

**NEW TRIER TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 203  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
December 14, 2015  
New Trier Township High School  
7 Happ Road, Room C234  
Northfield, IL 60093**

A **Regular 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 Monday, December 14, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.

**Members Present**

Mr. F. Malcolm Harris, President  
Mr. Greg Robitaille, Vice President  
Ms. Cathy Albrecht  
Mr. Alan R. Dolinko  
Ms. Lori Goldstein  
Mr. John Myefski  
Mr. Patrick O’Donoghue

**Administrators Present**

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

**Also Present**

Ms. Niki Dizon, Director of Communications; Mr. Gerry Munley, Assistant Principal, Winnetka Campus; Ms. Ellen Ambuehl, Director of Special Education; Mr. Peter Tragos, Assistant Principal, Northfield Campus; Mr. Myron Spiwak, Director of Business Services; Ms. Athena Arvanitis, Director of Student Services; Mr. George Sanders, Director of Human Resources; Mr. Christopher Johnson, Chief Information Officer; Ms. Stephanie Helfand, Chief Information Officer; Mr. Scott Williams, Assistant Principal for Student Services; Ms. Elizabeth Blodgett, New Trier Educational Support Professionals Association; Mr. Dave Conway, Northfield Campus Facility Manager; Mr. Terry Phillips, Mathematics Department; Mr. Colby Vargas, Social Studies Department; Mr. David Heineman, Social Studies Department; Mr. Spiro Bolos, Social Studies Department, President New Trier Education Association; Mr. Jay Rosenberg, English Department; Mr. Brett Rubin, English Department; Mr. Andrew Docktor, English Department; Mr. Matt Sloan, Science Department; Mr. Jamie Atwell, Social Studies Department; Mr. Jason Dane, Kinetic Wellness Department; Ms. Katie Kritek, Kinetic Wellness Department; Ms. Pam Beavin, Modern & Classical Languages Department; Mr. Craig Dannegger, Pepper Construction; Mr. David Powell, Wight & Co.; Mr. Rob Martinelli, Pepper Construction; Ms. Pat Sumrow, Winnetka Project Facilitator; Mr. John George, RSM US LLP; Ms. Katie Barry, RSM US LLP; Mr. Mike Hill, Technology Department; Mr. Eric Johnson, Technology Department and members of the press and community.

**BUSINESS MEETING**

**I. CALL TO ORDER – 6:00 p.m.**

Mr. Harris called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 6:01 p.m. Roll call was taken. All members were present except Mr. Myefski. Mr. Dolinko moved and Mr. Robitaille seconded the motion that the Board adjourn to closed session for the purpose of discussing collective negotiating matters between the District and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees; and for the purpose of discussing the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the District or legal counsel for the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee or against legal counsel for the District to determine its validity. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Mr. Dolinko, Ms. Goldstein, Mr. O’Donoghue, Mr. Robitaille, Ms. Albrecht, Mr. Harris

NAY: None

The motion passed.

**Adjournment to Closed Session – 6:03 p.m.**

**II. Closed Session – 6:00 p.m. — A201A**

Mr. Myefski joined the Closed Session at 6:05 p.m. The Closed Session meeting adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

*Student & Staff Recognition Program – 7:00 p.m. – Room C234*

**BUSINESS MEETING**

**III. Open Session – 7:30 p.m. – C234**

Mr. Harris re-called to Order the meeting of December 14, 2015 of the New Trier High School Board of Education at 7:36 p.m. Roll call was taken again and all Board members were present. Mr. Harris noted that the Board had returned from a Closed Session meeting and conducted the Recognition Program for students and staff who received special achievement awards. He welcomed those in attendance.

**IV. Minutes**

Mr. Harris asked if there were any comments or corrections to the minutes. None being offered, he requested a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Dolinko moved and Ms. Goldstein seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held on November 16, 2015, Open Session. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Ms. Albrecht

The motion passed.

**V. Communications**

Mr. Harris invited anyone who wished to address the Board during the Communications part of the agenda, he or she would need to fill out a yellow Communications Request Form found on the table at the back of the room and pass it up to the Board table. No one indicated a desire to address the Board.

Mr. Christopher Johnson introduced Dr. Stephanie Helfand as the new Chief Technology Officer for New Trier Township High School. The hiring committee was impressed with Dr. Helfand's extensive experience as a Director of Technology and teaching as a Special Education teacher. She will begin with the District effective January 4, second semester of this year. Dr. Helfand expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to work at New Trier High School.

