

**WESTLAKE CITY SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES**

**Monday, March 8, 2010 – 5:30 p.m. – Work Session
Administration Building - Board Room – 27200 Hilliard Blvd.**

Call to Order: Time: 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Winter	<u>Present</u>
Mr. Sullivan	<u>Present</u>
Mr. Cross	<u>Present</u>
Mr. Mays	<u>Present</u>
Ms. Rocco	<u>Present</u>

Pledge of Allegiance: President Winter led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Acknowledgment of Visitors: President Winter thanked all in attendance.

Approval of Agenda as amended to add a discussion of the January 11th and January 25th minutes after approval of Agenda

Motion by Ms. Winter
Seconded by Ms. Rocco

Discussion:

Sullivan: Stated he would like to be notified in advance about proposed amendments to the meeting agenda.

Winter: Indicated to Mr. Sullivan the agenda amendment was not meant to surprise members but instead an effort to move the Board forward on this topic of concern.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Winter	<u>AYE</u>
Mr. Sullivan	<u>AYE</u>
Mr. Cross	<u>AYE</u>
Mr. Mays	<u>AYE</u>
Ms. Rocco	<u>AYE</u>

Discussion of January 11th and January 25th Minutes:

Winter: She restated the District policy with regard to the recording and transcribing of minutes and indicated she had reconsidered Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Cross' request pertaining to the January 11th and January 25th meeting minutes. In an effort to move things forward she proposed the following motion:

Motion:

Move to include the Board member verbatim statements referring to the January 11th vote on resolution 10-28 and the January 25th vote on resolution 10-34 be added to tonight's meeting minutes.

Motion by Ms. Winter

Seconded by Mr. Sullivan

Discussion:

Sullivan: He asked Mrs. Winter for a written copy of her motion so he could review.

Rocco: Stated to Mr. Sullivan it is not uncommon that motions are presented by members of the Board at the table for consideration.

Cross: He requested Ms. Winter to clarify the videotape motion.

Winter: She indicated the Board would entertain the motions separately and asked Mr. Pepera to make any corrections between the submitted statements and the actual words used. She further stated that on a going forward basis, any member of the Board requesting a verbatim statement be included in the record should be prepared to read directly from their statement.

Cross: Will members of the Board as well as members of the audience be permitted to submit verbatim statements?

Winter: Stated this topic may best be addressed by the policy subcommittee.

Cross: Asked Mrs. Winter if a prepared statement be made as an addendum to the minutes?

Pepera: Stated to Mr. Cross the verbatim statement would be incorporated within the minutes and not as an addendum.

Sullivan: He stated the Board policy is unclear on the required timing of submission of statements.

Winter: Indicated the law states one of three requirements in this regard must be met. The District must have either a verbatim record of their minutes, a video or audio tape of the meeting, or minutes recorded in abstract form.

Cross: Asked Mrs. Winter for an example of how this might work.

Winter: In response to Mr. Cross, Mrs. Winter read the District policy regarding the appending of minutes.

Sullivan: Asked Ms. Winter if it is her interpretation if a Board member wants a written statement attached to the record, he or she has to make that request at the meeting at which he or she is making the statement?

Winter: She responded to Mr. Sullivan that is her interpretation.

Mays: He thanked Ms. Winter for her work on this issue and doesn't feel the Board violated any policy on this matter or there was any lack of transparency on the part of the Board. Nonetheless, he stated he is willing to support Mrs. Winter's motion in the hope the Board can move forward on this issue.

RES. #10-90

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Winter	<u>AYE</u>
Mr. Sullivan	<u>AYE</u>
Mr. Cross	<u>AYE</u>
Mr. Mays	<u>AYE</u>
Ms. Rocco	<u>AYE</u>

** See attachment of verbatim statements at the end of these minutes.

Motion:

Motion that the Board of Education meetings be videotaped for broadcast to the community.

Motion by _____ Ms. Winter _____

*Discussion was stricken from record due to lack of a second on the motion made by Ms. Winter.

***Hearing of Public (15 Minutes) Agenda Items**

Harry Applegate: Stated there was not a second to the motion offered by Ms. Winter to televise the Board meetings and therefore the discussion that ensued should be stricken from the record.

