

WEST NORTHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT 31
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING 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, Northbrook, Illinois
December 17, 2020 7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

The public hearing of the Board of Education was called to order by President Melissa Choo Valentinas at 7:01pm.

ROLL CALL

Board Members:

Present:

Laura Greenberg	Virtual
Daphne Frank	Virtual
Nancy Hammer	Virtual
Robert Resis	Virtual
Jeffrey Steres	Virtual
Maria Vasilopoulos	Virtual
Melissa Choo Valentinas	Virtual

District Administration:

Present:

Dr. Erin K. Murphy, Superintendent of Schools

Mrs. Catherine M. Lauria, Asst Superintendent Finance & Operations/CSBO

Virtual:

Dr. April Miller, Principal Field Middle School

Mrs. Shaton Wolverton, Principal Winkelman School

Dr. Janine Gruhn, Director of Special Education

Mrs. Becky Mathison, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction

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

COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE

None

PRESENTATION

Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Catherine Lauria, presented the tax levy highlighting the following:

- The public hearing presents the final proposed levy to the public for the opportunity to comment or ask questions. The tentative levy was approved by the Board of Education in November. There have been no changes to the tentative levy and it was posted in the newspaper, as required. The final levy presentation was attached if needed for any questions or comments. In summary, approval of the final levy is being requested at \$17.4 million plus \$846,000 for debt service for a total of approximately \$18.3 million. The resolutions and certifications for all the documents for the levy are included as action items. We will also be requesting approval of the supplemental levy.

ADJOURN

Secretary Daphne Frank made a motion to adjourn the public hearing for the tax levy.

Member Nancy Hammer seconded the motion.

Final Resolution:

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

Nay: None.

The motion passed 7:0 at 7:10PM.

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, Northbrook, Illinois
December 17, 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 7:12pm.

ROLL CALL

Board Members:

Present:

Laura Greenberg	Virtual
Daphne Frank	Virtual
Nancy Hammer	Virtual
Robert Resis	Virtual
Jeffrey Steres	Virtual
Maria Vasilopoulos	Virtual
Melissa Choo Valentinas	Virtual

District Administration:

Present:

Dr. Erin K. Murphy, Superintendent of Schools
Mrs. Catherine M. Lauria, Asst Superintendent Finance & Operations/CSBO

Virtual:

Dr. April Miller, Principal Field Middle School
Mrs. Shaton Wolverton, Principal Winkelman School
Dr. Janine Gruhn, Director of Special Education
Mrs. Becky Mathison, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction

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

COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE

Dear Dr. Murphy and Board Members,

I have to say, I am sorely disappointed as a resident, parent, life-long educator and tax-payer to see that you are approving contract extensions for all administrators, without any input from the constituents you serve, and without regard to ongoing potential budget impact and needs brought on by COVID-19. There is

no reason to make these contract extensions right now, and by doing so, you are putting the schools and the district at a disadvantage – unable to make important budgetary and staffing changes and decisions for the coming year when more is known about student and staff need, and the options required for learning in 2021-2022.

As a district with less than 900 students, District #31 is an extremely "top heavy" district -- a Superintendent, 3 Assistant Superintendents, 5 Fully released curriculum coordinators (and no currently coordinated curriculum in my experience), a principal and assistant principal in each school, and multiple other central office team members. And, while we spend MUCH more on our administration than like demographic districts of our size, we do not have significantly higher outcomes in any area to point to as a result of these investments. Given the uncertainty of the needs of the upcoming year both in terms of resources needed for meeting student need, and for meeting teacher need through negotiation of a new teacher contract, it would be prudent to wait to make these decisions to complete the equity audit and to assess the full impact of what we anticipate for the 2021-2022 school year would need. What if we need additional expertise in socio-emotional learning? An equity officer? More focus on the needs of our bilingual students? Additional lead teachers or a new structure to accommodate the ongoing impact of remote learning on our students? How about utilizing a coaching model? What about a Director of Technology and Innovation? As a board and superintendent, it is your responsibility to ask and answer these questions.

In addition to this being an extremely short sighted decision in terms of meeting student and staff need, it is unconscionable to not obtain feedback directly from the constituents you serve. Good evaluations provide growth opportunities for everyone and we have not had this for any principal at Winkelman throughout the last 4 principals in 6 years. There are many valid and reliable assessments that can be given to staff and the community to gauge fit, and there is other data related to attendance, student and family engagement and teacher retention that could and should be used to both evaluate and grow these leaders. Given the amount of turnover specifically at Winkelman, it is critical to ensure that we find and retain a leader that is a right fit to provide transformational leadership. If there is something we've all learned in the past few years, it's that good leadership is critical to creating positive outcomes.

