

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Education
Willow Springs Consolidated School District No. 108
Tuesday, October 27, 2020
Willow Springs School Gym**

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call

Members present: Weeg, Ciota, Ristić, Tortorella, Bohac and Patrick
Administration: Superintendent Patrick & Principal Smuda

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 21-038 by Bohac, seconded by Weeg as recommended by the superintendent for the approval of the superintendent's Agenda.

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

Public Comment

Community members are invited to share their questions, comments or concerns with the school Board. When speaking, citizens should state their name and address for the record and limit their presentation to three minutes. All comments are a matter of public record and as such will be documented and recorded. Where possible, the Board will answer factual questions immediately. A written response may be provided when information is not available. If a response would involve discussion of board policy or decisions which might be of interest to citizens not present at the meeting, the Board may place the item on a future meeting agenda.

Additionally, board policy 2:230 permits the Board President to shorten a person's opportunity to speak. "The President may also deny the opportunity to speak to a person who has previously addressed the Board on the same subject." (2:230)

Community members: Tiffany Carlisle (1047 Testa Dr., Justice)
Teachers: Michelle VonBank, Ann Musto, Dena Brockob, and Jaclyn Dondlinger
Mary Sheehan custodial staff
Valerie Wacker took the minutes.

Minutes

A copy of the September 29, 2020 minutes were in the packet.

The superintendent recommends the approval of the minutes from the Regular Board Meeting for September 29, 2020.

Motion 21-039 by Ristić, seconded by Tortorella as recommended by the superintendent for the approval of the minutes from the Regular Board Meeting for September 29, 2020.

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

Nays: Ristić and Patrick

Financial Report

The auditor's report for the month of September was in the packet. Nick Cavalier from Baker Tilly presented the financial report. He answered all questions.

Levy Discussion

Nick Cavalier from Baker Tilly provided an analysis of the upcoming levy. The levy must be passed prior to December 18, 2020.

The levy is where the District determines how much tax money it will ask from the taxpayers of the District. A levy is done in the aggregate. The Board determines how much tax money it needs, and then the County Assessor determines how will be asked of each taxpayer.

We will be taxing for Tax Year 2020 which is collected in 2021. It's a year behind because one of the years of the Great Depression no taxes were levied.

At the last levy, the District did not ask for any new money. It levied for the same amount of money as it had the previous year with the intent of reducing some of the burden on the taxpayers and recognizing that the District has received an influx of State money through the Evidence Based Funding Formula over the previous State Aid formula.

For the coming year, FY2022, the superintendent anticipates that we will be receiving less State money. He also anticipates a 5% reduction for this current year. The superintendent would think the following year would be greater. 5% of the Evidence Based Funding Formula for us is roughly \$62,500.

In the analysis Nick prepared, which was reviewed at the meeting, there is a great deal of information. On page 2, is the EAV. This is the total value of the properties in the District as determined by the County. In 2019, the year we will use, the EAV is \$75.7 million. It's down a bit from 2017's triennial but significantly higher than 2015. The EAV is the base number.

On page 3, is the new property. New property can be taxed at a higher rate than existing properties. It's been 2 years since there has been new property in the District. And the previous 3 years show minimal growth, probably 1 property each year.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is marked at 2.3%. Because of property tax caps, existing properties are taxed not to exceed the CPI or 5%. Whichever is lower. New properties can be taxed at 4.99% without inviting a Levy Hearing, much like the Budget Hearing. The superintendent anticipates that the District will have a Levy Hearing when TIF1, Renaissance Station comes back on our tax roll.

Following the written pages of Nick's analysis, are 7 charts. Chart 1 is last year's levy. Looking cross the top the current EAV of \$75,673,657 and the CPI of 1.9%. On the bottom right, a total increase of \$0. The Board designed a \$0 increase.

The next 5 charts are all different versions of the upcoming levy. The first 4 all have exactly the same information except for the amount of the new property in the upper left corner and its effect in the lower right corner of new money. The bottom line is that, barring a dramatic drop in EAV (chart 6), the new money based upon existing properties is \$90,369 (lower right hand corner). That's EAV and CPI on houses that already exist. That's a workable number for the District. That allows for drops in the Evidence Based Funding Formula and some growth in the budget (teacher salaries, benefits, utilities, all of which increase). The other charts predict new money based upon increases in new property, which would be taxed at 4.89%.

The last chart is the actual levy to be submitted to the County.

