

**EAST TROY COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
Special Meeting Minutes – December 16, 2014
Amended**

The East Troy Community School District Board met in special session on December 16, 2014. The meeting was called to order by President Ted Zess at 7:01 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Board members present were Steve Lambrechts, Chris Smith, Martha Bresler, Dawn Buchholtz, and Ted Zess. Also present were Dr. Christopher Hibner, Kathy Zwirgzdas, Amy Foszpanczyk, administrators, representatives from Miron and Bray, twenty-three guests, one reporter and one student representative, Julia Kostopoulos. Ted Zess read the open meeting statement indicating that the meeting is open to the public as required by state statute and that notice of the meeting had been sent to the media and/or posted.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AS POSTED

A motion was made by Dawn Buchholtz and seconded by Chris Smith for approval of the agenda as posted. Motion carried unanimously.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES ON DECEMBER 2, 2014 SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

A motion was made by Dawn Buchholtz and seconded by Chris Smith to approve the minutes of the December 2, 2014 regular Board meeting.

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PER BOARD POLICY:

Ms. Gina Dingman began by stating that the fact that Doubek Elementary neighbors a lumber yard is irrelevant to the future. She was shocked to hear discussion of revisiting the entire process and reminded the Board of the emails, surveys and communications that have been completed over the last few years. Ms. Dingman is concerned that some of the Board members have forgotten about the ideas and numbers that have come out of past investigations. She asked that the Board not return to the drawing board but to look to the architects for their expertise. In response to the efforts to save Chester Byrnes and its historical value, Ms. Dingman suggested saving the brick and using it on another building. She also urged Mr. Zess and Dr. Hibner to keep the Board on track and to not waste time rehashing things. She stated that it's time to listen as a team to the ideas the architects have.

Mr. John Murphy thanked the Board members for their time and efforts. He reaffirmed his support for new construction at the Prairie View site combined with renovation at the high school. Mr. Murphy stated that the industrial arts program is extremely important and needs to be supported.

Mr. Patrick Evans shared some of the information he has gathered by calling schools that have had successful referendums. In order to have a successful referendum, the School Board must ensure the following: a

unanimous vote, complete transparency with the community and the creation of a campus concept. Mr. Evans shared the information gathered from Dr. Wayne Anderson, the Superintendent of Williams Bay. Evans stated that Williams Bay recently passed a \$19.9 million referendum that included \$14.3 million of new construction costs. This breaks down to \$148.96 per square foot. This number included project costs, site work, demolition and permits. Mr. Evans concluded by stating that he would vote yes for a referendum that is supported by a unanimous Board vote and creates a campus setting.

Mrs. Claudia Felske, a teacher in the District for 21 years and a resident of East Troy for 18 years, called attention to the work that was done as part of the original ad-hoc committee in 2010. She described this committee as a diverse group that was given the charge to consider the future of the facilities. This group visited sites, researched best pedagogical practices and discussed how the facilities could support these practices. During this work, staff feedback and public input was collected; listening sessions were held and surveys were administered. Felske believes that this was a due process as there were many opportunities for stakeholders to be heard. She stated that this work does not need to be redone. Mrs. Felske was concerned to hear discussions regarding Chester Byrnes and the Middle School brought back up again. She feels that the focus should now be on the area of contention which is the location of the elementary school.

VII. WORKING REFERENDUM SESSION

A. Board of Education working to rebuild trust by establishing Board of Education “team norms” and properly acting upon these “team norms”:

Ted Zess began by revisiting the norms that were discussed at last meeting. Mr. Zess asked for feedback regarding the established norms. Chris Smith stated that he believed the norms were well thought out and would serve as something to move forward with and build upon. Dawn Buchholtz asked for clarification to determine if the Board was looking to establish a code of ethics. Mr. Zess reminded the Board that the code of ethics is included in Policy 161. Dawn Buchholtz stated that the policy mentions the code of ethics and that perhaps this is something that the Board should look at, research and develop further. Dr. Hibner stated that the Board could review Policy 161. He suggested having Shaina Lewis present to guide the Board through the revisions. Dr. Hibner stated that, at this time, the Board is simply looking to establish norms. He reminded the Board that there will be conflict as any good discussion has conflict. Norms will simply describe how members respond to the conflict to ensure that it is directed at the conflict and not an individual. The established norms will also help to focus efforts so that information can be provided to the entire Board. Hibner described the norms as a living document that is fluid and asked the Board members if they were able to agree on the norms now and continue to add to them in the future. Martha Bresler stated that, when she has a question, it is her responsibility to get answers before letting the issue go away. Bresler stated that she will go further to get answers if the administration and consultants cannot provide answers. Ted Zess reminded members that the full Board

