

**NEW TRIER TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 203  
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**August 14, 2014**

**New Trier Township High School  
7 Happ Road, Room C234  
Northfield, IL 60093**

A **Special Meeting** of the Board of Education of New Trier Township High School District 203, Cook County, Illinois was held at New Trier High School – Northfield Campus, 7 Happ Road, in Room C234 on Thursday, August 14, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

**Members Present**

Mr. Alan R. Dolinko, President  
Mr. F. Malcolm Harris, Vice President  
Mr. Peter Fischer  
Ms. Lori Goldstein  
Mr. John Myefski  
Mr. Patrick O'Donoghue  
Mr. Greg Robitaille

**Administrators Present**

Dr. Linda L. Yonke, Superintendent  
Ms. Cheryl Witham, Assistant Superintendent  
for Finance & Operations  
Mr. Paul Sally, Assistant Superintendent  
for Curriculum & Instruction  
Mr. Timothy Hayes, Assistant Superintendent  
for Student Services  
Ms. Denise Hibbard, Principal, Winnetka Campus  
Mr. Paul Waechter, Principal, Northfield Campus

**Also Present**

Ms. Ellen Ambuehl, Director of Special Education; Mr. George Sanders, Director of Human Resources; Mr. Christopher Johnson, Chief Information Officer; Mr. Peter Tragos, Assistant Principal, Northfield Campus; Mr. Gerry Munley, Assistant Principal, Winnetka Campus; Mr. Scott Williams, Assistant Principal, Winnetka Campus; Mrs. Linda Knier, Academic Services Director; Mr. Dave Conway, Plant Operations Manager for Northfield Campus; Mr. Todd Maxman, President, New Trier Education Association and Social Studies Department; Mr. Spiro Bolos, Social Studies Department; Ms. Mary Lappan, Mathematics Department; Mr. Erik Saszik, President Emeritus New Trier Education Association, Mathematics Department; Ms. Erika Immel, Library Department Chair; Mr. Jay Ripsky, Pepper Construction; Mr. Brad Paulsen, Wight & Co.; Mr. Kevin Havens, Wight & Co.; Mr. Scott Flanagan, Wight & Co.; Mr. Andy Joseph, Wight & Co.; Ms. Elizabeth Hennessy, Wm. Blair & Co.; Mr. Robert Leonard; Ms. Mimi Lee Rodman; Ms. Susan Schmitt; Mr. Joseph DiCamillo; Ms. Erin Lavin Cabonargi; Mr. Robbie Joseph; Mr. Pete Gelderman; Mr. Dan Fogle; Mr. Wes Bauman; Ms. Karen Ann Cullotta, Chicago Tribune; and members of the press and community.

**I. Call to Order – 7:00 p.m.**

Mr. Dolinko called the Special Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:02 p.m. Roll call was taken. All members were present. Mr. Dolinko outlined the agenda for the evening, noting there will be public comment before the recommendation, Board discussion, and Board vote. Anyone interested in speaking on the topic should fill out the yellow request form at the back of the room and bring it to the front table.

**II. Public Comment**

Seven residents of the township came forward to share their comments, concerns and questions with the Board regarding the Winnetka Facility Project, proposed referendum and budget. Those who spoke were Robert Leonard, Mimi Lee Rodman, Susan Schmitt, Joseph DiCamillo, Erin Lavin Cabonargi, Robbie Joseph, and Pete Gelderman.

