



## **Westlake Board of Education**

### ***Board Notes from Monday, Oct. 24, 2011, Work Session***

Tim Sullivan indicated he would vote against the approval of the minutes of previous meetings, noting that they do not do a good job of indicating what happens at meetings. I think we are bound to do a better job.

Nate Cross questioned the process of transcribing minutes.

Carol Winter asked Mr. Sullivan if he found inaccuracies in these minutes and if he had contacted Mr. Pepera about any concerns after receiving the minutes.

Sullivan answered that he has discussed these types of issues with Mr. Pepera before.

Mrs. Winter asked if he contacted Mr. Pepera about these specific minutes to report any inaccuracies for the minutes we are voting on right now

Sullivan stated he would rather not answer that question.

Mr. Pepera stated he did not receive any calls from any board members about these minutes.

Carol Winter indicated the Board has discussed how to proceed with minutes, indicating they are audiotaped and videotaped and fit into the requirements of the Ohio Revised Code.

Sullivan said minutes are misleading, deceptive and inaccurate through omission and failing in the board's duty of transparency.

Cross said we are falling short of a written transcription of meetings. Suggested a discussion item at the next meeting about hiring a stenographer.

#### **LBMS INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL PRESENTATION**

1. Claudia Vakos presented on a trip to Costa Rica
2. Ann Dill and Cathy DuBois presented on the Masaai Music Project in Africa

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

1. In March, WSC in partnership with another local school to co-sponsor an International Baccalaureate program in March.
2. We are going to offer Arabic and Chinese for high school credit second semester after school. It will follow our summer school model and will be open to other districts. Project Link Coordinator Mike Waters worked with Global Languages at the high school and Academic Services Director Pam Griebel to get this up and running.
3. Last week received results from CAAP exams. This test compares our students to more than 4,000 other students and OSU students in language proficiency. Test covers writing, speaking, listening and reading. Westlake students scored above OSU who are currently enrolled in Spanish in three of the four categories and significantly higher than the average for Ohio HS students.
4. Site work has started at LBMS. Traffic patterns will soon change and create a construction entrance. We will have separate lots for Dover Elementary School and LBMS. Events at soccer and lacrosse fields will need to work around construction site barriers.
5. We received an award from Ohio Schools Council, Exemplary Saver Award, for our efforts to save dollars through consortium purchasing. Top 25% of schools of the 157 districts in the consortium, top 39 of districts participating in consortium. Second time in four months recognized for best practices – previously recognized by Ohio School Plan as a Best Practice district in Ohio for reducing risk and insurance savings. Thank you to Mr. Dave Puffer.
6. The district secured significant savings through bond refinancing, over \$570,000. Kudos to Mr. Pepera.
7. Lauren Golick finished the season as a state placer. Second year she's placed in Division I tennis tournament. Finished fourth at the tournament. She has earned a 4.6+ GPA.
8. Girls' soccer won first tournament game.
9. Concert season is about to begin.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT/RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Quarterly report, presentation and financial forecast
  - a. Ohio school district forecasts historically have shown deficits in future years. Those projected deficits historically have not materialized. Forecast is impacted by many variables, including labor contracts, cost containment, sharing of service arrangements and efficiencies created.
  - b. National ratings agencies provide independent verification of our financial situation, including Moody's and Standard & Poor's.
  - c. Current five-year forecast is same provided on Sept. 26. Added one year to the forecast, through 2016. Forecasted amounts will change. Deficits cannot materialize to projected levels, based on statutes.
  - d. Sullivan: Assume no one in independent ratings agencies are Westlake taxpayers. See forecast for 2016 and see \$27.5 million cash deficit. True according to law it will not occur because we'll have a levy. But the levy will have to be large. Rate at which expenses are separating to revenue is concerning. Can't fathom a situation in which a school district can get itself into a negative cash reserve of \$27.5 million. Almost \$1,000 per man, woman and child in Westlake to make that up. It leads people to ask what this school board is doing to us. Understand when have an operating levy flush with cash, and end of levy cycle means operating deficits. People aren't going to understand that. Fiscally irresponsible and this board needs to do something about it. Going to vote a strong no on the first item.

