

## Oak Park River Forest League of Women Voters Eyewitness Report

Observed by Mary Haley

Date: October 26, 2017

Meeting Length: 2 hrs 15 min

Meeting Name: District 200 School Board

### **Headline: Board Rejects Renewal of Medical and Dental Insurance**

What did the Board decide?

- By a vote of 4-3, the board rejected the proposed renewal of medical and dental insurance for OPRFHS employees. Despite the fact that open enrollment for 2018-2019 is due to begin on October 30, the majority of the board stated that not enough had been done to contain the cost of insurance. Tom Cofsky, board member, pointed out that insurance is the largest cost the board votes on each year and that OPRFHS is paying more than comparable school districts. Linda Yefsky, a representative of Gallagher Benefits service that administers district claims, had initially projected a 7.4% increase in cost due in part to more serious claims from older staff and retirees as well as more younger teachers having children. After agreements with employees to pay more for certain services, the projected increase dropped to 5.4%. Brenda Horton, Human Resource Director, will take the proposal back to the Insurance Committee to talk about other ways to lower the cost.
- At a special board meeting held on October 31, the board voted unanimously to renew the medical and dental plans. Some changes had been made to the initial proposal, including an agreement by the Insurance Committee to look at ways to hold down costs.

What else did the Board discuss?

- Dr. Pruitt-Adams, district superintendent, summarized the ongoing conversations with the Oak Park and River Forest Park districts regarding funding for a community recreation center. Three possibilities were discussed: 1.) do nothing with the collaboration; 2.) contribute \$5M to be matched by the other entities and loan \$25M to the collaboration; or 3.) contribute \$5M and put up \$25M as a bond issue. Under scenario 3, the district most likely would have to go for an operating referendum the same year. Karin Sullivan, communications director, warned that this

might mean going to the community twice asking for referendums. The board asked for further information before voting on the issue.

Events and Testimony:

- Gale Landers, Founder and CEO of FFC (Fitness Formula Club), asked the board to reconsider joining with the park districts to build a community recreation center. Such a center, he stated, would be tax-exempt and unfair to private fitness centers in the villages. These centers pay a considerable amount in taxes and offer employment to many people. The high taxes paid to support the high school should not be used to support the park districts.