

**Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting  
of the Board of Education  
Flossmoor School District 161  
February 22, 2010**

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

Roll call was taken and the following members were present for the meeting:

**Present**

Mr. Arnold Crater, arrived at 7:06 p.m.  
Mrs. Christine Marks  
Mr. Ronald A. Moore, arrived at 7:15 p.m.  
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  
Ms. Deborah Pitts, Director of Instructional Technology  
Ms. Louise King, Legacy Professionals LLP  
Mr. Rob Grossi, Bloom Township Treasurer  
Mrs. Cathy Perino, Board Clerk

**Visitors**

See attached sign up sheet

**Presentation on District Audit by Louise King, CPA, Legacy Professionals LLP.**

The District conducts an annual compliance audit as required by law. The results of the audit are compiled and sent to the Regional Office of Education and the Illinois State Board of Education. Ms. Louise King of Legacy Professionals, LLP presented the audit for the 2008-2009 school year. Ms. King reviewed the highlights of the audit by page.

- Page 3a – general fund, working cash fund, and fire prevention and safety fund are considered the major funds for the year ended June 30, 2009.
- Page 3c: Government-wide financial statements, which summarize all assets and liabilities of the District.
  - ▶ Assets (including fixed assets/cash):     \$23,081,582
  - Liabilities                                     2,375,298
  - Net assets at the end of 2008-2009     39,455,911
- Ms. King pointed out a new footnote found on Page 28 – Note 10 – Other Post employment Benefits.

Ms. King next discussed the Management letter. She stated that there were no weaknesses, all adjustments were usual, and there were no changes in the District's accounting policies. She mentioned a footnote has again been added because of the

standard entitled Statement on Auditing Standards No. 112 had been added to the District's annual financial report a years ago. SAS No. 112 requires auditors to identify an entity's inability to produce complete financial statements including proper footnote disclosure as an internal control deficiency.

Lastly, the audit communication letter was discussed as well as GASB Statement No. 45, which requires school districts to disclose liability other than pension and inquired about any promises made by the District.

Board members were asked to share any questions with either Dr. Joy or Dr. Dreyfuss.

The Board of Education thanked Ms. King for her presentation.

- *Recommendation: The Board of Education recommends moving this item for approval at its March 8, 2010 meeting the financial audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008, as presented by Legacy Professionals LLP.*

**Presentation on Annual Investment Report by Rob Grossi, Bloom Township Treasurer.**

Mr. Robert G. Grossi, Bloom Township Treasurer, presented the annual investment report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009. Copies of the Annual Investment report were distributed to the Board members prior to tonight's meeting. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, school District 161 received \$678,000 in interest from its pooled fund balances.

Mr. Grossi discussed the four major categories of investments in the pool; certificates of deposit, commercial paper, bank and corporate notes, and government and government agency guaranteed. He shared the changes in the composition of the pool's portfolio and the need for more stable rates. Commercial paper, which was the pool's primary investment for short-term liquidity, is no longer used.

Mr. Grossi noted that because of the current state of the economy, his strategy is to maintain liquidity and preserve capital with very low risk. Most of the District's investments are being placed in certificates of deposits, with the investment amount per bank being below the FDIC insured maximum levels. This type of investment type provides the best return with the lowest risk.

Another part of the investment strategy has been to maintain higher levels of funds in the District's money market accounts. This is necessary for two reasons. First, since a larger portion of the District's portfolio is invested in CDs, the pool must maintain a higher level of liquid investments. Next, he noted that the state has been more than 120 days late with restricted grant revenues and fall real estate tax revenue from Cook County, which used to be due on September 1, may not be received until February 1 of this upcoming fall tax collection. If this is the case, school districts will need to operate from August through January without receiving any tax dollars. Because of

this, school districts should have three months of fund balances in reserve. He commended our school district because we have healthy fund balances (approximately 7 to 8 months of fund balances). The school districts with one to two months of reserve will be the districts in trouble and those school districts will be forced to borrow off of future taxes.

