

Board of Education
Worth School District 127
Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting
November 13, 2024
Dr. Rosemary Lucas Administration Building
11218 S. Ridgeland Ave, Worth, Illinois

Administrators:

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

Board Recording Secretary

Jill Moore

Others Present

Jennifer Decker, Wipfli Audit
Scott Duenser, Wipfli Audit
Mary Zirngibl, WE
Alyssa Zirngibl, WE
Shannon Fisher, WE
Jeff Pagano, WW
Agnes Hajnos, WJH
Lisa Jeffers, Worth Resident
Michelle Okrzesik, WE
Lisa Strzempa, WE

1. MEETING OPENING

A. CALL TO ORDER

President Drew Sernus called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

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

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President, Drew Sernus led the Pledge of Allegiance

2. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. VETERANS DAY - HONORING OUR VETERANS

Dr. Fleming opened by honoring and thanking the principals for teaching our students to value and honor our Veterans. A warm and special thank you was given to Board Member, Vince Flores, for his service as serving in the Air Force.

B. NATIONAL BOARD MEMBERS DAY - NOVEMBER 15, 2024

Dr. Fleming thanked all Board Members for their incredible dedication and volunteer service in supporting students, families and staff. The work accomplished over the years in Worth 127 would not have occurred without you sacrificing your time in supporting the district's vision to continually improve the learning environment for students and working environment for staff. The facilities, resources and professional development that the Board has supported is appreciated by all. Board Members each received a gift on behalf of the district.

C. AUDITOR'S REPORT FOR FY2024

Dr. Fleming introduced Mr. Scott Duenser, to give a brief overview of the results of the FY24 Audit. Mr. Duenser stated that their were no significant findings in the final report. Mr. Duenser stated that the district ended with a net position of about \$44MM and the financial position has improved overall. He encouraged Board Members to review all the reports that were provided in the agenda.

D. WORTHWOODS/WORTH JUNIOR HIGH CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Dr. Fleming stated that the west part of the building at Worthwoods has more concrete walls built up. Construction is progressing well and completion date is still on schedule for August 2025.

E. METROPOLITAN WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT (MWRD) UPDATE

Dr. Fleming stated that he had a phone call with MWRD and the village and they followed up with an email to give the district a tentative timeline for the Worthwoods land. We are tentatively going to receive that in December 2024 and then they are supposed to publicly advertise the project for September of 2025; award a bidder in December of 2025; contract start date of February 2026; with construction starting in the spring of 2026.

F. IASB 2024 RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Dr. Fleming shared the IASB 2024 Resolutions Committee Report and recommended resolutions:

- Educational Programs:
 - Dual Language
 - Submitting District: School District U-46
 - The Resolutions Committee recommends DO ADOPT
- Financing Public Education: State
 - EBP Authorized Charter School Funding
 - Submitting District: Woodland CCSD 50
 - The Resolutions Committee recommends DO ADOPT
- Financing Public Education: Local
 - Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Accountability
 - Submitting District: Skokie SD 69
 - The Resolutions Committee recommends DO ADOPT
- Board Operations and Duties
 - Faith's Law - Centralized State Agency for EHRs
 - Submitting District: Lake Forest CHSD 115 and Lake Forest SD 67
 - The Resolutions Committee recommends DO ADOPT
- Board Employee Relations
 - Health Care Coverage
 - Submitting District: Tuscola CUSD 301
 - The Resolutions Committee recommends DO ADOPT
- District Organization and Elections
 - Polling Place - Amendment to Position Statement 7.08
 - Submitting District: Lincolnshire-Prairie View SD 103; Diamond Lake SD 76; and Hawthorn CCSD 73
 - The Resolutions Committee recommends DO ADOPT
- Board Operations and Duties
 - Cellphone Usage
 - Submitting District: Edwardsville CUSD 7
 - The Resolutions Committee recommends DO NOT ADOPT
- Board Operations and Duties
 - Office of Inspector General
 - Submitting Division: South Cook Division Executive Committee
 - The Resolutions Committee recommends DO NOT ADOPT
- Board Employee Relations
 - Faith's Law - EHRs for Current Employees
 - Submitting District: Lake Forest CHSD 115 and SD 67
 - The Resolutions Committee recommends DO NOT ADOPT
- District Organization and Elections
 - Criminal Background Check
 - Submitting District: Joliet THSD 204
 - The Resolutions Committee recommends DO NOT ADOPT

G. FOIA REQUESTS

Dr. Fleming stated the district received two FOIA requests since the last Board Meeting and the district has responded to them in a timely manner.

3. ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR BUSINESS SERVICES

A. ESTIMATED TAX LEVY PRESENTATION

Cindy Dykas shared a presentation regarding the estimated Tax Levy.

Slide 2 - Review basic terms of the tax levy process

- First time in a few years with CPI below 5%, so PTELL is not in effect for this Levy.
- Not planning on Levying more than 5% this year, so the Truth in Taxation is not going to be necessary this year.

Slide 3 - P.A. 102-0895

- New section of the School Code, effective May 23, 2022
- Each School District now must publicly disclose the cash reserve balance of all funds held by the school district related to its operational levy
- Disclosures must occur at the public hearing at which the district certifies its budget and levy for the taxable year
- Worth School District 127 has complied with this by posting this information in Board Docs each month
- As of June 30, 2024, the Operational Cash Reserve Balances (all funds except Debt Service) was \$25,499,581

Slide 4 - Revenues

- Property Tax collections made up 46% of total revenue in Fiscal Year 2024
- Five years ago, before any Property Tax Relief grants were received, EBF was significantly less. This squeezed the pie and Property Tax collections made up 54% of total revenue. EBF in that year was 33.6% and Federal programs was 7.2%

Slide 5 & 6 - 10-Year History of Revenue Collected

- Property taxes have remained very constant over a 10-year period, in fact see the significant reduction in 2021 due to Property Tax Relief Grant AND EAV increase, which gives an overall relief to all taxpayers
- In 10 years', our total revenue has increased by 65%, from \$14.3 M in 2015 to just over \$23.7 M in 2024
- Evidence Based Funding (formerly General State Aid) increased over 200% from 2015, helping Property Taxes stay constant
- The large increase of Federal Programs from 2021 – 2023 was directly related to funds received for ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) from ARP (American Rescue Plan)
- Another visual showing how much both revenue and expenditures have grown over 10 years.
- 2022 was the first year of deficit spending in over 15 years.
- This shows a \$3.5 million surplus over ten years' time

Slide 8 – EAV & Tax Rates

- 2023 was \$242.6 million (all-time high) due to the triennial reassessment
- The triennial reassessment was expected to yield increases of 10-15% (per last year's Levy presentation) but ended up being a 27% increase.
- The 2023 Tax Rate of 4.226 is at a 10-year low, thanks to the fifth consecutive years of Property Tax Relief Grant.
- Also, Tax Rate and EAV have an inverse relationship, so when one goes up, the other goes down.
- Tax Rate will likely increase once the PTRG expires or Worth 127 no longer qualifies, but we have at least another year before that occurs.

Slide 9 - CPI (Inflation)

- 2023 CPI which affects the 2024 Levy was 3.4% (years prior were 6.5% and 7.0%)
 - PTELL (Property Tax Extension Limitation Law) is the tax cap which limits the increase in property tax extensions to 5%
- CPI in December 2024 is expected to continue leveling off (announcement in January 2025). PTELL is not in effect for this tax levy and likely not for levies in the near future

Slide 10 - Tax Levy vs. Tax Extension

- Doesn't matter what is levied, the district only receives CPI increase plus extra for new property growth.
- Middle data row shows large levy increases over prior year extension
- Row above is a year over year extension increase, which is roughly CPI and very minimal increases
- 2019 was a sharp decline because it was the first opportunity for the Property Tax Relief Grant
- 2020 and 2021 were low increases due to low CPI and continuing to receive PTRG
- 2022 was up as a result of CPI being at 7.0% (again, capped at 5.0%)
- 2023 was just 1.09% increase over the prior year extension, despite the 6.5% CPI

Slide 11 - SO...just because you levy (ask) you don't receive (extension)

Slide 12 - A community wide mailer was last sent out in November 2022

- We want to remind our community that our tax rates are lower than past years due to the PTRG.
- We didn't send this out recently, but like to show this slide
 - It's because of the support of you, the Board of Education, that we continue to qualify for the Property Tax Relief grant and your desire to secure low tax rates for the community AND gain as much funding as possible for our district!