will work together to provide direction to administration and the consultants. Steve Lambrechts suggested that the norms be incorporated into policy.

A motion was made by Chris Smith and seconded by Steve Lambrechts to approve the norms as presented, have the norms visible at every meeting and adapt into policy at a later date. Chris Smith stated that he sees this as a fluid document that will be added to. Dawn Buchholtz asked for clarification to determine what exactly was being created. Ted Zess stated that the Board was affirming how members will behave at board meetings simply as a basis to move forward. Dawn Buchholtz stated that if members felt that the norms need to be stated she doesn't have a problem with it. Martha Bresler expressed her concern that these norms have been put on the table because of her and Dawn. Chris Smith responded that then norms are not a response to anything anyone did. Rather, they are just an affirmation that can be returned to. Ted Zess stated that there is dysfunction and the Board has not been working together. Steve Lambrechts added that Board members should never be their cell phones at a board meeting. Dawn Buchholtz felt that that comment was directed at her. Buchholtz stated that she uses her phone as a calendar and for other items and she uses a separate recorder to record the meetings so that she can return to them. Steve Lambrechts then called attention to the fact that anything that is done during open meeting is public record. This includes emails and text messages. Ted Zess added that everyone needs to be aware that the meetings are being recorded and that the recordings are a public record. Dr. Hibner asked Ms. Buchholtz if the meeting recordings have been archived. Dawn Buchholtz stated that the recordings are archived and that she is willing to provide copies. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Administration and consultants sharing requested information pertaining to scope of projects, building costs, operating costs and educational issues:

Dr. Hibner provided an overview of the information that will be presented. He called attention to the fact that a lot of information will be shared and time will be needed to reflect on this information. Hibner highlighted the fact that there has been a lack of trust regarding the numbers that have been provided. As a result, information regarding costs and square footage will be brought to the forefront. Dr. Hibner stated that the consultants will discuss the components that go into light, medium and heavy renovation and new construction. Hibner suggested that if the Board doesn't believe in the numbers that are presented, they shouldn't move on to item B on the agenda.

1. Overview of projected budgetary numbers for building costs –

The consultants began by discussing costs per square foot. They shared a number of projects; some with costs as low as \$76 per square foot and some as high as \$253 per square foot. They discussed the many reasons for the differences in numbers including but not limited to site development, furniture, technology, winter construction costs, etc. With this wide range of costs per square foot, Board members will always be able to find a project to fit a narrative or to demonstrate that a presented number is too high or too low. In addition, it is also dependent upon how the number is represented

and what numbers may or may not be included within the cost of the overall project. Is the contingency costs, inflationary costs, general contractor fees, etc., all within the number being represented? The number being depicted to East Troy has all of these factors embedded into the calculation. Also, at this time with East Troy, these are budgetary numbers since bids have not occurred until a successful referendum is accomplished. Finally, the consultants reminded stakeholders that it is difficult to directly correlate other projects to the work that will be completed in East Troy. The consultants urged the Board to challenge their team and to describe their needs.

Consultants went on to describe the renovation categories: light, medium, and heavy. They called attention to the fact that a range is always provided. This is due to the fact that they cannot be sure what they will be digging into as each building is very different. The numbers shared have been used since 2012 and will serve as a starting point. It's important to note that there have been 29 elementary and 8 middle school scenarios explored. The starting point for new construction at Prairie View is \$195 per square foot. The consultants reminded the Board that these numbers are budgets not bids. Budgets are used as the basis as consultant work with staff and administration to ensure that the referendum amount is not exceeded. Post successful referendum work includes the design and engineering process. At this time, all work goes out to bid. Ted Zess stated that the numbers presented are historical and inquired about how the numbers look moving forward. The consultants stated that typically there is a 3 – 4% inflationary factor per year. They will have a better understanding of the numbers when they know when the Board would be going to referendum and when the construction will take place. The consultants explained that they first look to understand the needs of the District and the scope of the projects. That information is then used to develop the budgets. The goal is to then be within 2 -3 % of the projected costs.

