

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Education  
Willow Springs Consolidated School District No. 108  
Tuesday, February 25, 2020  
Willow Springs School Library**

**Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 6:35 p.m.

**Roll Call**

Members present: Weeg, Ciota, Bohac, and Patrick

**Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by President, Mary Ellen Weeg.

**Acceptance of the Superintendent's Agenda**

The superintendent recommends the approval of the Superintendent's Agenda.

**Motion 20-076 by Weeg, seconded by Patrick as recommended by the superintendent for the approval of the superintendent's Agenda.**

**Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, Ciota, Bohac, and Patrick**

**Public Comment**

Lori Smuda, Principal; Teacher: Sarah Haussy

Community Member:

Cynthia Schilsky, member of the League of Women Voters of the LaGrange Area spoke to the Board:

She said Their League has member from communities throughout Lyons and Proviso Townships. She came to speak with the Board about Lyons Township School Treasurer's Office, the TTO. She presumes that the Board is familiar with this office as they provide financial services to our school district as well as 10 other school district in the area. She noted that the office of Township School Treasurer was eliminated from all townships in Illinois except Cook County in 1962.

In the 1970's the League of Women Voters of Cook County studied the structure of the Township School Treasurer Office and at that time concluded that this outdated agency should be eliminated within Cook County as well so that the school board would have more control over the management of the educational tax dollars – both the investments and spending of those monies. Some TTO offices within Cook County have been eliminated and in some other cases school districts have been allowed to withdraw and provide these services for themselves.

The structure of the TTO is outdated and not in tune with the sophisticated school administrations we have in Lyons Township. The TTO charges each school district a percent of its expenses based on each school district's revenue, not the specific management fees on the district's investments or the TTO operational hours that are spent on the school district's work. For the 2018-2019 fiscal year that was approximately \$27,000 for District 108. The TTO does not provide the District with information on the investment management fees or banking expenses specific to District 108 balances, or the operational hours they spend on District 108 districts work,

making it somewhat difficult to for the Board to evaluate the efficiency of their operation in providing services for our district.

The School Board and administrators have no say in how the agency is managed or in their budget. There have been significant management and cost issues with the TTO over the years. One of the past treasurers, Robert Healy embezzled \$1,500,000 of school districts' funds during his tenure from 2002 to 2012. The office of the TTO then had to spend \$490,000 in legal fees during the investigation of their office. Only \$1,109,500 was ever recovered, resulting in a loss of \$880,000 to the member districts. At the current pro rata rate the cost to District 108 was \$14,900.

Also during Mr. Healy's tenure, High School District 204 objected to the manner of expense assignment and sought a more equitable method. It is contended that Mr. Healy and 204 worked out such a deal. That deal has resulted in a lawsuit that the TTO brought against District 204 in 2013. The TTO and District 204 disagree on whether an agreement between Mr. Healy and 204 was documented or even legal. So far, District 204 has spent \$500,000 and the TTO has spent over \$2,200,000 in litigation fees. None of the other districts were consulted about the lawsuit or have any say in negotiating a settlement but those districts are paying the TTO legal fees. District 108's share of that expense has been \$37,000 so far. If the TTO loses the lawsuit, the member districts will also be charged for the settlement.

The TTO contends that it can get a greater return on the tax dollars of its member districts because larger dollar amount garner higher earnings. However, that must be weighed against the costs we have seen from the TTO because of fraud and litigation.

Some districts with the TTO say they are happy with the services and costs, but for those districts that have done the analysis and have determined they could do better independently, they are asking that all the school boards support any legislative action that would allow those districts to withdraw from the TTO. Representative Durkin has introduced 3 bills in the state legislature that would allow school districts to withdraw from their TTO if they so choose. The bills are HB5355 relating to elementary school districts and 5356 and 5357 relating to high school districts. All have been referred to the Rules Committee. While the League really favors elimination of this office that seems unlikely at the present time and they are hopeful that these bills allowing school districts to withdraw if they so choose will be approved. They hope the Board will support this legislation.

Teacher, Sarah Haussy talked about Wonders Reading.

