

**Minutes of the Board of Education
Flossmoor School District 161, Cook County, Illinois
Levy Hearing and Board of Education Meeting
December 14, 2009**

President Dreyfuss called the hearing for the 2009 Levy to order at 7:35 p.m. in the Normandy Villa School conference room, 41 E. Elmwood Drive, Chicago Heights, Illinois.

Roll call verified that there was a quorum of the Board present with the following members present as listed below:

Present

Mr. Arnold Crater
Mrs. Christine Marks
Mr. Ronald Moore
Mrs. Timijanel Odom, via teleconference
Mr. John Simmons
Mr. Thomas Sifner
Dr. David Dreyfuss

Staff members present:

Dr. Donna C. Joy, Superintendent
Dr. Rebecca Elish, Director of Learning and Instruction
Mr. Joseph Martin, Director of Operations
Dr. Susan Pingitore, Associate Superintendent for Administrative Services
Ms. Deborah Pitts, Director of Instructional Technology
Ms. Nancy Wilson, Director of Special Education
Mrs. Cathy Perino, Secretary to the Superintendent and Board of Education

Others present:

Dr. Vanessa Atkins, Karen Brown, Bruce Brozynski, Jennifer Camilleri, Bob Pinciak, Venus Smith, Lynn Westerlund, Justin Petrarca, John Fester, staff, and community members.

2009 Levy Public Hearing

Dr. Susan Pingitore presented the fiscal 2009 levy payable in 2010. The notice of the public hearing was published December 2 in the Southtown Star newspaper. The state law requires school districts to comply with Truth in Taxation Laws. She said the District annually publishes a black-bordered legal notice in the newspaper even though this notice is only required when a levy increases by more than 5 percent from the previous year's levy.

Dr. Pingitore said the amount of the levy was based on the 8.2% percent increase in equalized assessed valuation from last year. The levy is based on

the present EAV of \$559,249,160 with an assumption that next year's EAV will include \$6,000,000 in new growth. Dr. Pingitore said it is unlikely that there will be \$6,000,000 in new growth, but basing the levy on that amount is prudent to assure the District does not leave money on the table which cannot be recaptured in future levies. She said that since each levy is based on the previous year's levy because of the property tax cap this is an important consideration.

Dr. Pingitore described the property tax cycle in Illinois, school funding in Illinois, and revenue sources for District 161. The State of Illinois does not provide much funding for schools, and therefore, District 161 like many other suburban school districts is heavily dependent upon property taxes to fund the educational needs of students. Illinois now ranks 50th in the U.S. in amount of school funding provided by state revenues. On average, states throughout the country provide an average of 51 percent of funds for education. However, Illinois provides only 30 percent on a state-wide level, far less than the national average.

The history of the District's assessed valuation was discussed.

This year the consumer price index for purposes of establishing the levy is .10 percent. This figure was established by the State Department of Revenue in January. Dr. Pingitore said the CPI for next year's levy would be announced in January 2010.

The proposed 2009 tax levy breakdowns are as follows:

Educational	\$15,310,000
Operations & Maintenance	\$ 2,600,000
Transportation	\$ 700,000
Municipal Retirement	\$ 0
Social Security	\$ 800,000
Liability Insurance (Tort)	\$ 800,000
Special Education	\$ 0
Working Cash	\$ 250,000
Life Safety	\$ <u>0</u>
Total	\$20,460,000

Mr. Crater questioned the status of grant writing in the District. He wants to make sure the District is also focusing on other sources of revenue.

Dr. Pingitore stated because of the low CPI, if there were no new growth in property, the District's estimated additional revenue would be less than \$20,000. Three million dollars in new growth would be a revenue increase of \$124,000.

There were no public comments at the hearing. Dr. Dreyfuss closed the levy hearing was at 7:55 p.m.

Audience to Visitors

Board President Dreyfuss asked if there was anyone wishing to address the Board on non-agenda items.

Maggie Bachus, Western Avenue parent, echoed Mr. Crater's question regarding the status of grant writing in the District. Dr. Joy indicated the District receives state and federal grants as well as continuing to seek additional sources of grant money. For example, the District recently received ARRA grant money from the Federal government. In addition, the District has been in contact with a retired individual from Homewood-Flossmoor School District 233 to assist the District with any upcoming grant writing. Dr. Elish added she scans the Gates foundation and technology grants for any opportunities. She added many times the District does not qualify for a grant because it does not have the right criteria i.e. demographics. Also, later in the meeting the administration will discuss a grant through the Illinois State Board of Education whereby the District could potentially receive additional federal funds under the ARRA program known as Race to the Top.

