

Oak Park River Forest High School Board
December 17, 2015
Mary Haley, Observer

Present: Jeff Weissglass-President, Jackie Moore-Vice President, Tom Cofsky, Steve Gevinson, Sara Dixon Spivy, Fred Arkin and Jennifer Cassell

Mr. Weissglass called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

Public Hearing on 2015 Tax Levy: The levy was on public display since November 11, 2015. There were two speakers. Their major concerns were that the new levy wipes out the benefits of the last two years' reductions of property taxes and that increasing the levy at this rate will see property taxes doubled by 2020. A suggestion was made to find new sources of revenue.

Public Hearing on the Proposal to Sell \$17,500,000 in Working Cash Fund: The sale of these bonds is proposed in order to fund the building of a new pool. There were five speakers. A petition for a referendum to decide on the pool funding received 4300 signatures. Signers believe that a stand-alone pool building can only be funded through a public referendum. Therefore it is premature to vote on this proposal. Other points made were that collaboration with the Park District to build an aquatic center should be pursued again and that the last school board election was not a referendum on the pool plan.

Public Comments: There were four speakers: Sheila Hardin, president of the Faculty Senate, expressed appreciation for the work of the board, but requested that the board reconsider the existing plan to tear down the garage in order to build a pool facility. Lack of adequate parking will cause issues with neighbors of the high school and will limit OPRFHS to host events with other schools. Ms. Hardin asked the board to reconsider the proposal to incorporate parking within the new structure. Another speaker asked the board not to challenge the petition, but to accept it as an expression of the community's opinion.

Consent Items: All items were passed unanimously.

Action Items: Tod Altenburg, Chief School Business Official, presented three possible scenarios for the 2015 tax levy. In order of tax amount they are: 1.0 return to the 2012 levy; 2.) return to the 2012 levy with a CPI of .8%; 3.) return to the 2012 levy with estimated amounts for new growth and construction. Mr. Cofsky supported option 1, and Mr. Weissglass agreed, saying that this was the recommendation of the Finance Advisory Board in 2012 when the board voted to reduce taxes for two years. Under this scenario, the board will need to propose a referendum in 2022. The item, amended to option 1, was passed unanimously.

The board also unanimously approved a resolution to move money to make payment on the debt service.

Informational Items: Board members expressed support for the new state mandated graduation requirement of teaching a civics class to all students.

Ms. Cassell commented on the articulation work and asked that parents of 8th graders be made more aware of the placement process for incoming freshmen.

Mr. Weissglass reported that the Park District has proposed a feasibility study to begin in January 2016, to build a village Recreation Center. Members of the six Oak Park taxing bodies will participate in the study. Mr. Weissglass will represent District 200. The committee will discuss where a center could be built, what facilities it should include and the projected cost. Dr. Gevinson observed that if a pool were included that would be adequate for competition; the high school could replace the two existing inadequate pools with one pool adequate for swimming classes. The report should be completed by mid 2016, not in time for the March 2016 election.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 p.m.