- e. Cross: Over the past decade our district's annual operating expenses have risen. Showing an operating deficit in 2016. This is an embarrassing forecast. Illustrates the impact of our fiscally irresponsible spending policies resulting in escalating personnel costs we cannot afford. We need to significantly work to reduce escalating costs. Taxpayers don't deserve to be held hostage to this spending plan. I will vote no on all fiscal year 2012 resolutions.
- f. Sullivan: at our last meeting I voted no on the budget and at the end of that Dr. Keenan indicated my vote was in essence holding the district hostage. I find that assertion ridiculous in light of the fact I'm in the minority. I find it to be irresponsible and inflammatory statement. IF vote no on something you are holding the district ransom. He asked Dr., Keenan to remember he had a "Dr." in front of his name and don't think it's appropriate to say a board member is holding the district for ransom. Mr. Mays I am disappointed in your failure of leadership.
- g. Tom Mays: Do you have a comment regarding this resolution? That is what discussion is supposed to be about. You are talking about a meeting where you voted no on an operating budget that was a reduction of 6.7%.
- h. Winter: Mr. Mays, we will carry on with Mr. Sullivan. Mr. Sullivan please continue with the reason you are voting on this item. This has nothing to do with an action you voted on at the last meeting. The cornerstone of our Democracy is majority rules. Important to know our policy indicates once a vote is taken we move. Do you have anything further?
- i. Sullivan: No response to specific vote
- j. Winter: You are out of order, is there further discussion?
- k. Mays: Everyone on this board is always concerned with our financial forecast. These numbers are going to change because there are assumptions going forward that take into consideration things that might occur in the future. Purpose of the forecast is to do things to continue operating the district properly. I would hope sometime along the line before you are gone and while Mr. Cross is still here, that you would also talk about the good things that have happened in this district. I don't know if either one of you called Mr. Pepera to congratulate him on saving the taxpayers \$571,000. There are good things and bad things in every district forecast. Nice to bring up the stuff that will help us move forward. We also shouldn't forget to mention positive things in the district, such as \$577,000 bond refinancing savings. Thanked CFO/Treasurer Mark Pepera.
- l. Cross: Congratulated Pepera for savings. I do look at this forecast. While \$500,000 is not small change, it doesn't come close to addressing our deficit in the next five years. I'm trying to keep a balanced approach. What has me concerned is this is the first time in FY12 we'll start to deficit spend. We're going to bring in \$48.6 million and committed to \$52.1 million. I understand this is based on assumptions. Our fiscal year costs in 2012, we are committed to these expenses at this point, and we don't have enough revenue to cover it. That is deficit spending. We have \$48.6 million coming in and \$44.3 million in personnel. That leaves us \$3 or \$4 million to play with to cover our other expenses. I will vote no on any measure that appropriates dollars toward the fiscal year 2012 budget because I then would be spending beyond our means.
- m. Andrea Rocco: Legally, this board is bound by the contracts signed by four members of the board Sullivan, winter, Mays and myself. The resolution we are voting on is to appropriate on operating expenses. This is money to buy toilet paper for the bathrooms, a wheelchair for a child who just moved to the district. Those are the kinds of operating expenses you will hear us vote on. If majority of board voted no, that would mean our schools would not have materials our students need to learn. There are a lot

of games being played and democracy is messy and dirty. It's unfortunate it comes with pre-typed statements and a lot of unfounded accusations.

- n. Winter: Ms. Rocco please finish comments on this specific item
- o. Andrea Rocco: Every couple years you as a community gets to say what's right and wrong. This forecast is something districts have done for years. We've had perfect audits, ratings, Mr. Pepera has been named Treasurer of the Year. This budget meets our legal obligations.
- p. Winter: We, as a board, understand public school finance, which is different than financing a municipality and private industry. There is so much to public school finance. Remember that we've had discussions about it. This budget is following our goals.
- q. Mark Pepera: one thing that may help some understand because I think there is some confusion by some members on what this forecast is..by voting yes on the forecast, the only thing you are doing is keeping the district in compliance with state law. Required to file this by Oct. 31. I just want you to understand that there is a statutory requirement to file a forecast. By voting on the forecast you are not authorizing the district to spend money in this format. You did that a month ago with the budget. I think it is important I make that clear to you prior to vote. Other item to point out. Mr. Cross indicate we took in more money last year than we spent. I believe if you look at the forecast we were actually the opposite. We did take in more money last year than we spent accordingly. Earlier forecast last year showed the opposite. Speaks to our historic deficits seen on paper but not reality.
- r. Dr. Keenan: In response to Mr. Sullivan, I would ask you please go back and read the board notes or listen to the recording instead of reading news clippings. You will find a different account of what occurred. I remember clearly asking those who voted "no" if you understood we could make changes, but you responded you will vote no on everything unless the rest of the board decided to do something else on a separate matter that you wanted. At that point of time, prior to your vote, I asked you to consider my role in administering the district and that I expressed if the budget weren't passed my hands would be tied because board members were worried about a different issue than what you were actually voting on. I would warn against that once again from some of the statements I have heard tonight. My problem is not with no votes when there is a reason we can work with for that voted item. But when you are voting no on one item because you're upset about the results of another, different vote, you are tying my hands to run the district. That's what I was stating to you then and I would state the again. I checked last time to see if you understood and it's clear you did. I also think you understand very clearly what we are voting on here with our forecast. If you want to make a statement, you have a right to do so. I simply stated last time that my concern is that if more than two board members made that same statement that the school district would not be able to operate. As far as the "Dr." in front of my name comment and the statement that comments made were ridiculous, I won't sink to the same level as Mr. Sullivan, but I did hear the word "disappointed" used. I share that disappointment with your boardmanship. You go back and forth picking and choosing which board policies to adhere to or not and which OSBA recommendations to follow and which not. I would ask you to do nothing different than anyone has asked you to do when you took your oath and that is follow board policy and demonstrate proper boardmanship. If you have disagreements you can express them in a more respectable and appropriate way by doing so. I remind you that we do have students who watch how we act and we do have community members who watch how we act. If you feel

