

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Education
Willow Springs Consolidated School District No. 108
Tuesday, November 19, 2019
Willow Springs School Library**

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:34 p.m.

Roll Call

Members present: Weeg, Ciota, Ristić , McSweeney, Hawkins, 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 20-045 by Ciota, seconded by Hawkins as recommended by the superintendent for the approval of the superintendent's Agenda.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, Ciota, Ristić , McSweeney, Hawkins, Bohac and Patrick

Public Comment

Lori Smuda, Principal; Teacher: Dena Brockob & Sean Masterton

Community Members: Kathleen Tannyhill-Draper & Milton Draper(8295 Archer) & David Patterson(206 E Ravine).

Mr. Dave Patterson addressed the Board and indicated that he and a group of citizens are working to get all of the students in 60480 to attend the same high school. 60480 is currently split between 3 high school districts. It is believed that this will reduce the tax burden on the local taxpayer..

Financial Report

The auditor's report for the month of October was in the packet. Nick Cavaliere was not available for this meeting so the superintendent answered all questions. The revenues and expenditures are on target for October.

2018 Levy Adoption Preparation

Next month we will adopt the levy for our tax appropriations for 2019, this is always in arrears.

Nick Cavaliere has prepared an analysis based upon the Board's direction to have a 0% levy increase with this levy. He basically took last year's levy amount and reduced it by the County's automatic markup of 6% for lost tax revenue. This should keep the levy at 0% growth rate over tax year 2018.

It's important to remember, that while the District will keep its levy flat, how the County apportions that levy among the taxpayers is out of the District's control. Some taxpayers will more than likely still see an increase based upon their home's Assessed Value in comparison to their neighbors.

ISBE Property Tax Relief Grant

When the state legislature passed the new Evidence Based Funding Formula, it also established a Property Tax Relief Grant. This was heavily promoted by school districts and legislators in South Cook. Across the State, South Cook has the highest property tax rates.

The General Assembly has funded the first round of Property Tax Relief Grants for this year at \$50 million. It has also opened the window to apply for the grant.

The way the grant works is that after the grant is approved, the District abates the taxes at a set amount through the County. That amount is then added in perpetuity to the Evidence Based Funding Formula. It appears to be a win/win for both the school district and for the taxpayer. Beginning this year, the district awarded the grant must agree to abate taxes for 2 years. Previously, there was only a 1 year commitment.

If the superintendent read the ISBE report correctly, as it is not clearly written, we are ranked at number 74. Last year, they funded through number 29. If awarded, \$390,766 dollars would be abated back to the taxpayers.

The superintendent recommends that the Board apply for the 2019 Property Tax Relief Grant, in the amount of \$390,477.

Motion 20-046 by Weeg, seconded by Ristić as recommended by the superintendent that the Board apply for the 2019 Property Tax Relief Grant, in the amount of \$390,477.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, Ciota, Ristić, McSweeney, Hawkins, Bohac and Patrick

FY2018 Cook County Board of Review, Sterling Taxes

Following last month's meeting, the District has filed the appropriate paperwork with the Cook County Board of Review to challenge the low taxes paid by the corporation that owns Sterling Estates.

Our attorneys have been working in tandem with the attorneys at Argo. We were a bit late to the game to be able to file because an appraisal is needed – which on a commercial property the size of Sterling cannot be completed quickly, nor within the time frame allowed by the Cook County Board of Review. There are 3 steps to the appeal. 1. File initial paperwork challenging the taxes, early November deadline. 2. File the supporting evidence (appraisal), mid-November deadline, 3. A hearing at the Board of Review, usually mid-December.

Argo was ahead of us in the process and allowed us to use their Appraisal. We will contribute to its cost. It's a win-win as a case is stronger with more taxing bodies challenging the taxes.

Based upon the appraisal and the current assessed valuations, our attorney estimates that there is a difference of about \$1.1 million in assessed valuation, resulting in a loss of roughly \$190,000 in tax money to District 108. That's a significant amount of money for the District.

FY2019 Audit Report Update

The FY2019 audit is just about completed. The superintendent is expecting it to be released to the District at any time. We can expect the presentation to the Board in either December or January.

FY2020 Audit Firm

In the past, the Board has expressed concern regarding using Baker Tilly for both financial consultant services and the audit as it may appear to be a conflict of interest. If the Board would like to check out new Audit Services, now would be the time to act.

At the Board's direction, the superintendent will prepare an RFQ (Request for Quote) for audit services. That works very similarly to going out for Bid for a building project. Quotes will be analyzed, presented to the Board, and the Board can make its choice. The timeline would be to present the qualified firms to the Board at its February or March meeting for a selection to be made.

Minutes

A copy of the September 24, 2019 regular minutes, which were not approved last month, are in the packet.

The superintendent recommends the approval of the minutes from the Regular Board Meeting for September 24, 2019.