Again, given the uncertainty we are in, this board's focus should be on the return to school plan, ongoing work with staff to meet student need during the pandemic, providing robust summer opportunities for students who need them, and planning for classroom based transformation in 2021-2022, not on continuing to build an administrative team without evaluation on their performance and need.

I urge you to delay these decisions until at least February, potentially later, in order to be responsive to student, staff and family need. Take this time to create and administer a survey so you begin to make decisions based on locally obtained data!

Thank you,

Allison Slade, Ed.D. -- parent, educator, school board candidate

To the board, administration, staff, and faculty: 2020 has been a year like no other. Thank you for everything you have done! Like many families, I was a little apprehensive about the transition to remote learning a few weeks ago, but it has given me a keener appreciation for all that our teachers do, both on site and remote, and has provided a unique opportunity to witness my kid in a class setting. As I see silver linings in this mess, I continue to be grateful for everyone in the district and all you do to provide the best for our kids. Many, many thanks, and we wish you all a wonderful holiday season with many moments to breathe and simply "be." - Margo Schwartz-Newton

CONSENT AGENDA

Secretary Daphne Frank made a motion to approve items A-I of the consent agenda.

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

Member Jeffrey Steres made a motion to approve the following:

1.
 - a. Resolution of West Northfield School District 31, Cook County, Illinois, Providing for the Levy of Taxes for the Year 2020/Certificate of Secretary.
 - b. Resolution to Levy Certain Special Taxes/Certification
 - c. Certificate of Compliance with the Truth in Taxation Law
 - d. Approve 2020 Certificate of Tax Levy
 - e. Approve Resolution to Instruct County Clerk How to Apportion 2020 Tax Levy Extension Reductions for West Northfield School District331, Cook County, Illinois

Secretary Daphne Frank seconded the motion.

Final Resolution:

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

Nay: None.

The motion passed 7:0.

Vice President Laura Greenberg made a motion to approve the Resolution Authorizing a Supplement Tax Levy to Pay the Principal of and Interest on Outstanding Limited Bonds of the School District 31, Cook County Illinois. Member Maria Vasilopoulos seconded the motion.

Final Resolution:

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

Nay: None.

The motion passed 7:0.

Secretary Daphne Frank made a motion to approve the extension of the summer food service meals program through the end of 2020-2021. Member Jeffrey Steres seconded the motion.

Final Resolution:

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

Nay: None.

The motion passed 7:0.

Secretary Daphne Frank made a motion to approve the contracts with West Ed to assist with the development of the District 31 MTSS framework and guiding manual. Member Maria Vasilopoulos seconded the motion.

Final Resolution:

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

Nay: None.

The motion passed 7:0.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Superintendent Erin Murphy updated the Board of Education on the [metrics/dashboard information](#):

Celebrated all things going well this year, which included in person options education and an educational platform choice for parents.

Reviewed categories in terms of how we know when we are okay to be in school:

- Operations - needed safety supplies/PPE - the district is prepared.
- School Based Public Health - Field and Winkelman have been in an adaptive pause for in person attendance. Our schools never had outbreaks and our safety procedures were really working.
- Scheduling and Procedures - the district is prepared.
- State of Illinois Phase - currently we are in Phase 4. It is believed that if we return to Phase 3, schools would move to remote.
- IDPH Mitigation Strategies - allows schools and daycares to be open at this point.
- Student Attendance - currently we are virtual and continue to monitor.
- Glenview/Northbrook Ordinances - have not made ordinances that impact schools.
- CCDPH School Metrics for North Cook - This is in orange which is a warning but does not mean we cannot be open.
- Community Public Health/Region 10 Public Health - Northfield Township has just been updated and the numbers are decreasing and going the direction we want them to go even though they are still considered high.
- Staffing and Subs - the sub pool has increased to 17 and is still growing. We have done recruitment efforts such as:
 - Mailer to all homes in D31 community
 - Ad in paper - 65,000+homes
 - Facebook Ad
 - Partnership with Kelly
 - Pre lined up subs as much as possible
 - Developed partnership with Raden Wellness to provide opportunities for quicker testing for staff.
- The CDC has adjusted their guidelines for quarantining from 14 days to 10 days. With an option for staff to get tested after 5 days with a negative test to come back in 7. This allowed us to get back to school one week earlier. January 11th is the recommended date to return to in-person learning.

