

WEST NORTHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT 31
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Per SP2135 the District 31 Board Meeting was held electronically and in-person in the
Field Learning Center, 3131 Techny Road,
August 25, 2020, 7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by President Melissa Choo Valentinas at 7:05pm.

ROLL CALL

Board Members:

Present:

Melissa Choo Valentinas	Virtual - left meeting at 8:37pm
Laura Greenberg	Virtual
Daphne Frank	Virtual
Robert Resis	In-Person
Jeffrey Steres	In-Person
Maria Vasilopoulos	In-Person
Nancy Hammer	In-Person

District Administration Present:

Dr. Erin K. Murphy, Superintendent of Schools
Mrs. Catherine M. Lauria, Asst Superintendent Finance & Operations/CSBO
Dr. April Miller, Principal Field Middle School
Mrs. Shaton Wolverton, Principal Winkelman School
Dr. Janine Gruhn, Director of Special Education
Mr. Nino Alvarez, Winkelman Assistant Principal
Mrs. Becky Mathison, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction

A quorum of the Board was confirmed by President, Melissa Choo Valentinas

ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

- Superintendent Erin Murphy stated that the enrollment report will be a part of the presentation on the school reopening update and status report.

READING OF COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

- None

RECOGNITION OF AUDIENCE

Superintendent Erin Murphy read the following comments from the audience, received via the google form.

Dana & Foster Elliott

Dear Dr. Murphy, Board of Education, Dr. Miller, Mr. Cooper, Ms. Wolverton, Mr. Alvarez and all the staff at Field and Winkelman, Thank you so much for all the time and effort you put into planning both in-person learning and remote learning. The first two days have been a huge success and we can't thank you enough!!! We are so grateful to all of you!

Halima and Onrie Kompan

Hello! We are beyond grateful that the school is offering both safe in-person and rich e-learning opportunities for our community. Just wanted to share some comments based on the first 2 days of e-learning for Winkelman elementary students (3rd grade in particular).

The homeroom teachers are dealing with a lot of pressure right now, but are ultimately doing a much better job of engaging students compared to the spring e-learning process. There is a great improvement despite some technical issues (hopefully, those will be figured out within next couple of weeks).

Unfortunately, sessions for special classes (PE and music, in particular) are disengaging at this moment. These co-curricular activities are meant to enrich and give students a break between academics. They can be presented in a much more creative way rather than with a list of instructions of sit-ups and push-ups and pre-recorded videos for all grade levels at the same time. We understand that there are resource issues and instructors for these activities may not be available for full synchronized session, but even the pre-recorded videos can be more informative, creative and interesting. Ultimately, students need to be engaged otherwise they aren't learning.

Also, these co-curricular sessions take place in the morning after attendance/SEL seems to distract the students from focusing on their academics. Could you please consider revising the schedule to move co-curricular activities to break up the monotony of the day, or towards the end of the day, and definitely make them more engaging and interesting.

Lastly, is it possible to have a googlemeet extended for 10-15 mins after the flex time (or somewhere else during the day) for kids social interaction? Today when the teacher was booted out of the meeting or something, kids had such a great time chatting, they miss each other and they need that unsupervised (or slightly supervised) communication window

Thank you!

AJ & Taz Virani

Transitions between remote sessions are in need of some help, particularly for the young ones. While we're waiting for the much anticipated breakout feature to be added to Google Meet (under development), we should consider having instructors jump in/out of meetings rather than the students. As parents of 2nd and 3rd graders, we are constantly scrambling to find meeting invites/passwords and adhering to the overall schedule - let's eliminate all the virtual noise for our students to allow them to focus on learning.

The other things I would love to see, have an assistant/moderator in all virtual classes. Ideally this person would spend the entire school day with our students (minus lunch & recess). They would be responsible to answer the plethora of questions our students have, keep things moving to schedule, ensure the completion of any assignment/activities/videos, engage students during the gaps where the students don't have face-time with their lead instructors, and also potentially provide tech support :)

Thanks for your time and the dedication to our district!