something is important, stand up for convictions, but to violate policies by choice, or make decisions on one vote, not on the merit of that vote, but because of other votes when you understand the district needs to operate... I just ask that you reconsider, if you are going to make those types of decisions, how your vote impacts how we operate the schools.

2. Approved quarterly report and financial forecast (Yes = Rocco, Mays, Winter; No = Sullivan, Cross)
3. Authorized treasurer to transfer funds from General Fund to Athletic Fund (Cross abstained)
4. Approved then and now certificate for Hylant Administrative Services and Sysco Food Services (Cross abstained)
5. Accepted state Ohio K-12 Network FY12 funds and federal Title III Immigrant FY12 funds. (Cross abstained)
6. Established appropriations for Ohio K-12 Network FY12 and Title III Immigrant FY12 (Cross = No)
  - a. Cross: At the Sept. 26 board meeting that until we exercise financial restraint and to force our employees to significantly reduce personnel costs, I will not vote for this or any further expenditures that impact spending with this budget.  
Keenan: I want to note for the record this was a vote to establish appropriations for grant funds.  
Rocco: Grant funds are not the same as the general fund tax dollars  
Pepera: Correct  
Cross: I'll just vote no on everything at this point just to cover myself.
7. Approved adjustment of FY12 appropriations (Yes = Rocco, Mays, Winter, Sullivan; No = Cross)
8. Authorized treasurer to secure all available tax advances from auditor for funds lawfully due the school district

Pepera: If any member ever has any question, I know you know this; if you ever have a question about an item on the agenda, please give me a call. I did not receive a call from any board member prior to this meeting.

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

1. Accepted gifts and contributions from:
  - a. Anonymous
  - b. Dean's Greenhouse/Debbie Dean-Espie
  - c. WHS Cheer/Pam Dunlap
  - d. Mr. & Mrs. Michal Gleespen
  - e. Hyland software/Lisa Johnson & Mike Bilardo
  - f. Mr. & Mrs. Keith Jenkins
  - g. Sandy Nemeth
  - h. Z-Space Technologies/Laura Lathem
2. Approved classified resignation of Josif Silaghi (No = Cross)
3. Approved resignation for purpose of retirement for Dolores Kuclo (No = Cross)
4. FMLA for Vanessa Lem, Elizabeth Huffman, Mark Quinlan, Dottie Kozak (No = Cross)
5. Certified employment of Raymond Glenn (No = Cross)
6. Classified Employment of Loreen Lucas, Robin Gingell, Nichole Borecki, Sandra Houser, Gail Smith (No = Cross)
7. Extended time for Raymond Glenn (No = Cross)
8. Classified substitute resignations of Laurel Covell, Kelli Noykos, Tom Sorensen (No = Cross)
9. Certified substitute resignations of Laurel Covell and Kelli Noykos