Superintendent Erin Murphy and Assistant Superintendent of Student Services updated the Board of Education on the Intergovernmental Agreement for Student Services wherein they stated that District 31 entered into this agreement with our neighboring township schools in January 2020. The agreement opens up the possibility for us to collaborate as a township in a way that can be beneficial for all of us. An area that we talked about applying this is with our Student Services department. Right now we have a wonderful collaboration with NSSD. However, there has been a movement to keep our students local and cut back costs but with high quality services but more locally controlled programming in our district. We are working with District 27, 28 and 30 to see if we can do that in our township. Our ultimate goal is to ensure high quality programming and support for students in a way that is also beneficial to our district.

Assistant Superintendent Janine Gruhn stated that she has been collaborating with other township districts to see what services can be programmed locally. For the school year 2021-2022 the focus is on case management for our early childhood programming. We have four classrooms in our district and District 27 and 28 feed into our program as well. We all feel this area is in high need. This is a good collaboration and an area where we can start and focus on building our district program. We would still need NSSED for our support such as OT and PT and psychologists. As we take over case management, we will still have township students in our classrooms, only District 31 will be collecting the tuition as opposed to NSSED. The cost is not a huge savings but it is a significant savings over time.

Superintendent Erin Murphy stated that the district has a deadline of February 1st to let NSSED know which services we would be using next year. At the January Board of Education meeting, the Board would need to direct Superintendent Erin Murphy with where we are going with this recommendation and which questions the Board would want the Administration to ask.

Finance

Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Catherine Lauria, stated that the Monthly Budget Reports for November 2020 were included in the packet however some comments were made:

- Treasurer's report - The bank reconciliation summary report shows \$1.8 million decrease from the prior month to \$15.9 million. Of that, \$12 million is invested and we have \$2.8 million in PMA accounts as we have some maturities that we weren't able to invest until December 15th.
- General Ledger Summary - The revenues reflect about \$230,000 greater than last month. This is mostly due to grant reimbursements. Overall, the expenses are \$2 million over the prior month. \$1.2 million was from expenses in the Ed Fund. This is half of what they were last month due to a \$1.3 million payment to NSSED. There was an increase in transportation expenses over the prior month due to the timing of the invoices.
- Budget Summary - The operating revenues show no percentage variances with the exception of working cash. This is basically due to interest earned which will remain below budget by the end of the year as interest rates have not rebounded. In the Ed Fund there are local receipts of \$230,000 lower than the previous year. This is due to lower tax receipts from numerous refunds. State receipts are about 22% lower in the Ed Fund while Federal receipts are slightly higher. The operating expenses are within range except for the transportation due to a delayed invoice. The non-operating funds have large variances compared to last year due to the capital projects that we were involved in. When the entire budget was reviewed, there were a few areas that were over budget, mainly supplies, subscriptions, and technology assistant hours.
- The Linear Chart - Reflects less receipts mentioned mainly due to less tax receipts.
- P-Card statement is available for review.

Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Catherine Lauria reviewed the potential need for an amendment to transportation contract. She stated that while we are on adaptive pause, NorthShore furloughed most of their bus drivers as the opportunity was there for them to have access to additional funds through the unemployment system. Since the drivers and aids have been furloughed, which is 43% of their costs, the district may want to consider sharing some fixed cost expenses such as benefits and labor of office and shop workers, bus leases and facility costs. If the Board of Education is interested, we would have an amendment created. Should the Board want to move forward, an effective date of the amendment could also cover the costs of meal deliveries within this 37%. Currently, the adaptive pause involves 31 days of no transportation services for Field students and 26 days for Winkelman students. Total cost was calculated at approximately \$22,230. Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Catherine Lauria, requested the Board of Education state whether or not they would want an amendment created for the next Board of Education meeting. After further discussion, the Board of Education directed her to bring an amendment to the January Board of Education meeting.

Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Catherine Lauria, reviewed the fees for the 2020-2021 school year. She stated that each year at this time, fees are reviewed and approved in January for the following year. Previous discussions with the Board included the need to revisit the fee structure along with a possible reduction of certain fees. This year has changed many things. Back in February of 2020 we collected an activity fee for a number of activities that did not occur. We also collected a milk fee for Winkelman school which we did not use except for the first couple of months. A chart was shared and reviewed with the Board of Education that showed the fees collected in the past years and the FY22 Sample Option. This included adjustments to grade level fees, activity fees, and transportation fees.