Slide 14 - Now the hard part – Creating the 202

Property Tax Levy!

- How much do we need in each fund to pay current bills?
- Have to guess at how much the 2024 EAV will be valued at? Won't know until next year, so it's a guess. This is a challenge each year (last year's reassessment year was very difficult) as we "guessed 10-20%" but it was higher. For next year, will it go down?
- Have to guess at how much new property will be incurring taxes in 2024. Won't know until next year.
- Evaluate these three variables and take into consideration the maximum rate allowed in some of the funds
- Again, a Levy is not a guarantee. It will be closer to the 2023 extension times CPI 3.4%, so closer to \$11.7 million less \$1 million for PTRG, or just over \$10.5 million, not \$11.8 we are requesting.

Next Steps

- The Board will approve a resolution (Item D) under Motions, in this meeting. The resolution is for the Estimated amount of money to be raised for taxation for 2024.
- At the December meeting, we will not have to hold a Truth in Taxation hearing because the 2024 levy is only 4.35% over last year's extension. The hearing is only required if greater than 5%.
- It is not necessary to publish the Proposed Property Tax Levy in the local newspaper; however, we will publish it on the district website.
- The Board will approve the 2024 Tax Levy in December
- Documents will be filed with the Cook County Clerk's office by the last Tuesday in December.

B. TRANSFER ABATEMENT RESOLUTION

- Attachment is a sheet created by Raymond James to illustrate the amount of payments of our recently issued Series 2023 Bonds and the corresponding amounts we will abate each year (how much the district will transfer and pay towards bond payments in order to keep the debt amounts flat for our taxpayers).
- We plan to move the funds from the Operations and Maintenance Fund to the Bond and Interest Fund
- This year's transfer and abatement is \$261,743.28
- You will vote on the resolution under Motions, item C

C. HEALTH SCREENING UPDATE

- A full panel blood test can detect the potential for many illnesses and early detection is key!
- Continuing with the Wellness Initiatives offered by the school district and thanks to the Board of education for the additional financial incentive for those who participate in the Health Savings Account/High Deductible Health Plan, this year's Wellness Screenings were a huge success.
- We offered two dates for In-District wellness screenings, by Empower Health Services, on October 23th and 24th.
- About 60 people were screened over the two days, followed up with individualized confidential and comprehensive reports sent directly to the participant
- Also, staff and their family members who are members in our health plan could go to any LabCorp location for the Wellness Screenings, which serviced an additional 24 participants and likely more before the November 30th deadline!
- In addition, Osco Pharmacists were on site earlier in October to offer flu, tetanus and/or COVID booster shots.

4. DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL SERVICES

No Report

5. DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

A. ILLINOIS STATE REPORT CARD

Linda Esposito gave an update regarding the Illinois State Report Card.

1. WSD 127 IL School Report Card 2023-2024 Presentation
2. Student Enrollment
 - a. 998 students were enrolled in WSD 127 as of 10-31-23.
 - b. The table shows a breakdown of students into subgroups.
3. Student Growth
 - a. The state average student growth percentile is 50%.
 - b. The district average growth percentile for ELA is 63%. The interpretation guide states that a growth rate of 60% and above is excellent.
 - c. The district average growth percentile for Math is 53%. 50%-53% is considered average.
 - d. 54%-60% is considered above average.
4. Student Growth Trends
 - a. A look at student growth percentiles for 3 consecutive years and prior to Covid in 2018.
 - b. These tables show our post-Covid recovery in terms of student growth.
5. All three of our schools received Commendable summative designations.
6. Summative designations are calculated by assigning each school points for every accountability indicator.
 - a. To get the next highest rating, Exemplary, a school had to be in the top 10% of all IL schools.

