

Oak Park River Forest League of Women Voters Eyewitness Report

Observed by: Diana Shea

Date: 5/22/18

Meeting Length: 4 h 23 minutes

Meeting Name: District 97 Board of Education

D97 School Board delays vote on Preliminary Renovation Plans for Lincoln Elementary

What did the Board decide?

- D97 Board approved an expenditure for [Leveled Literacy Intervention](#), [landscaping bid for Clauss Brothers](#), [\(small\) summer construction projects](#), and vendors for warehouse items ([custodial supplies](#), [dust mops](#).)

What else did the Board discuss or refer to committee?

- D97 Board had a learning session which covered three topics:
 - [Staff Diversity and plans for hiring season](#)
 - [Teacher Mentoring Curriculum](#)
 - [Professional learning opportunities](#)
- D97 Board discussed the [annual recertification of hazardous crossings](#) for the State of Illinois with the purpose of qualifying for busing expense reimbursements. There is an IDOT point system that is used to determine if a crossing is hazardous. When asked, the Vice Superintendent of Finance stated that the crossings have not been rescored using the IDOT ratings system since their original application for hazardous status and likely no longer meet the requirements. The Board has requested more information and may consider including the topic of hazardous crossings in a broader conversation with the community around transportation considerations.
- Committee Reports
 - The June 5 Facilities Advisory Committee meeting will take place at Holmes, following a tour of the construction progress. Topic of discussion will be Lincoln renovation.
 - Datta and Braymeier reported that there have been a few more meetings (Longfellow, Julian, Beye, Brooks) to get community input on the Equity Policy for the Committee on Community Engagement (CCE).
 - The PTO Council is evaluating the district's use of plastic straws
- The Village of Oak Park has created a [Taxing Body Efficiency Tax Force](#) and asked the D97 Village Board for responses to some specific questions in [this](#)

[memo](#). The Board's efforts to connect with the Tax Force via phone (and email?) have not been answered.

Unexpected Votes, Events, Testimony or Items to Watch for in the Future

- Broy shared with the Board that she felt blindsided by some of the things shared in the Facilities presentation at the 5/8 meeting (Lincoln and Longfellow renovations). Many of the Board members agreed that they would not be able to support the preliminary Lincoln plans without more information. A discussion ensued.
 - The Board Members posed several questions and asked the district to provide more information:
 - What do we expect to pay for with \$57M and what are the cost estimates for those items? (i.e. we can't spend so much on Lincoln that we can't afford HVAC and life safety upgrades at other schools)
 - Is the capacity issue at Lincoln a temporary problem? And can we solve it another way? (e.g. boundary changes or temporary classrooms)
 - Is there a way to lower the cost of the renovation?
 - What is maximum classroom capacity using contractual limits? In order to minimize construction, do we go to higher classroom sizes? (The Board discussed this question, making it clear that determination of class sizes takes many things in to consideration: space, layout, make up of students in the class considering IEPs, 504s. In the Referendum, the Board promised to keep class sizes below the state average, which can be measured a number of different ways: individual schools or across grades)
 - The Board decided that it would not be ready for a vote on the Lincoln renovation plans on June 12. Instead, the Board expects to take action at the July 17 Board meeting
 - The Location of the June 12 Board Meeting will still be Lincoln, as planned