### **Financial Report**

The auditor's report for the month of January was in the packets. Nick Cavalier from Baker Tilly could not attend the meeting. The financials look unremarkable for January. Right on track for both expenditures and revenues.

### **Minutes**

A copy of the January 28, 2020 regular meeting minutes were included in the packets.

The superintendent recommends the approval of the minutes from the Regular Board Meeting for January 28, 2020.

**Motion 20-077 by Ciota, seconded by Bohac as recommended by the superintendent that the Board approve the minutes from the Regular Board Meeting for January 28, 2020.**

**Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, Ciota, Bohac and Patrick  
Abstain:**

## **Consent Agenda**

The superintendent recommends the approval of the consent agenda.

**Motion 20-078 by Weeg, seconded by Ciota as recommended by the superintendent for the approval of the consent agenda.**

### **Consent #1**

**The superintendent recommends the approval of the payroll and the approval of the bills in the amount of \$217,228.57 (8A-1-2), the reimbursement of the Imprest Fund in the amount of \$126 (8B) and approval of the Activity Fund balance of \$59,671.43 (8C) for the month of February 2020.**

### **Consent #2**

**The superintendent recommends the approval of the financial report for the month of January 2020. Fund balances: Educational: \$3,417,533; Operations & Maintenance: \$335,581; Debt Service: \$363,509; Transportation: \$449,796; IMRF: \$246,263; Capital Projects: 606,594; Working Cash: \$538,735; Tort: \$54,755; and Fire Prevention & Life Safety \$4**

### **Consent #3**

**The superintendent recommends that the Board direct the superintendent to prepare the annual district budget for Fiscal Year 2021.**

### **Consent #4**

**The superintendent recommends the acceptance of the Honorable Dismissal Sequence List as presented.**

**Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, Ciota, Bohac and Patrick**

## **Notices and Communications**

The superintendent presented the following news articles:

A-a. 1 journal articles related to National and Illinois Education issues at this time.

From the Illinois School Board Journal, an article talking about the importance of the 2020 Census – and working to get everyone counted. Federal dollars are based upon the Census Count. The superintendent is working with the Village to develop strategies to get everyone counted.

A-b. 1 newspaper and related articles related to Willow Springs School District 108.

Our Kindergarten Screening and PreRegistration in the Des Plaines Valley News.

A-c. 0 Newspaper and related articles related to early childhood education.

### **Item 9B Legislative/SCOPE report: 4 Items.**

There are 4 reports included. The Legislative report spotlights legislation the Governor signed into law following the Veto Session in the fall. Two SCOPE Reports focus on the Governor's State of the State address and his budget address. A great deal rides on the graduated income tax. It's also alarming that existing funding is planned to be withheld if the graduated income tax fails. And finally, a preliminary report of early bills introduced to the legislature.

### **Item 9C State Board of Education Correspondence: 0 Items.**

### **Item 9D Illinois Association of School Boards Correspondence: 0 Items.**

**Item 9E AERO Correspondence items: 0 Items.**

**Item 9F EBC Health Insurance Co-op Correspondence items: 0 Items.**

**Item 9G Village of Willow Springs Correspondence: 0 items.**

**Item 9H County Clerk Correspondence: 0 items.**

**Item 9I Intermediate Service Center Correspondence: 0 items.**

**Item 9J Township Treasurer Correspondence: 0 items.**

**Item 9K**

Superintendent Correspondence Received: 0 items.

Superintendent Correspondence Sent: 1 items.

Letter sent home with the homeroom where a disciplined student was located. The letter was also posted on the website.

**Item 9K-A Freedom of Information Act Requests and Notices 1 item.**

1. A request from NBC5 regarding internet content filtering and monitoring. It was complied with on February 6, 2020.

**Special Education**

Mickey Bohac said there was nothing to report.

**Principal's Report**

Principal Smuda reported:

The students in grades 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> completed the 5 Essentials survey measuring school climate. The staff was surveyed, too. ISBE will be comparing last year's results with the latest scores.

