

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Education
Willow Springs Consolidated School District No. 108
Tuesday, January 25, 2022
Willow Springs School Library**

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:32 p.m.

Roll Call

Members present: Weeg, Ristić, Bohac, Hawkins(6:37), Anderson, Mierop and Nunez
Administration: Superintendent Bahn & Principal Oreluk

Pledge of Allegiance

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

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, Justice) and Kamilana Parta(225 W. Ashland, Chicago)
Teachers: Kim Cahill, Lauren O'Reilly, Joy Tristano, Terri & Laura Baricovich, Dawn DeAnda, Monica Dickman, Deanna Swicionis, Renata Rusin, Jadda Castaneda, Nikki Theodoropoulos, Ann Musto, Sarah Bromberger, Allie Cook, Mary Sheehan, Michaele Strauch, Sharon Conrad, Isabel Lietza, Kendall Pignato, Dena Brockob, Elena Delahera, Michelle VonBank and Juan Garcia
Valerie Wacker took the minutes.

Terri Baricovich, teacher spoke, asking what is Willow Springs School Family? She said just like most of yours and ours, when one family member hurts, we all hurt. Doesn't matter, clerical, nurse, subs, maintenance, para's, certified or administration. Just like most families, some members are stronger than others to speak up but all are just as valuable. Willow Springs School as always has been a "Safe Zone" to speak our minds and agree or disagree but Always Respect is given to all at All times. No verbal threats, punishment or retribution, a No Bully Zone for all. We are professionals and deserve respect. Must be backed up by administration vs students till all stories are told. Students need LIMITS and consequence's like at home. We need private areas to be able to speak as needed. The office should be a detention hall.

Kim Cahill, teacher and president of the Willow Springs Council stated:

As the voice for the union members present here behind me. She wanted to address the Board as to the current school year here at Willow stating: We all have been working very hard together to bring about the best for our student community. Being in this loop year of a pandemic, it has had its challenges, but we have tried to make school as normal and engaging as possible.

We came here tonight to express that we need more support to continue bringing success to our students. And I quote, "As we know, you don't rise to the level of your goals, you fall to the level of your systems." Administration has been very open to sharing their goals and ideas for changes to occur. We feel there are great ideas planned for the future of Willow Springs School, and we need help, for example, ensuring school staff and student safety are included. We would like those systems to put in place enable success with student behavior and expectations for the remainder of this 2021-22 school year.

One such way we can do so is to share some ideas brought forth by our School Improvement committee, which is part of our bargaining agreement with the district. Three main areas of improvement we seek are in student discipline and safety, communication, and building maintenance.

We would like to suggest forming a Discipline Committee. The committee would create a framework of expectations and consequences, using the guidelines set up in the existing Student Handbook. The administration and staff could then utilize this framework for a more consistent, controlled implementation. Another suggestion is using a coded announcement system that can be made for a trained team member to respond if a classroom situation were to escalate and assistance is needed.

A second area of improvement is that of daily custodial maintenance. We are asking that in the existing scenario of the COVID pandemic, the district secure more custodial help or authorize more overtime to insure that health and safety standards are continued.

Finally, and most importantly, to build and keep important connections with students and staff, more effort is needed to communicate and “get to know” this Willow community. Oftentimes, workplace communication can be the source of frustration, when it should be the solution. Good communication builds trust and creates a more enjoyable place to work. We are asking for simple acknowledgement when emails are viewed, or request for immediate assistance are sent.

Great things are happening in this building. We look forward to continued successes at Willow as we work together to make that happen.

Thank you for your time.

Board/Superintendent Announcements

Superintendent Bahn stated Nick Cavaliere from Baker Tilly could not make it to the meeting tonight.

Financial Report and Tax Levy Discussion

The financial reports for the months of December were in the packets. The superintendent stated that Revenues are up do to tax payments and Expenditures are down from last year.

Consent Agenda

The superintendent recommends the approval of the consent agenda.

Motion 22-050 by Bohac, seconded by Hawkins as recommended by the superintendent for the approval of the consent agenda.

