

DECEMBER 18, 2017
WILMETTE, IL
REGULAR MEETING

A regular meeting of the Board of Education was held on Monday, December 18, 2017 at the Mikaelian Education Center, 615 Locust Road, Wilmette, Illinois. President Mark Steen called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Mark Steen, Jon Cesaretti, Tracy Kearney, Frank Panzica,
 Alice Schaff, Lisa Schneider-Fabes, Ellen Sternweiler

Members Absent: None

Administrators Present: Ray Lechner, Gail Buscemi, Heather Glowacki, Katie Lee, Denise Thrasher

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Principal Kelly Jackson introduced members of the Highcrest Student Advisory Board to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

ARTWORK

Mr. Steen noted seventh graders used their creative ideas to craft dream drawings that focused on transforming their drawing skills by altering their thinking. Students sketched geometric shapes to form three dimensional objects. Students then practiced shading using light and shadows to enhance their artwork.

Eighth graders learned about color theory by exploring ideas related to light, symbolism, and color schemes. After practicing blending and various painting techniques, they created a painting using a particular mood or time of day. They were required to choose a color scheme that expressed the feeling of their scene.

PROCEDURAL NOTES

Mr. Steen announced the Board agreed to change procedures during the public comment section of the Board meeting to allow as many community members to speak as possible while maintaining an orderly and efficient meeting of the Board. He explained during the first public comment period each speaker may speak for three minutes. During the second public comment period those not yet recognized may speak for up to three minutes, but those already recognized may clarify or extend their remarks for up to one minute. He also noted a person would not be allowed to speak for three minutes and then speak on behalf of someone else for another three minutes.

Mr. Steen noted this meeting would be procedurally different than normal as the current regular meeting would adjourn to the hearing on the 2017 Levy, and return back to the regular meeting. He noted voting would take place after returning to the regular meeting as standard practice. He reminded everyone that this is a public meeting and all are among neighbors and fellow residents. The Board members agreed that it was important to emphasize appropriate conduct would be expected from everyone. He asked that people speak only when called upon and refrain from distracting behaviors such as loud conversations, cheering, clapping, and booing.

APPROVE THE MINUTES

Mr. Panzica moved, seconded by Mrs. Schaff, to accept the minutes of the November 13, 2017 Regular and Executive Session Meetings. The minutes were approved as submitted by **General Consent**.

APPROVE POLICIES

Mr. Panzica moved, seconded by Mrs. Schaff to approve as second and final reading revised Board of Education Policies 2:230 *Public Participation at Board of Education Meetings and Petitions to the Board*; 6:70 *Religious Holidays* renamed *Teaching about Religions*; 6:80 *Controversial Issues* renamed *Teaching About Controversial Issues*; 6:100 *Resources for Teachers: Animals* renamed *Using Animals in the Educational Program*; 6:110 *Truant's Alternative and Optional Education Programs* renamed *Programs for Students at Risk of Academic Failure and/or Dropping Out of School*; 6:120 *Special Education*; and 6:140 *Education of Homeless Children*.

On a roll call vote on the motion, voting “yea” – Jon Cesaretti, Tracy Kearney, Frank Panzica, Alice Schaff, Lisa Schneider-Fabes, Ellen Sternweiler, Mark Steen; voting “nay” – none; absent – none:

Motion Carried.

ADJOURN TO PUBLIC HEARING ON 2017 LEVY

Mr. Panzica moved, seconded by Mrs. Schaff to adjourn to the public hearing on the 2017 Levy.

On a roll call vote on the motion, voting “yea” – Jon Cesaretti, Tracy Kearney, Frank Panzica, Alice Schaff, Lisa Schneider-Fabes, Ellen Sternweiler, Mark Steen; voting “nay” – none; absent – none:

Motion Carried.

