creating a year-round pool for the whole community and swim clubs. That would free up two plus floors of room created by getting rid of current pools. Then a boys' locker room, coaches' offices, stem labs and more could go into those freed up spaces that we so desperately need.

“After watching *America to Me*, it has become more obvious that this plan isn't what the whole community wants. This needs to be an equity and educational based plan that has a budget. It should be based on actual identified needs. If you thought this plan was good and would be approved by the community you would put it to referendum. But, you are not. Instead, you are looking at creative ways to finance it using part of what's in District 200 coffer. The problem is that \$100 million, in the coffer, was earmarked last year in the October 17-, 2017 Five-Year Financial Projection report as being needed to operate so that an “operating referendum” would be held off until 2023. If you use any of this money in the coffer, then you will be asking us for more money before 2023 in the form of an earlier operating referendum. District 200 is already operating in the whole every year and has been for some time. And, all of this is before salary negotiations are final and we know what these costs will be.

“There has been a tremendous amount of work done by the citizens in the IMAGINE group, but with no budget parameters and the sky's the limit wants list. It is time to come down to earth and face reality. No one does a facility plan without a budget, and a needs list. Do what the whole community needs and elected you to do. This isn't the right facilities plan for OPRFHS and the whole community.”

Debra West a 24 year-resident and parent of a graduated, attended every meeting of the previous pool committee who brought forth the proposal involving the parking garage. She was dismayed that a proposal that involved renovating the field was not part of it, because it would save money. This is an old building that has not been updated. Previous school boards have kicked the can down the road, and she agreed with the Sped Ed who asked if not now, when. We have a board who is stepping up to responsibility and I commend them for that. I am disappointed that it doesn't address accessibility needs of Auditorium or Little theatre. She appreciated having spaces for all. Appreciate SPED needs. This is the jewel of the community and needs to maintain luster or property taxes will fall. She wished everyone who was upset about the taxes would put that energy toward the state level and change the school levy process.

Darlene H., a single mom with two elementary students, felt the plan was awesome as long as someone else paid for it. She asked if the Board could pick and choose what it wanted. Would it vote for the three cheapest phases or was this all about the doing the two most expensive phases or then everything else would fall away? Dr. Moore stated that this was about looking at the priorities. Ms. Darlene asked that the budget is taken into account.

Paul Pummel, 2-year resident, liked the plan except for the blue parts. Bathrooms and wheelchairs accessibility make sense. We are talking about a high school here. I care about the students who go the high school. Each of these expenditures, I want to use science saying this is a reasonable expenditure for as many students as possible to everyone lifted up and done cost effectively. Thinking about this science says we should be doing this or that. If science says we should be doing a huge amount of sports, then he wanted to see the science.

**Board Member
Comments**

Dr. Moore noted that Mr. Barton and Mr. Arkin were the board of Education liaisons to IMAGINE, and they were the connection back to board. And Mr. Iseli has been working with finance department on issues of finance and remind everything that as we talk about this moving forward to not only adopt master facilities but the purpose of tonight was to garner input and look at research and data as well as the financial aspect.

Mr. Iseli noted that Dr. Grossi had laid out different scenarios as to how to fund the IMAGINE Plan. They understand where the district is regarding its annual budget and spending, and as people have pointed out, nothing here comes for free. Any money that will be spent on IMAGINE are things we are looking at all of the ways to balance. All of the elements of the IMAGINE plan will need to be prioritized with all of the other expenses of the district. One thing not discussed is that there are elements of the longer term would require a referendum and but other elements have to do with updating the school regarding ADA issues, etc., and that the fund balance may be a more appropriate decision that the Board will handle.

Mr. Cofsky is greatly concerned about taxes, noting that taxes related to the high school were the same today as they were in 2013. The Board has taken action not to increase taxes over those six years and also gave back \$20 million to the taxpayers. He continued that in the last six years, the District has spent \$315 million on human capital, programs, teachers, bringing in extra educators in special education, etc. and only spent \$40 million on facilities during that time. That is a ratio to 8:1. Regarding annual dollars being spent, it is a different perspective. Are resources needed behind educational programs and educating in the classroom? Yes, that is a top priority for this Board of Education.

Dr. Pruitt-Adams noted that facilities are where teaching and learning take place and if we don't have adequate lighting, ventilation, we cannot meet the needs of the students. It is about ensuring the technological structure is there when talking about the education of the future. State of Illinois requires PE, so something must be done. Research shows that students who are actively involved in sports do better in school. The plan does not ask for an Olympic-size pool. Information has been put out that if the number of students taking swimming, it will reduce the size of the pool. Is OPRFHS willing to give up aquatics when 60% of the African-American students do not know how to swim? For her, this is about removing the barriers for all students. Funds and resources need to lockstep with each other. If not, facilities could be harmful to students' health. The Board of Education is committed to looking at all aspects of the plan and prioritize.