Motion 20-047 by Ciota, seconded by Weeg as recommended by the superintendent that the Board approve the minutes from the Regular Board Meeting for September 24, 2019..

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

Abstain: Ristić, McSweeney, and Hawkins

The superintendent recommends the approval of the minutes from the Regular Board Meeting for October 22, 2019.

Motion 20-048 by Ciota, seconded by McSweeney as recommended by the superintendent that the Board approve the minutes from the Regular Board Meeting for October 22, 2019..

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, Ciota, Ristić , McSweeney, Hawkins, and Bohac

Abstain: Patrick

Consent Agenda

The superintendent recommends the approval of the consent agenda.

Motion 20-049 by Hawkins, seconded by Bohac 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 \$233,369.98 (8A-1-2), the reimbursement of the Imprest Fund in the amount of \$500.80 (8B) and approval of the Activity Fund balance of \$54,356.99 (8C) for the month of November 2019.

Consent #2

The superintendent recommends the approval of the financial report for the month of September 2019. Fund balances: Educational: \$4,036,740; Operations & Maintenance: \$453,071; Debt Service: \$880,344; Transportation: \$482,038; IMRF: \$278,771; Capital Projects: 602,682; Working Cash: \$535,259; Tort: \$57,331; and Fire Prevention & Life Safety \$4

Consent #3

The superintendent recommends the FMLA request from Nicole Jaronczyk, running approximately from January 23, 2020 through March 29, 2020, be approved.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, Ciota, Ristić , McSweeney, Hawkins, Bohac and Patrick

Notices and Communications

The superintendent presented the following news articles:

A-a. 0 journal articles related to National and Illinois Education issues.

A-b. 0 newspaper and related articles related to Willow Springs School District 108.

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

Item 9B Legislative/SCOPE report: 1 Item.

Included is an Alliance Legislative Report from November 1, 2019 following the 1st week of the Veto Session. The only legislation reported on of note is the SB1784 requiring an onerous amount of teacher directory information to be submitted to the union monthly.

The superintendent attended the SCOPE Property Tax Freeze summit late last month. Unfortunately, the only 2 legislators in attendance were Republican and didn't have any real information as they are in the minority and clearly were not in the know of what is being talked about privately among legislative leaders.

But there are many committees studying various aspects, with 90 legislators involved. October deadlines were established for each of the committees to submit reports, and few deadlines were met.

Item 9C State Board of Education Correspondence: 1 Item.

The ISBE had issue with the number of alternative assessments that District students were administered. We administered alternative assessments to 6 students last year. All of these students are in AERO programs. The superintendent included the request for information as well as the District's response.

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: 2 items.

The annual invoice to the Village for tuition for students living in the TIF District. The total this year is \$144,272. The Village has already submitted for payment to the District.

Item 9H County Clerk Correspondence: 0 items.

Item 9I Intermediate Service Center Correspondence: 0 items.

Item 9J Township Treasurer Correspondence: 1 item.

A memo and information from Mike Thiessen, TTO Board President, regarding the lawsuit between the TTO and Lyons Township High School

Item 9K

Superintendent Correspondence Received: 0 items.

Superintendent Correspondence Sent: 1 item.

The YMCA asked for a letter of support in applying for a grant that assists in funding their afterschool program here.

Item 9K-A Freedom of Information Act Requests and Notices 4 items.

1. Mr. Dave Patterson requested enrollment information based upon zip code on
2. October 30, 2019. The request was fulfilled on October 30, 2019.
3. Jack, from the Cook County Observer, a publication of the League of Women Voters, requested all emails between the superintendent and administrators at Argo, 109 and 104 regarding the TTO with 7 different search terms between January 30, 2019 and November 1, 2019. The request was made on November 1, 2019 and fulfilled on November 4, 2019.
4. Jonathan Fagg, from WLS-TV, requested information regarding disciplinary actions on vaping since 2017. The request was made on November 1, 2019 and fulfilled on November 4, 2019.
5. Bethany Simpson from SmartProcure requested all purchasing records from August 6, 2019 to November 11, 2019. The request was made on November 11, 2019 and fulfilled on November 14, 2019.

Special Education

Bohac reported:

They are ahead of schedule for demolishing Queen of Peace, the asbestos abatement has been completed and demolition is on target to finish in April. They salvaged the stain glass windows, for sale or future use.

Michael Reardon, an AERO superintendent was named to the ISBE Capital Project Board for the state to determine how grant procedures will be done.

After the AERO union failed to ratify its tentative agreement, negotiations are happening focusing on paraprofessionals salaries as there is a significant shortage of them.

Principal's Report

Principal Smuda reported:

Parent Teacher Conferences were a success! The average percentage of parent attendance was approximately 83%. Three classrooms had 100% attendance! Many great quotes from the parents.

The principal held Honor Roll assemblies for students in grades 4th – 8th. The PFC attended and helped distribute awards. She was proud of everyone's positive recognition of others!