FINANCIAL PRESENTATIONS

A. 2017 Levy

Dr. Lechner reviewed the tax levy process, noting the request is a dollar amount and not a percent increase or tax rate. He stated the dollar amount is based on Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is always known, and new construction, which is estimated. He noted the percent increase the District receives is not the percentage increase listed on tax bills. The biggest change to property tax bills is from the estimated property value. Dr. Lechner stated the District is allowed by law to levy according to CPI and that CPI has increased 7.7% since the referendum. He noted one third of an individual tax bill goes toward District 39, meaning one-third of 7.7%, which is approximately 2.6%, spread over five years equals 0.5% per year. He then presented a revenue growth chart for the past five years nearing 8.7%. He noted the demand for services is strong as the District continues to deliver an exceptional educational program along with normal and customary increases in expenses. Dr. Lechner noted the guiding financial principals following the referendum were to maintain a minimum operating fund balance of 30%, to budget conservatively and connect revenues to expenses, and to maintain and improve educational excellence while living within financial means. He presented the operating cost per pupil and property tax per pupil ratios noting District 39 continues to remain the lowest in the township.

B. 2017 Levy Scenarios & Five-Year Financial Projections

Dr. Lechner stated each year after the presentation of the District's audit, an updated five-year projection is prepared. He said Mrs. Buscemi's presentation would begin with the standard levy presentation reflecting past practice. Dr. Lechner acknowledged the diversity of opinion regarding the levy and stated Mrs. Buscemi's additional reports would provide projections using four different levy scenarios to assist the Board in making a decision on the levy.

Mrs. Buscemi stated the law requires a public hearing when the tax levy exceeds 5% of the prior year's extension, however, District 39 provides an annual hearing to maximize transparency for the community. She noted the annual District practice is to extend the levy amount to include CPI and new property growth.

Mrs. Buscemi stated the levy request is based on several variables including the Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) of properties determined by local and county assessors, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the value of new construction. The District's EAV is unknown at this time, but is projected to remain flat at \$1,817,523,158. December 2016 CPI is 2.1%. She stated new property growth is estimated by using a twelve-year historical average of \$15.6M and adding \$16.5M for renovations of the Mather Place. She estimated \$8M in local new construction for a total of \$40M in new property growth. She noted the 2017 levy request is for \$53,858,546.

Mrs. Buscemi reviewed different scenarios for financial projections for 2019-2023. She reviewed the revenue and expenditure assumptions. She presented the Operating Funds combined fund balance through 2023 with the minimum 30% fund balance using standard assumptions based on CPI at 2.1% plus new property growth. She also presented a scenario using a one year tax freeze for 2017 with no increase in the levy. The third projection showed the impact of SB 851 keeping the standard assumptions for 2017 levy and implementing property tax freezes for 2018 and 2019. The final projection showed a three-year tax freeze for 2017, 2018, and 2019.

BOARD DISCUSSION ON THE 2017 LEVY

The Board members discussion included teachers' salaries being tied to CPI; Phase 1 Highcrest construction being included in the forecasts and the four construction phases presented as options for flexibility; what happens when fund balances go below 30%; State requirement of a minimum 25% fund balance; the notion that expenditures and budgets are not looked at or considered being misleading; requests by constituents for new programs such as kindergarten enrichment and moving band/orchestra into the school day schedule; uncertainty in future projections for revenues and expenses and lower revenues resulting in cutting programs; maintaining low operating costs per pupil without affecting programs.

AUDIENCE RESPONSE TO THE 2017 LEVY PRESENTATION

Erin Stone, Wilmette, appreciated the diverse perspectives on levy. She has paid attention to District 39 revenue spending and felt the District doesn't squander its resources and is a wise steward over taxpayers' dollars. She appreciated all the opportunities the District offers and noted her support of the levy extension. She also supports instrumental music before the school day so kids can continue to participate in both music and related arts programs as they exist now.

Arnie Eisenberg, Wilmette, has parents, children and grandchildren that attended public schools. He stated if the public schools are short changed it would lead to privatization of schools. He was awed that the budget was reduced by \$4.5M instead of extending the kindergarten program to a full day. He added that the Board should in no way consider dropping fund balances below 30%. He asked to consider the best funding and best facilities for District 39 schools or home values would decrease.

