

# Spotlight on the Board

## Notes from the District 15 School Board Meetings

### December 12th, 2007

This was a Regular Board of Education meeting. Board members present at Roll Call were Tim Millar, Gerald Chapman, James Ekeberg, Kelly Keenan and Sue Quinn.

Board member Wendy Rowden entered the meeting at approximately 7:45 p.m.  
**Board member Nancy Lee Carlson was absent – 6<sup>th</sup> consecutive absence.**

### Citizens Address the Board

**Joe Heater** – Resident of Palatine

Wanted to extend his thanks to the current and former members of the D15 Board of Education for their service to the community. Said that too often, we in the community do not understand or realize the efforts put in by the Board. Said that the Board takes a lot of heat on a lot of cases. We don't always agree with every decision but he certainly respects the efforts the Board puts in to make those decisions. Secondly, he wanted to recognize the efforts made to improve the transparency of the Board to the community – specifically the financial data/documents that are on the District's Web site. Thinks the new Financial Report Card is an extraordinary effort. It has really done a lot to expose the community to what is going on. Lastly, tonight he noticed that the agenda documents – all 97 pages – that were going to be discussed were on the Web site. Advised audience members to look at them. It gives you an understanding of what the Board has to go through to achieve their ends of a great education for the kids in our community.

*Reference:* Financial Report Card (FRC) posted on the District's Web site  
[www.ccsd15.net/WhatsNew/NewsReleases/HTML/Archive/CCSD1512\\_05\\_2007.html](http://www.ccsd15.net/WhatsNew/NewsReleases/HTML/Archive/CCSD1512_05_2007.html)  
[www.ccsd15.net/AboutDistrict15/BoardofEducation/PDF/FinancialReportCard\\_Nov2007.pdf](http://www.ccsd15.net/AboutDistrict15/BoardofEducation/PDF/FinancialReportCard_Nov2007.pdf)

### Board Discussion and Reports

#### Food Service – Food Quality

**Board member Kelly Keenan** – Asked for this topic to be put on the agenda. Wanted to ask if the Student Wellness Committee could look into ways to improve the quality of food and what we are serving the kids especially at the junior high level. What we are telling parents not to bring into the schools for parties, etc. is being served at the school lunches.

**Dr. Jean Sophie, Asst. Superintendent** – Said that the committee works with what is served at gatherings and rewards in the classroom, etc. They discuss food, nutrition, exercise. What is served during the school lunch is not currently part of the committee.

**Board member Gerald Chapman** – Suggested that the Board ask the superintendent to come back with a recommendation at the next meeting with the appropriate way to study this issue, get some direction.

#### Semi-Annual Review Closed Session Minutes

**McKanna** – Put this item on the agenda. There is a responsibility, on a six month basis, to review Executive session minutes and declare which ones can be opened and which ones need to remain closed. Some school districts have sent their minutes to their law firm for filtering and a recommendation; some have the administration do it; or a Board member can work with the administration to go through them. Thinks the Board might want to have the administration go through it instead of the law firm. The administration can go through

them quickly and get back to the Board in the next meeting or two. The minutes are a year behind now.

**Board President Tim Millar** – Would not be opposed to having the administration take a look at the minutes but would like guidance from the attorneys. Perhaps a list of what is excluded, what typically isn't – an education on that process. Then have them take samples (of minutes) to make sure we are on the right track.

**Chapman** – Thinks a better process would be to review them first. If we had any doubt of what was appropriate, then ask the attorney. Then it is down to very specific cases.

**Millar** – Agrees with that – still would want a sample of the ones that we didn't have doubt on looked at because this isn't our daily business. Just a sample of 10% to have the attorneys look at and let us know if we are on the right track – as a safety measure. It is subjective to say we don't have doubt – wants them to sample some to make sure we aren't missing something.

**Chapman** – Thinks it is a waste of time to ask the attorneys to look at 10% of our minutes because what you are really looking for is – if there is any sensitivity in the issue that ought not to be released. Is there any information about a specific employee? There is a very limited amount of things we talk about in closed session. And in his view, most of the minutes are written in such a way that the sensitivity issues are taken out. Thinks he could look at it and tell whether or not they are appropriate to release.

**McKanna** – Recommends that the attorneys give guidelines of what would be appropriate and not. Then let the administration review and bring back to the Board. If there are questions at that time, then ask the law firm about particular minutes. Asked if the Board would want to see all of the minutes or just the ones the administration thinks need to remain confidential?

