

**Board of Education
Worth School District 127
Dr. Rosemary Lucas Building**

**Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting
August 9, 2023**

Administrators:

Dr. Mark Fleming, Superintendent
Cindy Dykas, Assistant Superintendent, Business Manager/CSBO
Linda Esposito, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Jason Tooth, Worth Junior High Principal
Melissa Wills, Assistant Principal, WJH
Dr. Maureen Eichstaedt, Principal, Worth Elementary
Elizabeth D'Andrea, Assistant Principal, Worth Elementary
Ashley Toms, Principal, Worthwoods
Robert Jeffers, Director of Technology
David Dvorchak, Director of Facilities and Grounds

Board Recording Secretary

Jill Moore

Others Present

Elizabeth Hennessey, Raymond James (virtually)
Robert O'Shaughnessy, Worth Park District
Melissa Nagel, Worth Park District
Jeff Pagano, WW
JoAnne Albrecht, WJH
Mary Zirngibl, WE
Alyssa Zirngibl, WE

1. MEETING OPENING**A. CALL TO ORDER**

President Drew Sernus called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Drew Sernus, Vince Flores, David Blanks, Michelle Egan, Missy Sinclair
Absent: Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President, Drew Sernus led the Pledge of Allegiance

2. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**A. ELIZABETH HENNESSEY - CASH BOND UPDATE**

Dr. Fleming introduced Elizabeth Hennessey by Zoom to share a presentation regarding the final pricing bond sale from July. Elizabeth stated that we went to market on July 18, 2023 with \$10.5MM of working cash bonds that will be used for school renovations for completion in the next two summers. She further stated that Dr. Fleming and Cindy Dykas did a wonderful job presenting to Moody's Investor's Service and the district received a double Aa3 bond rating, which is an excellent rating. The bonds were priced at an ideal time and the combined interest rate of the transaction was 3.99% and we were originally estimating the interest at 4.2%. The bonds will go out for 20 years and the taxpayers will not experience any rate increases from the bonds as the district is abating and the payments will stay exactly the same as they have been at \$700,000. (Ms. Hennessey was having technical difficulties with the virtual presentation).

Board Member asked for clarification regarding the rate increase and if there was a dramatic drop in interest rates, would there be a reduction in rates. Ms. Hennessey stated that the bonds are callable after nine years and if there is a reduction in interest rates, you would be able to refund them for interest cost savings.

Dr. Fleming stated that Elizabeth and her team have been fantastic to work with and requested that she email a copy of the presentation to him and he will copy all Board Members.

B. COLLABORATION WITH WORTH PARK DISTRICT

Dr. Fleming introduced Robert O'Shaughnessy, Worth Park District Executive Director to highlight a grant that he and his team are currently working on. Bob appreciated being able to attend and share information regarding the Stahlak Park grant along with Melissa Nagel, Park Commissioner. The park was acquired by the park district in 1978 and since that time it had only one piece of playground that was taken down in 2011 due to safety concerns. The park district is currently applying for an OSLAD (Open Space Land Acquisition Development) Grant through the IDNR (Illinois Department of Natural Resources). The tentative plan has been discussed with Dr. Fleming and we have till August 31st to make any adjustments or changes to this plan. One plan consists of just the park district side as well as another plan that includes the park district side along with the school district side. Back in 2017, Dr. Rita Wojtylewski had a survey done and she brought to my attention that the back portion belonged to the school district and then fast forward to Dr. Fleming coming in and he stated in 2022 that the back property belongs to the park district. In 2023, it was discovered that the property does in fact belong to the school.

Bob further stated that Stahlak Park is the only underdeveloped park that we have and there are a minimum of 30 children in that area that would benefit from this playground. We have a wonderful opportunity to make significant changes and improve Stahlak Park with this grant. Bob highlighted the following options:

1. We could develop a lease from the school district; however, it would be required to be a 20 year minimum as a non-revocable lease, which is a requirement of the IDNR.
2. Lease the property under the same requirements of the IDNR, but there could be a stipulation that the school district could come back and use the property later, within the 20 years.
3. Quick claim deed the property over to the park district with an attached reverter clause in case the district wanted to do something with that property.
4. The park district would develop on their own land.

