

Oak Park River Forest League of Women Voters Eyewitness Report

Observed by: Diana Shea

Date: Sept 4, 2018 Meeting Length: 3 hours

Meeting Name: District 97 Board of Education

HEADLINE: D97 Expresses Concerns About Lack of Information in Advance of Budget Approval

What did the Board decide?

- The D97 Board approved a contract to [continue work with Alma Consulting](#) to build a diverse workforce.
- The D97 Board approved a [motion](#) to issue bonds in order to increase the Working Cash Fund in an amount not to exceed \$7,650,000.

What else did the Board discuss or refer to committee?

- The D97 Board heard a report from Superintendent Kelley that included:
 - a new initiative to encourage attendance (i.e., remedy chronic absence), report
 - a discussion of curriculum committee progress (Pillar 1 Update) and Professional Development Plan (12 events last year were attended by 97 unique teachers).
- Spatz gave an update on the Financial Oversight Review Committee (FORC).
 - The committee has several upcoming items that the Board will action on. President Spurlock asked if FORC could present to the Board to review these upcoming decisions so that the Board has some preview before decisions need to be made. The administration is building a calendar of the timing of the upcoming financial decisions. It will consider including construction decisions in the same calendar as those decisions are tightly intertwined.
 - The committee needs new members
- Spatz gave an update on the Facilities and Infrastructure Committee.
 - There is continued conversation about the construction projects. Because of the bond sales, the timing of construction and the amount of expenditures is more tightly related, and the committee will need to monitor the cash flow situation closely.
 - The CFO suggested that D97 Board should expect a bid packet soon that will have better estimate of costs and comparison to what had

been previously presented. The board will be able to better develop assumptions about when the work will be done and the timing of the cash flows.

- President Spurlock reminded the CFO that the D97 Board had talked about finding ways to reduce expenses by considering options and alternatives for design and aesthetic.
- Breymaier and Datta gave an update on Committee for Community Engagement (CCE)
 - The current chair is willing to continue serving on the committee but not willing to be chair this year. The charge for the committee is very different from the other citizen committees and may need to be revisited.
 - The D97 Board decided that the feedback that CCE has received on the Equity Policy will go to the Board Policy Committee, and it will continue to consider lessons learned from CCE experience last year and what it would like for it to be going forward.

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

- The D97 Board will approve a final budget at the 9/25/2018 meeting. The D97 Board expressed concern to the CFO that it has not received as much documentation in advance of the upcoming Budget Approval as it is accustomed to. The date of the meeting cannot be changed because it has been publicly announced. The CFO said that the board will have more documentation soon. The current draft shows the district operating at a deficit, but the CFO said that he had not yet fully adjusted the expense side yet. Breymaier expressed some frustration that if turns out that the budget will be at a deficit, the Board might not have approved some recent expenditures, had it known further in advance.
- Breymaier commented that back to school campaign by Communication Director has been very successful on Twitter.
- O'Connor commented that he really appreciates the support of the Teachers and the Administrators who encourage participation with the PARCC test. He thinks it's a robust assessment, and it's really helpful for Administrators to have something else to look at.
- Broy asked for data to be organized by school when the Board reviews achievement metrics.