Tom Meade, Wilmette, is a professor at Northwestern noted his lack of confidence in the statistical analysis of the charts presented as there were no error bars. He noted the statement about being unable to retain or recruit quality teachers was "bunk". He was disturbed that the majority of the board sought to lower personal property taxes and while raising taxes for the community.

Allen Minoff, Wilmette, appreciated District 39 and the great education provided for his children. He stated housing values in his neighborhood are going down and taxes are going up. He felt no need for a tax increase. He noted Bannockburn recently turned down a tax increase. As a senior citizen on a fixed income, he encouraged the Board not to increase the levy.

Kathy Myalls, Wilmette, heard about other feeder schools spending more per student which is true but she noted average incomes in those areas are higher than Wilmette's. She stated Wilmette has a larger middle class than Glencoe and Winnetka. She commented on a federal tax proposal that would make state and local taxes less deductible and requested waiting on a levy request until that impact is known. She suggested looking at the cost for substitutes as one line item reduction.

Raquel Klibanoff, Wilmette, strongly supported extending the levy to keep pace with inflation. She said keeping the levy the same while the costs of goods and services increase would be a cut to education funding. She stated District 39 has an outstanding record for providing superior public education while continuing to be a responsible steward for residents' tax dollars. She also noted support for having band/orchestra during the school day at the junior high.

Michael Lieber, Wilmette, noted someone spoke untruthfully that he was one of 50 people in support of the levy, yet appealed their own property taxes. He did support the levy and noted in the ten years living in Wilmette they have never appealed or hired someone to appeal their property taxes. He explained another Wilmette family hired a lawyer and mistakenly gave them his property pin number without his knowledge or approval. He stated while those opposing the levy never asked him, they continued to run ads reporting his tax appeal and support of the levy. He stated you can support the levy and obtain a property tax appeal if you feel your home has not been assessed properly. He stated the flyer the opposing group distributed contained falsehoods.

Mark Weyermuller, Wilmette, stated he appeals his taxes every year as he wants to pay less taxes. He suggested finding ways to lower the levy and lower taxes for the future as Illinois has a mass migration problem. He commented on the threat to cut programs but felt the main issue is teacher compensation and pensions.

Rob Drewry, Wilmette, graduated from District 39 in 1997. He was subject to the failed levy in 1990-91 when he attended McKenzie. He stated any school that failed to pass a levy has a short-term gain and long-term nadir in terms of quality students enrolled and quality teachers to attract. He stated that the focus of the discussion has been on property taxes, however a lot goes into value of home besides the quality of the schools.

Jasmina Hauser, Wilmette, spoke about the uncertainty of the potential tax freeze and suggested Illinois cap taxes rather than freeze them. She encouraged the Board not to increase the levy until teacher contracts are negotiated at no more than 3%. She also stated her lack of support for all day kindergarten.

John Marshall, Wilmette, has three sons who attended District 39 and was appreciative for the education they received. He spoke in favor of levy in keeping with inflation and appreciated the District being fiscally responsible having lower per pupil spending and lower pupil to teacher ratio than the feeder districts. He noted while he no longer has children in District, he cares about the education for his neighbors' children and the community.

Rachel Beatty Riedl, Wilmette, stated the community is thriving due to the schools, however misinformed statements were circulated via paid advertisements, newspapers, community members, and a school board member. She addressed the misinformed statements made by the group opposing the levy. She stated she supported the extension of the levy.

Beth Feeley, Wilmette, stated she attended District 39 and loved the community and chose to return to allow her children the same experiences. She requested the Board not extend the levy due to anticipated declines in student population. She stated the money received since 2008 has outpaced CPI by a factor of three so the levy is not keeping with inflation, it is outpacing inflation. She stated as President of New Trier

Neighbors she had hundreds of people asking not to extend the levy and presented a petition of nearly 500 resident signatures opposing a tax increase.