Consent #1

A copy of the Regular Board Meeting December 14, 2021 minutes were in the packet.

The superintendent recommends the approval of the minutes from the Regular Board Meeting on December 14, 2021.

Consent #2

The superintendent recommends the approval of the payroll and the approval of the bills in the amount of \$269,533.67 (7b), the reimbursement of the Imprest Fund in the amount of \$736.94 (7c) and approval of the Activity Fund balance of \$53,518.66 (7d) for the month of January 2022.

Consent #3

The superintendent recommends the approval of the financial report for the month of December 2021. Fund balances: Educational: \$4,429,231; Operations & Maintenance: \$168,755; Debt Service: \$358,478; Transportation: \$579,250; IMRF: \$167,041; Capital Projects: 147,825; Working Cash: \$537,113; Tort: \$40,669; and Fire Prevention & Life Safety \$5.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, Ristić, Bohac, Hawkins, Anderson, Mierop and Nunez

Item 8 Action Items

Item 8A Approval of Teacher Contract – Long Term Leave Position

The superintendent stated one of our 1st grade teachers will be out for the remainder of the school year and we were unable to fill this vacancy prior to the beginning of her leave. This was discussed with the Board at the December meeting. At that time the superintendent shared the classes were split and transitioned into the two remaining 1st grade classrooms. The position stayed posted and a certified teacher was secured to fill this position for the remainder of the year. Students will not be split into three classrooms but will stay in two classroom and a plan will be worked on with the existing 1st grade team and the new teacher to co-teach all of the 1st grade students. This plan allows for the least disruption to the students' learning and provides the necessary support to the staff and students.

The superintendent recommends the approval of the contract for Miss Lauren Vorva as a 1st grade teacher for the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year.

Motion 22-051 by Ristić, seconded by Weeg as recommended by the superintendent for the approval of the contract for Miss Lauren Vorva as a 1st grade teacher for the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, Ristić, Bohac, Hawkins, Anderson, Mierop and Nunez

Item 8B Approval of FMLA Request

A letter was included to the Board from Mrs. Meghan Litko – Willow Springs School Director of Special Education. Mrs. Litko is expecting a child near the end of March 2022, and is requesting leave for the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year.

As with any FMLA request, the start date of this leave is subject to change. The superintendent will work with Meghan regarding the dates of her leave and update the Board of any changes. Meghan's actual first day or two out of the building she may work remotely. A meeting will take place to work on a possible replacement.

The superintendent recommends the approval of the FMLA request for Mrs. Meghan Litko for the period of time indicated within her letter.

Motion 22-052 by Ristić, seconded by Hawkins as recommended by the superintendent for the FMLA request for Mrs. Meghan Litko for the period of time indicated within her letter.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, Ristić, Bohac, Hawkins, Anderson, Mierop and Nunez

Item 8C Approval of Board Secretary Stipend

The superintendent included a memo to the Board with details regarding the annual payments to the Board of Education secretary and the Board's recording secretary. The memo provides the details of these payments.

The superintendent recommends the approval of the annual stipend payments in the amounts of \$180.00 for the Willow Springs Board of Ed secretary, and the \$1,050.00 Willow Springs Board of Ed recording secretary as defined within the memo.

Motion 22-053 by Hawkins, seconded by Weeg as recommended by the superintendent for the approval of the annual stipend payments in the amounts of \$180.00 for the Willow Springs Board of Ed secretary, and the \$1,050.00 Willow Springs Board of Ed recording secretary as defined within the memo.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, Ristić, Bohac, Hawkins, Anderson, Mierop and Nunez

Item 8D Approval of Lawn Maintenance Contract

The superintendent included a copy of the contract for the lawn maintenance of Willow Springs School for 2022. The details of this agreement are included within the contract. They worked for Willow Springs School in the past and are not raising their prices.

The Board decided to table this item to collect more information. They do not start till April 1st. Juan stated the tractor was broken but is fixed now.