John Simmons suggested the administration update the Board members quarterly at a Committee of the Whole meeting regarding the status of grants in the District.

Mrs. Bachus also inquired about the status of computers for each teacher in the District as well as well publicity in the newspapers. Debra Pitts, Director of Instructional Technology, responded the District is following the Technology Plan, which increases computers at the buildings and laptop carts will be updated at elementary levels as well as Parker junior High school. Dr. Pingitore commented that press releases are sent to the Southtown Star on a regular basis. Board members asked community members to write to the Southtown's editor and let them know they would like to read more about their community.

The District's chain of command was discussed. If a community member has a concern or question, they should start with the teacher, who is the best resource, then contact the building principal. If attention is still needed, contact the administration and lastly, contact the Board of Education.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Joy shared the District's website will be getting a new look in the new year. Deb Pitts and the technology staff are redesigning the website to be more user friendly. The website is still under construction, but will soon be ready for viewing.

Dr. Joy stated the principals will present their School Improvement Plans later in the meeting; however, 2009 school report cards are posted on the District's website.

Dr. Joy shared the District hosted a parent workshop on Reading. Dr. Kathleen Doyle was the presenter. The parents in attendance enjoyed the presentation as well as the reading games and materials they received. A second parent workshop will be held on January 12 on mathematics. The facilitator will be Sharon Rak. All are invited.

Dr. Joy shared it is important to develop students of character. Our children participate in many activities that support the development of good character such as citizenship, responsibility, and caring. The following activities were highlighted: Flossmoor Hills is sponsoring their second annual food drive. Students are asked to demonstrate the pillar of CARING by bringing in non-perishable food items to help those in need during this holiday season.

Heather Hill students and faculty are taking part in The Respond Now drive. Respond Now is a United Way agency that provides emergency assistance to those in need. Families are also provided with groceries for Christmas dinner. Serena Hills students, in connection with their PTO, held a Food Drive, which provided families in the Serena Hills area with food and grocery gift cards. Students will also be collecting lotions, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, and lotions for PADS.

Western Avenue students participated in the Village of Flossmoor's Winterfest. Students will be collecting nonperishable food items to benefit people in need as well as participate in the PADS program. Parker Junior High held their second annual Hopes for Hope on December 5. Students had the opportunity to shoot free throws and/or play in three on three basketball tournaments. This event helps to raise money for children who have been orphaned by HIV and AIDS. To date, Parker's event raised \$1,278.32.

The following consent items were presented for approval:

Approval of Minutes

- Regular Board of Education Meeting – November 9, 2009
- Executive Session – November 9, 2009

A motion was made by Mrs. Marks seconded by Mr. Sifner to approve the consent Agenda regarding minutes as amended.

Voice Vote:

Aye: Odom, Moore, Simmons, Marks, Sifner, Dreyfuss

Nay: None

Abstain: Crater

Motion Carried.

Approval of Personnel

A motion was made by Mr. Moore seconded by Mr. Crater to approve the consent Agenda regarding personnel as amended.

Roll Call Vote:

Aye: Crater, Odom, Simmons, Sifner, Moore, Marks, Dreyfuss

Nay: None

Motion Carried.

Approval of Business

- Approval of gifts from The O'Toole Family – CHARACTER COUNTS! Materials

A motion was made by Mr. Moore seconded by Mrs. Marks to approve the consent Agenda regarding business. The Board members thanked The O'Toole Family for their generous gifts to the District.

Voice Vote:

Aye: Marks, Moore, Simmons, Odom, Crater, Sifner, Dreyfuss

Nay: None

Motion Carried.

Approval of Bills/Payroll

A motion was made by Mrs. Marks seconded by Mr. Sifner to approve the bills for the month ending December 2009, in the amount of \$1,040,103.95.

Roll Call Vote:

Aye: Simmons, Odom, Marks, Crater, Sifner, Moore, Dreyfuss

Nay: None

Motion Carried.

A motion was made by Mrs. Marks seconded by Mr. Sifner to approve the payroll for the month ending November 2009, in the amount of \$1,481,306.11.