7. The schoolhouse graphic shows the Overall Index Score for WW, the points assigned for each of 8 indicators, and the weight given to each indicator.
8. WE schoolhouse graphic
9. WJH schoolhouse graphic
10. Summative Designation Descriptive Statistics
11. WW Overall Index Score = 70.15. The threshold for Exemplary was 84.04.
12. WE Overall Index Score = 74.90
13. WJH Overall Index Score = 72.09
14. IL has 3056 elementary schools. The top 10% (306 schools) were given Exemplary designations.
 - a. This graph shows the distribution of elementary/middle school by index score.
 - b. The index scores for WW, WE, and WJH all fell in the same range (70-74.9).
 - i. This makes me so happy because it shows that students are receiving an equitable, quality education no matter which school they attend.
 - ii. We have worked hard to achieve equity by providing the best curriculum, ensuring the curriculum is being followed so that all students receive similar instruction, giving time for teachers to collaborate at their buildings and across Harlem Ave, and working with consultants and coaches to provide consistent training to all teachers.

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

Lisa Jeffers - Book donation made to all schools in honor of her father.

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 presented."

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

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by David Blanks.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, 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 \$936,567.04 (EDUCATIONAL); \$84,011.56 (OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE); \$52,754.73 (TRANSPORTATION); and \$914,522.61 (CAPITAL PROJECTS) for a total of \$1,987,855.94."

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

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by David Blanks.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, 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 \$831,062.42, the Building Fund in the amount of 56,590.36, and the FICA/IMRF/Medicare in the amount of 50,300.71."

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

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by David Blanks.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

Action (Consent): D. EMPLOYMENT OF CLASSIFIED STAFF - INTESAR ALDENI - PARAPROFESSIONAL - EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 14, 2024

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

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by David Blanks.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

Action (Consent): E. KRISTINA COZZOLINO - REQUEST FOR CONTRACTUAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE - EXTENDING FMLA 3/31/25 - 5/9/25

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

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by David Blanks.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

Action (Consent): F. PRESSPLUS POLICY 5:330 SICK DAYS, VACATION, HOLIDAYS, AND LEAVES

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

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by David Blanks.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

Action (Consent): G. UPDATED CALL LIST OF SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF

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

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by David Blanks.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, 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 regular October 9, 2024 meeting."

Motion by Danette Keeler, second by David Blanks.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores

Abstain: Missy Sinclair

Action: B. ACCEPTANCE OF AUDITOR'S REPORT FOR FY2024

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education accept the Auditor's Report, as recommended by the Assistant Superintendent/CSBO and the Superintendent".

Motion by Michelle Egan, second by Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

Action: C. TRANSFER ABATEMENT RESOLUTION

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education adopt the Resolution (i) transferring funds from the Operations and Maintenance Fund to the Bond and Interest fund of the District and (ii) abating a portion of the tax heretofore levied for the year 2024 to pay debt service on the General Obligation Limited Tax School Bonds, Series 2023, of the District."

Motion by Vince Flores, second by David Blanks.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

Action: D. ESTIMATED 2024 TAX LEVY

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education adopt the Resolution determining the estimated amount of money to be raised by taxation for 2024 and establish the Board meeting of December 11, 2024, as the time for the public hearing regarding the levy, as recommended by the Assistant Superintendent for Business Services/CSBO and the Superintendent, as presented in the attached documents in 3 A.

Motion by Danette Keeler, second by Missy Sinclair.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

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

Board Members discussed the upcoming Joint Annual Conference that will be held on November 21-24, 2024.

10. CITIZENS' REMARKS - AGENDA ITEMS

No Citizens' Remarks

11. CLOSED SESSION

Action: A. ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education adjourn to closed session at 7:48 p.m. to discuss security procedures, school building safety and security, and the use of personnel and equipment to respond to an actual, a threatened, or a reasonable potential danger to the safety of employees, students, staff, the public, or public property."

Motion by Vince Flores, second by David Blanks.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

Action: B. RECONVENE IN PUBLIC SESSION

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education upon completion of it's discussions in closed session reconvene in public session at 8:22 p.m.."

Motion by Missy Sinclair, second by Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

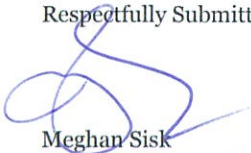
12. ADJOURNMENT

Recommended Motion (voice vote): "that the Board of Education motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 p.m."

Voice Vote: All Yes

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Respectfully Submitted,



Meghan Sisk
Secretary, Board of Education



Drew Sernus
President, Board of Education