Mr. Simmons asked how soon after the fiscal year could the Board receive this report. Mr. Grossi responded the report could be presented in September or October; however, the allocation of interest for the District may not be included in the report at that time.

Dr. Pingitore stated when the PMA financial model is updated she is using .5% for future interest rates.

The Board members thanked Rob Grossi for his presentation.

- *Recommendation: The Board of Education recommends moving this item forward to the March 8, 2010 Board of Education meeting and placing the approval on the consent agenda.*

#### **Review of 2010-2011 school calendar**

Dr. Joy shared that the administration begins development of the 2010-2011 in January or February. The 2010-2011 calendar is parallel with past calendars. The calendar is developed according to the guidelines of the Illinois State Board of Education and the Flossmoor Education Association (FEA) contract. This draft calendar reflects 187 days per our teachers' agreement, and 174 instructional days. The calendar will reflect 186 days for the 2011-2012 year per the teachers' contract. Dr. Joy also collaborates with the superintendents of Homewood-Flossmoor High School District 233 and Homewood District 153.

The 2010-2011 school year is scheduled to begin with a half-day session for students on Wednesday, August 25. Two early release days are scheduled on September 24, and February 1 for School Improvement activities. The calendar also includes five emergency days. The last day of school attendance will be Wednesday, June 7 if no emergency days are used and Wednesday, June 14 if all five days are needed. There are four days for Parent-Teacher Conferences, two in the fall and two in the spring. There are four institute days scheduled, which include two days prior to the first day of school. In addition, institute days are scheduled for October 8, and November 2. Dr. Joy noted that SPEED is using its ARRA funds to hold a joint institute day on October 8 for all of its member districts.

Mrs. Marks had some concerns regarding the calendar. She would like to see the District apply for a waiver to conduct classes on Casimir Pulaski's birthday in lieu of a

legal school holiday. She believes the students would be better served by conducting classes. She also questioned the number of ½ days.

Dr. Dreyfuss stated the District has requested waivers in the past for Casimir Pulaski's day. The District decided to observe the holiday due to the fact that school districts 153 and 233 also observe the holiday. Dr. Dreyfuss asked the Board of Education members to think about this issue. A motion can be added to the agenda at the next Board of Education meeting.

- *Recommendation: The Board of Education recommends moving this item forward to the March 8, 2010 Board of Education meeting.*

### **Review of Student fees**

Dr. Pingitore shared with the Board of Education members that there would be no increase in the textbook fees this year; however, the technology fee is being rolling into the student book fees. The administration is asking for a \$7.00 increase in the Outdoor Education fee in order to cover room and board and activity fees of the camp.

The fee for students in Grades K-5 would be \$155 and the fee for Grades 6-8 would be \$190. However, the fee would remain the same as the fees for the 2009-2010 school year for returning students who participate in mail-in registration or students who register during kindergarten registration in April. These fees would be \$120 (K-5) and \$155 (6-8).

Mr. Crater inquired if the District breaks even with this District program. Dr. Pingitore stated the Board may wish to look at the Outdoor Education Program in depth.

Dr. Pingitore distributed a survey of school district fees as well as fee history to the Board members.

- *Recommendation: The Board recommends moving approval of fees for the 2010-2011 school year forward to the March 8, 2010 Board of Education meeting.*

### **Discussion of Fee Waiver**

Dr. Pingitore shared with the Board of Education members a revised model policy regarding Waiver of Students Fees from the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB). This policy meets the requirements of a new state law (P.A. 96-360), which permits school districts to establish their own process for verifying students' eligibility for fee waivers.

Dr. Pingitore stated this revised policy would enable the District to verify income for students who request a fee waiver. Currently, students qualify for a waiver when they meet the federal guidelines for the free lunch program or other extenuating circumstances. However, the federal guidelines restrict school districts to verifying only 3 percent of the approval meal applications each year. The District's attorney John Fester reviewed this policy.

Mrs. Odom questioned what guidelines the District would use for the verifying process. Dr. Pingitore responded the District would still follow the federal income guidelines for verifying students' eligibility for fee waivers.