John Flanagan, Wilmette, stated a friend sent a news item from New Trier Neighbors highlighting the decision by the Bannockburn Board of Education to reduce taxes. He researched Bannockburn District 106 and noted statistics that if understood would limit a comparison between Bannockburn and Wilmette. He encouraged New Trier Neighbors to present the proper context for these comparisons: Bannockburn enrollment consists of 175 students, which is 5% of District 39 which has 3,567; EAV per pupil is \$1,230,000 compared to Wilmette's \$442,000; operating fund reserves of \$11.7M or 184% of their annual operating budget, which is one year and nine months; Wilmette has closer to 50% fund reserves or six months of the operating budget. The ratio of EAV per pupil is 2.8 times that of Wilmette, operating spending per pupil is 1.6 times that of Wilmette and property tax per pupil is 2.4 times that of Wilmette.

Tim Scherman, Wilmette, spoke as a former board member, encouraged the Board to pass the extension of the levy as it is. He mentioned Ms. Reidl who spoke about intellectual honesty and the actual numbers presented regarding the levy. He noted the discussion about Board members 'caught' appealing their property taxes. He stated he appealed his taxes this year and his letter stated he saved \$920 on taxes. He said if you take one-third of that which is about \$300 and divide it among the multiple taxing bodies it resulted in a miniscule amount. He didn't feel the Board should be questioned as being irresponsible with residents' money. He added the Board does great work and they do it for free.

Betsy Hart, Wilmette, she expressed concerned about tenor of comments suggesting that those who question status quo are not thinking wisely. She noted her disappointment with Mr. Lieber's comments, and stated New Trier Neighbors never named him in the newspaper and it was another news organization that did so. She stated her organization was not affiliated with them. She expressed her concern about lack of civility in the community. She encouraged District 39 to set a new standard by adopting a positive example set by the Village of Wilmette to encourage civil dialogue. They appointed a citizen committee to investigate the minimum wage issue. She suggested the District do the same regarding the \$2M tax increase.

Richard Huszagh, Wilmette, stated he attended District 39 schools and has lived in McKenzie area for more than 30 years. He noted his concern about affordability and also about the amenities and enrichment the schools provide to the community. He was in favor of the proposed tax levy. He stated he does not want to see another referendum any time soon if at all. He said the Board has taken very seriously since the last referendum it's responsibility to maintain the very limited resources that is has, including changes in teacher compensations.

Stacey Woehrl, Wilmette, discussed areas of cost reduction. She noted her confusion about asking for 4.36% and CPI is 2.1% so why not compromise and ask for 2.1%. She stated she opposed increasing the tax burden at all. She felt there should be more discussion about spending reform i.e. living within your means considering the financial condition of the State. She suggested a representative from each taxing entity could work together to discuss ways to reduce and cut costs. She stated she is not in favor of cutting programs.

Danielle Mergner, Wilmette, thanked the Board for thinking critically and having a robust discussion. She wished to also discuss spending and said you are only looking at half the picture when requesting the levy. She requested a whole analysis regarding revenues and expenditures. She suggested reviewing with other districts and consider economies of scale by coordinating with others. She noted the library and village were also considering tax increases.

Carl Hauptman, Wilmette, asked that parents be allowed to observe classrooms. He explained reasons he was given for not allowing observations. He stated a lot of tax dollars go to the school districts and they should be accountable to taxpayers. He favored a reduction in the tax levy noting the average teacher salary in District 39 was higher than private Northshore schools.

Annabel Weyhrich, Wilmette, spoke about the comments made regarding the petition. She witnessed the incident that occurred at the local grocery store and approached one of the teenagers to inquire about the tax levy. She stated the teen said the tax increase was to allow third graders to receive swivel chairs and said he was participating to fulfill a political-science requirement. She felt he was giving people false information and not actual facts. She questioned the legitimacy of the petition. She added that she had a great experience in District 39 and any program cuts or withholding of money would sadden her.

Leslie Weyhrich, Wilmette, responded to the comment by the man who approached this Board stating they are hypocrites. She objected to his statement and noted Board members are all unpaid volunteers and do the best for students. She stated local government is about different views not political ideology. She added it's about non-partisan leadership coming together to make the best decision for the community. The fake news she witnessed told alternative facts; two people who spoke from New Trier Neighbors said they were not affiliated with the news organization yet they posted the news article on their website that listed her name and address. She stated her support for the levy.