Chris and Terah Bozarth

Thank you! Thank you to the teachers and administration for a great first day. It is really clear how much planning and work the teachers are putting in to make the experience work for the kids and to also give them a sense of normalcy (as much as they can).

We are probably one of the only families who actually chose both in person and remote.

For in person, our 8th grader was glad to go to school and said the day felt fairly regular and her biggest complaint was humorously that she had to walk a few extra steps in to PE. Thanks to the 8th grade team for the good communication as well.

Also, we're aren't sure how logistically you made it work, but WOW to the class sizes. As a parent, knowing there are around 8-10 kids in each of her classes definitely made us feel like she was a bit more safe. Thank you.

As for remote, our 4th grader's teacher - Mrs. Alleya - has been great with the communication and even today making great adjustments from day one. Her emails late at night and early in the morning have not gone unnoticed. We appreciate that rather than diving into the prescribed schedule, she's gone above and beyond with synchronous time to set the kids up for success and build community with the kids.

We know there were glitches and hiccups yesterday, and there are sure to be more to come..... and maybe we will all still be remote sooner than later. But, for now - thank you for the positive first day and the hard work by administration and teachers.

PRESENTATION

Superintendent Erin Murphy gave the reopening presentation wherein she thanked the entire staff for the amazing work that was done to make the reopening happen. The PTO was appreciated for providing school supplies to all our students and the Education Foundation for providing PPE materials for staff.

The presentation highlighted the following:

- Dr. Doug Bolton presented at one of our Teacher Institute Days which was received with much positivity. Dr. Bolton spoke on strategies to support social, emotional learning through building resilience and school communities. The feedback from the staff was very positive and requested him to return for more sessions.
- Building based agenda items were covered during the Teacher Institute Days which included:
 - Building meetings

- Team meetings
- Student services meetings and collaboration
- Articulations
- Classroom set - up -virtual or in -person
- Social Emotional Learning

- Enrollment at Winkelman and Field were presented in detail which is in the presentation. Both schools are close to remote vs in-person percentages wherein they showed District 31 totals:
 - Total K-8 834
 - E-School 42%
 - In-Person 58%

- Successes were presented which included:
 - North Shore Transit - Bus Service
 - Quest Food Services
 - Technology
 - Routines and Schedules

- Opportunities
 - Consistency in parents self certifying students
 - Consistency in parents pre-ordering food and milk at Winkelman
 - Schedules and routines, maintaining enrollments
 - Technology
 - Substitutes

- Reviewed the test positivity rate for region 10 and reviewed the date for the two District’s zip codes, mitigation measures, adaptive pause, the metric guidance for local health departments to prompt discussion with school officials and what the next steps would be.

Superintendent Erin Murphy stated that this is a living document and will continue to change.

CONSENT AGENDA

Member Jeffrey Steres made a motion to approve items A-K. Member Maria Vasilopoulos seconded the motion.

Final Resolution:

Aye: Maria Vasilopoulos, Robert Resis, Nancy Hammer, Daphne Frank, Jeffrey Steres, Laura Greenberg, Melissa Choo Valentinas

Nay: None.

The motion passed 7:0.

ACTION ITEMS

Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations summarized the tentative budget for

2020-2021 school year wherein she stated that copies are available for public inspection and will be posted on the website once approved. A public hearing on said budget will be held on September 24, 2020 at 7:00pm.

The summary highlighted the following:

- Impact on COVID expenses
 - Additional costs of \$262,000 from March - Mid August.
- General tentative budget information.
 - Revenues also have been impacted from COVID
 - Property Taxes - late/ delinquent tax payments - a number of property owners in the community have not yet paid their property taxes. There are some refunds that we are working on to mitigate the effects or eliminate the impact.
 - State Reimbursements - we are still waiting for some state reimbursements from last year. Usually there are four, we received 2 payments last year. We are waiting to see how reimbursements are affected this year.
 - Early Retirements - helped reduce salary expenses; provided a buffer for the additional staff hired this year.
 - Consequential expenses and savings to be determined
 - Though we do not typically want to have these types of savings, we will experience some savings from not having after school and sport programs due to the COVID impact, which will offset some of the additional expenses needed for this year.
 - Yet to be determined are final expenses from the NSSSED tuition costs, final numbers on the Collective Bargaining Agreement, and other salary increases yet to be determined for FY21.
 - Additional staffing costs, materials and equipment purchases for high level cleaning/safety implementations, and meal costs affected the tentative budget
- The focus is mainly on operating funds which include the following funds:
 - Education
 - Operations and Maintenance
 - Transportation
 - Working Cash
- Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Catherine Lauria compared actual FY20 operating revenues to FY21 tentatively budgeted.
 - Property taxes are currently stated at a much higher level than prior year actuals as late or no payments, nor are refunds reflected in this number. Potential for more large tax refunds and late receipts are possible which will be reflected in the final. Report from Cook County showed numerous tax payments as unpaid to date.
 - CPPRT is reflected as 10% less receipts; these dollars are also used to

- help fund 1:1 devices, meaning those dollars are not reflected in the operating budget.
- State and Federal revenues are similar to prior year's actual with the exception of additional receipts from the CARES Act which is calculated based on the Title I needs of the district.
- Impact fees, not associated with operating revenues, should be received from both the Provenance and Lexington Homes projects.
- For operating fund expenses, the following was noted:
 - Atypical items were removed from the funds and listed elsewhere to facilitate a comparison between years.
 - Increase for FY21 was due to mainly to reflect increases in the Education Fund (5.2%) and Operations/Maintenance Funds (20%) due to equipment purchases and intercom/bell system for Winkelman
 - Transportation continues to increase more significantly, though the district is to receive up to 80% in reimbursements for SPED transportation, likely less this year.
 - Allocation of expenses between objects (Salaries, Benefits, etc. remains typical (outside of Capital Projects).
- Key Points - ISBE 50-36 Tentative Budget:
 - Balanced Budget - deficit reduction plan not required for tentative budget
 - Budget summary - met all requirements
 - Summary of cash transactions - met all requirements
 - Limitation of administrative costs - change of a negative 6%
 - No errors or adjustments needed

Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations also summarized the projection information. Resources used to develop this projection include the agency tax report for CY2019 and the final Skyward reports for FY2020.

- Reviewed the assumptions which included:
 - FY 21 & 22 salary increase estimated at 5%, with 3% increases for next four years, at the current level of FTE which reflects CBA employees, administrators, and assistants
 - 6% benefit increase FY21; 5% moving forward.
 - Potential savings of \$175,000 for retirees in 2022.
 - Potential savings of over \$120,000 for retirees in 2023.
 - Continued receipts for Astellas 7(b) Tax Incentive Project of 200,000 through 2025. Property value was set for 13 years except for minor increments.
 - 15% increases in transportation costs FY21; 5% moving forward
 - Decreasing interest earnings due to lower rates and depletion of capital projects funds as construction nearing completion
 - FY21 & FY22 CPI 1.5% (all urban CPI used which includes suburban and urban and how they spend their money) ; FY23 and forward at 2%

- Slight change to collection rate - 55% in spring; remainder in fall to 97% which is a 1% reduction than typically anticipated.
- Reflects reduced tuition costs by \$400K for 2022 and moving forward
- EAV increase of 12.8% produced a 9.35% reduction in tax rate - 2.84 to 2.58, which is due to new property and 2019 reassessments.
- 2018 tax refund was experienced and is reflected in FY20.
- Model does not include 2019 potential property tax refund in FY21.

Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Catherine Lauria presented a few charts resulting from the above revenues and expenses which included the following:

- The first linear chart includes a CPI of 1.5% for tax year 2020 and 2021 and increasing to 2% each subsequent year. This chart shows that by 2026 we will meet our minimum fund balance requirement. This allows time to adjust, as needed. This year may be a higher level year in regards to expenses than we anticipate moving forward, as there are many unknowns at this point in time.
- The second chart shows a 2.5% salary increase for two years and with a 1.5% for CPI, which adjusts the 2026 fund balance to 42%.
- The third chart reflects results of a CPI rate lower than 1.5% from the prior year which would negatively impact our tax receipts moving forward.