Cross: Indicated he is in agreement with Mr. Applegate's comment.

Sullivan: Stated the Board should have any motions in written format so they are better prepared to discuss.

Winter: Stated she wants the record to reflect there was no second to the motion dealing with the videotaping of the meetings of the board and therefore it will be stricken from the record.

A. Board Discussion Items

1. Mrs. Winter briefly discussed preliminary planning for a Spring Mini-Retreat and Summer Retreat. She stated the tentative dates are slated for May 10th (Mini-Retreat) and August 28th (Summer Goal Setting Retreat).

2. Facility Scenarios – Budget Thresholds

Keenan: He asked the Board to clarify any untouchables and communicate an aggregate threshold in order to prepare a final reduction expenditure plan. He reiterated this plan would only be required if the May levy fails.

Winter: Stated \$3 million of reductions is an amount that makes sense in light of the totality of the issue.

Mays: Stated the proposed \$15 million in facility repairs to be completed over the next five years will likely grow to \$17-18 million due to inflation.

Keenan: Stated there are a lot of things to consider in this proposal, and the school program as we know it will come to suffer as a result. He also stated that using this band-aid approach over the next five years is unrealistic and will not permit us to catch up with our facilities issue.

Mays: Agreed with Dr. Keenan and indicated he is concerned we'll never catch up. He stated that he does not support cutting anything to do with programming such as reading intervention, technology replacement, and the purchase of textbooks.

Keenan: He acknowledged Mr. Mays opinion, but stated he won't be able to get an acceptable amount of repairs complete without mandating such cuts to the educational program.

Mays: Stated that people move to Westlake because of our Excellent with Distinction honors and believes everything we have worked for over the years will suffer with such cuts.

Cross: Asked Dr. Keenan if we are really talking about only \$2.5 million in cuts?

Keenan: Responded to Mr. Cross that out of the \$3 million number, \$500,000 is coming from the annual permanent improvement allocation. He further indicated that if cuts or reductions are not made, it's unrealistic the District could begin to address its facilities problem.

Sullivan: Asked Dr. Keenan to explain his reference to 'code' issues.

Keenan: Indicated to Mr. Sullivan his comments are taken from the architect reports that referenced repairs on items to address code violations.

Sullivan: Spoke about the descriptive adjectives that were used in the Lesko study of our facilities.

Keenan: He asked Mr. Sullivan if he believes that needs exist from the information he has been provided and as described in the facilities report that was also reviewed by three other professional groups?

Sullivan: Indicated to Dr. Keenan he believes there is a need.

Keenan: Stated to Mr. Sullivan he has had the chance to talk to all professionals on any of the data contained in the reports and asked what other method he might suggest the District follow to get a number that will satisfy his inquiry.

Winter: She asked the Board to affirm again the amount of the need as evidenced by the data contained in the professional report.

Sullivan: Stated to Dr. Keenan that when you have your own home, your need to first eat and clothe yourself and get to work. You address the facilities in your home when things break.

Keenan: Commented on Mr. Sullivan's statement about his office space at an earlier meeting and that it was interesting Mr. Sullivan mentioned food and clothing but failed to mention shelter.

Winter: Stated the Board needs to give global direction to Dr. Keenan with regard to a maximum threshold so that he can make recommendations for a proposed set of cuts.

Cross: Indicated he believes there may be a number of alternative solutions, and the Board should develop a framework or plan. He further commented he would like to figure out the essential repairs to be made and consider moving up the next operating levy. In addition, he would like to look at all the operational expenses for potential areas of reductions.

Keenan: Stated to Mr. Cross he has not heard any other ideas from him other than cutting administration and a potential for a PI levy. He further stated that it essentially boils down to whether you trust the architects or not, what you value for our kids, and do we want to be responsible for our taxpayers. He further stated he is confident on how he stands on all three and has offered solutions as well. A PI levy will be just as costly as a bond issue and will not be able to address the scope of the problem.

Cross: Indicated the bottom line of proposing cuts is a result of a levy failure in May. The question is how do we as a Board deal with this?