**Board member Wendy Rowden** – Replied just the ones that need to remain confidential because the administration is going to release the others. The Board has seen all of them at one time before.

**Board member Sue Quinn** – As a new Board member, she may not have seen all of them. Asked for clarification that the district is going to start posting those Executive session minutes once they are clear on the Web site so they will be accessible to everyone.

**McKanna** – Said that can be done.

## Committee Reports

### Finance Committee

**Quinn** – A lot of work has been going on in the committee in getting the budget ready for next year. Has been working with staff on the budget. The CLIC Cooperative went through the committee and we will be proposing a withdrawal from that. Thinks we are proposing some form of self-insurance, the district is a good candidate for that. A lot of good work is going on in the budget committee and thanks everyone for their hard work. We are starting to get Board packets for the Finance Committee now so you know that we are doing something.

### Communications Committee

**Quinn** – At the last Board meeting, asked the Board to consider/think about whether to do a town hall type committee meeting with the entire Board. Or stick with the original conception of the Communications committee as proposed back in August which was just the committee (Millar and Quinn) doing a series of topic oriented meetings like the first one. Or scrap it all together and do something different? Quinn is looking for direction from the rest of the Board on how to proceed because if we are going to do something, it should probably be put on the calendar for sometime after the first of the year.

**Rowden** – Thinks the way it was done last time was very successful. Personally thinks it should continue with just the committee members unless something comes out of committee that is accessed as worthy of the whole Board attending a town hall meeting.

**Millar** – Right now doesn't think there are any hot topics

**McKanna** – Thinks there may be some topics with finance because the budget will be brought to the Board in January. The administration will show the Board the cuts that have to be made to the budget. Thought that will bring up some topics that will generate interest.

**Quinn** – Then perhaps delay the next Communications meeting to February/March timeframe?

**McKanna** – Replied it should be some time before the budget is adopted

**Quinn** – Will find an interim point in order to get some feedback from the community. Mentioned that Chapman and Ekeberg attended the last Communications meeting and thought that was great because they got to see a lot of the public comments. The meeting obviously would be open to everyone in the community, anyone who decided to come.

## **Facilities/Architectural/Real Estate Committee**

**Keenan** – Today, she and Chapman met with three park districts – Hoffman Estates, Inverness and Palatine. The intent of meeting with them is to secure a mutually beneficial five-year contract. We are three fifths of the way done and hope to have all of the contracts ready for the architectural committee in January and for full Board approval in February.

## **Action Items**

### **Personnel Report**

Postponed until after Executive session.

## **Withdrawal from the CLIC Cooperative for Worker's Compensation**

**Bob Strande, Co-interim Asst. Superintendent for Business** – In order to withdraw from the pool, the district must give 6 months notice (by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007) to withdraw on the anniversary/renewal date of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008. Staff brought information to the Finance Committee on a number of proposals. Three of the four vendors that submitted tentative proposals that may change when we are closer to the anniversary date.

Upon investigation, the district does have a viable quote that would be looked at as a last resort. It is our recommendation that we do withdraw from CLIC so that we can explore other possibilities for this coverage. A recommendation will be brought to the Board no later than June.

The district's protection is that there is a backup that we feel comfortable with and would not put the district in jeopardy by withdrawing from the pool. The CLIC pool said that if we do decide to change our mind, that still remains a possibility. Strande sees no downside in withdrawing from the pool at this time. It gives us the opportunity to investigate other alternatives. If we find a better, more cost efficient method for worker's comp, we can move on it.

In response to Keenan's question about the size of the pool –

**Strande** – The pool that we are in right now has about 128 school districts from the Chicagoland area. We are a large district with large payrolls, meaning number of people. We are a big player in the pool but we are also very viable to stand alone with our worker's compensation. Whether we go partially or fully self-insured, those are the options we will explore.

## **Motion made to withdraw from the CLIC Cooperative for Worker's Compensation**

Unanimously approved.

## **Bids – Buses (No Bids Received)**

**George Lingel, Co-interim Asst. Superintendent for Business** – The district went out for bid for service contracts to replace the current 90-day emergency contract for ten buses with First Student/Laidlaw, which expires on January 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The bid was sent out to eleven companies, there was a pre-bid meeting, eight came to the meeting, and there was a lot of interest. The district went through a very detailed discussion with the potential bidders about the services the district was providing and what the expectations were.