After hearing all of this information, Ted Zess asked the Board members if they were comfortable with the numbers and ready to move forward. Dawn Buchholtz stated that this was the first time the Board has been given this kind of information and this should have been presented before. Chris Smith stated that his concern focuses on the needs that exist at the building level and not the cost per square foot. Martha Bresler asked about when programming at the middle school began to grow. Dr. Hibner reminded the Board that practices began changing about 6 years ago and programming increased starting in 2012.

Kathy Zwirgzdas discussed the debt that is currently being paid off. She explained that each year when the District has a failed referendum another year of the existing 1999 debt is paid down. This means there is less old debt to have to structure

around in the new amortization, which allows the District to go to referendum for more money while maintaining the zero tax impact. Zwirgzdas shared that bond rates remain low and, as a result, an increase in interest has not been factored in. However, construction costs are anticipated to increase by 3 – 4%. At the last referendum, the District asked for \$20.8 million. Now the District would be able to go to referendum for \$22.5 million with no tax impact. The additional \$1.7 million uses about \$800,000 in increased construction costs, and about \$900,000 more available for projects. A referendum anytime prior to and including early November of 2015 could include projects totaling \$22.5 million at \$0 tax impact. Zwirgzdas described the importance of this timeline as the District is required to set a levy. After November 2015, the District's borrowing authority will drop slightly. She further described the fact that in November of 2016 the District will no longer have principle and interest payments and the threshold then drops to zero. Therefore, November 2016 is the last possible opportunity to pass a referendum at any amount with a zero tax increase.

2. Overview of Chester Byrnes –

Dr. Hibner described the process that the administration team used to determine the operational costs of both Chester Byrnes and Doubek. The team looked at 4 years of operational costs of when occupying Chester Byrnes and the costs when the building was not occupied. The team also worked to provide projected costs to reopen Chester Byrnes from an operational perspective. When looking at Prairie View, the team identified the operational costs associated with adding PK -1 or just 1st grade. The team then looked at the numbers from an educational perspective and identified the instructional impact needs that are associated with housing 4K at Chester Byrnes, 4K – 5K at Chester Byrnes, all grades at Prairie View with an extension to the current building and all grades at Prairie View with new construction. Finally, the team identified the instructional impact of remodeling Doubek. Hibner reminded the Board that these numbers do not address construction. Rather, they are simply operational numbers.

Mr. Ellis presented figures related to the operational costs of Chester Byrnes. These costs were determined by averaging out costs from the last 8 years and dividing by the square footage of the building. This method allows Mr. Ellis to depict associated costs that don't always line up per building as this is coded district-wide. Mr. Ellis was then able to share part of overall fixed costs that are associated to individual buildings based on square footage. Ellis noted that the projected costs to reopen Chester Byrnes are to open 100% of the building as another way to open the building has not been specified.

Chris Smith asked the Board if they really want to spend time looking at Chester Byrnes and Doubek as it sounds like the community prefer and the former Boards planned to have a school built at the Prairie View site. Dawn Buchholtz added that that was the idea for the future of East Troy. Buchholtz stated that she does not view Chester Byrnes or Doubek as the future of East Troy. However, Buchholtz doesn't believe that Chester Byrnes needs to be demolished. Chester Byrnes currently provides space for the administration offices and storage. She suggested that the building could potentially provide classroom space for programs that we offer like Birth to Four and 4K which aren't required by state. In addition, Ms. Buchholtz stated that Chester Byrnes could help to relieve the congestion until a new school can be built. She would like to look at improvements that result in minimal costs. Buchholtz also stated that the portion of the building that houses administration needs to be taken care of. In addition, she expressed an interest in fixing up Doubek so that we can get through for the next couple of years. Then we can consider options for Chester Byrnes. There are many possibilities including a charter school, a center for the very young, a community center, a library, etc. Martha Bresler stated that the people in village see the Prairie View site as the future. Ted Zess questioned putting money into Chester Byrnes and Doubek if the plan is to build new at Prairie View. Chris Smith proposed considering projects that could be taken care of immediately to address concerns. Ted Zess once again stated that he didn't see the logic behind putting serious money into either building if the plan is to move. Martha Bresler reminded the Board that location for administration offices is a big question. Will they remain at Chester Byrnes or be included as part of another building?

