

Oak Park River Forest High School Board
August 25, 2016
Mary Haley, Observer

Present: Jeff Weissglass-President, Jackie Moore-Vice-President, Tom Cofsky, Steve Gevinson, Sara Dixon Spivy and Fred Arkin (via phone.)
Absent: Jennifer Cassell

Mr. Weissglass called the meeting to order at 7:31.

Recognition: The board recognized the Oak Park Police Department for its work in solving the ongoing problem of bike thefts on the school campus.

Public Comment: Three speakers expressed their belief that the board should not renew its contract with Marcia Sutter (d.b.a. Minding Your Business.) The speakers questioned what they considered an ethical lapse by Ms. Sutter in including a reference to a pro referendum advocacy group in her proposal.

Introductory Reports: Jamelyn Lederhouse of Global Glimpse reported on the success of this summer's program, which included 15 OPRFHS students traveling to Ecuador/Nicaragua. Four of the students spoke of their experiences, citing the opportunities for cross-cultural immersion, leadership development and service components that included teaching English and building playgrounds.

Consent Items: All items were passed unanimously. Tom Cofsky requested a discussion of Item D, *Personnel Recommendations, including New Hires and Resignation*, prior to the vote. In June, members of the history department expressed their disappointment that a candidate whom they considered a "superstar" was not hired because, they believed, of salary constraints. If paying a salary in the \$135,000 range was a guarantee of a "superstar" level of teaching, Mr. Cofsky questioned if the current staff members in that bracket were teaching at that level. He suggested that OPRFHS look at a different model for hiring and retention of teachers based on more criteria than longevity.

Action Items: Prior to voting on the renewal of OPRFHS's contract with Marcia Sutter, an attorney from Franczek Redelet reviewed permitted and prohibited actions of board members related to a referendum. (For a detailed view of this subject, visit https://intranet.oprfhs.org/board-of-education/board_meetings/Regular_Meetings/Agendas/2016-17/20160825%20REG%20Agenda.pdf)

The vote was 5-1 against renewing this contract. Mr. Arkin voted in favor, citing the excellent work Ms. Sutter had already done in helping to engage the community in discussions of the new pool and referendum. The other board members agreed that her past work has been good and that the questionable language in the new contract had been corrected. However, they believed, the perception by the community of an ethical mistake by Ms. Sutter could not be undone and that it might jeopardize support for the referendum. Therefore, they voted against the item. Board members did agree that additional support for Karin Sullivan, Director of Communications and Community Relations, would likely be needed to prepare all the materials needed to educate the community on the referendum question.

The board also heard information about the River Forest TIF. Language was added to the proposal that eminent domain would not be used to acquire single- family homes in the TIF district.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:21.