Family Reading Night was very successful! The teachers prepared activities centering around the Wild West. Students made bookmarks, worked puzzles, learned about snakes, searched the building for cowboy words, and traveled the Oregon Trail! At the principals' station, the students learned the line dance for Louisiana Saturday Night! At the end of the evening, we raffled off several prizes. It was a fun, family evening!

For the past 3 weeks, the school has been reading a Wolf Called Wander together. Each day, the teachers read approximately 2 chapters aloud to their class. The principal hung trivia questions in the hallway and promoted the book at lunchtime. Ms. Castaneda followed the wolf theme during library classes, too!

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, we will be promoting Read Across America with Dr. Seuss. Sam Pulia, former Willow Springs police chief, will again dress up as the Cat in the Hat and read a book to the kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade students. The principal asks Dr. Seuss questions at lunch too. Students will be encouraged to dress up as their favorite character for the day.

The spring concert is scheduled for March 12<sup>th</sup> in the evening. Students in grades 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> will be performing. The theme is We Are the World and will address global diversity in music.

Kindergarten screening for the next school year is scheduled for Tuesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>. The information has been in the local newspaper as well as the Willow Weekly. Carina also sends letters to our families with known 4-5 year olds.

IAR testing begins March 11<sup>th</sup>. We schedule the testing to end before spring break. Students will sit for five testing sessions lasting between 60-90 minutes each. (3 math tests, 2 ELA tests)

Two of our students, Jason DeAnda & Kendall Wendt, were honored by Congressman Dan Lipinski for their Nominations in the All-American Boy and Girl. They both made the top 100 from the 1,000 applicants and Kendall was awarded 3<sup>rd</sup> place overall in the female category!

#### **11A Class Size Information**

Enrollment continues to fluctuate slightly.

#### **Item 12A Job Description Update**

The superintendent recommends the adoption of the school librarian job description as presented.

**Motion 20-079 by Patrick, seconded by Bohac as recommended by the Superintendent the adoption of the school librarian job description as presented.**

**Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, Ciota, Bohac and Patrick**

#### **Item 12C School Year Calendar Adoption**

The calendar for 2020-2021 is ready to be adopted. It follows our recent practices. The first day for students will be August 19, and the last day is scheduled for May 26 – before Memorial Day. Both the state worksheet and the memo to staff were in the packet.

The superintendent recommends the adoption of the 2020-2021 school calendar.

**Motion 20-080 by Weeg, seconded by Ciota as recommended by the Superintendent the Board adopts the 2020-2021 school calendar.**

**Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, Ciota, Bohac and Patrick**

#### **Item 12D IAR Testing**

As the principal shared, testing is scheduled for prior to spring break. This is supposed to be a bridge year test as the ISBE wants a comprehensive change in place in 2021, but the superintendent has seen little action that would indicate it will be different next year.

#### **Item 13 Closed Session**

Board needed to go into closed session to discuss probable litigation, personnel, discipline issues and school security measures.

**Motion 20-081 by Weeg, seconded by Bohac to go into Closed Session at 7:05 p.m. with the purpose of discussing probable litigation, personnel, discipline issues and school security measures.**

**Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, Ciota, Bohac and Patrick**

**Motion 20-082 by Weeg, seconded by Ciota Board returned to open session at 7:38 p.m.**

**Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, Ciota, Bohac and Patrick**

**Item 14 Final Actions**

The superintendent recommends the approval of the closed session minutes from January 28, 2020 and to keep them closed to the public...

**Motion 20-083 by Patrick, seconded by Bohac as recommended by the superintendent to approve the closed session minutes from January 28, 2020 closed session minutes.**

**Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, Ciota, Bohac and Patrick**

**Abstain:**

The superintendent recommends the ratification of the Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Retirement Benefits.

**Motion 20-084 by Ciota, seconded by Weeg as recommended by the superintendent to ratify the Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Retirement Benefits.**

**Item 15 Other Business Items**


**Item 16 Adjournment**

**Motion 20-085: Adjournment at 7:39 pm**

**Motion made by Ciota, Seconded by Bohac**

**Hearing no objections so moved.**

  
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President

  
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Secretary