David Ford, Wilmette, had an issue with expenses being reviewed in months to come. He disagreed with capturing levy revenue just because it is available. He also disagreed that a referendum wouldn't pass. He said District 39 is fabulous but costs need to be addressed. He stated he was not in favor of extending the levy.

Tom Scanlon, Wilmette, stated he spoke at the park district hearing on the referendum three years ago, which had a large public turn out. He noted the impressive number of residents in attendance at this meeting. He asked that the Board listen to the comments made by the community.

Evita Vulgaris, Wilmette, stated her support for the extension of the tax levy. She said her two children attend Central and she is very happy with school and programs. She noted her children started at St. Francis to have full day kindergarten. She felt costs should not really be the bottom line for everything when it comes to obtaining a good education.

Dan O'Brien, Wilmette, stated his support for the extension of the tax levy. He noted his family moved here for the quality schools four years ago. He added after seeing the projections, the potential property tax freeze, and without an extension of levy, there will be program cuts and hurt the quality education that he and many others came here for.

Jeff Axelrod, spoke in support of the tax levy to protect property values. He stated if the schools become under-funded property values would decrease.

David Hyser, Wilmette, has two students in District 39 and noted one of them performed in their first orchestra concert this evening. He said it's great that the District is able to fund music programs and keep fine arts in the schools. He also shared that his child is a Type 1 diabetic. She benefits directly from the exceptional nursing care provided by this District that doesn't exist at most districts in the State, or is offered on a provisional or rotating by school basis. He thanked the Board for offering these programs and services for students. He requested an extension of the levy. He believes in investing in children and to err on the side of solvency, noting it is the fiscally responsible and socially conservative thing to do.

Elizabeth Nicoli, Wilmette, stated her support of the tax levy although she does not have children in the District. She supports public education and thanked the Board for their hard work.

ADJOURN TO REGULAR MEETING

Mr. Panzica moved, seconded by Mrs. Schaff to adjourn back to the regular Board of Education meeting.

On a roll call vote on the motion, voting “yea” – Jon Cesaretti, Tracy Kearney, Frank Panzica, Alice Schaff, Lisa Schneider-Fabes, Ellen Sternweiler, Mark Steen; voting “nay” – none; absent – none:

Motion Carried.

BOARD REPORTS

A. Committees

Facility Development Committee – Mrs. Schaff stated the committee met December 11th as part of the Committee of the Whole. The committee discussed two major topics. The Highcrest construction update, in preparation to solicit bids in January, reviewed more detailed technical drawings provided by STR Architects. Conversation ensued about costs and cost containment. The second topic discussed was kindergarten enrichment and facility needs. As part of the Strategic Plan, this is the first step in exploring how to implement a kindergarten enrichment program in the District. Administration and STR Architects looked at space needs at the four elementary schools. The next steps include an analysis of program operating costs such as salaries, surveying parents to gauge interest in a District sponsored enrichment program, and the possibility of offering the program in a budget neutral fashion. The final report would be presented when the analysis completed in spring. The next Committee of the Whole meeting is on January 8th.

School Finance Committee – Mr. Panzica stated the committee met December 11th as part of the Committee of the Whole. The committee spent a significant amount of time on the annual levy. The other items discussed were student fees, budget calendar, property tax assessment appeal resolutions, and excess pension payments. He noted under New Business the committee decided to delve deeper into Districts costs. The next Committee of the Whole meeting is on January 8th.

Committee of the Whole – Mr. Steen stated the committee discussed written communications, policies, and norms. He noted the discussion was not concluded but that current practice is either the Board President and/or Board Secretary responds to written communication on behalf of the entire Board. He noted this topic would continue to be discussed at January 8th Committee of the Whole meeting.

B. Liaison

Community Review Committee – Mrs. Kearney stated the committee met December 4th and is focusing on personalized learning. The next CRC meeting is on January 8.