Nick and the superintendent are recommending a levy of 4.89%. Existing properties are automatically reduced by the County Assessor to CPI, 2.3%. Adjustments can be made and that's why it's brought to the Board early.

The Board will vote on this at its November or December meeting.

Consent Agenda

The superintendent recommends the approval of the consent agenda.

Motion 21-040 by Bohac, 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 \$211,107.36 (8A-1-2), the reimbursement of the Imprest Fund in the amount of \$17.00 (8B) and approval of the Activity Fund balance of \$55,196.63 (8C) for the month of October 2020.

Consent #2

The superintendent recommends the approval of the financial report for the month of September 2020. Fund balances: Educational: \$4,506,936; Operations & Maintenance: \$310,149; Debt Service: \$831,171; Transportation: \$579,276; IMRF: \$238,650; Capital Projects: 211,260; Working Cash: \$533,652; Tort: \$36,167; and Fire Prevention & Life Safety \$4.

Consent #3

The superintendent recommends the destruction of the audio recordings from the Closed Session meeting of March 26, 2019 as accurate minutes exist.

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

9 Notices and Communications

The superintendent presented the following news articles:

A-a. 0 Journal article related to National and Illinois Education Issues at this time.

A-b. 0 Newspaper and related articles related to Willow Springs School

Item 9B Legislative/SCOPE report: 0 Item.

As the legislature has been out of session, there is nothing legislatively from Springfield to report.

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

Item 9D Illinois Association of School Boards Correspondence: 1 Item.

The superintendent included information about the IASB Summit that will happen in place of the usual 3 day annual conference. It is on Friday, 11/20 during the day. The superintendent will register the Board if they are interested.

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: 1 items.

Included is the latest email from the Lyons Township School Treasurer regarding the lawsuit with LTHS District 204. It appears that the case is moving closer to trial in early November. Interesting that the TTO is looking to settle before getting to trial. There are over 50 documents posted on the TTO's website at <http://www.lyonstto.net/litigation.html>

Item 9K

Superintendent Correspondence Received: 0 items.

Superintendent Correspondence Sent: 3 items.

1. September 30th letter to families extending the remote Learning through October.
2. A thank you letter to the Swanson's for the annual contribution to the SoozyQ Fund!
The Swanson's are Sue Cook's parents. Sue was a kindergarten teacher here from 1983-2011. She died in 2012 from ALS.

Item 9K-A Freedom of Information Act Requests and Notices 2 items.

1. A request from Kirkland & Ellis regarding the District's Title IX policies. It was complied with on October 16, 2020. Title IX is in reference to gender equity and discrimination. The US Department of Education has recently changed rules (August 2020) regarding Title IX. And, yes, it is a complex process.
2. A request from Vince Espi of Local Labs looking for guest speaker contracts from this year and last year. There were no guest speakers. The request was fulfilled on October 19, 2020.

Special Education

The Governing Board does not have an October meeting to report on.

Principal's Report

Principal Smuda reported:

The first quarter of school has ended. Report cards will be generated later this week and mailed home. We plan to mail home honor roll certificates, too.

The principal hosted two parent meetings on October 14th to inform parents about our new Blended Learning Model. Approximately 100 people attended between both sessions. Additionally, the principal recorded the meeting and sent it out to all families.

Families were asked to complete two surveys. The first one asked if their child(ren) were returning to in-person learning or remaining in the remote model. The second survey asked families if their child(ren) would ride the bus or be transported by parents.

Nurse Lisa has been tracking students' immunizations and determining which students to exclude from school. Willow has approximately 50 students out of compliance. The state of Illinois changed its ruling on October 10th for learners in the remote setting, stating children learning at home will not be exempt. Hopefully, this new ruling gives families a little more time to get to the physician.

Parent Teacher Conferences will be virtual this year. The EC-5th teachers will be contacting parents for appointments. Junior high teachers will make appointments through Sign-Up Genius. Parents will come to the Zoom meeting and then be placed in breakout rooms for individual conferences. We are still finalizing the details with this process.

Our school designation at the state level remains at COMMENDABLE! Due to the pandemic, all schools retained their rating from the previous year.

Back in March, the students started the IAR state assessments, but then COVID came upon us. The students completed two ELA tests and one math test. Surprisingly, we received student results for ELA! Unfortunately, there are no formal reports to manipulate the scores to get data. Reports will be sent home with the report cards.