No bids were received. Five letters were received which said “no bid”. Lingel thinks the letter from our current contractor First Student spells it out when they said that basically they cannot afford to bid because of the new legislation. The new legislation requires a contractor to match all of our benefits/salaries to take over a self-operating system.

*Reference:* Letter from First Student dated November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007  
[www.fcwpta.org/pdf/First\\_Student\\_d15\\_12\\_12\\_07.pdf](http://www.fcwpta.org/pdf/First_Student_d15_12_12_07.pdf)

Lingel thinks one of the biggest items that the contractors ran into was actually matching the IMRF benefit – which is the Illinois Municipal Retirement benefit. All of our bus drivers have that, any non-certified position that entails at least 600 hours a year actually qualifies for IMRF. Currently that is about 9% that the contractors would have to pay and they couldn't match that because they just don't have that type of retirement. That is why the district didn't get any bids – the contractors said the cost of wage/benefits was too high, they could not match it.

After looking at this and talking to the current contractor (First Student/Laidlaw), the district could still declare an emergency and continue with them. A second contractor said they would like to also bid if an emergency award was to be bid on.

**Lingel** said that another option the district has – because there is time until January 22<sup>nd</sup> – is to go out and bid for additional buses to replace the ten routes. If the district were to bid, Lingel recommends bidding **three options:**

**First** – Purchase buses

**Second** – Do a lease/purchase for a period of three to five years. That is where you make a lease payment. He checked with one bus provider today and they would have a lease available at 4.6% or 4.7%

**Third** – Just do a lease or a rental where we would be actually just leasing the buses for a period of time. It would probably be set up for a three year program where you could return them and then pay a lease for one year only. Then you could possibly return those buses and not use them.

Based on what the administration is possibly going to recommend for transportation next year, which will also be available at the January meeting – Lingel thinks it would be good for the district to go out and do a bid for 12 to 15 buses. Ten for the routes and a few extra for spares. When they do the bid, if the buses are not available by January 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup>, then the district would have to declare an emergency and could continue with the current contract. That is where the district is at right now – we do need to provide the service that we are currently providing.

**Chapman** – Asked if there was time to get the bids together?

**Lingel** – Bids would have to go out by Monday and get them back the first week of January.

**Rowden** – Asked where all of the extra buses would be housed? How are they going to be maintained with our current staff?

**Don Skinner, Co-Interim Transportation Director** – There is some room on the backside of Sundling, outside of the yard.

**Rowden** – Asked about the weather conditions and the heating blocks that were just purchased for the other additional buses that are housed at CLA

**Lingel** – He knows that is a concern. It is not just the purchase of buses, we still need a place to put them. Skinner said that by January 15<sup>th</sup>, there should be enough drivers who have completed their training and would be able to staff the buses. Location will be a concern.

**Keenan** – Concerned about buying extra buses when we don't even know what our needs are for next year.

**Lingel** – That's why we would want to look at one of the options where we would just lease them for the short-term. Before the bid is approved, the district would have a recommendation to the Board for next year. The complete package (bids for options and recommendation for next year) will be available for the Board to look at in January.

**Keenan** – Asked if the current system is working reasonably well?

**Skinner** – Yes, it is operating at a much better level.

**Rowden** – Asked for clarification on why the district cannot just do the emergency situation to get through until the end of the year?

**Lingel** – We can possibly do that. Legal did ask him to look at all of the options before coming back to declare another emergency. Legal said that if we explored everything and if this is the only possibility we have (declare an emergency), then we could possibly declare another 90-days. Probably would have to do two 90-day contracts to get through the fiscal year. And there is a second contractor who wants to be considered if there is an emergency bid, in addition to First Student/Laidlaw.

**Rowden** – Asked if anyone is challenging the new legislation because she can't imagine that District 15 is the only school district that is going to run into a problem with this.

**Lingel** – Hasn't heard anything yet. The legislation includes not only transportation but also food service, custodians – it includes all of the services. A lot of contractors told him that this was the first case where people came out to bid and didn't feel they could meet the benefit package and salaries.

**Millar** – Would like the guidelines for next year before spending that kind of money for additional buses now without knowing where we are at as well as staffing up.