3. Overview of Doubek –

Mr. Ellis presented figures related to the operational costs of Doubek Elementary. Dawn Buchholtz inquired about possibilities for potential energy efficiency savings with renovations and updates. Bob Ellis stated that there is a possibility for savings but the saving regarding energy efficiency cannot be outline until the Board decides what updates and improvements would be included.

4. Overview of Prairie View – PK – 1 building, PK – 2 building and extension onto current Prairie View building –

Mr. Ellis presented the increase in cost that would be a result of moving first grade to Prairie View. He stated that if 4K – 1st grade moves over to Prairie View the costs simply shift from Doubek to Prairie View. The consultants presented options for new construction at Prairie View. They highlighted the fact that the significant intensity of site construction would serve as the base cost to get started at Prairie View. The

consultants further explained that the difference in costs between the high school and Prairie View are due to the fact that at the high school the work that is proposed is to enhance existing spaces. When building new at Prairie View, it is important to build the core with the correct sizes from the beginning. Martha Bresler asked the consultants if they could use their expertise to work on a design that would address the cost. She also inquired about looking into an option that included separate buildings for primary and intermediate grades but with shared spaces. In response, the consultants shared some past options and plans that were explored by the ad-hoc committee and were ultimately dismissed as they were considered undesirable because the building was too large and expansion would only make a large building larger. Ted Zess asked whether the 2nd grade should be left as is. Martha Bresler suggested that the 2nd grade be included as part of the primary grades. Dawn Buchholtz added that this was part of the problem with last referendum as it didn't address 2nd grade at all. Dr. Hibner asked the Board members if they felt that the PK -2 option on the Prairie View site is what they would like to look at. Dr. Hibner identified benefits of the configuration including: fewer transitions, collaboration and the ability to share students in order to address individual needs. He then asked the elementary principals to provide their thoughts regarding grade configuration. Lindsey Harris stated that primary most often includes second grade and intermediate includes 3rd – 5th grade. Mark Weerts stated the when considering what is developmentally appropriate, PK – 2nd belongs together.

Chris Smith explained that he feels comfortable with a referendum that includes a slight tax impact if it meets the needs of the District. He believes that the Board will absolutely be able to convince people to spend money on the right solution. Ted Zess express his concern regarding a tax impact especially after three failed referendums. Dr. Hibner suggested that a community-wide poll needs to take place and that this should be done via phone calls. He further stated that the Board needs to understand the community's thoughts to determine what concerns exist - Is it the site? The tax impact? If it's the tax there will be more work to do. Martha Bresler suggested that the Board may need to consider what can be done to ensure that the District has the ability to expand in the future without another \$20 million referendum.

The consultants will further explore options including a PK – 1 and PK - 2 at Prairie View. They asked for clarification to determine the timeframe that would be used to base the budget on. Ted Zess stated that they would like to aim for April. Martha Bresler stated that this work must be able to be completed while the District is still able to take advantage of a zero tax impact. She also stated that it is critical to

discuss the operational. The consultants asked the Board to consider the plan for the future of Doubek should PK – 1st move over to Prairie View.