Roll Call Vote:

Aye: Moore, Marks, Odom, Crater, Sifner, Simmons, Dreyfuss

Nay: None

Motion Carried.

Approval of 2009 Tax Levy Resolutions

A motion was made by Mrs. Marks seconded by Mr. Moore to approve the levy for tax year 2009 (payable 2010) in the amount of \$20,460,000. The levy was reviewed at the October 26 Committee of the Whole meeting.

Mr. Crater requested that in the future more in-depth justification for levy increases be presented to the Board members.

Roll Call Vote:

Aye: Odom, Marks, Simmons, Sifner, Moore, Dreyfuss

Nay: Crater

Motion Carried.

Approval of Summer School 2010

A motion was made by Mr. Crater seconded by Mr. Moore to approve the continuation of the District's summer program for students in kindergarten through the eighth grade in the area of skill building.

Ninety-minute classes will be offered in language arts and mathematics for six weeks. In addition, classes will be offered to junior high students who are required to take social studies and/or science. The District will continue to offer enrichment classes.

Roll Call Vote:

Aye: Marks, Odom, Moore, Crater, Sifner, Simmons, Dreyfuss

Nay: None

Motion Carried.

Approval of School Improvement Plans

A motion was made by Mr. Moore seconded by Mr. Sifner to approve the School Improvement Plans for Flossmoor Hills, Heather Hill, Serena Hills, Western Avenue, and Parker Junior High School.

The principals provided an overview of their SIPs in a short presentation to the Board, and then responded to the Board's questions. School Improvement Plans will be placed on the District's website.

Voice Vote:

Aye: Moore, Sifner, Simmons, Odom, Marks, Crater, Dreyfuss

Nay: None

Motion Carried.

Approval of Serena Hills' Paving Bid

A motion was made by Mr. Simmons seconded by Mrs. Marks to award year two of the six-year paving plan to Chicago Heights Construction Company as the lowest responsible bidder.

Roll Call Vote:

Aye: Sifner, Odom, Moore, Crater, Marks, Simmons, Dreyfuss

Nay: None

Motion Carried.

Consideration of Memorandum of Understanding for Race to the Top

A motion was made by Mr. Simmons seconded by Mr. Moore to authorize the Superintendent to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Illinois State Board of Education. The District has the potential to receive additional federal funds under the ARRA Program known as Race to the Top Grant.

Voice Vote:

Aye: Odom, Moore, Simmons, Marks, Crater, Sifner, Dreyfuss

Nay: None

Motion Carried.

Executive session

A motion was made by Mrs. Odom seconded by Mr. Sifner to go into executive session to discuss matters relating to personnel 5ILCS 120/2 (c)(1) and student discipline 5ILCS 120/2 (c)(9).

Voice Vote:

Aye: Moore, Marks, Odom, Crater, Sifner, Simmons, Dreyfuss

Nay: None

Motion Carried.

The Board of Education went into executive session at 10:00 p.m.

Return to Open Session

A motion was made by Mrs. Odom seconded by Mr. Sifner to return to open session.

Voice Vote:

Aye: Marks, Moore, Simmons, Crater, Odom, Sifner, Dreyfuss

Nay: None

Motion Carried.

The Board of Education returned to open session at 11:02 p.m.

Approval of Administrative Salaries and Non-Scheduled Support Staff

A motion was made by Mrs. Marks seconded by Mr. Moore to approve the salary increases for administrators and non-scheduled support staff.

Roll Call Vote:

Aye: Simmons, Odom, Marks, Moore, Crater, Sifner, Dreyfuss

Nay: None

Motion Carried.

Approval of Retirement/Resignation Agreement

A motion was made by Mr. Simmons seconded by Mrs. Marks to approve the retirement/resignation agreement of employee #1105.

Roll Call Vote:

Aye: Odom, Moore, Marks, Simmons, Crater, Sifner, Dreyfuss

Nay: None

Motion Carried.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Mrs. Odom seconded by Mr. Sifner to adjourn the Board of Education meeting.

Voice Vote:

Aye: Crater, Simmons, Odom, Sifner, Marks, Moore, Dreyfuss

Nay: None

Motion Carried.

The Board of Education meeting adjourned at 11:05 p.m.

Dr. David Dreyfuss, President

Ronald E. Moore, Secretary