11A Class Size Information

The enrollment report was included in the packet.

Item 12A Remote and Blended Learning

The principal shared the details on the blended plan that we have developed for implementation. It provides for at least 3 hours of remote learning daily and 3.5 hours of in-person learning with 30 minutes of remote in the afternoon with a teacher. The rest of the time to 5 hours will be independent work.

On 10/15 the superintendent thought we would be in Blended Learning in November. With the rise of rates, including in Willow Springs (we had 2 days this week over 8%), he is less certain. He watches the numbers daily.

The plan on 10/15 would have included a Remote Learning Planning Day on Wednesday, November 4th (Teacher Institute) to put the final touches on the classrooms and materials preparation. We would phase the students back into the building, K-2 and Cross Cat special ed on Thursday, November 5th. Grades 3-5 on Monday November 9th and 6-8 on Thursday, November 12th.

Because we can't control where people travel to over the holidays, the superintendent would also recommend that on the full week following Thanksgiving Break and the full week following Winter Break that we have full remote learning with an immediate return on the following Mondays.

If we don't return on November 5th, the superintendent would also recommends that we wait until the new year, Monday, January 10th for the earliest possibility of Blended,

The superintendent included the grade distribution report in the packet as well. Clearly, over last year looking at the same time period, the number of Fs is up. Some of it is diminished participation in specials (doing yoga and exercises from online is not thrilling). While our attendance rate remains high at 94.6%, we have a few chronic student attendance issues (10 students, 4 families). One of the greatest motivators for 6-8th graders are the after school programs and athletics, you cannot participate if you're not passing everything. That carrot doesn't exist, and won't for some time. At the same time, the number of As remains consistent with last year, We've added tutoring after school for our failing students. Roughly 50% choose to attend. They've been paired in small groups of 3 or 4 with a teacher. It's having a positive effect on those that are attending.

Looking at our staff: as of October 21st, we've had 2 positive cases (unrelated to school) of COVID19. We've had 19 staff members isolate/quarantine since August because of symptoms or exposure. We have had 4 staff members work from home because of child care issues or traveling to a Hot Spot. On October 21st, we had 7 teachers working from home. We would probably have had 2 classes have to work from home on that day because we would not have had supervision for them in the classroom. The teachers have been able to work from home. When possible, we would put a substitute in the class and have the teacher teach from home with assistance from the sub here in school. We would not have been able to do that for the 2 classes on 10/21. We will also have 2 staff members on medical work from home orders when we go blended.

What are our neighbors doing? About 1/3 of South Cook districts have some sort of in-person learning in place already. Another 1/3 are planning to potentially return in November. The final 1/3 are staying remote at least through the holidays. 109 has been in-person for nearly a month. They send a high number of children home daily. 104 is perhaps looking at a return in December. Argo sent a letter stating a potential return on 11/5, however, the rates in Summit are still too high to warrant a return to school.

Survey results: As of 10/22 in the early afternoon, we have over 80 students who will be fully remote. We are reaching out to 70 families we haven't heard from yet. Our final results as of 10/26 are: 165 (about 44%) want to stay remote and 201 would like to come back as Blended Learning. 10 – 12 families did not respond so they will stay all remote. We would have 100 – 105 bus riders. The bus limit is 47, we were trying to have 36 on a bus but as on 10/28/20 per the Governor we will only be able to have 25 on a bus.

Weeg motioned all instruction remains remote at this time and the Board will readdress at the next Board meeting on November 17, 2020.

Motion 21-041 by Weeg, seconded by Bohac all instruction remains remote and the Board will readdress at the next Board meeting on November 17, 2020.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, and Bohac

Nays: Ciota, Ristić, Tortorella, and Patrick

Motion Failed.

2nd motion all instruction remains remote through the winter holidays and the Board will readdress at the December 15, 2020 Board meeting for a potential return in January.

Motion 21-042 by Weeg, seconded by Bohac all instruction remains remote through the winter holidays and the Board will readdress at the December 15, 2020 Board meeting for a potential return in January.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, and Bohac

Nays: Ciota, Ristić, Tortorella, and Patrick

Motion Passed.

Ristić motioned to direct the superintendent to make a plan for social emotional needs especially for those at risk.

Motion 21-043 by Ristić, seconded by Weeg to direct the superintendent to make a plan for social emotional needs especially for those at risk.

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

Motion Passed.