5. Overview of Middle School –

The Board asked Pete Syens was asked to share his thoughts regarding the needs that exist at the middle school. While Mr. Syens has not yet spoken to his staff, he was able to assess and describe how the current spaces are utilized. Martha Bresler asked Mr. Syens if the current classrooms provide the space that is needed for 21st century learning. Syens stated that teachers are utilizing creative practices and the space available is not sufficient. He further explained that the currently classrooms are approximately 825 square feet. Dawn Buchholtz stated that there are certainly things that could be done at the middle school that include more than the scope of the last referendum which only included control systems. Ted Zess asked Mr. Syens to identify priorities for work that needs to be completed at the middle school. Mr. Syens began by stating that, when considering the needs from a district standpoint, the priority is to find a solution for the elementary level. However, when considering the middle school, Syens identified the following projects: the HVAC system, new lockers, updated restrooms and improvement to the aesthetics. He added that there are still things that need to be done with the safety and security of the building. Martha Bresler asked Syens to consider whether the space that is currently used for computer labs could be utilized as dirty spaces or shared areas to set up for projects. Syens described the challenges that exist when projects need to left out for extended periods of time. Shared spaces require the work to be put away. He stated that the real need is to have the flexibility of larger classrooms. Dr. Hibner called attention to the fact that Pete Syens deserves a lot of credit. While he certainly fights for his staff and his building, he also acknowledges the he is a part of the entire district. If money was not an issue, Mr. Syens would certainly jump on all the middle school renovations. Hibner went on to describe his concerns regarding the safety and security at the middle school. The current set up allows individuals to be buzzed in and have direct access to the halls. Visitors could go any direction as they do not enter directly into the office. The consultants will take the information provided to further explore and provide a budget at the middle school to include: the HVAC system, new lockers, updated restrooms, improvements to aesthetics and lighting.

6. Overview of High School –

The consultant asked for direction regarding the scope of projects at the high school. High school administration feels that they would like to use the projects, updates and improvements that were part of the last referendum.

7. Overview of Central Office –

Ted Zess asked the Board to think about options to consider for central office. Chris Smith asked if there was an option for leasing space. The consultants discussed including a budget for demo at Doubek. They stated that demolition costs approximately \$3.50 per square foot. Martha Bresler explained that she cannot she demolishing the building. Before just tearing it down Bresler would like to explore other options. Ted Zess agreed but reminded the Board that, at some point, those buildings need to be off of the District's books. Chris Smith suggested that, if the District holds on to the property, they could eventually build something new. Dr. Hibner reminded the Board of the continued shortfalls and urged the Board to consider this when spending money to operate buildings/sites that are not being utilized. He also reminded the Board that money could be designated for the demolition but that doesn't mean that other options cannot be explored. Martha Bresler suggested that administration will need to be at Chester Byrnes for at least two more years. Hibner told the Board that, if there is a long term plan in place, Central Office staff does not need dollars designated for improvements to address the short term. The consultants added that many districts include demolition dollars in the referendum but communicate clearly that the property/building could be sold should a buyer come forward. The consultants reminded the Board that they could hold onto the money set aside for demolition for three years to provide the community time to purchase. The consultants did caution the Board about selling the building for \$1. In district where this has happened, the property often ends up run and boarded up. The sale could include an agreement that includes development within one year. Chris Smith stated that these dollars need to be part of the referendum budget. Ted Zess agreed.

Chris Smith stated that he would like to see Chester Byrnes repurposed as a village entity but expressed concern as the Board cannot be sure that will happen. At this point, Tim Griffin requested permission to speak. The Board agreed that Mr. Griffin could speak. Griffin stated that he knows of a party in town that is interested in purchasing the Chester Byrnes and Doubek buildings. Dawn Buchholtz stated that she is concerned that the District's needs are pushing the limit on referendum dollars and she likes the idea of using one of or part of a building for administration and the Alt Ed program. Buchholtz went on to state that she does not believe that the referendum should include new construction for administration. Ted Zess called attention to the fact that it would be a challenge to entertain offers for purchase is the administration offices are still housed in the buildings. He stated that a plan to address the administration offices must be included in the referendum. Chris Smith suggested that administration offices could

be part of the PK – 2 building. Dawn Buchholtz reminded that Board that the ad-hoc committee expressed concerns about housing administration within a school building. She suggested that there are advantages to have administration and Alt Ed at a different site. Chris Smith then suggested leasing office space for central office. Ted Zess suggested that a study be completed to compare the costs associated with renting or owning office space.

C. Set next meeting date:

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 7th at 7:00. December 26, 2014

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Dawn Buchholtz and seconded by Chris Smith to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Smith