Keenan: Responded to Mr. Cross that a permanent improvement levy is a separate issue and compared that solution to an individual paying a minimum amount on a maxed-out credit card and expecting to catch up. He further stated that if we put forth a permanent improvement levy in the same amount as our bond issue, the annual revenue received will not address the scope of our needs and will cost the taxpayer more in the long run.

Cross: Stated to Dr. Keenan that implementing cuts for the next three to five years in concert with decreasing salaries would be a good game plan.

Keenan: Stated to Mr. Cross that our 'game plan' involved a community process that included over 100 people to develop a viable solution, and alternatively we have to be prepared for what we will do if the bond issue doesn't pass. He further commented that our expenditure per pupil will still go up if we have to use operating dollars to address this, unless we ignore the problems.

Winter: Stated the Board needs to go back and concentrate on the original issue of a game plan as offered by Dr. Keenan in case of a levy failure.

Mays: Stated he has a hard time saying \$3 million is the correct number to cut, but respects Dr. Keenan's recommendations.

Sullivan: Indicated he doesn't know what the right number is but has trouble with the bond issue and the proposed budget cuts. He then distributed a comparison of cost per pupil figures for review by members of the Board.

Rocco: Stated to Mr. Sullivan that one cannot make direct cost per pupil comparisons between Westlake and other districts due to various local factors such as enrollment, the number of special need and ESL students served, and other local factors. She did indicate to Mr. Sullivan she would be willing to work on a committee to investigate our cost per pupil expenditures.

Keenan: He asked the Board again the parameter they are willing to set so that he may determine how to best address our facilities in case of a bond failure.

Sullivan: Stated that as we deal with the needs we have now, we will also need to set a goal so that in future years we won't have to threaten budget cuts if the community doesn't approve building all new schools. Would like the Superintendent to help the Board set a goal over the next generation of students as to what our cost per student is going to be.

Keenan: Stated to Mr. Sullivan that the bond issue does not call for all new buildings, and he is simply asking about a backup plan in case the bond issue doesn't pass. He further commented that he can't keep the District's cost per pupil figure at the same level and not cut programs or address the facility needs.

Sullivan: Stated to Dr. Keenan that his parameter is most likely to consist of no cuts to programs, keep the cost per pupil figure constant and also to address our facilities needs.

Keenan: He reiterated the District must work within its means with the resources given from the community, and stated he cannot address facility needs without cutting educational programming.

Sullivan: Stated to Dr. Keenan that he did not think those items were part of the parameter he is trying to set.

Keenan: Asked Mr. Sullivan how he is off on his assessment either by not cutting education or addressing facility needs?

Winter: Stated that while we can consider cost per pupil in a subsequent discussion or a committee, we need to address Dr. Keenan's request on setting an overall parameter. She then asked Mr. Pepera if he would be willing to meet with two of the Board members to go over cost per pupil and report back to the Board at a later date.

Pepera: Indicated to Ms. Winter he would and only requested the Board develop a clear charge for this committee.

Sullivan: Stated he is not comfortable with putting this most important decision to this committee.

Winter: Due to the various opinions on the matter, she suggested to continue this discussion at the next work session.

Cross: Stated he would like to sit on the committee.

Sullivan: Stated he would like to sit on the committee as well.

Winter: Indicated the Board will discuss this topic at the next work session.

Mays: Asked Mr. Sullivan if he is comfortable with Dr. Keenan's suggestion to obtain \$3 million in reductions to address facility needs.

Sullivan: Stated to Mr. Mays he is not sure.

Rocco: Indicated she doesn't believe the District could do much less considering the scope of the problem. She further stated that, like Mr. Mays, she doesn't believe this will help us

out of this situation in the long run. She stated she will leave the details of the reductions to the Superintendent and only commented that she would recommend considering non-educational cuts first.

Cross: He stated that he supports cuts in the \$2.5 million to \$3 million range. He further stated that the District should consider cutting their administrative area by 15-20% and possibly 1-2% in the pupil and instructional support area.

Keenan: Indicated to Mr. Cross he would have a very difficult time making such a reduction without touching any items at the classroom level.

Winter: Asked Dr. Keenan to bring up specific cut items at a subsequent meeting.

Mays: Indicated that instituting things such as pay for play may have negative unintended consequences.