**III. Recommendation for November Referendum**

Dr. Yonke reviewed the many steps taken by the Facilities Steering Committee, the Community Engagement Committee and the Finance Committee that now brings to the Board this recommendation to approve the Election Resolution. The question recommended for placement on the November 4, 2014 ballot asks township residents to vote on an \$89M referendum for School Building Bonds to fund the capital project at the Winnetka Campus. Board members have been provided with additional materials reviewing the conceptual design, updated cost estimates, and exact ballot language. Dr. Yonke detailed the reasons supporting the recommendation, which included the addition of more than twenty new classrooms and new science labs; improved ADA accessibility; improved safety standards; increased energy efficiency and LEED certification; new library space to promote instructional collaboration, individual study and research; a new access road to relieve traffic issues in the surrounding neighborhood; and cost avoidance for maintenance and repairs in the buildings slated for demolition. While this project is scaled back from the 2010 proposal, the new addition will more than double the square footage on the west side of the campus. The township survey and phone poll conducted this spring indicate that the community is supportive of the smaller size project and the lower cost. Dr. Yonke also reviewed the changes in the cost estimates since the July 24 Special Meeting of the Board. Reductions of approximately \$2.1M have brought the overall project budget to \$100.3M, significantly closer to the target budget of \$100M. Before Board discussion began, Mr. Dolinko and Dr. Yonke addressed the question asked during Public Comment on the possible use of the Northfield Campus. While this question arises often, the west campus is not suitable for numerous reasons which included that it could not support a larger student body since the cafeteria is too small, the gyms are too small, the science labs are not adequate, special education and other facilities are limited. Dr. Yonke noted that the Northfield Campus would need to be totally rebuilt at a costly sum. A solution of this type would not address the mandated maintenance of \$6.5 million at the East Campus and would not meet the educational needs of that facility.

**IV. Board Discussion**

Mr. Dolinko invited Board members to share their thoughts on the process, the project, and the Resolution. Mr. Robitaille expressed his support of the project, noting that it is the right project at the right time. He strongly

recommended bringing the question before the voters of the township. Mr. Robitaille also felt the \$11.5M in the budget for contingencies and escalation was adequate for the project. Mr. Fischer agreed that it is the right time and the right project for the District. He noted from the surveys, that the public likes the project and hopes to see it implemented, and that they will be able to weigh in at the General Election in November. Ms. Goldstein thanked those members of the community who came to speak and share their voices in the discussion. She noted she could not imagine a more transparent community involvement process. She agrees it is the right project and the right time, highlighting its efficiency, accessibility, its reasonableness and its fiscal responsibility. Mr. Harris agreed that the community does want to weigh in on this important issue and he sees the high school as the most valuable asset that the community has. Mr. Myefski wants to continue to explain why the Northfield campus option is not viable as it does not appear that the message of its unacceptability is being heard. Mr. Myefski also prefers the Board as a whole to state that the project cost is \$100.3M and will not go over that. Mr. O'Donoghue asked questions regarding the green roof, the changes made to the freight elevator, the theater equipment, and the HVAC system. He noted that he also aligns with those who would like to see the Northfield campus a four year program; however he does not see where this Winnetka Project conflicts with that vision. It does not preclude that Northfield may at some future time provide the District with a four year campus option. Mr. Dolinko expressed confidence that the project budget will continue to be refined and that the final cost will be the targeted \$100.3M. He summarized what the Board learned from the Community regarding the 2010 Referendum - that the proposal was too big, too costly, and poorly timed during the recession. Those factors have been addressed in this 2014 proposal; the project is smaller, it addresses academic needs, and the economy is improved. He views this proposal as an investment in the District's assets. It is the correct solution to bring to the voters of the Township. Mr. Dolinko urged community members to keep an open mind, learn as much about the project as possible, be informed and then vote on November 4, 2014.

Mr. Myefski reiterated his request to fellow Board members to support and hold the project budget at \$100.3M. Board consensus was in agreement that all were committed to the \$100.3M budget total and would continue to work towards reaching that goal.

**V. Resolution providing for and requiring the submission of the proposition of issuing School Building Bonds to the voters of the District, at the general election to be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2014.**

Mr. Dolinko asked for a motion for the resolution. Mr. Fischer moved that the Board approve the Resolution providing for and requiring the submission of the proposition of issuing School Building Bonds to the voters of Township High School District Number 203, Cook County, Illinois, at the general election to be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2014. Mr. Robitaille seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. Goldstein, Mr. Harris, Mr. Myefski, Mr. O'Donoghue, Mr. Robitaille, Mr. Fischer, Mr. Dolinko

NAY: None

The motion passed unanimously.

**V. Adjourn**

Mr. O'Donoghue moved to adjourn the Special Meeting at 8:50 p.m. Ms. Goldstein seconded the motion. All voted in favor (voice vote).

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lou Anne Kelly, Secretary

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Alan R. Dolinko, President