

Oak Park River Forest League of Women Voters Eyewitness Report

Observed by: Diana Shea

Date: Dec 19, 2017 Meeting Length: 3 hours 20 minutes

Meeting Name: District 97 Board of Education

D97 Board Approves Final Levy Amount

What did the Board decide?

- District 97 Board approved the **adoption of the 2017 Final Levy amount**. This amount is 3.00% overall when compared to last year's tax extension, exclusive of bond and interest. The deadline to file Certificate of Tax Levy is December 26, 2017.
- District 97 Board approved the **Audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017** as prepared by Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP.

What else did the Board discuss or refer to committee?

- The Board heard a **presentation by Dr. Evans regarding the adoption of the 2017 Final Levy Amount**. Dr. Evans estimates that the adoption of the 2017 Final Levy Amount will save the district \$150,000 in interest. The Board suggested that it will look at ways to make sure future boards understand the original intent with this Levy amount (to pay off debt, reducing interest expense) and that it will fix the overage through future policies. Board President Holly Spurlock underscored that the Final Levy amount is not permanent. It can be adjusted in the near future as the Board gets more information.
- The Board heard a presentation from **Mr. Nick Cavaliere with Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP**, the District's new auditing firm. Baker Tilly issued an "Unmodified audit opinion" for the 2017 fiscal year end audit, which is the highest level of comment from an external auditor. There were two primary risks identified during the course of the audit: (1) external adjustments and (2) day to day management risks. The District has compensating policies that have mitigated these risks. There were also a few minor findings from the grant compliance audit.
- The Board heard a **Debt Service Extension Basis (DSEB) presentation from Elizabeth M. Hennessy with Raymond James**. The board postponed issue of DSEB dollars. Several options were reviewed. The majority of board members

felt it was best not to issue the DSEB bonds and levy the maximum amount under Property Tax Extension Law Limit (PTELL) funds. There will be a discussion of financing options at the Financial Oversight Review Committee (FORC) meeting in January. Ms. Hennessy will also be in attendance at the February meeting of the Board.

- The Board discussed the **Equity Policy draft** recently published by the District 97 Policy Review Team (Keecia Broy, Bob Spatz and Chris Jasculca) and next steps for incorporating community input. Issues that the Board discussed include whether the scope of the policy should (1) include equity overall or be more specifically targeted towards racial equity and (2) go beyond student achievement, including workforce, contractors, purchasing. The Board discussed several options for next steps. The Board agreed that they would like for the community to be engaged in defining the policy. Board members Breymaier and Datta will bring this question to the Committee on Community Engagement (CCE) by 1/12/18.

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

- The Financial Oversight Review Committee (FORC) will review Budget Authority Adoption in January 2018. The Board will review 5 year plan in late January 2018.
- A plan for addressing the equity policy will be forthcoming.

Any other comments or observations

- The Board heard **public comment on the topic of the 2017 Final Levy Amount**. The citizens that commented were not in favor of the proposed Levy Amount due to rising taxes in Oak Park and its threat to our economic diversity. Of particular note, Dan Moroney, current Trustee for the Village of Oak Park, and one other former Trustee for the Village of Oak Park both made comments against adoption of the Levy amount.
- The Board heard **public comment on the topic of the Drafty Equity Policy**. Citizens that commented emphasized that they would like for the scope of the policy to include the workforce as well as curriculum.