Bob opened the discussion to Board Members to allow for questions and answers:

- Board Member asked for clarification regarding who the land was acquired from back in 1978. Bob was uncertain and stated that he could go back to the history log and get back to Board Member.
- Board Member asked for clarification regarding how much they are seeking from the grant. Bob stated that the development for their portion is \$689,000. Both parcels would include \$760,000.
- Board Member asked for clarification on the percentage of land owned by park district and percentage owned by school district. Bob stated that the two parcels combined is 1.88 acres; park district portion is 1.06; school district portion is .82.
- Board Member asked for clarification regarding leasing the property and what would the costs be. Dr. Fleming stated that the district could propose whatever costs we wanted as we do with RISE and the Coop that leases a classroom. Board Member stated that the lease could possibly cost more than the difference between the \$65K over the 20-year period of leasing the land.

Dr. Fleming stated that we would not have to lease the property to the park district and not charge them, we can do an easement to the park district and our attorney would draft up an easement. The land would be there for the park district to use and they could put in a walking path until the district would need that land back for use. We would allow a reasonable timeline and give six months to one year notice. Dr. Fleming stated that he understands the park district would not get the full grant, however; this would allow both parties to work together to make the best use of the taxpayers' money.

- Board Member asked if the district needed the property back, would the park district have to tear out the walking path at their cost. Dr. Fleming stated that they would need confirmation from the attorney and clauses/languages would be added to the contracts in advance.
- Board Member asked who uses the property there now. Dr. Fleming stated that RISE staff and students use that property.
- Board Members asked for clarification regarding the amount of the grant and the park district portion. Bob stated that if the district were to not allow for the 20-year lease, the grant would be for \$689,000; however, the full grant would give the park district \$760,000.
- Dr. Fleming asked Bob what is the cost of just the walking path. Bob stated the estimated cost for the entire path would be \$65,000.
- The grant just opened up on July 1 and there are short deadlines with applying.

Board Members stated that committing to a 20-year lease would be very difficult with the uncertainty of what the future holds. Board Members expressed concern on how quickly they would need to make a decision and that implementing all the legalities would take much longer than the grant deadline. Board Members expressed their concern with just finding out about the grant and making a final decision this evening. Bob and Melissa want to apply for the entire grant and allow the property to be leased for 20 years to get the full maximum potential of the grant. Bob stated that the deadline to apply for the grant is August 31, 2023.

Dr. Fleming stated that the compromise is the easement where the park district would have access to the walking path and maintain it and it's a win-win for both parties. The park district can apply for their portion of the grant which would give them \$689,000 to work with. Dr. Fleming also clarified that every space at the district office is being utilized and there is no additional space left in the building.

Dr. Fleming stated that with no further questions, the conversation should be tabled and Bob should contact him with his thoughts on what was discussed this evening. Ms. Nagel stated that there is a meeting at the park district on Thursday, August 17 and encouraged everyone to attend this community meeting.

C. METROPOLITAN WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT (MWRD)

Dr. Fleming stated that he and Cindy Dykas met with MWRD and DLA virtually to discuss the joint project. We plan to break ground at Worthwoods in the spring of 2024. MWRD would also like to break ground on their plans in the spring of 2024. We are hoping to have a collaborative effort and Mr. Ed Wright, DLA, is taking over the conversations with MWRD. MWRD would like us to meet with another group of their team and Mr. Wright is trying to set that up. This project was proposed to the Board approximately eight years ago and we hope to have this completed in the spring.

D. INSTRUCTIONAL COACHES

Dr. Fleming stated that on the board agenda this evening the Board will take action to approve four instructional coaches. Three positions for regular education and one for special education. As discussed at the June meeting, the plan is to post the positions now to hire; and to allow for one year of training and implement those coaches in August 2024.

E. 2023/2024 EARLY RELEASE DATES

Dr. Fleming stated that just as a reminder there are seven early dismissal days this school year. Six will be used for professional development and school improvement and one of those days is per the teacher contract (December).

October 6, 2023

October 31, 2023

December 8, 2023

December 22, 2023

February 16, 2024

April 25, 2024

May 24, 2024

Several reminders will be going out to parents to highlight those dates. Worth Junior High will depart at 1:20 p.m. and Worthwoods and Worth Elementary will depart at 1:30 p.m.

F. FOIA REQUESTS

Dr. Fleming stated that since the last Board Meeting on June 14, the district has received six FOIA Requests and has responded to them in a timely manner.

3. BUSINESS MANAGER

A. FY 2024 BUDGET PRESENTATION

Cindy Dykas shared a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the FY 2024 Budget and stated the Board will take action in September to approve the budget. She stated that Worth School District 127's primary source of revenue is from property taxes. Slightly less than 50% of the District's revenue is generated from this source. The second largest revenue source for the district, Evidence Based Funding (EBF), which continues to grow over the past few years. Since 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 has grown exponentially as a result of the property tax relief grant that the district received after granting that property tax relief grant to the taxpayers and then get the money through EBF. Mrs. Dykas stated that the property tax relief grant may be extended as there was legislation passed and hopefully will get passed and if it does get extended, the district will again apply.

4. DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL SERVICES

No. Report.

5. DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

No Report.

6. CITIZENS' REMARKS - AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

There were no citizens' remarks.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

Action (Consent): A. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Resolution: Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Agenda Items as outlined below."

Motion by Michelle Egan, second by Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action (Consent): B. BOARD BILLS PAYABLE

Resolution: Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the Accounts Payable for \$787,298.27 (EDUCATIONAL); \$1,785,781.43 (OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE); \$36,683.15 (TRANSPORTATION); and \$48,982.60 (TORT IMMUNITY) for a Total of \$2,658,745.45."

Motion by Michelle Egan, second by Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action (Consent): C. PAYROLL SUMMARY

Resolution: Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the Payroll Summary for the Education Fund in the amount of \$131,114.24, the Building Fund in the amount of \$48,031.13, and the FICA/IMRF/Medicare in the amount of \$23,031.65."

Motion by Michelle Egan, second by Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action (Consent): D. RESIGNATION OF CLASSIFIED STAFF - LISA SMITH - LUNCHROOM SUPERVISOR - WORTH ELEMENTARY - EFFECTIVE JULY 11, 2023

Motion by Michelle Egan, second by Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action (Consent): E. EMPLOYMENT OF CERTIFIED STAFF - DIMA ABDULRAZAK - BILINGUAL ARABIC TEACHER - EFFECTIVE FOR THE 2023/2024 SCHOOL YEAR

Motion by Michelle Egan, second by Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action (Consent): F. EMPLOYMENT OF CERTIFIED STAFF - IRIS TORRES-RODRIGUEZ - BILINGUAL SPANISH TEACHER - EFFECTIVE FOR THE 2023/2024 SCHOOL YEAR

Motion by Michelle Egan, second by Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action (Consent): G. EMPLOYMENT OF CLASSIFIED STAFF - ANNA BASZEWSKI - PRE-K PARAPROFESSIONAL - WORTH ELEMENTARY - EFFECTIVE FOR THE 2023/2024 SCHOOL YEAR

Motion by Michelle Egan, second by Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action (Consent): H. EMPLOYMENT OF CLASSIFIED STAFF - DIANA FLERICK - REGISTERED NURSE - WORTHWOODS ELEMENTARY - EFFECTIVE FOR THE 2023/2024 SCHOOL YEAR

Motion by Michelle Egan, second by Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action (Consent): I. EMPLOYMENT OF CLASSIFIED STAFF - GENEVIEVE REED - PERMANENT SUBSTITUTE - EFFECTIVE FOR THE 2023/2024 SCHOOL YEAR

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Agenda Items as outlined below."

Motion by Michelle Egan, second by Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action (Consent): J. EMPLOYMENT OF CLASSIFIED STAFF - STANISLAWA CZYZ - PART-TIME CUSTODIAN - EFFECTIVE AUGUST, 2023

Motion by Michelle Egan, second by Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action (Consent): K. SECOND READING AND ADOPTION OF BOARD POLICY #112

Resolution: Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the second reading and adoption of the policies as listed in the attached."

Motion by Michelle Egan, second by Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

8. MOTIONS

Action: A. REGULAR BOARD MINUTES

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the June 14, 2023 regular meeting."

Motion by Missy Sinclair, second by Michelle Egan.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action: B. RESOLUTION ABATING THE WORKING CASH FUND OF THE DISTRICT

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the Resolution abating the working cash fund of the District.

Motion by Vince Flores, second by Missy Sinclair.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

Action: C. INSTRUCTIONAL COACHES

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve four new Instructional Coach positions."

Motion by Michelle Egan, second by Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores, Missy Sinclair

9. BOARD DISCUSSION/ACTION AND/OR REPORTS/REQUESTS

Board Member expressed his to appreciation Cindy Dykas for the presentation of the 2023/2024 Budget.

10. CITIZENS' REMARKS - AGENDA ITEMS

There were no citizens' remarks.

11. CLOSED SESSION

There was no closed session.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Recommended Motion (voice vote): "that the Board of Education motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 p.m."

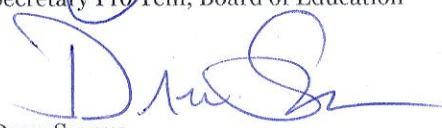
Voice Vote: All Yes

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Respectfully Submitted,



Michelle Egan
Secretary Pro Tem, Board of Education



Drew Sernus
President, Board of Education