Mr. Simmons inquired if there was a cost associated with the District doing its own process. The administration responded it will handle this responsible in-house.

- *Recommendation: The Board of Education recommends moving this item forward to the March 8, 2010 Board of Education meeting.*

### **Discussion of SET**

Dr. Elish reviewed with members of the Board that the Student Enrichment Time (SET) program was recently revisited. The District has held two meetings to discuss modifications to SET, which were developed by a committee of teachers and co-facilitated by Lynn Westerlund, and Dr. Elish. Two areas of modifications discussed were scheduling and content.

Dr. Elish shared the four SET modifications regarding scheduling are: 1) no longer six week rotation; 2) SET will begin the Tuesday after Labor Day; 3) time length – currently 3 or 6 weeks; change to 2 week sections. Student may have additional 2 weeks, if needed; and 4) teacher or teams - grade levels may assist other teachers to lend support as needed. The content area was also modified from reading and math to now include math, language arts (which encompasses reading, writing, vocabulary, and spelling). These modifications are tailored more to the student's needs, which would allow greater flexibility. The second content modification was to offer social skills. The social piece would allow social workers to assist students with skill type activities. Also, speech pathologists can offer language and vocabulary activities to students.

Dr. Elish stated the committee would like to begin these modifications after Spring Break.

Dr. Dreyfuss clarified that only students who need SET will participate. Teachers are determining the students based upon PLC discussions, grade level meetings, which students need skills and how the District can support these students for two weeks. NWEA and Aims web are also keys assessment tools. The communication piece was discussed.

Mr. Sifner requested a copy of the information summary regarding the SET modifications Dr. Elish discussed.

Mrs. Marks questioned if the SET program only targets students below grade level. Dr. Elish responded that teachers suggest students that need extra support at any end of the spectrum.

Mr. Crater asked how the social skills piece would be achieved. The administration responded the District has a curriculum in place designed to help students.

- *Recommendation: The Board of Education request written update of the SET modifications and place on the March 8, 2010 agenda for further discussion.*

### **Discussion of Phonics Adoption**

Dr. Elish shared with the Board of Education a subcommittee comprised of language arts curriculum committee members have been involved in a K-3 phonics program adoption process from fall 2009 through the winter. After the committee evaluated programs from several publishing companies, the subcommittee selected two companies for K-3 elementary phonic teachers of evaluate.

The K-3 phonics program selected was *The Wright Skills* by Wright Group. The estimated cost to purchase the new K-3 phonics program is \$55,000. The District has appropriated funds for this purchase.

A training session on the new phonics program and support materials is scheduled in May for all K-3 teachers. Implementation will begin with the 2010-2011 school year.

Mr. Moore inquired if the District will be purchasing any copies in Spanish. Yes, Spanish versions will be purchased for the ELL students.

The Board of Education members thanked Dr. Elish for her report.

- *Recommendation: The Board of Education recommends moving this item forward to the March 8, 2010 Board of Education meeting.*

### **Review of Upcoming Work Projects**

Mr. Martin shared with the Board of Education five projects to be completed in 2010. Total cost of the five projects is approximately \$71,500.

Three projects were discussed for Western Avenue. Those projects are as follows: main entry configuration at Western Avenue; brick repair of the Bell Tower; and installation of the key fob system for exterior doors.

Lockers would be refinished at Serena Hills. Since pavement work is being done at Serena Hills in the summer of 2010 causing a move of summer school it would be a good time to address the lockers. This would finish major work at Serena Hills and not interfere with future summer school placement. Mr. Martin also proposed a plan to repaint and repair the Flossmoor Hills and sixth grade lockers at Parker in 2011 and Western Avenue's lockers in 2012.

Finally, like Western Avenue, Heather Hill has a similar safety issue. Mr. Martin proposed changing the door hardware enabling the gym door to lock from the outside.

Mr. Martin stated the total cost of the five projects would be approximately \$71,500. The money could come from the \$163,892 under budget costs for Phase 2 of the paving project and would not negatively effect the PMA financial model.