**Rowden** – Asked how is the district going to maintain these buses? The maintenance area is already over capacity.

**Lingel** – And the staffing there too. We are getting close to a request for another mechanic.

**Keenan** – Agrees with Millar. Would like to look at this after we see the recommendation for next year.

**Lingel** – Asked if the Board wants to do a bid and then either accept it or can always reject it. The district would at least have that option then.

**Rowden** – Said to do the bid. Thinks more information is going to be helpful.

**Lingel** – Thinks everything else has been looked at at this point

**Quinn** – Asked when the bids are done for the initial three options, will it encompass asking for the ten buses as well as the stated desire for 12 to 15 buses.

**Lingel** – Yes, we will do the bids with the options on it, definitely.

**Motion to have the Board authorize the administration to seek bids for additional buses for Board consideration in January**

Unanimously approved

## **Bids – Technology**

### **a. District-wide Wireless Network**

### **b. LCD Projectors**

**Keenan** – Had some questions/concerns about purchasing from Trapeze (wireless network) because it is not a well known company. Concerned about support issues, what is the size of the company, how many support people do they have, etc.

**Jim Garwood, Asst. Superintendent for Administrative Services** – Replied that one of the reasons the district looked into using Trapeze was because of the ease of installation. It is something the district’s technology staff would be able to handle with maintenance. Some of the other vendors would require the district to contract for doing the installation and some of the maintenance. Going with Trapeze would save money on installation and maintenance.

### **Motion to approve the two technology bids**

Approved 5:1 (Keenan voting no; Carlson absent)

## **Approval of Distribution of the Financial Report Card via Student Backpacks**

**Chapman** – Asked if the cost was known, he assumed it was minimal

**Quinn** – Said it was minimal, like other copies that have been sent via backpacks

**McKanna** – We send it to the buildings. The building secretaries run off the copies for the classrooms, distribute it to the teachers and teachers put it in the backpacks.

**Chapman** – Clarified that we are talking about the one sheet version of the FRC

### **Motion to approve the distribution of the FRC via Student Backpacks**

Approved 5:1 (Millar voting no; Carlson absent)

*Reference:* Financial Report Card version to be sent via student backpacks  
[www.fcwpta.org/pdf/FRC\\_backpacks.pdf](http://www.fcwpta.org/pdf/FRC_backpacks.pdf)

## **20-Year Building/Use and Facility Efficiency Audit**

*Reference:* Proposal from Gilfillan Callahan Nelson Architects  
Includes letter, fee summary, outline and facility audit work plan  
[www.fcwpta.org/pdf/Facility\\_Audit\\_d15\\_12\\_12\\_07.pdf](http://www.fcwpta.org/pdf/Facility_Audit_d15_12_12_07.pdf)

**Quinn** – Thinks it is a great idea, something the district needs to do. Would like to see the Board delay approval until next month so we can look at some of the details of our debt. Has concerns about the Life Safety Amendments. Knows the district wants to get started on it and Quinn does too. Asked if this was something that would be done next fall?

**Keenan** – It is part of next year’s budget.

**Craig Phillips, Maintenance** - It is next year’s budget but it would take a period of six to seven months to put the entire reporting process together in detail. There would be subcommittees and data tracking, cataloging all of the information. It would have an impact on the following year’s budget (2008/09). The sooner we do it, of course the better the Board members would be in a position to make fiscal decisions like what you are going to talk about on the next item (Life Safety Amendments).

**Chapman** – With conversations in the Facilities Committee, he feels comfortable with this direction.

**Quinn** – Agrees with the direction. Concerned until the Board resolves the next item.

**Phillips** – The audit is a statement that the Board is accepting the direction to proceed and enter into an agreement with the architectural firm (Gilfillan Callahan) to begin doing the study. It will take a period of 6 to 7 months and during that time, there will be subcommittees dealing with various groups to identify focus groups in order to get their input. We will be looking at building use based on a core curriculum that the Board/Administration wants to see – it will be going parallel with this study. We just don't want a report that says this building is obsolete or this building needs this type of work. We want it tied to the core curriculum that we anticipate for the next 5, 10 or 15 years on a long-range program.

The effect that it has relative to the Life Safety amendments is a separate issue. They are not tandem. This facility audit has nothing right now to do with the ten-year Life Safety Study that was done or the amendments that are in front of the Board right now. Or any progressive work that we might do in this year's budget with the exception of the curtain wall replacement. If the facility study was done previously, it would have helped make this decision for this fiscal year and others coming up.

