

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
March 18, 2021 at 7:00PM

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by President Melissa Choo Valentinas at 7:04pm.

ROLL CALL

Board Members:

Present:	Robert Resis	Virtual
	Jeffrey Steres	In-Person
	Maria Vasilopoulos	Virtual
	Nancy Hammer	Virtual
	Melissa Choo Valentinas	Virtual
	Daphne Frank	Virtual
	Laura Greenberg	Virtual - Arrived at 7:15pm

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
Mrs. Kathleen Ipsen, Proposed Director of Support Services

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

COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE

Superintendent Erin Murphy read the following comment:

The Schwartz-Newton Family

As the election for board members approaches, we want to thank each of you for your dedication, hard work, compassion, and passion in serving the district. We are very grateful for all that you do!

PRESENTATION

Superintendent Erin Murphy reported on the continuing planning for the 2021-2022 school year. [Planning for 2021-2022 Part 3](#)

After the report, the Board of Education confirmed their agreement with the recommendations in the presentation. The recommendations are as follows:

- Winkelman
 - Target 4-6 foot social distancing.
 - Not to exceed class size guidelines or 20 students--whatever is smaller.
 - Result of implementing the recommendations is an anticipated 35 classroom sections for grades K-5
- Field
 - Target 4-6 foot social distancing.
 - Use 20 students as a target but allow some flexibility based on middle school schedule intricacies.

Superintendent Erin Murphy stated that she will continue to update the Board of Education on class sizes and registration.

CONSENT AGENDA

Member Maria Vasilopoulos made a motion to approve items A-G of the consent agenda.

Member Nancy Hammer seconded the motion.

Final Resolution:

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

Nay: None.

The motion passed 7:0.

ACTION ITEMS

Member Daphne Frank made a motion to approve the appointment of Kathleen Ipsen as Director of Support Services (Early Childhood Programming). Vice President Laura Greenberg seconded the motion.

Final Resolution:

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

Nay: None.

The motion passed 7:0.

Member Rober Resis made a motion to approve the appointment of Catherine Lauria, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations/CSBO as the Assistant Township School Treasurer for FY22 and FY23. Vice President Laura Greenberg seconded the

motion.

Final Resolution:

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

Nay: None.

The motion passed 7:0.

Superintendent Erin Murphy reviewed the revised draft proposal for the FY22 school calendar. She explained how the days off are determined and the contract requirement of 180 days. School code requires students to be in session for 176 days. Some of those 176 days look like something else. For instance, our conference days can be counted as student days even if the students are not there. This year our blended remote learning days counted as student days. When the Calendar Committee or the Board of Education makes recommendations for certain days off it is not necessarily in place of a student day. You still have to have the same amount of student days. Other district's may have more student days because their teachers' contracts may have a higher number of work days. Our contract does have the flexibility to have 5 additional work days at a per diem cost of approximately \$48,000 a day. Teacher institute days and professional development days are included in the calendar. As we have seen from the audits that have been completed, part of the responsibility is to improve student outcomes. The institute and professional development days help support the teachers in their professional growth which then help improve student outcomes.

Based on the feedback from last month's meeting. The Calendar Committee and Superintendent Erin Murphy revised the draft calendar to accommodate the feedback from the prior meeting.

After discussion, the Board of Education decided to purchase four additional days of school in order to ensure increased student academic time as well as needed professional development. In addition, weather emergency days will be traditional "snow days," although the superintendent does have the discretion to determine if remote days would be more appropriate.

Member Nancy Hammer made a motion to approve the calendar with the modifications of approving 4 additional education days and that snow days will be days off and/or based on the recommendation of the superintendent.

Final Resolution:

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

Nay: None.

The motion passed 7:0.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Dr. Erin Murphy, provided the following updates:

- Superintendent Erin Murphy briefly updated the Board of Education on the return to school update changes and offered updates on vaccination efforts and current travel guidelines. [March 2021 Health Dashboard](#)
- Superintendent Erin Murphy stated that at the last Board of Education meeting it was requested that the Board be updated on the status of where we are with the audits. The updates will be attached to the website and put in the Board Briefs.
 - [Curriculum Audit Update](#)
 - [EL Audit Update](#)
 - [Special Ed Update](#)
 - There is no equity audit update yet as it is a whole year process. The first draft will be sent to the administrators at the end of March and then hopefully brought to the Board of Education, in May.
 - Member Jeffrey Steres requested that along with the updates, he would also like to have information on how we are improving and moving along in each audit category.
- Superintendent Erin Murphy summarized the summer school update.
 - Incoming K-8th Grade will have summer support for 4 weeks. This will focus on resource based intervention that will focus on ELA or Math. This is by invitation only based on test scores. There is no cost and invitations will go out next week. This is not required.
 - Brush Up will be returning at Winkelman for the incoming 1st -5th Grade students and will be the week before school starts. There is no cost and there will be approximately 10 students per grade level. Registration will start April 16th.
 - The Center for Gifted will provide enrichment programs for a cost to our parents during the 4 weeks of summer school. There are K-2nd grade programs, 3-5th grade programs, and four different middle school programs. They do not have a limit on students that can be registered.

Field Middle School Principal, April Miller, reported that with the new guidelines that just came out, they allow us to have an in-person graduation on June 3rd and honor them very similarly as what we have in the past. The location is still to be determined and more information will be shared as the new guidelines come out.