Mr. Crater questioned Chicago Heights Construction Company as doing a majority of the District's construction work. The administration noted Henry Brothers, Talsman,

Acu-paving are just a few of the companies who have done construction work for the District in recent years.

Mrs. Marks questioned why the District uses lockers in the elementary buildings. She inquired if there would be a cost involved if the lockers were removed and replaced with cubbies or another type of option.

Mrs. Odom inquired as to why Heather Hill does not have lockers. It was stated that when Heather Hill was constructed as an "open" school in the 1970's there was not enough room to install lockers. Dr. Dreyfuss stated the administration can look into cost reconfiguration at Heather Hill.

- *Recommendation: The Board of Education recommends moving this item forward to the March 8, 2010 Board of Education meeting. The administration was asked to investigate the cost involved with removing lockers and replacing with another option when looking into the 2012 project at Western Avenue.*

### **Review of Bus Lease**

Mr. Martin shared with the Board of Education members that the District's two-leased busses will expire in July 2010.

Mr. Martin discussed engaging in a one-year lease for the busses with an option to extend for an additional year.

Mr. Martin distributed a copy of a May 27, 2008 memo to the Board members.

Mr. Moore questioned the mileage used for the two busses. Mr. Martin stated the District would remain with the 18,000 mileage allowance for the year.

Mr. Moore inquired if these busses contain seat belts. Mr. Martin believes there are due to transporting of our special education students, but he would get back to Mr. Moore regarding this. After the report, Mr. Martin checked and confirmed that three seat belts per seat are available on the District's current busses as will be the case with the new leased busses.

The Board of Education thanked Mr. Martin for his report.

- *Recommendation: The Board of Education recommends moving this item forward to the March 8, 2010 Board of Education meeting.*

### **Review of FEA Request for Transportation Bids for a Change in School Day.**

Dr. Joy shared that during negotiations the teachers wanted a change in the starting time changed to 7:50 a.m. and dismissal changed to 2:30 p.m.

Mr. Sifner shared his concerns regarding this matter and the fact that the Board has not been shown any concrete data that movement of the school day is in best interest of the learning of the students. He believes this is extremely premature. Mr. Sifner

thinks this should be undertaken as part of the District long-term strategic planning process.

Mr. Simmons asked when the district's current transportation contract expires. The District is in its first year of a three-year contract with Positive Connections. He also inquired how many combinations can we include in our request for school day changes.

Mrs. Marks echoed Mr. Sifner concerns and does not believe this request is community driven. She also questioned the timing of the request. She reiterated the District is currently involved in a strategic plan with a tentative proposal being brought before the Board in July. She suggested letting the long-range planning process play out, which suggests that if there were a change in the school day that it could not occur until 2011-2012.

Dr. Dreyfuss stated that since the change in school day issue could not be resolved for the 2009-2010 school year, the BOE negotiating team suggested the faculty form a committee and submit a proposal to the members of the Board and Superintendent.

It was discussed and decided this matter would be discussed in alignment with the District's Strategic planning process. The process helps to prioritize items so the District can provide the most value for the money on the District's prioritized items. Dr. Joy believes the FEA operated on good faith in preparing this proposal.

Dr. Dreyfuss mentioned he is receipt of a letter from the music department regarding this matter.

Mr. Crater asked what problem is the District solving by changing the school day. Dr. Joy shared the FEA negotiation team said this would accommodate students who left school at 2:00 p.m. for various extra-curricular activities and reduce the number of Parker teachers who had to sub for the coaches that left with their students. Mr. Crater's concern is the cost of any changes in transportation.

Kathy Fotopoulos, FEA secretary, thanked the Board and stated this proposal is just the first step. Nothing can be done until a conversation is started regarding the conflicts with the current start and end time of the school day.

Dr. Dreyfuss stated at least the Board could proceed to accept and look into this request.

### **Adjournment**

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

Voice Vote:

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

Nay: None

Motion Carried.

The Board of Education meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

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Dr. David Dreyfuss, President

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Ronald E. Moore, Secretary