**Chapman** – The Facilities committee has looked at this issue pretty thoroughly. What his suggestion was going to be on the Life Safety Amendments (next on the agenda) is to refer them back to the committee. We can come back to the Board and say we have a better understanding of that.

**Quinn** – Her only concern is the connection between the two (audit and life safety amendments) is that they use the same architect. We have issues with them (architect). Wants to hear back from the Facilities committee with whatever conclusion they have on that. Would be fine with approving the idea of the audit. Would just hold back and make sure we have the right company doing it.

**Rowden** – The audit has nothing to do with the prioritization of any kind of work that came out of the Life Safety report.

**Phillips** – The audit would tell them that if the district was going to spend money on a particular building, that it is was not an obsolete building. It would be a responsible repair expenditure. In absence of this audit report, it doesn't mean we don't have to spend money. If Quinn has a concern about the firm that we hire to do the audit, that is a different issue.

**Keenan** – If we don't go with this audit, then we would be pushing the audit out for over a year. The company doing the audit did the ten-year Life Safety study. If you get a different company, then we would incur more costs and it will be a longer process.

**Rowden** - Needs clarification. Had some previous experience with the Facilities Committee about a year or so ago. Asked if we bid this out as an audit? Gilfillan Callahan at that time were the best cost for what we were looking for. The charge of the audit is completely different then the charge of the Life/Safety Study. Knows that there are some concerns over the change of prioritization in the Life Safety study which may lead someone to question the architectural firm. However, this audit is distinct from that. In the audit, we are not going to be given a list of repairs that we have to do and Gilfillan Callahan has to do them unlike Life Safety report. Rowden is comfortable with the audit by Gilfillan Callahan because of past experience and because of what the charge of the audit is. Does see it as being completely separate of whether she is comfortable with some of these other items coming down the road.

**Chapman** – Wants to clarify. According to Illinois law, is that you select your architect and then you ask that architect for a proposal. Then you either accept or reject that proposal. It isn't a bid. If we reject this proposal, then in affect we either consider - at a future meeting - which just puts us behind, or we could go hire another architectural firm, which puts us behind. And then ask the new firm for a proposal. But it is not a bid process.

**Rowden** – Perhaps she used the wrong word but we did a year ago have another architectural firm give us a quote on doing an audit. So we were able to go outside of Gilfillan Callahan.

**Chapman** – We did discuss that at some length at our meeting. Just wanted to clarify that we can't consider this a bid.

**Quinn** – If the Board members who are on the Facilities Committee are comfortable with this going forward as is, then she would defer to that. Still has concerns about the Life Safety issues.

**Keenan** – Is comfortable for the exact reason Rowden said because they (architectural firm) are not doing the investigation for the incentive of doing the work afterwards. They are doing the investigation and we decide how to proceed after that.

#### **Motion to approve 20-Year Building/Use and Facility Efficiency Audit**

Unanimously approved.

#### **Authorize 2008-2009 Health/Life Safety Amendments – Lake Louise, Winston Campus, Hunting Ridge**

#### **Motion that these issues be assigned to the Facilities Committee for further review and recommendation**

Unanimously approved.

### **Correspondence**

#### **FOIA – Freedom of Information Act Requests**

One request was received by Dr. Brian Neal, Arlington Heights

Reference: [www.fcwpta.org/pdf/FOIA\\_d15\\_12\\_12\\_07.pdf](http://www.fcwpta.org/pdf/FOIA_d15_12_12_07.pdf)

**Executive Session** - The Board went into Executive session at 8:45 p.m.

**Return to Open Session** – Approximately 9:35 p.m.

#### **Personnel Report**

Approved 5:1 (Keenan abstained; Carlson absent)

Written by: Jennifer Mondy [fcwnews@comcast.net](mailto:fcwnews@comcast.net)

Posted: Sunday, December 16, 2007

**NOTE:** Agenda items not covered in these *Spotlight on the Board* notes can be found on the District's Web site. A "Summary of Board of Actions" for this meeting is available at:

[www.ccsd15.net/AboutDistrict15/BoardofEducation/Summary/2007-08/2007-12-12\\_BOESummary.doc](http://www.ccsd15.net/AboutDistrict15/BoardofEducation/Summary/2007-08/2007-12-12_BOESummary.doc)