

**Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting  
of the Board of Education  
Flossmoor School District 161  
January 25, 2010**

President, Dr. David Dreyfuss called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Board Clerk, Cathy Perino, took roll call. The following members were present for the meeting:

**Present**

Mr. Arnold Crater, arrived at 7:15 p.m.  
Mrs. Christine Marks  
Mr. Ronald A. Moore  
Mrs. Timijanel Odom  
Mr. Thomas Sifner  
Mr. John Simmons  
Dr. David Dreyfuss

**Others Present**

Dr. Donna C. Joy, Superintendent  
Dr. Susan Pingitore, Associate Superintendent of Administrative Services  
Dr. Rebecca Elish, Director of Learning and instruction  
Mr. Joseph Martin, Director of Operations  
Crystal Conley, FEA President  
Cathy Perino, Board Clerk

**Bond Presentation by Elizabeth Hennessey**

Ms. Elizabeth Hennessey was asked to speak to the Board of Education members regarding the District's future bonding power. Ms. Elizabeth Hennessey of William Blair & Company presented the Board members with a market update.

Ms. Hennessey updated the Board members on legislative and financial options for the District. She discussed Public Act 96-0501 – Debt Service Extension Base that started in 2009. The debt service extension base must be increased each year by the lesser of 5% or the CPI for the prior calendar year. This will allow school districts to issue a greater amount of non-referendum bonds including life safety bonds, working cash fund bonds and funding bonds within their respective statutory limits. Because of the difficulty of estimating the CPI into the future, issuers must pledge additional funds to the repayment of the bonds just in case the CPI is less than anticipated. She stated the CPI for the 2010 levy year would be 2.70%. She shared one concern of this public act is that many agencies will not depend on the County Clerk's office to abate any levy that is in excess of the CPI increase in future years. She shared a procedure that would help counter this concern. School districts could

approve a supplemental bond resolution in addition to its operating levy annually. William Blair & Co. has decided to refund their FSA insured bonds issued in 1997 in its entirety to take advantage of this new state law.

Mr. Crater arrived.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was discussed and it was noted that the qualified small issuer limit was raised from \$10,000,000 to \$30,000,000 per year for bonds issued in 2009 and 2010. This allows an issuer to designate up to \$30,000,000 as qualified tax-exempt obligations. Ms. Hennessey discussed several bond options. Build America bonds, which currently results in lower net interest cost than traditional tax-exempt bonds; tax credit bonds are bonds that pay the investor a tax credit instead of interest. However, the market is not really developed for this type of bond and would require a small supplemental coupon; and qualified school construction bonds, tax credit bonds issued for construction purposes, rehabilitation, or repair.

Lastly, Ms. Hennessey shared an overview of William Blair & Company and mentioned they are celebrating their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

A discussion took place regarding what bonds can and cannot be used for. The bonding process was discussed and the fact that it would take between four to six weeks. A referendum notice must be published in local papers 30 days in advance.

Mr. Sifner clarified that as of the 2013-2014 school year the District will no longer be paying interest on its 1997 bond obligations.

Mr. Moore questioned how the bonds would be purchased either by negotiated or competitive sale.

The Board thanked Ms. Hennessey for her presentation.

### **French Adoption Information**

Dr. Elish reviewed with the Board of Education members that the District offers the Homewood-Flossmoor High School first year French course for students at Parker Junior High. The students take the first half of the course in seventh grade and the second half of the course in eighth grade.

The French 1 course offered at Parker utilizes the same textbook as the French 1 course taught at HF High School. Over the last several months, the HF Foreign Language Department and French teachers from District 153 and District 161 reviewed and selected a new textbook, *Bien dit!*. Published by Holt, Reinhart and Winston for French 1. The estimated copy for the new

French 1 textbook purchase would be \$6,900. Funds have been allocated to cover this purchase.

The District has secured approximately \$10,000 in free complimentary materials. The student textbook and teacher edition are accessible online and the teacher edition will be supported with a CD ROM as well.

Board members were asked to direct any additional questions regarding this issue to Dr. Joy.

Mr. Crater inquired about the online textbooks. Dr. Elish stated depending on what kind of student the child is the textbook or online version really is a family choice.

- *Recommendation: The Board recommends moving approval of the French 1 textbook to the March 8 Board of Education meeting pending Homewood-Flossmoor High School's approval at their February Board of Education meeting.*

### **Technology Summit Update**

Deb Pitts, Director of Instructional Technology, shared with the Board of Education members that a technology summit was held on January 5. Teachers from all five schools and administrators participated in the summit. The purpose of the summit was to determine as a District what can be done to utilize technology more effectively and evident.