Educational Foundation –

Mrs. Schaff reported the Foundation hosted two funding raising events; the Attire to Inspire fashion show and Family Bingo night. She added Science Olympiad classes are underway and run until February 9th. Trivia night is on February 3rd at the Masonic Lodge. She noted six Gripp Grants totaling \$11,134 dollars were gifted to schools. The next grant application deadline is March 2nd.

Mrs. Kearney stated the committee met December 13th and prepared for the Annual appeal which is an outreach for contributions to the foundation to support teachers and curriculum. She stated the committee enjoyed a video regarding the Google Chromebook pilot currently underway at Central that was a huge success. The next meeting is January 17th.

C. Legislative Update

Mrs. Kearney stated Illinois general assembly not been in session and would reconvene January 10, 2018. While in recess, conversations continued regarding pension obligations, a potential property tax freeze, and talk around the Tier III benefit structure for members as a result of the new State law enacted in July by the General Assembly. The Teacher Retirement System (TRS) anticipates that the earliest date that Tier III may be implemented for members is July 1, 2019.

Mrs. Kearney noted she was appointed to the TRS Board of Illinois and attended the December meeting in Springfield where the committee gave final approval to the \$4,466 billion State contribution to the system for fiscal year 2019.

INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Written Communication

Dr. Lechner noted the Board received a significant amount of written communication concerning the levy. All of this written communication is posted online. Other written communication received was from Evan Canal, Joan Oh, Jill Williamson, Kara Lesperance, Lynn Abbott and Maja Koss regarding band/orchestra program and survey; John Powers regarding pension spiking and the CRC Climate survey relating to harassment.

B. Administrative Announcements

Dr. Lechner congratulated Mrs. Kearney on her appointment to the TRS Board.

Dr. Lechner announced kindergarten registration for the 2018-2019 school year would be held January 18th from 9:30 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. and on January 19th from 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. at all four elementary schools.

Dr. Lechner stated the District received a FOIA request from Stephen Chichelli of SmartProcure requesting any/all purchasing records from August 7, 2017 to present date.

C. Annual Business

1. 2018-2019 Draft School Calendar

Dr. Lechner stated this is the first draft of the proposed school calendar for 2018-2019. Per past practice the District aligns its schedule with New Trier township holidays. The calendar would be presented for approval in January.

2. Fiscal Year 2019 Student Fees

Dr. Lechner stated as reviewed by the School Finance Committee, school fees would not change with the exception of a \$10 increase to 7th grade instructional material fees to cover the cost of iPad insurance. No other fee increases were recommended for the next school year.

Dr. Lechner announced in an effort to address routing issues experienced this past fall the District would change its bus registration practice. He stated the District would extend the deadline two weeks to July 13th and bus routes will then be established. Students registered after that date would incur a late fee and be added to a bus route on September 15th if there is available space on the bus.

Mrs. Buscemi stated the District imposed a late fee to bus registrations received after the deadline to deter late registrations, however, having 266 students register after the cut-off date negatively impacted bus routes. She stated extending the registration period by two weeks and having a hard cut-off date mirrors the practice of neighboring districts. It was noted that this late fee would not affect new families moving into the District. Dr. Lechner added there would be extensive communication regarding the new deadline.

3. Clarifying District 39 Teacher Pension Obligations

Dr. Lechner stated this report was developed to clarify questions made by the community concerning pension obligations in Illinois and specifically for District 39. He reviewed reasons that led to the pension crisis in Illinois. He noted the State assumes the “employer” share towards pensions, however the State historically has balanced its budget by not making required payments resulting in TRS being underfunded. Dr. Lechner stated Illinois has addressed the pension liability by eliminating the early retirement option, requiring school district to contribute towards retired Teachers Health Insurance (THIS), having districts contribute a portion toward TRS, and making districts responsible for Excess Salary Payments. He explained Excess Salary Payments are fees incurred when a retiring teacher’s raise is over 6%. He noted payments are uncommon and incentives have been implemented to avoid these fees such as imposing contract limits on salary increases prior to retirement and encouraging teachers to seek approval for retirement five years in advance.