**VI. Special Orders of Business**

**A. Report from Campus Principals, Assistant Superintendents & Associate Superintendent**

Mr. Paul Waechtler, Principal of the Northfield campus reviewed the activities occurring in Northfield which reflect the busy time of year before the holidays as well as the end of semester. Final exams are taking place this week, with Grading Day on Thursday and the last day of the first semester on Friday, December 18. The annual Tri-Ship Can Food Drive took place in December and provided 37,000 meals to the Chicago Food Depository. New Trier is one of the largest contributors to the area food bank. Planning for the incoming freshman class of 2020 has begun with the placement testing as well as the planning for the Academic Life nights in January and class registrations in February.

Ms. Denise Dubravec, Principal of the Winnetka campus also reported on campus events. Ms. Dubravec commended Bob Spagnoli and his students on their fourth place win in the Quaker State Challenge. WNTH held their 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Radiothon which raised \$3,000 to purchase new equipment for the station. The 98<sup>th</sup> Annual Winter Music Festival took place on December 6. Ms. Dubravec thanked Stacy Kolack for her coordinating work with the Northwestern University Settlement House Project. Eighty-one families benefited from this year's efforts through student adviser rooms. She also thanked students involved in the Tri-Ship and Girls Club Canned Food Drive for the Chicago Food Depository. The Tri-Ship Christmas tree and greenery sales are still going on. They have only 40 trees left from their inventory of 600. Their anticipated proceeds of \$20 -25,000 will go to Scholarships. Ms. Dubravec provided an update on the Japanese flag story of previous months. The name of the flag's owner is now known; however, there are three Japanese soldiers with that name. Research continues on locating the exact owner so the flag may be returned to the soldier's family. In closing, Ms. Dubravec read a letter from a university admissions director to one of our faculty thanking him for the well written and thoughtful recommendation he wrote on behalf of a student. Ms. Dubravec noted this highlights another important service our faculty provides

for our students in their search for their right college.

Mr. Timothy Hayes, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services reported that planning for Martin Luther King Day is going very well. Students are registering for different seminar topics and there are over 80 sessions scheduled and facilitated by administrators, staff members, and teachers. Mr. Hayes also highlighted his recent memo on School Safety. He noted that the school annually provides an emergency preparedness report in conjunction with the Police and Fire Departments. New Trier has a current plan and is also looking into best practices in emergency readiness. We are exploring best methods of communication with text messaging and or possibly incorporating it with our calling system with parents.

Mr. Paul Sally, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, provided an update on state testing. Dates for spring PARCC testing will be established in January. The plan is to test the freshman class again with focusing on saving as much instructional time as possible. Adjusted class schedules may be used. The State Science Test is not finalized and it is uncertain as to whether it is a grade test or an end-of-course test. The State-sponsored College entrance exam will be the SAT; however, we will administer the ACT in April on a school day as we have done in the past. Also, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESS) has passed at the federal level. This Act replaces the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and is anticipated to be a positive change, shifting school accountability to the state and local levels.

Ms. Witham reported that there were two FOIA requests made in November and both have been answered and are closed out. There are no open requests at this time.

*Mr. Harris called Agenda Item VII. B. Audit Report to be presented at this time.*

#### **B. Profile of the Class of 2015**

Mr. Paul Sally, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, began the presentation on the academic areas of the Profile Report for the Class of 2015. He announced the Administration's commitment to communicating the wonderful news of the high test scores of students across all levels of classes to parents and students alike. He highlighted course-taking patterns that showed the rigor of core classes taken over the four years as well as the balancing of elective classes to expand student experiences. The report also looked at the variety of colleges our students attended and the National Student Clearinghouse Data we use in helping assess our students' experiences in college. New to the report was looking at the interdisciplinary courses and the AP course enrollment to garner new insights for advising students. Mr. Hayes reported on the area of Student Services which saw an uptick in use of the social work services by this class. Highlighted leadership opportunities include the Habitat homes built by senior advisories, Senior Project opportunities, and other service work. He noted that this class was the last one to work on the Haiti Project when they were freshmen, with students assisting in the completion of the second floor of the school and providing additional school supplies. Other service opportunities come through partnerships with other schools. While these are beneficial, they need more administrative assistance to become ongoing and more stable. Lastly, Mr. Hayes cited the need in Social Work to understand the issues surrounding depression and anxiety for students, to better support them. Board discussion followed with Mr. Hayes and Mr. Sally responding to Board members' questions and comments. Conversation was supportive and appreciative of the report. Numerous members encouraged more communication of the good news showing students at every level succeeding academically in their college endeavors.