The Technology plan was reviewed. Ms. Pitts shared approximately 80 percent of the action steps to meet the goal of "Equitable Access to Technology for all Students and Staff" have been met or initiatives started. Personal computers as teacher workstations have replaced Citrix thin clients at three of the buildings. Laptops are being purchased, imaged, and deployed to replace out-dated systems. Classroom center laptops are ready for distribution to all five schools. Interactive whiteboards have been installed and are being utilized in 14 classrooms.

A committee has been formed to evaluate three web-based student management systems. This process will begin in February. A new Exchange server has been implemented allowing the District to move to web-based email. Deb Pitts shared she will be in contact with Homewood-Flossmoor High School regarding their student management system or ParentConnect program.

Ms. Pitts stated the next concentration of efforts would be on the Teacher Preparation and the Student Learning Action Plan. Future initiatives were discussed, which included Smartboard interactives, classroom websites, integrated classroom videos, and subscriptions to educational resources.

The Committee decided to modify the plan to include showcasing student work.

Mrs. Marks inquired who would be doing the wireless walk through. Ms. Pitts stated Mr. Charles Lay would be doing the walk through. She also suggested introducing Skype into the classrooms as well as video teaching lessons and placing them on the web for homebound students.

Dr. Joy shared that teachers are excited about the Smartboards and the student are engaged.

Mr. Crater stated now the District needs to add a PR piece as a tool within the learning process to show the community what the District is doing. He had a question regarding the wireless coverage and Ms. Pitts stated she has a meeting later this week to discuss that issue. She will be in contact with Mr. Crater once this meeting takes place.

Mrs. Odom suggested if time permits, putting together a quick time movie of the great things happening in the District in time for the February focus group meetings.

Crystal Conley mentioned a website TeacherTube.com, which would be a good resource to be used outside of the school day.

- *Recommendation: The Board thanked Deb Pitts for her presentation and Christine Marks would like to schedule a walk through to see the Smartboards in the classrooms. The Board of Education would like to see an update on modifications to the Technology Plan.*

### **Discussion Regarding Free Breakfast for Eligible Students**

Joe Martin, Director of Operations, shared with the Board of Education members that Flossmoor Hills and Serena Hills School now qualify for the State of Illinois Breakfast Program. Implementing this program will present major problems for the District, including the safety of our children and a large financial burden.

Mr. Martin discussed the option of requesting to be exempt from offering the breakfast program in our District. In addition, to the regular breakfast program, the additional summer breakfast program would present the same challenges and burden.

Mr. Martin shared some additional concerns such as students may be walking to school in the dark during the winter months, the before school program at Flossmoor Hills will be displaced due to the multi-purpose room being used for breakfast, additional refrigeration units will cause space problems as the District does not have food preparation areas. Also, the District would need to hire additional staff to accommodate our needs.

Mr. Martin stated that he has been in contact with Midlothian School District who was granted a waiver from participating in the State of Illinois Breakfast Program.

Mr. Martin discussed the District's hot lunch program and the fact that Ceres Food Group, Inc. continues to do an excellent job for the District. If the District were to become part of the Illinois Breakfast Program, the District would have to bid again its hot lunch program. This would be due to the fact that the District did not have a breakfast bid for the original bid. If the District is not successful in securing a waiver, the District would have to re-bid its hot lunch program.

- *Recommendation: The Board recommends moving forward the District's request for a waiver from participating in the required Breakfast Program and Summer Breakfast program to the consent agenda for the February 8, 2010 Board of Education meeting. .*

### **Update on Strategic Plan**

Dr. Joy shared with the Board members that letters were sent home this week via backpack inviting parents to the February 4 focus groups at the elementary schools. Letters inviting the junior high parents were mailed with the student report cards. Staff members were also notified of focus groups that will be held in each building on February 2.

Dr. Joy reiterated that Dr. Dreyfuss would attend the focus group meeting at Heather Hill, Tom Sifner would attend the focus group meeting at Flossmoor Hills, John Simmons, and Ron Moore would attend the meeting at Serena Hills, Timi Odom and Arnold Crater would attend the focus group meeting at Western Avenue, and Christine Marks, Timi Odom, and John Simmons would attend the Parker Junior High focus group meeting on February 9. Because more than 3 members of the Board will be in attendance at the February 9 meeting, the meeting will need to be posted.

The Board requested copies of the draft strategic plan survey at the February 8<sup>th</sup> Board of Education meeting.

The Board thanked Dr. Joy for this update.

Mr. Moore inquired if there was an update regarding the gift that was tabled at the last Board of Education meeting. Yes, the t-shirts did have the company's logo on it so they were returned.

### **Adjournment**

A motion was made by Mrs. Marks seconded by Mr. Moore to adjourn the Committee of the Whole meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Voice Vote:

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

Nay: None

Motion Carried.

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Dr. David Dreyfuss, President

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Ronald E. Moore, Secretary