

DECEMBER

League of Women Voters of Downers Grove-Woodridge-Lisle

Observer's Report

Governmental Body: Downers Grove District 58 School Board Date: December 10, 2012

Please check answers:

Type of meeting: Regular Workshop Public Hearing
Other _____

Facilities: Clean Proper Size Could See Could Hear
 Handicap accessible

Media Coverage: Yes No If yes, who was present: Patch reporter Amanda

Public Present: Yes (about 15) No Public Comment: Yes
 No

PROCEEDINGS

Meeting start on time? Yes

All members present? Yes

Sufficient staff present? Yes

Presiding officer control meeting? Yes--Little control needed; quiet meeting

Members prepared and attentive? Yes

Members respectful and courteous to all present? Yes

Adequate discussion of issues? Yes--Too little discussion of Pierce Downer project

Information re issues available to public? Yes

Sufficient opportunity for public input? Yes

Additional observations or concerns:

Under Non-Action Reports, Mr. Meech, Director of Technology, and Assistant Superintendent Rich gave a lengthy and informative report, "Spotlight On Our Schools". They explained how the District is using technology to improve both teaching and learning, noting that the Common Core Standards specifically address the use of technology. They stressed that the focus of the whole technology plan was on learning rather than the technical devices themselves. The District planned a series of parent education sessions to show parents how the digital era works and how to help their students access digital materials at the public library.

In her report, among other things, Superintendent Cremascoli explained that the Illinois Standards Achievement Test will be replaced in 2014 with a new assessment instrument. More communication with parents is planned as preparation for this change. The District is also working with the Northwest Evaluation Association to administer the Measure of Academic Progress assessment. This will facilitate close monitoring of students' progress all through the school year.

The only item under Discussion was a facilities planning update. The Superintendent introduced an architect from Wight & Company who made a lengthy presentation concerning a possible addition to Pierce Downer School. The architect stressed that he was presenting only conceptual plans. He displayed preliminary drawings which showed the addition of three classrooms and resource areas to complement the classrooms. The drawings also reflected the rearranging of space to provide areas for small groups and special uses. This proposal was estimated to cost \$1.2 million. During the presentation, the Board asked good questions and sought clarifications. However, at one point two members briefly expressed a difference of opinion as to exactly what was needed, or at least as to what they had expected would be presented. It was not clear what information the Board had prior to the architect's presentation. But it was clear that not all Board members were on the same page concerning the scope of the Pierce Downer project. Nevertheless, neither the two Board members who disagreed nor anyone else on the Board continued the discussion or asked further questions. They gave virtually no direction to the architect as to how to proceed.

Also pertinent to facilities planning, other projects related to operations, maintenance and Life Safety were discussed. These projects were prioritized, and a timeline and funding sources suggested. The prospective funding sources were numerous and seemed to leave the Board a bit confused. Dr. Popernik assured the members that they would have sufficient funding in 2013 to proceed with the Pierce Downer project this summer. The Superintendent stated that she would arrange a presentation by bond counsel for the January Board meeting to clarify the various funding options.

Reception of Visitors. Two citizens spoke about crowded conditions at Pierce Downer School. Melissa Nuttall strongly urged that the school needs every bit of space shown on the architect's conceptual plan; it needs expansion, not just rearranging.

The meeting adjourned to closed session at 9:00 p.m.

Observer: ___Peggy Healy_____Date:___December 10, 2012

submitted: ___January 26, 2013_____

For more information, see the District 58 website: www.dg58.org