#### **C. Extracurricular Participation Report**

Mr. Tim Hayes presented the student participation report for extracurricular activities during the 2014-2015 school year. The report also provides information from previous reports for comparison. Mr. Hayes highlighted this year's information noting that overall percentage of participation is the same as last year. However, there has been a slight shift, with increasing student participation in the Performing Arts and the Intramural Program. He noted that 89% of all students participate in some activity beyond the school day, either inside or out of school. Board discussion followed on data collection, gaps in male and female participation in either Performing Arts or Athletics, and Booster Club opportunities through numerous intramural activities.

#### **D. Public Hearing for the intent of the District to sell \$6,000,000 School Fire Prevention and Safety Bonds for school fire prevention and safety purposes**

Mr. Harris called the Public Hearing to Order for the intent of the District to sell \$6,000,000 School Fire

Prevention and Safety Bonds for school fire prevention and safety purposes. Ms. Witham reviewed that the Health Life Safety projects were presented to the Board of Education in August of this year and they were approved by the State in October. The District now needs to issue the Bonds and this Public Hearing gives township residents the opportunity to speak on these Safety Bonds. Mr. Harris invited those present who may be interested in addressing the Board to come forward. No one addressed the Board. Mr. Dolinko noted that the need for these bonds was anticipated and taxpayers will not see an increase in the Debt Service taxes due to this bond issuance. Mr. Dolinko moved to close and adjourn the Public Hearing on the intent to sell School Fire Prevention and Safety Bonds for school fire prevention and safety purposes. Mr. Robitaille seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: None

The motion passed.

#### **E. Public Hearing 2015 Tax Levy**

Mr. Harris called to Order the Public Hearing for the 2015 Tax Levy. Ms. Witham provided a PowerPoint presentation of the 2015 Tax Levy, explaining the process and the statutory guidelines regarding tax levies. She noted that the recommended Tax Levy is 2.54% higher than the 2014 Levy and therefore does not require a Public Hearing; however it is our custom to do so and allow the public to speak regarding Tax Levies. The District will request the CPI-U increase of 0.8% plus an estimated value of new property added to the tax base during 2015 of \$80 million. The Levy by fund is detailed in the Resolution Levying Taxes for the Year 2015 of \$97,521,854:

Education	\$85,272,653
Building	\$ 7,082,802
Transportation	\$ 1,391,265
I.M.R.F.	\$ 1,751,476
Social Security	<u>\$ 2,023,658</u>
	\$97,521,854

Mr. Harris invited members of the audience to share their comments about the recommended 2015 Tax Levy. No one came forward to speak. Mr. Harris opened the discussion to members of the Board. Mr. Dolinko noted the lengthy Board discussion at the October meeting and that nothing has changed in the recommendation. Members commented on several related topics: there has not been an Education Fund tax rate referendum increase since 2003; there is uncertainty about what Springfield will do with their funding; and there is a disconnect between the CPI taxing structure and the labor costs incurred by schools. Mr. Dolinko moved that the Board close and adjourn the Public Hearing on the 2015 Tax Levy. Mr. Myefski seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: None

The motion passed.

#### **F. 2015 Tax Levy Approval**

Mr. Dolinko moved that the Board approve the attached Resolution Levying Taxes for the Year 2015 in the amount of \$97,521,854 to be distributed as follows:

Education	\$85,272,653
Building	\$ 7,082,802
Transportation	\$ 1,391,265
I.M.R.F.	\$ 1,751,476
Social Security	<u>\$ 2,023,658</u>
Total Capped Funds:	\$97,521,854

And that the Board approve the related resolutions, including the Resolution to abate a portion of the Debt Service Fund Levy and the Resolution to abate a portion of the loss and collection supplement. Mr. Myefski seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

Mr. Harris

NAY: None

The motion passed.