Field Middle School Principal April Miller, reported on the track season wherein she stated that they are excited to offer a track season and Jon Damon, Athletic Director, has been working with the other Athletic Directors. There will be six meets and Field School will not be hosting any of the meets but the students will be going to the other schools to attend the

meets. First practice is April 7th. Social distancing will be a huge component. Masks will be worn and social distancing guidelines will be in place for students in locker rooms.

Finance

Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Catherine Lauria, stated that the Monthly Budget Reports for February 2021 were included in the packet, however, some comments were made:

- Treasurer's Report - The ending fund balance is \$14.5 million compared to February of 2020 which was \$14.85 million. This is only a 2% decrease in the fund balance from the prior year to date.
- The investment summary shows that the rates went down to .041%.
- General Ledger Summary- All fund balances are positive. The transportation and operations and maintenance balances are higher than the prior year. There is an overall decrease of \$300,000 so again remaining steady. March reports will reflect some expenses paid for capital projects, as expected.
- Monthly Budget Summary - When talking about the budget for 2021, the revenues for the operating funds were set at approximately \$19.6 million and the operating expenses were set at \$19.9 million. This produced an unbalanced budget but our actual operating revenues are higher but still within 5% of the receipt percentages from last year. February has brought in \$2 million in property tax receipts. In March, to date, we have received \$4.8 million as we are now getting the bulk of spring receipts. Operating expenses are also within 5% from the prior year with the exception of the transportation fund, as discussed previously. This fund is well below budget at this time of year.
- The Linear Chart - Revenues are slightly higher by 3% and expenses are slightly lower at 1.5% which is a great story for such an unusual year.
- P-Card statement is available for review.

Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Catherine Lauria, reviewed the TRS Supplemental Savings Plan:

- This is available to TRS employees.
- This plan is meant to add to an employee's retirement savings and was supposed to be approved by March 31st. Due to the many unanswered questions regarding compliance issues with 403b and 457 plans, this is not going to happen. Initially, TRS stated that we would not have any fiduciary responsibilities but that is not the case at this point in time. We are trying to get some answers and as we utilize a third party to make sure we are not out of compliance, there is an effort to involve them with the TRS plan.

President Melissa Choo Valentinas expressed that the District is very financially solid and the District Board deserves recognition because it took years to get here.

BOARD REPORTS

Superintendent Erin Murphy stated that a parent who is also running for board trustee, contacted her regarding the development going up across from Plaza Del Prado. Part of the new development will include Amazon Fresh. This is not in our District though the concern is the traffic flow. Superintendent, Erin Murphy and Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Catherine Lauria, reviewed the traffic study, which includes plans to change the traffic route to get back on the expressway. This may impact the traffic at Winkelman School. This is a concern but nothing has been finalized yet. There may also be a new development across from the high school but we cannot confirm that yet.

Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Catherine Lauria, stated that she revisited the left turn lane in front of Winkelman with Cook County. So far, they have not responded.

The Education Foundation:

- Looking to bring new people for the future of the foundation.
- The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 13th at 7:30pm via Zoom or the Stern's backyard depending on weather.
- A walk to school program will be announced in April.
- Support our School renovation will be a fundraiser for any future renovations.

PTO

- Art To Remember is underway. Submit artwork to the <https://arttoremember.com/> website soon in order to have Mother's day presents available.
- Teacher Appreciation week will be closed out with a celebration at Winkelman for the entire district community to thank the teachers and staff for everything they do on May 7th.
- PTO is looking for new members. If interested email districtpto@gmail.com
- The next restaurant fundraiser is March 30th at Noodles and Company and the new McAlister's Deli on Willow on April 13th. The fundraisers have brought in \$3,000 so far.

NSSSED

Member Jeffrey Steres stated that they are in their rebranding campaign. The transition date is July 1st. Last month they talked about the potential financial "tax" on member districts. Julie Dillon, Chief Financial Officer resigned her post. They are searching for her replacement.

Superintendent Erin Murphy also reported on NSSSED wherein she stated that what NSSSED decided regarding the potential financial tax placing on the member districts is to bring it to their advisory committee then bring whatever the recommendations are from there to the stakeholders committee meeting and then bring to their Board for approval in April. This

morning the advisory committee met and Superintendent Erin Murphy stated that she is on the committee and she was the only voice that said no and cannot endorse it. NSSD reduced the surcharge from 6% to 1.55% which is \$39,000 for us. It will now be brought to the various stakeholder groups and then brought for a vote in April. Secretary Daphne Frank is our representative for the April NSSD.

President Melissa Choo Valentinas stated for NSSD we will need a full representative to represent the District and attend the meetings.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Superintendent Erin Murphy reported enrollment.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUESTS

- JSutton - Public Records Requester

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Strategic Plan Update and Calendar

Superintendent Erin Murphy shared the strategic plan update and calendar. The strategic plan will be facilitated by CEC. The recruitment will start in April for parents, students and staff for our first orientation in May. All meetings will be held virtually.

MOVE INTO CLOSED

Member Jeffery 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. Member Maria Vasilopoulos seconded the motion.

Final Resolution:

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

Nay: None.

The motion passed 7:0.

ACTION FOR CLOSED

Vice President Laura Greenberg made a motion to approve the one year childrearing leave for Winkelman Special Education Teacher, Claire Wilkin. Secretary Daphne Frank seconded the motion.

Final Resolution:

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

Nay: None.

The motion passed 7:0.

ADJOURN

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

Final Resolution:

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

Nay: None.

The motion passed 7:0 at 10:22pm.

Board President

Board Secretary

Date