Board discussion ensued about retirement options and incentives and restricting retiring teachers from padding salaries.

4. Property Tax Assessment Appeal Resolutions

Residential and Commercial

Dr. Lecher reported the District received two appeal resolutions this month. One for a residential property located on Sheridan Road and the commercial appeal for Manor Care on Poplar Drive. Mrs. Buscemi noted these appeals are for the first year of a triennial reassessment which means if granted, the appeals would be in effect for three subsequent years. She added all municipal partners have agreed to intervene on these appeals.

Mrs. Kearney questioned the intervention on property tax appeals. Dr. Lechner explained the municipalities only intervene when the appeals are over \$100,000.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Evita Vulgaris, Wilmette, had questions regarding the school calendar particularly starting the school year prior to Labor Day, extra days off during Thanksgiving week, and having October 31st as a half day.

Jason Paul, Wilmette, spoke as senior at New Trier High School about the District 39 band/orchestra program. He said his experience in District 39 prepared him in unique way for rigors of New Trier’s music program. He felt the early morning rehearsals breed a dedicated music student and helped him excel in the high school band program.

Gail Schnitzer Eisenberg, spoke as a New Trier Township Trustee spoke about the confusion of property taxes and property tax appeals during the tax levy discussions. She announced Jan Churchwell, the Township Assessor, offered a public course on the Cook County real estate tax calendar and services provided by township assessor. She noted the current county property tax assessment process is broken and relies on the appeals process in order to ensure accurate assessments. She also noted as a parent noting she moved here for the education system that he husband and father experienced in District 39.

Carl Hauptman, Wilmette, wanted to finish his comments regarding reducing the levy request referencing teacher salaries being higher than North Shore schools and high property tax rates.

Betsy Hart, Wilmette, spoke in defense of New Trier Neighbors stating their organization did not publish Ms. Weyhrich’s name and address rather that North Cook News had. The New Trier Neighbors linked the North Cook News article as they felt appealing your taxes while pushing for higher taxes is hypocritical.

Beth Feeley, Wilmette, said on behalf of New Trier Neighbors she encouraged civil dialogue. She thanked the Board for listening and reviewing the community's viewpoints.

ACTION ITEMS

A. Consent Agenda

Mrs. Kearney requested the resolutions for the residential and commercial property tax appeals be pulled from the Consent Agenda.

Mr. Panzica moved, seconded by Mrs. Schaff to approve the personnel report dated December 18, 2017, which included licensed full-time employment of **Helen Cole Hampson**, effective December 7, 2017; **Kristina Long**, effective November 16, 2017; educational support personnel full-time employment of **Kathryn Clarke**, effective January 8, 2018; **Ellen Kim**, effective December 14, 2017; **Laura McEnerney**, effective December 6, 2017; **Clare Schmisek**, effective November 29, 2017; **Dana Taylor**, effective November 27, 2017; **Joan Wiegold**, effective December 8, 2017; temporary employment of **Tresa Stone**, effective December 1, 2017; educational support personnel resignation of **Margaret Donner**, effective December 22, 2017; **Judy O'Malley**, effective December 18, 2017; release of probationary employees **Clare Kelly**, effective November 17, 2017; **Slaney Palmer**, effective December 1, 2017: approve the fiscal year 2019 student fees as contained in "Exhibit A" of the report dated December 18, 2017: to approve the accounts payable for bills listed between November 14, 2017 – December 18, 2017 in the following amounts: Educational Fund \$478,301.63; O&M Fund \$215,025.69; Debt Service Fund \$661,871.25; Transportation Fund \$139,917.07; Capital Projects \$236,509.00; Tort Fund \$195,999.00; total all funds: \$1,927,353.64: to approve the manual checks issued between November 14, 2017 – December 18, 2017 in the following amounts: Educational Fund \$349,189.47; O&M Fund \$4,285.92; Transportation Fund \$52.86; total all funds: \$353,528.25.