**G. Bid Package 8 and 8A Approval**

Dr. Yonke reviewed the results of the Prime Trade Award Recommendations for Bid Packages 8 and 8A. She noted that these packages include bids for interior finishes, millwork, casework, tile, carpet, flooring, Theatre seating & platforms and Audiovisual. A portion of Bid Package 8 was delayed from November due to only one bid each for Millwork and Wood Flooring. Those two bids were not opened and the contracts were re-bid, creating Bid Package 8A. After the re-bidding, the Millwork and Wood Flooring Bids combined were approximately half a million dollars over the estimate. Together with other Package 8 Bids the total bid results were over the estimate by \$1.1M. The Facilities Steering Committee with the OAC reviewed voluntary alternates and accepted 25. These alternates add up to \$355,926 and reduce the overage to \$745,328. Committee discussions looked at contingency risks on Construction costs and Owner's costs and whether the contingency amount is sufficient for the remainder of the project. Dr. Yonke noted that these adjustments would necessitate using more of the Reserve Funds. Facility Steering Committee members Mr. Robitaille and Mr. O'Donoghue added commentary on the Committee discussions on Bid Package 8 and 8A, cost estimates, contingencies, and the use of Reserve Funds. Mr. Robitaille felt any further cuts in the budget would compromise the integrity of the project. He noted that while the project will now be \$3.1M over the intended target of \$100.3M, the District has a way to fund the project through the use of Reserve Funds that will provide the Township with the desired Renovation Project that taxpayers are expecting. Mr. O'Donoghue agreed with Mr. Robitaille stating that the District can meet these costs without asking for more from the taxpayers. Further Board discussion followed on the District Reserve Funds and operating contingencies. Mr. Harris highlighted that the District has a project to be proud of and the Board is meeting its commitment to the Community. Mr. O'Donoghue noted that the project is also adding new space, that it is a new facility with expanded purpose. Mr. Dolinko moved that the Board approve the award of Prime Trade Agreements for the Winnetka Campus West Side Addition to those bidders highlighted in green in the above Bid Results for Bid Packages 8 and 8A. Ms. Goldstein seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: None

The motion passed.

**VII. Administrative Items**

**A. Treasurer's Report for November 2015**

Ms. Witham provided the Financial Treasurer's Report for November 2015 that included three years of Cash Flow Statements, the Financial Statement for November 2015, the Cash and Investments Report, the November Investment Report and the Historical Graph. Ms. Witham noted the ending balance for November in the Cash accounts was \$84.4M. The Receipts were \$758,000 and Payroll was \$7.7M. Total Expenditures included payments for the Winnetka Project of \$14.4M. Certificates of Deposit make up 79.92% of the current investments earning a rate of 9.17%; Municipals are 27% of the portfolio earning a rate of 1.2%. The top three investment institutions are PMA with 51%, Fifth Third Bank with 13% and First Bank & Trust with 17%. The portfolio for the Winnetka Project Funds has 47% invested in certificates of deposit earning .623%; 32.5% invested in government securities earning 0.688%; and 8.94% invested with municipals earning .817%. The top investment houses for the Winnetka Project portfolio are PMA with 33%, Fifth Third holding 28%, First Bank & Trust Winnetka with 12%, and 12% with Raymond James. Ms. Witham responded to Board members comments and questions.

**B. Audit Report**

Ms. Cheryl Witham introduced Mr. John George and Ms. Katie Barry of RSM (formerly McGladrey) to present this year's Audit Report. Mr. George, Audit Partner of RSM, noted the recent name change of the firm and introduced Ms. Barry, Senior Manager. He reviewed the audit process and the timeline performed for the District which began last June and continued through the end of August. He noted the field work performed, focusing on the internal controls for payroll, disbursements, investments, and debt cycles. He stated no issues were found. Verifications were performed at the end of the summer and statements were

drafted. Ms. Barry praised the New Trier District for being awarded Certificates of Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Association of School Business Officials International and the Government Finance Officers Association. She reviewed the contents of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the year ended June 30, 2015 and the two page Independent Auditor's Report which provided an unmodified opinion for the District finances. Ms. Barry also highlighted the changes from previous year's reporting as the District adopted the reporting and disclosure requirements of Governmental Accounting Standards Board Statements No.67 and No.71. Information previously reported in footnotes of past reports is now recorded within the financial statements. Ms. Barry noted that the CAFR report is sent to the Illinois State Board of Education to create the District's Annual Financial Report Profile. New Trier scored highest in this profile rating. Mr. George reviewed further elements included in the audit and commented that no issues were identified. The last single audit review was performed on the IDEA funds with no issues found. He was pleased to provide a clean audit report to the Board. Open discussion followed with Mr. George and Ms. Barry responding to comments and questions of Board members. Mr. Dolinko asked if Mr. George could comment in layman's terms the findings of the comprehensive financial report. Mr. George stated the audit produced a clean opinion of the District's finances; there were no control issues, clean compliance testing, and clean financial reporting. He also noted that the District is excellent in its reporting and financial standing compared to other high schools. Other comments included the sample size used in the audit and any impact from the implementation of the new Skyward system. Mr. Dolinko moved and Mr. Myefski seconded the motion that the Board accepts the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and other related reports for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2015. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: None

The motion passed.