Dr. Moore stated that the questions raised tonight were:

- 1) Prioritization
- 2) Fundraising and naming rights
- 3) Exploring and collaborating with other governing bodies
- 4) Career readiness and how the plan addressed that issue

Ms. Cassell thanked the public for their comments. The Board of Education has heard them was taking everything into account. IMAGINE's work has been thankless. Thank you. She looked forward to hearing a recommendation from the administration in November on the master facility plan. I heard about the vision of OP, and we need to take into account. We don't want to continue to increase the tax burden, but we have to move forward on capital improvement projects and facilities, we will never do so, and previous boards and administration have not decided on how to move forward with improving the facilities. Now is the time to have a vision and move forward.

Dr. Dixon Spivy appreciated everyone's comments and thanked the IMAGINE workgroup and the administration for dedicating so much time and energy. Taxes are high. She moved to Oak Park without realizing mortgages would double due to property taxes. Tax dollars will not be spent on a "Barbie Dreamhouse," but the District needs a roadmap for progress to take place. It is logical and rational to have a template. This is not a punch list. Education, equity and facilities are not mutually exclusive, they are integral. This is not a virtual campus, and the Board has to be a good steward of the building. The master plan is simply a new normal to holistically address the needs of the schools. Accepting the plan is taking a step forward on how the Board will look at this facility as a whole long term. This plan is not about a pool. She appreciated the comments.

Mr. Arkin thanked the IMAGINE Workgroup for its commitment, dedicated work, and sacrifice. He also thanked Dr. Pruitt-Adams for her leadership and vision, and Ms. Sullivan for her stewardship of the process. The Board of Education has heard all comments and are well aware of the concerns of the community. Taxes are an issue around the state. Projections are controllable. This process was a conceptual plan to move forward in maintenance and upgrade to the facilities. As move forward, parts may be implemented, modified or abandoned. The facility needs assessment overview is a foundational document of this work. It clearly outlines the findings of the committee's extensive research and has shaped his opinion in understanding the building needs and content. His perspective has evolved regarding prioritizing needs. Keeping equity and excellence as the driving forces of the District's mission, he sees the priorities as accessibility, creating a welcoming environment, expanded access of students to recourse, modern learning spaces for 21st-century learning and safe and adequate spaces for extracurricular. . The Board is the steward of the public funds.

Mr. Iseli thanked IMAGINE workgroup for their hard work and the community for their comments. He appreciated their input. He reflected on the process taken. When this process started, he was not fully on board with it. He felt restraints should have been made, but he learned much, and things may have been missed that that approach. Through the process, he was now a convert, as he saw the needs that came from faculty/staff, students and community. The Board of Education will have to prioritize and balance the needs of the stakeholders, but from the point of understanding all of the issues and problems, it is critical to have that as input before going forward with the knowledge on the best solutions, as they are in the best position to decide.

Mr. Baron reiterated his thanks to the volunteers of the IMAGINE Workgroup. It had boiled down all of its research into this recommendation. The Board of Education will continue to receive punishment, and that is why the members are elected. The Board members do not know what the other Board members are thinking; there is no preconceived destiny for this plan. And, there is a false perception of this being an either/or. The cost per square foot on the South End of the building will be more expensive than the North End of the building. He urged people to think through the comments they were making. He appreciated the idea of having naming rights. As the District explores different options and the decision points, doors will open or close. Accepting this plan is not a commitment to spend this money. If this were an easy decision, it would be discussed in another space. He was not going to kick this can down the road, and if the Board of Education only annoys 40% of the community, the Board was doing well. Every decision the Board of Education makes ties back to the Strategic Plan, and he invited everyone to review it and understand that it is a dynamic document. All of what flows from here goes back to the many dedicated people here and beyond. This is being done for children not yet born.

Dr. Moore thanked the IMAGINE workgroup. This is the first town hall. Its goal was to gain insight and listen. She hoped that the community listened and could appreciate that they had been heard. They appreciated the pro and con emails. The real work begins after the final reiteration from the IMAGINE workgroup is received. The Board values the students. She and Mr. Cofsky wanted to address the fund balance when they joined the Board of Education. They are not trying to go into debt or to burden taxpayers, but the community has a facility that has not been maintained in a way that would allow for repair, and it is time for renovation. Several people talked about the Village and how it has always done things in a way that others have not. She read something from 1927 from a local paper. It talks about \$750,000 in additions for students and says, "These additions include a Fieldhouse for the boys and a gymnasium for the girls each of which will contain a spacious swimming pool and every facility for physical training. These improvements add to the brick stadium seating 6,000, tennis courts and outdoor track and OPRFH and athletic equipment representing an investment of \$1.5 million that rival many colleges." The superintendent said she says to get all of the student's health work five times per week to turn out graduates with sound minds and bodies. Young men and women should be equipped for all the responsibilities and tax of an industrial situation." That was the perspective of the community from 1927.

Dr. Moore asked the community to allow the Board of Education to make the decision for stakeholders and allow the high school to be its crown, the jewel of this community. The Board of Education will not turn away from this voting decision.

Adjournment

At 9:22 p.m., Dr. Moore moved to adjourn the Special Board Meeting; seconded by Mr. Cofsky. A voice vote resulted in the motion carried.

Dr. Jackie Moore
President

Jennifer Cassell
Secretary