Member Maria Vasilopoulos questioned what the District would do if we reached our fund balance.

Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Catherine Lauria stated that our board policy set the minimum fund balance at 35%. As we are above our 35% currently, we would make adjustments as needed which is important to note so we keep that in mind as we move forward.

Member Jeffrey Steres questioned that since 2017 we are on a downward trend meaning that the fund balance is declining year over year.

Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Catherine Lauria confirmed that is the case and that we hope that this year is not as bad as some anticipate but there are still numerous unknowns.

Member Maria Vasilopoulos made a motion to approve the adoption of the tentative 2020-2021 budget. Member Nancy Hammer seconded the motion.

Final Resolution:

Aye: Maria Vasilopoulos, Jeffrey Steres, Robert Resis, Laura Greenberg, Nancy Hammer, Daphne Frank, Melissa Choo Valentinas

Nay: None.

The motion passed 7:0.

Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Catherine Lauria and Superintendent Erin Murphy summarized the memorandum of understanding with Quest Food Services. The district will assume some additional costs through a management fee and to cover food and non-food costs. Additional labor costs would also be assumed should the operation need to shut down.

Member Maria Vasilopoulos made a motion to approve the memorandum of understanding with Quest Food Services. Member Nancy Hammer seconded the motion.

Final Resolution:

Aye: Maria Vasilopoulos, Jeffrey Steres, Robert Resis, Laura Greenberg, Nancy Hammer, Daphne Frank, Melissa Choo Valentinas

Nay: None.

The motion passed 7:0.

Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Catherine Lauria presented the request to the Board to pay the costs for extra cleaning services provided by North Shore Transit. Per a conversation with North Shore, she added that this results in extra cleanings per day cost and the cost changed from approximately \$28,000 to \$21,000 per year.

Member Jeffrey Steres made a motion to approve the additional cleaning costs for bus service with North Shore Transit. Member Nancy Hammer seconded the motion.

Final Resolution:

Aye: Maria Vasilopoulos, Jeffrey Steres, Robert Resis, Laura Greenberg, Nancy Hammer, Daphne Frank, Melissa Choo Valentinas

Nay: None.

The motion passed 7:0.

Superintendent Erin Murphy stated that during our last Board of Education meeting it was asked that the School Board Meeting Procedures be pulled to have more specific language be included in this policy in the section concerning the process to add discussion items to the agenda as requested by Board of Education members.

Currently the language states:

- Items submitted by Board members to the Superintendent or the President shall be placed on the agenda for an upcoming meeting.

PRESS has alternative language which states:

- Any Board member may submit suggested agenda items to the Board President for his or her consideration.

Another alternative for language can state:

- Items submitted by Board members to the Superintendent or the President shall be placed on the agenda for an upcoming meeting at the earliest convenience, but not later than three board meetings hence.

After further discussions, the Board of Education directed Superintendent Erin Murphy to draft the language for approval for the school board procedures that also includes; that within two Board meeting timeframes and all other board members (6) determine if the topic is not appropriate then it is not added to the agenda. Superintendent Erin Murphy stated that she will draft the language and bring to the next Board of Education meeting.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Superintendent Erin Murphy summarized the Equity Audit timeline and stated that phase one has already been completed. The timeline is also available in the Board packet and more information will be provided in the upcoming months.

Superintendent Erin Murphy was proud to summarize the first Virtual Parent Education Series of District 31 wherein Dr. Doug Bolton presented on August 12th on Building Resilience During a Pandemic. Our second one will be on Equity 101 scheduled for September 21, 2020. In October, our Administrative Team will do one on Technology and a second series will be done in the Winter.

Superintendent Erin Murphy reported on the yearly safety drills and shared the District 31 plan for compliance. Superintendent Erin Murphy stated that Schools in Illinois are subject to required safety drills and protocols. District 31 has also developed robust Active Shooter protocols that are in alignment with the township wide emergency management program. Modifications for COVID-19 were made in consultation with local authorities.