Item 8E Approval of Milk Contract

The superintendent included a copy of the milk contract with Clover Leaf Farms for the 2022-2023 school year. The details of this agreement are included in the attached letter. This contract renewal comes with an increase of \$0.02 per pint for the 2022-2023 school year. If the school needs to cancel a delivery for any reason on the day of the delivery we will still have to pay for that delivery but only that one not any subsequent to the 1st one. Clover Leaf Farms is the only milk distributor that we can get our milk from.

The superintendent recommends the approval of the milk contract with Clover Leaf Farms of Crestwood, Illinois 2022-2023 school year with an increase in costs of \$0.02 per pint.

Motion 22-054 by Bohac, seconded by Hawkins as recommended by the superintendent for the approval of the milk contract with Clover Leaf Farms of Crestwood, Illinois 2022-2023 school year with an increase in costs of \$0.02 per pint.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, Ristić, Bohac, Hawkins, Anderson, Mierop and Nunez

Item 9 Presentations/Committee Reports

9A Winter Data Presentation

The superintendent shared current academic data for Willow Springs School by grade level. This information has been gathered from the 2021 fall results and is the most recent round of assessments which were completed with the past two weeks. The presentation was included in the Presentation/Committee Reports tab in the binder packet.

9B Principal's Report

Principal Oreluk reported:

Big Life Journals were purchased for 1st – 4th grades and Big Life Journal: Teen Edition for 5th and 6th grades. This is a research based journal and she surveyed the staff to see who would be interested in using it before she purchased it. It focuses on big ideas and problem solving. Each student will have a journal buddy. The students will keep the journal at school but will take it home at the end of year as a guide for the students. These journals will help the students figure out what they want to do after they leave Willow. The Board was able to look at samples of the books.

The principal went over the NWEA Winter Map Assessment and Access Testing. She will be able to provide more information next month. This information will give us insight on how we can improve.

Access Testing there are four main domains: Writing, Reading, Speaking and Listening. This testing is done with all the ELL, English Language Learners students and is required and measures their progress towards English Language proficiency. The assessment is created based off of the WIDA English Language Development Standards.

Upcoming Professional Development: In collaboration with the Willow Professional Development Committee, Lurie's Children Hospital will provide professional development on gender identity. Gender 101: Creating Gender Inclusive Environments which will overview shared language and key concepts; impact of gender on our society; supporting those who come out and best practices (institution, leadership and personal). Looking to find out how we use language in our building to make everyone feel safe.

Caught Being Good raffles are being done every two weeks for all ages to win. This will continue to encourage proper mask wearing, helping others and our school, and being respectful. Students in EC – 8th grades have won numerous prizes.

9C Enrollment Report

The enrollment report was in the packet. It includes grade level enrollment numbers cohort from the end of last school year, the middle of August 2021, October 2021, December 2021 and January 2022 for comparison purposes.

Item 10 Information/Discussion Items

10A 2022-2023 School Calendar (2nd Draft)

The superintendent included a second draft of the 2022-2023 school calendar for Board review and discussion. He listed several related items below. He discussed this proposed calendar with the Willow Springs Leadership Team last week, and sent it to the entire staff for review and feedback following that discussion. He shared staff feedback with the Board. After tonight's discussion the superintendent will revise the contract into the final form and send it to the Board for a final review. He will bring the final draft to the Board in February for approval. He also reviewed the proposed calendars of Districts 104, 109, and 217. The start and end of the school year is consistent with District 217. He shared his thoughts regarding the start of the school year for grades 1st – 8th and an alternative date of August 19th for the kindergarten classrooms. Winter and Spring breaks are aligned with District 217; Willow has a waiver allowing for student attendance on the following holiday. The superintendent did not mark all of these as non-student attendance days on this draft: Columbus/Indigenous Peoples' Day; Veterans' Day; Martin Luther King Jr Day; Lincoln's Birthday; Presidents' Day or Casimir Pulaski's Birthday.

Tuesday November 8, 2022 is election day and public schools in Illinois are not allowed to be open on this date. This will add another day to the calendar.

April 7, 2022 is a date that is included in the current calendar as a non-attendance day. The superintendent discussed how to proceed with this day going forward.

This draft currently has 27 weeks with 5 full days of instruction.