The Illinois States Attorney's office made a presentation on internet safety to grades 5th-8th. Issues discussed included online predators, sharing personal information, and digital responsibility.

Student Council sponsored a Halloween dance. The students participated in a costume contest, cake walk, and danced for a few hours! Student Council has also planned monthly games called Homeroom Wars, Last Friday, the students had to guess which high school each teacher attended. Teachers gave out subtle hints in their daily instruction to help the students figure out the answers.

Ms. Bromberger is taking the band students to the symphony on Friday. Sarah was able to secure very cheap tickets through a summer lottery. What a great experience!

The principal also applied for a \$20,000 grant from Enchanted Back Pack. She did not get the \$20,000 but she did receive \$3,000 for the teachers to use on Technology.

11A Class Size Information

Enrollment continues to fluctuate slightly.

Item 12A Building Report

1. Life/Safety Inspection

Every autumn, staff from South Cook Intermediate Service Center inspect our building for safety. The report, which is excellent, is in the packet. The minor violation has already been corrected. The automatic door closers have been on our report throughout his superintendency. We are working to get the appropriate doors and closers.

2. Air Flow

Working with an engineer and our architect, we have 3 classrooms that do not have adequate air flow, rooms 206, 207 and 211. When the air conditioning was put in place in 2005, fresh air handles for winter were not part of the new a/c units because we have an interior air handler, which was standard issue at the time. Since 2005, interior air handler are no longer considered appropriate for air movement as they move air between hallways and classrooms, not from outside.

None of the single classroom a/c units were installed with fresh air handlers for winter. However, all of the other classrooms have either windows that open or a separate fresh air handler (rooms 106 and 107).

This is going to be an expensive fix. The superintendent is getting cost estimates on 3 options; installing windows that open in 206, 207 and 211; retrofitting those 3 existing a/c units with a fresh air handler for winter; replacing those 3 existing a/c units as they are 14 years old on 15 year life expectancy.

3. Flooring legal action

After getting all existing reports from our architects, Tom Melody and a colleague of his, Carmen Forte who specializes in legal action regarding building issues, reviewed the data. We may have a case. Carmen recommended that we get an independent report on the damage to the floor. The superintendent is in the process of getting a quote on this. There are not many people who do this. So far, we've only been able to identify one – and that company is in Georgia.

4. Summer projects 2020

Work has begun to put together bid specs for the replacement of classroom doors, side panels, etc. We're also putting together bid specs for securing the front entrance further so that there are 2 locked doors between the outside and the office as well as bullet resistant glass in the vestibule.

Item 12B Long Term Leave Position

With planning for Nicole Jaronczyk’s FMLA leave this winter, we’ve posted the temporary vacancy on a number of different sites. We’ve also reached out to local universities to share with their December graduates. To date, we’ve had no one apply for the position. We’re starting to develop other options.

Item 12C School Resource Officer

Our program with the Village began on Tuesday, November 12. A letter went home to parents explaining the program on that day. It was in the packet. There are many rough edges that need to be smoothed out, but the superintendent is confident that as we grow together, that will occur.

Item 12D Vaping Parent Meeting

Along with the other Argo district’s, we are sponsors for a Parent Meeting at Argo on Tuesday, December 10 regarding the dangers of vaping and the new marijuana laws. It promises to be a good session. We will be heavily promoting it. The flyer was in the packet.

Item 13 Closed Session

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

Motion 20-050 by Weeg, seconded by McSweeney to go into Closed Session at 7:35 p.m. with the purpose of discussing probable litigation, personnel, discipline issues and school security measures.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, Ciota, Ristić , McSweeney, Hawkins, Bohac and Patrick

Motion 20-051 by Ciota, seconded by Hawkins Board returned to open session at 7:53 p.m.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, Ciota, Ristić , McSweeney, Hawkins, Bohac and Patrick

Item 14 Final Actions

The superintendent recommends the approval of the closed session minutes from September 24th, 2019.

Motion 20-052 by Weeg, seconded by Patrick to approve the closed session minutes from September 24th, 2019 closed session minutes.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, Ciota, Ristić , McSweeney, Hawkins, Bohac and Patrick

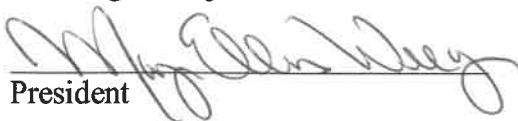
The superintendent recommends the approval of the closed session minutes from October 22nd, 2019.

Motion 20-053 by Hawkins, seconded by Ristić to approve the closed session minutes from October 22nd, 2019 closed session minutes.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, Ciota, Ristić , McSweeney, Hawkins, Bohac and Patrick

Item 16 Adjournment

**Motion 20-054: Adjournment at 7:55 pm
Motion made by McSweeney, Seconded by Weeg
Hearing no objections so moved.**



President



Secretary