10. Classified substitutes Edward Roldan, Lori Sinclair, Susan Winter
11. Certified substitutes Mandeline Abraham, James Foerster, Jerrin Holt, Chelsea Matthews, Jennifer Rinaldi, Ann Straub, Patrick Aurand, Chelsa French, Ada Jenkins, Lauren Mole, Andrew Robinson, Gregory Stringer, Denise Cukrowicz, Kathryn Gannon, Elizabeth Knotek, Mark Rauchfleisch, Christopher Smith, Susan Winter, Mara Evans, Patrick Guthrie, Michele Lebo, Pamela Relitz, Katherine Snyder
12. Reclassification of certified staff Amy Tucher, Jeff Short, Mike Newman (No = Cross)
13. 2011-12 resignation of supplemental employment for Chris Milano (No = Cross)
14. 2011-12 supplemental contract employment (No = Cross)
  - a. Lynda Appel
  - b. Mike Allan
  - c. John Holland
  - d. Katie Marquard
  - e. Shaun Koski
  - f. Chris Milano
  - g. Mary Rehor
  - h. William Bowles
  - i. Jay Valadez
  - j. Dave Fazekas
  - k. Brian Arth
  - l. Laura Miller
  - m. Sara Latkowski
  - n. Jennifer Dietrich
  - o. Jennifer Butler
  - p. Julie Davidson
  - q. Karen Petrus
  - r. Emerson Emser
  - s. Dane Holman
  - t. Trisha Simon
  - u. Ann Marie Thomas
  - v. Kevin Golick
  - w. Linnga Djohan
  - x. Nancy Koehler
  - y. Jason Buhrman
15. Approved Saturday school stipends for Mike Besu, Jim Egan, Ann Marie Thomas, Deb Voss (No = Cross)
16. Approved ABLE resignation of Desiree Caliguire-Maier (No = Cross)
17. Approved ABLE employment of Lisa Feldman, Mark Laurenzi, Donna Hinson (No = Cross)
  - a. Dr. Keenan let the record reflect this is a grant-funded program
  - b. Rocco this is for a grant that helps adults with special needs
18. Approved employment of Project Link personnel James Foerster, Nancy Jankowski (No = Cross)
  - a. Dr. Keenan let the record reflect Project Link is a self-sustained program
19. Adjusted Transportation Department employee hours (No = Cross)
  - a. Dr. Keenan let the record reflect these are due to real, verified route times and the overflow policy of the Board of Education
20. Approved stipends for curriculum writing for Laura Jagels, Marcia Faber, Joe Schofield, Art Daniels (No = Cross)
  - a. Dr. Keenan let the record reflect these are paid through grants from CSU

21. Approved agreements for admission of tuition pupils and purchased services with Euclid City Schools, PEP Assist-Behavior Consulting Services and performance contract for Dr. Jay Berk, PhD & Associates.
22. Approved Sunday building use for Lake Erie Youth Basketball
23. Approved Seniors' Seasonal Delights program
24. Appointed Pamela Griebel as trustee of the Westlake Education Foundation

#### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

1. Bob Teitenberg of Turner Construction gave an update on the master facilities construction project.
2. Director of Business Affairs Dave Puffer: Working with parents and staff at both sites to make sure everyone is informed of what is going on. Dismissal from student parking lot continues to improve. Had to remove boxwoods, ornamental grasses and daylilies in front of PAC. That will be the cafeteria in two years. Had plants encroaching on the board office sidewalks, so we are transplanting those items here to reuse all of those items that offer minimal maintenance but an improved appearance. Everything is weather dependent.

#### **HEARING OF THE PUBLIC**

1. Russ Esalt: When I come here I'd like to be warm and fuzzy, but the actions of the majority of this board cause a problem. But that doesn't matter because you get enough support from the community. I'm told we must pay an average Westlake teacher \$71,000 to get excellence because of a direct linkage between salary and excellence. I don't believe that. Also heard Westlake is hooked into a contract and you can't change that. There are at least half a dozen districts in the area that have taken salary decreases or freezes. I like to go on the internet. Found a story online of a tiny rural county school district in Kansas of 385 students outscoring 95% of 20 global competitors. I would ask for information on how we rank with the world so taxpayers can know that. This school district is the second highest in math in the country and has considerable poverty. I feel happiness and I'm troubled. Happy when the district saves \$571,000. Also know that's a pittance compared to huge amount of expenditures on salaries. I am troubled about why this comes out 2 weeks before the elections when it's something we should be doing anyway.

**NEXT REGULAR MEETING:** The next meeting of the Board is a regular session and will take place at 5:30pm in the Board Room at the Administration Building, Monday, Nov. 28.

For more detailed information on these items, visit

<http://beta.westlake.k12.oh.us/boe/meetingschedule/default.aspx>