#### **VIII. Consent Agenda**

- Bill List for the Period November 1-30, 2015
- Personnel Report
- Ratification of Change Orders
- Approval of Physical Plant Services Contract

Mr. Harris asked if any Board member would like to remove items from the Consent Agenda for separate discussion. No items were selected for separate discussion. Mr. Myefski moved that the Board approve the Consent Agenda which includes: the Bill List for the Period November 1-30, 2015; the Personnel Report; that the Board of Education of New Trier Township High School District 203 ratifies Budget Change Order #3 to the contracts managed by Pepper Construction Company; and furthermore deducts the amount of \$197,851.00 from the West Side Project Construction Contingency line item. That the Board of Education further ratifies expenditures to the Essex Road and Capital Improvements Project budget which reflect contingency use in the amount of \$934.00 all in the best interest of the District; and that the Board approve the 3.5 Year Agreement with the New Trier Physical Plant Services Association as presented. Mr. Dolinko seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

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

NAY: None

#### **IX. Board Member Reports**

Ms. Albrecht reported for *ECGC* and their group discussion event on December 2 which asked "How do we talk to our kids about race?" It was facilitated by Tim Hayes and Pat Savage Williams. Fellow Board member Lori Goldstein also attended. Forty-fifty parents joined the conversation which easily could have continued after the set time. Ms. Albrecht announced that the *New Trier Educational Foundation* meeting will be tomorrow. The Foundation has hired a part/time marketing assistant who has boosted their fundraising efforts with Giving Tuesday email solicitations. His work has garnered an additional \$17,565 for the Foundation.

Ms. Goldstein noted that the *All School Forum* meeting was cancelled. *NSSSED* will meet this Wednesday, December 16. The *New Trier Parents Association* met last week and presented Randy Oberembt as their guest speaker on the New Trier Athletic Mission statement and the New Trier student and student athlete experience.

Discussion also focused on the impact of the shortened school calendar and any additional stresses it may have imparted on sports, teaching, hard work, and resiliency. The Annual District Dialogue meeting on January 28 will include a book talk with Dr. Yonke on a book titled *How to Raise an Adult*.

Mr. Myefski said there was no *Technology* meeting this month. He attended the *New Trier Fine Arts* meeting which included discussion on the budget. He noted there was also much discussion on the Debate Program and whether travel expenses would be covered by the District. Expenses for debates that are held far from school are generally covered by the students and money is set aside to assist any student in financial need.

**X. Board Members' Requests for Research & Calendar of Events**

- Calendar of Events

Dr. Yonke reviewed calendar events which included first semester final exams this week. She highlighted that this is the first year that exams take place before the Winter Break. There will be no assignments or homework for students over break. Wednesday, December 16 is the annual New Trier vs. Evanston Basketball game at Evanston at 6:00 p.m. Friday, December 18 is the last day of the semester and classes resume on Monday, January 4, 2016. Academic Life will be on Wednesday and Thursday, January 6 and 7 and again on Tuesday, January 12. The Martin Luther King All School Seminar is planned for Monday, January 18. That is also the date of the next Regular Meeting of the Board.

- Board Members' Request for Staff Research and Future Agenda Items

Mr. O'Donoghue inquired about the status of the fundraising efforts on the Turf Project and the Black Box Theatre. Mr. Dolinko spoke for the Booster Club noting that there is an approximate balance of \$200,000 on the Turf Project pledge. They are hopeful to complete that commitment by the end of this year. He also noted that the Club is looking to transition to a more general support of Booster Club programs than specific projects like the Turf one. Dr. Yonke offered that she will provide an update on both fundraising efforts in a future Weekly Letter. Mr. Robitaille asked when the next update on the teacher evaluations would be. Dr. Yonke and Mr. Sally responded that this is a PERA Planning year and an appropriate follow up report could be scheduled for July, at the end of this school year.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. O'Donoghue moved that the Board adjourn the open meeting. Mr. Robitaille seconded the motion. Upon a voice vote being taken, all members indicated they were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 10:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lou Anne Kelly, Secretary

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F. Malcolm Harris, President