Member Maria Vasilpoulos expressed her concern on the transportation fees and would like to see a reduction in the fees for families. The idea of a sibling discount was mentioned.

BOARD REPORTS

NSSSED

- President Melissa Choo Valentinas stated that NSSSED did a culture survey through Humanex and shared the information with the members. NSSSED also shared what the adaptive pause looks like for them.

The Education Foundation:

- Holiday Boutique was fun and had 22 vendors, 8 which supported the live show case. It was a fun event even though the registration was low. This new program has raised over \$1,500 and we expect to raise \$2,000 after the vendors submit their additional support.
- The Ed Foundation is working with Superintendent Erin Murphy to raise \$80,000 to update equipment for a new science room at Field and art room at Winkelman

PTO

- Thanked everyone for purchases from the Book Fair. Orders all year will benefit

District 31. Visit abcfairs.com to place your orders.

- Project Reach is working with the staff to make sure kids that need winter coats will receive them.
- Restaurant Fundraiser at Butterfields. Mention District 31 on Tuesday December 29th between 7:00am and 3:00pm and receive a 20% discount. Proceeds will go to District31.
- New Spirit Wear will roll out in January with orders taken online. Current inventory is available at d31ptostore.square.sight
- Art to Remember which adds your artwork on mugs. Details coming out on Friday.

Illinois Association of School Boards

- Member Jeffrey Steres stated that the Triple I virtual conference was disappointing this time due to not being able to choose your schedule and not enough sessions to choose from.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Superintendent Erin Murphy reported enrollment.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUESTS

- Nick Hoover - Amazing Educational Resources

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- Superintendent Erin Murphy summarized the rental information regarding what we charge for using our facilities. Due to COVID, we are not renting out our facilities. Member Maria Vasilopoulos stated that our parking lots have been used very frequently and would like to see more language attached showing portions of the parking lot and fees attached. The Board of Education agreed to revisit this with more information provided. Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Catherine Lauria agreed and stated that after speaking with the property liability insurance that unless there were barriers up in the parking lots, on weekends and different times we are not here we can't keep people off our property but if we had an agreement we would ascertain certificate of insurance which would help our liability. The Board of Education requested to come back with some proposals on what our expectations and goals for this agreement could be.

MOVE INTO CLOSED

Secretary Daphne Frank 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. Vice President Laura Greenberg seconded the motion.

Final Resolution:

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

Nay: None.

The motion passed 7:0.

ACTION ITEMS FROM CLOSED

Member Jeffrey Steres made a motion to approve the settlement and release agreement between the Northshore University Health System and Board of Education of Northbrook School District 28, the Board of Education, West Northfield School District 31, the Board of Education of Glenbrook High School District 225 but expressly conditioned on the possible revisions of actual tax dollars reimbursed being based on actual taxes paid to the districts.

Vice President Laura Greenberg seconded the motion.

Final Resolution:

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

Nay: None.

The motion passed 7:0.

Secretary Daphne Frank made a motion to approve one year contract extensions for the following administrators:

- Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, Becky Mathison
- Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Dr. Janine Gruhn
- Winkelman Principal, Shaton Wolverton
- Field Principal, Dr. April Miller
- Winkelman Assistant Principal, Nino Alvarez
- Field Assistant Principal, Justin Cooper
- Manager of Technology and Infrastructure, Dave Del Boccio
- Director of Buildings and Grounds, Edmund Blankenheim

Vice President Laura Greenberg seconded the motion.

Final Resolution:

Aye: Nancy Hammer, Maria Vasilopoulos, Jeffrey Steres

Robert Resis, Daphne Frank, Laura Greenberg, Melissa Choo Valentinas

Nay: None.

The motion passed 7:0.

Member Jeffrey Steres made a motion to approve the compensation of unused vacation for members of the administrative team at a rate of 25% per day. Vice President Laura Greenberg seconded the motion.

Final Resolution:

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

Nay: None.

The motion passed 7:0.

Secretary Daphne Frank made a motion to approve the termination of support staff employee, Julie Raab. Vice President Laura Greenberg seconded the motion.

Final Resolution:

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

Nay: None.

The motion passed 7:0.

ADJOURN

Secretary Daphne Frank made a motion to adjourn. Member Jeffrey Steres seconded the motion.

Final Resolution:

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

Nay: None.

The motion passed 7:0 at 9:57PM.

Board President

Board Secretary

Date