Member Jeffrey Steres requested consideration of another Safety Drill/Active Shooter protocols in January upon the possible shift in enrollment. If a significant amount of students return to in-person that were remote, they would need to be updated on Safety Drills/Active Shooter Protocols. Superintendent Erin Murphy agreed and asked the Principals to add that to the plan.

Finance

Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Catherine Lauria reviewed the financial reports for July 2020:

- Treasurer's Report - Reflects a \$17.1 million fund balance with approximately \$16 million invested at this time. The amount expected for interest income through the end of November is \$9,000. The rate of return is 0.33%. We received some July and August property taxes and a higher level of CPPRT than expected. The state may be paying more upfront and not as much through the year. The property taxes from the monthly budget report are lower than what we received last year at this time which affects all operating funds. Fund Balance for Capital Projects is \$494,000.
- Expenses - The district is spending more in Operations and Maintenance Fund due to numerous additional items needed for the buildings for this year. The expenses for the Education Fund show as higher than last year which is due to an early retirement payout.
- Bar Chart - Our expenses are aligned with last year percentage wise, but are revenues are not due to property tax receipts being lower.

Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Catherine Lauria reported on the facilities:

- Field - The fields are still being reviewed to see how we can improve them. The landscaping is being done in areas outside of Field Middle School. The street has been completed for the beginning of the school year in regards to the striping on Landwehr Road.
- Winkelman - We will have to reseed in the fall.

BOARD REPORTS

Member Hammer reported on the PTO has been very active:

- School spirit posters we completed and handed out with technology and materials.
- School spirit wear was sold during the 6th grade material pickup.
- Welcome back lawn signs at both schools.
- First general mtg 9/14 at 7:00PM via ZOOM
- Everyone is a member this year due to the membership being waived..

The Education Foundation:

- Working with administration to provide \$5,000 worth of PPE supplies.
- Received donations of face masks, homemade and purchased and hand sanitizers to be used in the district.
- Received \$2,000 in donations.
- Next meeting is scheduled 9/22 at 7:30PM both in-person and remote operations. Visit the website for more information.

Superintendent Erin Murphy stated that the Triple III conference was cancelled for this year due to COVID.

Superintendent Erin Murphy stated that NSSSED had an emergency meeting on reopening

and adopted some policies. Secretary Daphne Frank will be attending the NSSSED meeting tomorrow. NSSSED is remote until after Labor Day and then moving to a hybrid model.

Member Jeffrey Steres requested an update on the self evaluation dates for the Board of Education. Superintendent Erin Murphy stated that the representative for the self evaluation would be Dee Molinare. Superintendent Erin Murphy questioned the consensus of the Board of Education on if they still wanted to schedule the self evaluation due to the fact that the schedules of the Board Members conflict. After further discussion, Superintendent Erin Murphy will get more dates from the facilitator and will find out from IASB if the self evaluation can be in open session.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Superintendent Erin Murphy reported enrollment during the presentation on reopening District 31.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUESTS

None

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- The Board of Education discussed the attendance at NSSSED Leadership Council Meetings for 2020-2021. Superintendent Erin Murphy will send out the dates to the Board members to try to get a representative signed up for each NSSSED meeting for this school year.

RECOGNITION OF AUDIENCE

None

MOVE INTO CLOSED

Member Jeffrey Steres made a motion to move into closed session to consider pending litigation, collective bargaining, and the appointment, employment, compensation, or performance of specific employees and school security matters. Secretary Daphne Frank seconded the motion.

Final Resolution:

Aye: Robert Resis, Nancy Hammer, Maria Vasilopoulos, Daphne Frank, Laura Greenberg, Jeffrey Steres

Nay: None.

The motion passed 6:0.

ADJOURN

Member Jeffrey Steres made a motion to adjourn. Member Nancy Hammer seconded the motion.

Final Resolution:

Aye: Robert Resis, Nancy Hammer, Maria Vasilopoulos, Jeffrey Steres, Daphne Frank, Laura Greenberg

Nay: None.

The motion passed 6:0 at 9:59PM.

Board President

Board Secretary

Date