ISBE calendar guidelines offer districts up to 4 Professional Learning Days per year. The superintendent included 4 possible dates in this draft.

Within the current CBA, there is no defined time for staff meetings outside of the contractual days. Currently there are several ½ days of attendance with the current calendar. He shared his thoughts on these days and gave an option of students having an early dismissal day every Wednesday. They would leave an hour early.

Staff Feedback:

The superintendent received four messages with feedback regarding the calendar. One message asked about the Pulaski holiday. The other three messages expressed concern about having students in school on Halloween.

The superintendent doesn't see any reason not to have school on Halloween but was open to suggestions of why it is better not to have school on Halloween. One of the messages included a positive comment about the delayed start date for kindergarten. Another message suggested having parent/teacher conferences on Monday, November 7th. This is the day before Election Day which is required to be a non-attendance day. The superintendent shared his thoughts regarding this day.

Item 10B Willow Springs Strategic Plan

The superintendent the desire to begin a strategic planning process for the district. He would like to begin the planning phase of this process over the next few weeks, including a tentative schedule for the creation of a plan, the development of a committee to draft a plan, and timelines for the completion of the plan. Additionally, he discussed the use of an outside consultant to help facilitate this process. He believes that the creation of the first long-range plan will benefit greatly from having an outside view of the district and areas that we need to focus. He recommended an former superintendent that he has worked with in the past that specializes in this line of work. He will give a report of what they are doing by February. The superintendent will lead the Special Board of Ed planning meeting on Saturday, February 5, 2022.

Item 10C COVID Update

The superintendent provided an update regarding COVID. As of yesterday there is one positive case and nine quarantines. About 20 families do not feel comfortable sending their students to school since the outbreak. New guidelines which are stricter regarding masks when students come back from quarantine. They now have to stay totally masked for five days when they come back from quarantine. To help with this guideline a make shift lunch room was made out in the hallway to help further distance the students when they come back from quarantine. School-wide COVID testing is set to begin on February 1, 2022. Opt out forms will be sent home with students to give parents the option of opting their students out of testing.

Item 10D AERO Update

Micki Bohac reported:

AERO will begin preparation for the budget. They will need Willow Springs School's enrollment projection for the next school year by March.

They voted on increasing the Paraprofessionals starting salary to \$19.00 per hour. They are currently short 4 Paras. They are hoping this will help close this gap.

They are in the process of hiring a New Executive Director that would begin 7/1/2022 to work with Dr. Grunell for one year. They started with 10 applications and are down to 3.

Item 10E New Assessments and Automated Learning Tools

The superintendent has been researching various assessments to support the students and staff, as well as automated learning tools which he hopes to pilot for the remainder of the current school year.

11 Communications/Correspondence

11A Desplaines Valley News

The superintendent included the article of the Willow Springs Police Department takes kids on a shopping spree from 12/21/21. This article includes pictures of some Willow students and their experience with the police department.

Also included an article with the ARGO seniors recognized as state scholars from 12/23/21. Two former Willow students earned this scholarship: Emma Szponder and Jordan Wendt.

Item 13 Items For Next Agenda

2022-2023 School Calendar Adoption

First draft of 2022-2023 staffing plan

Item 14 Closed Session

Request to conduct a Closed Session pursuant to Chapter 102, Paragraph 2 of the Statutes of the State of Illinois and as per board policy for the purpose(s) of discussing pending legal actions; the appointment, employment, and/or dismissal of an employee(s) and/or other matters governed by the above-stated Statutes therein as per motion to adjourn.

The superintendent recommends going into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing matters pertaining to litigation and student discipline.

Motion 22-055 by Bohac, seconded by Weeg to go into Closed Session at 7:55 p.m. with the purpose of discussing matters pertaining to litigation and student discipline.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weeg, Ristić, Bohac, Hawkins, Anderson, Mierop and Nunez

Board left closed session at 9:24 p.m. but did not have a need to go back into Open Session.

Item 16 Adjournment

Motion 22-056: Adjournment at 9:26 pm

Motion made by, Weeg Seconded by Anderson

Hearing no objections so moved.

President

Secretary