Item 12B Kindergarten Position

The principal and superintendent changed tactics a bit with the kindergarten position. With the blended model, they don't think we need a full time person. They think, at most, they will need a half time person in the morning to do in-person learning. The principal and superintendent are confident that Desiree and Alicia will be able to handle the remote kids in the afternoon.

We currently have a half –time early childhood position filled by Laura Baricovich. She is interested in working full-time. She'll be fine in kindergarten as well.

When we are ready to make the change, we can do that. She knows there's no set date, at this point.

This modification will save the District a half time salary.

Item 12C First Student Contract Amendment

First Student has submitted an amendment proposal. It has a lot to question. The superintendent has already informed First Student that it is not acceptable.

Basically, they're looking for the 40% for full remote. The superintendent thinks we can reduce that to around 30%. They're looking for 100% when we go Blended. That's fair. We will need the buses. The problem is if we have to reduce or go full remote again, they'll continue to look for 100%. Indefinitely. This is definitely a non-starter. They have also included a paragraph that says that their version of the contract meets CARES Act requirements. There are no requirements in the CARES Act regarding student transportation.

There's nothing to do right now except wait and negotiate.

Item 12D Building Repairs

The summer work is finally completed! About a month ago, we noticed some "dust" on portions of the ceiling in the gym. It looks like dust. However, we did have it tested and its mold. The good news is that it's a non-toxic mold. It's that same mold that is in the trees outside. It's just collecting on our gym ceiling. It is as safe to be in the gym as it is to be outside.

We are researching why this is happening. At this point, we only have speculation. We are going to identify the cause and remedy it to prevent it from happening again.

We've already contracted to have the mold cleaned up. We are waiting until the problem is remedied before we do that though. We don't want to pay for it twice. It's roughly \$3,500.

Item 12G Office Winter Break Hours

The following hours are proposed for the school office over the Winter Break:

Monday 12/21 through Wednesday 12/23 – 8-2
Closed on Thursday 12/24 & Friday 12/25
Monday 12/28 through Wednesday 12/30 – 8-2
Closed Thursday 12/31 & Friday 1/1

The superintendent recommends the Winter Break office hours as presented.

Motion 21-044 by Weeg, seconded by Tortorella as recommended by the Superintendent set the Winter Break office hours as presented.

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

Item 13 Annual District Progress Report

The District maintained its Commendable rating. It's not the usual October report because State testing was not completed last year. The traditional version we're used to looking at has not been made available by the State. Also State averages have not been made available.

We will share MAP growth data from September to January in February.

Item 14 Calendar Information

Item 15 Closed Session

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

Motion 20-045 by Ciota, seconded by Weeg to go into Closed Session at 8:19 p.m. with the purpose of discussing probable litigation, personnel, discipline issues and school security measures.

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

Motion 20-046 by Ciota, seconded by Weeg Board returned to open session at 8:39 p.m.

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

Item 16 Final Actions

The superintendent recommends the acceptance of Stephanie Patrick’s resignation with gratitude for her service to the students and families of the District.

Motion 21-047 by Weeg, seconded by Bohac as recommended by the Superintendent the acceptance of Stephanie Patrick’s resignation with gratitude for her service to the students and families of the District.

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

President Weeg presented Ms. Patrick with a plaque honoring her service on behalf of the District. The superintendent reminded the Board of the process for filling a vacancy. The position will be advertised in the DesPlaines Valley News, the District’s website, and the school marquee. The Board has 60 days to fill the vacancy.

Superintendent Patrick also reminded the Board of the 2021 election process and that candidate packets are available.

Staff Holiday Activities

In the past, the Board has graciously hosted a holiday party for staff members. The cost has roughly averaged \$800-\$1000 for the District. A party during COVID is not a good idea. The superintendent is proposing the Board purchase a \$15 Teachers Pay Teachers gift card for each teacher. Teachers Pay Teachers is a website where teachers who have created materials for learning sell the materials to other teachers. Our teachers make great use of this site on a regular basis.

The Board discussed this and decided to go a more personal route for the staff using \$20 Amazon gift cards as well as a food snack.

Motion 21-048 by Tortorella, seconded by Weeg instead of a holiday staff party this year, that each staff member be honored with a \$20 Amazon Gift Card as well as a food treat for the Thanksgiving holiday.

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

Item 17 Adjournment


Motion 21-049: Adjournment at 8:45 pm

Motion made by, Bohac Seconded by Ristić

Hearing no objections so moved.



President



Secretary