On a roll call vote on the motion, voting "yea" – Jon Cesaretti, Tracy Kearney, Frank Panzica, Alice Schaff, Lisa Schneider-Fabes, Ellen Sternweiler, Mark Steen; voting "nay" – none; absent – none:

Motions Carried

Mr. Panzica moved, seconded by Mrs. Schaff to approve the resolution dated December 18, 2017 to permit legal counsel to intervene in a residential (No. 1712-01) property tax assessment appeal for a property located at 1330 Sheridan Road, Wilmette, PIN: 05-27-404-001-0000 for Tax Year 2016.

Mrs. Kearney stated she would not be in favor of intervention in property tax assessment appeals going forward and requested for the future they not be included on the Consent Agenda.

On a roll call vote on the motion, voting "yea" – Jon Cesaretti, Frank Panzica, Alice Schaff, Lisa Schneider-Fabes, Ellen Sternweiler, Mark Steen; voting "nay" – Tracy Kearney; absent – none:

Motion Carried

Mr. Panzica moved, seconded by Mrs. Schaff to approve the resolution dated December 18, 2016 to permit legal counsel to intervene in a commercial (No. 1712-02) property tax assessment appeal for a property located at 432 Poplar Drive, Wilmette, PINs: 05-34-121-041-0000 and 05-34-121-056-0000 for Tax Year 2016.

On a roll call vote on the motion, voting "yea" – Jon Cesaretti, Frank Panzica, Alice Schaff, Lisa Schneider-Fabes, Ellen Sternweiler, Mark Steen; voting "nay" – Tracy Kearney; absent – none:

Motion Carried

B. Adopt the 2017 Levy

Mr. Panzica moved, seconded by Mrs. Schaff to adopt the 2017 Levy and accompanying resolutions contained herein for requested amounts that can be summarized as follows: Educational \$40,707,000; Operations & Maintenance \$9,000,000; Transportation \$ 635,800; Working Cash \$ 85,000; IMRF \$342,120; Social Security \$1,238,484; Life Safety \$0; Tort Immunity \$281,047; Special Education \$309,147: total aggregate levy \$ 52,598,598.

Mrs. Kearney noted her opposition to the request to increase the Levy by 4.36%, but supported an increase of 2.88%. She suggested the Board amend the levy request to 2.88% not 4.36% as a compromise. The other Board members spoke individually regarding their reasons for supporting the levy extension as proposed.

Mrs. Kearney, moved, seconded by Mrs. Schaff to amend the proposed tax levy extension from 4.36% to 2.88%.

On a roll call vote on the motion, voting “yea” –Tracy Kearney; voting “nay” – Jon Cesaretti, Frank Panzica, Alice Schaff, Lisa Schneider-Fabes, Ellen Sternweiler, Mark Steen; absent – none: **Motion Failed**

Mr. Panzica moved, seconded by Mrs. Schaff to accept the proposed tax levy extension as presented at 4.36%.

On a roll call vote on the motion, voting “yea” – Jon Cesaretti, Frank Panzica, Alice Schaff, Lisa Schneider-Fabes, Ellen Sternweiler, Mark Steen; voting “nay” – Tracy Kearney; absent – none: **Motion Carried**

CONFERENCE ITEMS**A. Old Business**

None

B. New Business

None

C. Good and Welfare

None

Mr. Panzica moved, seconded by Mrs. Schaff to adjourn to executive session to discuss specific personnel.

On a roll call vote on the motion, voting “yea” – Jon Cesaretti, Tracy Kearney, Frank Panzica, Alice Schaff, Lisa Schneider-Fabes, Ellen Sternweiler, Mark Steen; voting “nay” – none; absent – none: **Motion Carried.**

The meeting adjourned to executive session at 10:31 p.m. and returned to the regular meeting of the Board of Education at 10:52 p.m.

Being no further business, Mr. Panzica moved, seconded by Mr. Cesaretti, to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Education. It adjourned at 10:55 p.m. by **General Consent.**

 President

 Secretary