

MINUTES OF A **SPECIAL MEETING** OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, THORNTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 205, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS, HELD ON **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 2016**, IN THE VOCATIONAL BUILDING AT THORNTON HIGH SCHOOL, ROOM T-107, HARVEY, ILLINOIS, BEGINNING AT 6:30 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. President Lawrence made the following announcement: Any person may record or broadcast an open Board meeting. Special requests to facilitate recording or broadcasting an open board meeting such as seating, writing surfaces, lighting and access to electrical power shall be directed to the Superintendent at least 24 hours before the meeting. Recording meetings shall not distract or disturb Board members, other meeting participants, or members. Please know if you participate in public participation, you are part of the Board meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENT
BY BOARD
PRESIDENT

On roll call, Members Butler, Graham, Lawrence and Whittington and Williams answered. Members Banks and Gibbs were absent. Dr. Leotis D. Swopes, Interim Superintendent, Mr. James Petrungaro, Legal Counsel, and Mrs. Maria Brunson, Director of Information Technology, were also present.

ROLL
CALL

The following individuals spoke during Public Participation:

PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION

- Ken Wendorff, Faculty Association President, spoke about the Reduction-in-Force to be voted on this evening. He understands the urgency to balance the budget and remain financially solvent, but it shouldn't be on the backs of the teachers. Labor Management meetings discussion included details of the RIF. Although requested, he asked for it, he only found out yesterday the enormity of the RIF. Faculty was not included in the discussion. Left on sidelines for change of co-teacher discussion and found out yesterday that it was occurring. They asked numerous times throughout the year about such changes. You are letting go loyal teachers who fought hard on behalf of students so their needs are met beyond the classroom. Please reconsider the size of the reduction and reexamine the numbers.
- Felita Crayton (Dolton) wished everyone a blessed resurrection Sunday.

At 6:35 p.m., Mr. Butler moved, Ms. Graham seconded to go into **Executive Session** pursuant to Section 2C of the Illinois Open Meetings Act to consider: Student discipline, the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity; student discipline, and collective negotiating matters. On roll call, Members Butler, Graham, Lawrence, Whittington and Williams voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

EXECUTIVE
SESSION

At 7:45 p.m., **Regular Session Reconvened.** On roll call, Members Banks, Butler, Graham, Lawrence, Whittington and Williams answered.

RECONVENE
REGULAR SESSION

Mrs. Lawrence opened the **Public Hearing—Reduction of Teachers.** Dr. Doss stated the Public Hearing is being held according to the Illinois School Code. Tonight the Board is considering the dismissal of 75 teachers due to the 2015-16 major critical threats to the District including declining enrollment, declining average daily attendance, decreasing tax collections and declining fund balances. From 2006 to 2015 there has not been a reduction in teachers due to Non-Renewals or Reduction-In-Force. In 2006 there were 6300 students; at end of 2015 there were 4900 students. Next school year is projected at 4500 students. He shared a slide that Dr. Grossi presented to the Board in 2011 that predicted there would be dramatic decline in student enrollment in District 205.

PUBLIC HEARING –
REDUCTION OF
TEACHERS

The public hearing was opened for comments and questions:

- Dwayne Bearden (Teacher and District 205 resident) stated that the deficit burden should not fall on the backs of just the teachers. Administrators' expenses, services, contracts, etc. should also be looked at. He hopes the District revisits the issue and lowers the number of 75 teachers who will be let go. How can you say *Children First* when you take away 20% of the teachers?
- Edward Crayton (Dolton) stated that with the reduction in staff, will the borrowing of funds still move forward? Mrs. Lawrence stated the Business Manager, Mr. Horton, will get back to him.

- Lisa Chambers asked why parents have to pay for an education because the district doesn't have the teachers to teach what students need.

PUBLIC HEARING –
REDUCTION OF
TEACHERS, Con't.

Mrs. Whittington moved, Mr. Butler seconded to **Close the Public Hearing—Reduction of Teachers**. On roll call, Members Banks, Butler, Graham, Lawrence, Whittington and Williams answered.

Dr. Swopes stated it is with much regret that teachers are being rified. On behalf of himself and the Board, he expressed compassion for those teachers, stressing the responsibility the District has to be the stewards of public money. The district was staffed for 7,000 students; there are now below 5,000 students. If the RIF had been done in the past, the number would have been much lower. If it is not done now, the Board would be remiss in their duties. He regrets that good people will be lost.

SUPERINTENDENT
COMMENT

Mr. Butler moved, Mrs. Whittington seconded to **Approve the Resolution Authorizing Non-Reemployment of First, Second and Third-year Teachers**. On roll call, Members Banks, Butler, Graham, Lawrence and Whittington voted aye; Member Williams abstained; motion passed.

APPROVAL OF
RESOLUTION
AUTHORIZING NON-
REEMPLOYMENT OF
FIRST, SECOND AND
THIRD-YEAR
TEACHERS

Mr. Butler moved, Mr. Banks seconded to **Approve the Resolution Authorizing Reduction-in-Force of Teachers**. On roll call, Members Banks, Butler, Graham, Lawrence and Whittington voted aye; Member Williams abstained; motion passed.

APPROVAL OF
RESOLUTION
AUTHORIZING
REDUCTION-IN-
FORCE OF
TEACHERS

Mr. Butler moved, Mr. Banks seconded to **Approve Reclassification of Administrator, Mr. James Walton**. On roll call, Members Banks, Butler, Graham, Lawrence, Whittington and Williams answered.

APPROVAL OF
RECLASSIFICATION
OF ADMINISTRATOR

Mr. Banks moved, Mrs. Whittington seconded to **Approve the Employment Contract Step Increase**. On roll call, Members Banks, Butler, Graham, Lawrence, Whittington and Williams answered.

APPROVAL OF
EMPLOYMENT
CONTRACT STEP
INCREASE

Mrs. Whittington moved, Ms. Williams seconded to **Approve the Student Withdrawal Agreements**. On roll call, Members Banks, Butler, Graham, Lawrence, Whittington and Williams answered.

APPROVAL OF
STUDENT
WITHDRAWAL
AGREEMENTS

At 8:03 p.m., Mr. Butler moved, Ms. Graham seconded, to **Adjourn the Meeting**. On roll call, Members Banks, Butler, Graham, Lawrence, Whittington and Williams answered.

ADJOURNMENT

President

Secretary