Rocco: Stated the videotaping of Board meetings should also be discussed at our next Board meeting.

***Hearing of Public (15 Minutes)**

Harry Applegate: He would like to understand the building codes a school has to follow in comparison to codes a resident might follow. He can't see putting bad money after good and how the school will address their needs with such little money as suggested by the 'backup' plan.

Keenan: Indicated to Mr. Applegate there is a little bit of leniency for schools, but technically we have to follow the same codes as residential owners.

John Finucan: Asked the Board if they actually approved the agenda?

Winter: Indicated to Mr. Finucan they had.

Finucan: He suggested the Board pause after the approval of agenda and prior to the hearing of the public for clarification purposes.

B. Adjournment

President Winter adjourned the meeting at 9:03 p.m.

President

Treasurer

*The public may address the Board during the periods of the meeting designated for public participation. Each person addressing the Board shall give his/her name and address. If several people wish to speak, each person is allotted three minutes until the total time allotted is used. During that period, no person may speak twice until all who desire to speak have had the opportunity to do so. The period of public participation may be extended by a vote of the majority of the Board present and voting.

Verbatim Statement of Nate Cross
January 11, 2010

"I realize the decision to place an \$84 million bond issue on the May ballot is indeed a complex, difficult and emotional issue, very emotional issue. This issue is further complicated by the realization that something must be done to deal with our aging facilities and the challenges we confront relative to capacity.

For us to successfully meet this challenge, we must do everything we can as a broad community to assume that any solution that we decide to do has the best chance to win at the ballot box. To do so, we need to be certain that the timing is right, community support is assured, and that we have presented the best and lowest cost solution to address this problem.

As stated previously, it's my firm belief the Westlake School District needs to confront this problem by developing a fiscally responsible plan to correct existing problems in our school facilities, as I agree these are indeed important taxpayer assets that need fixed and maintained. Unfortunately, as we all know all too well, especially from the stories tonight from everyone, the current problem we are faced with did not evolve overnight, and therefore unfortunately may take some time to correct.

We also must remain mindful that a defeat on the May 2010 ballot could further complicate the renewal of our Operating Levy in either 2011 or 2012, which must remain our first priority.

For me, the issue has boiled down to three very important criteria that, in my mind, must be met.

1. Is the timing right, given the economic environment we find ourselves in?
2. Does this issue have critical community support?
3. Are there other alternatives or more cost effective options to consider that will allow us to maximize community support to fix the problem?

Please allow me to just touch briefly on each of these three.

1. The timing in terms of the economic conditions that we currently face. A project estimated to cost \$84 million as one of two anticipated phases, with the second to come in the range of \$35-\$40 million, would occur during one of the worst economic environments we have ever seen in decades. The following economic considerations and indicators, when combined together, demand that we exercise fiscal discipline during a time of historic economic uncertainty. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Ohio's unemployment rate which in just this past year alone has gone from 7.6% to 10.6%.
 - Property tax revenues which continue to decrease which means our values are declining and it translates to an unchanging tax burden on a home that has lost value.
 - The State of Ohio recently eliminated a tax cut to plug a budget hole deficit of over \$800 million which in my mind translates to a tax increase.
 - Other competing agencies in Cuyahoga County plan to raise taxes and have issues on the ballot that will affect taxpayers.

- State operating mandates will continue to place an additional burden on school districts which necessitates fiscal responsibility to prepare for these additional unanticipated expenses.

There are other indicators, too, that you can look at to show that this economy is hurting.

- Building permits have decreased. People aren't building. We're built up. In terms of the issue of capacity, that's a relevant factor.
- Foreclosures in Westlake, like other suburbs, have jumped to a record high 215 in 2008.
- Private school enrollment has steadily increased during this past decade from 26% to 36%. In my mind, there is no verifiable or compelling data to suggest a reversal of this trend, nor should an anticipated reversal dictate spending millions under the notion that if they built it, they will come. That point is referenced to new buildings in terms of capacity.

2. The second criteria that, in my mind, is very important is, does the issue have critical community support? As we know from Mr. Dykes that was here and presented last week and spoke today, we commissioned a poll. He's a reputable firm. Triad Research, is a strong firm in this area. The results indicate that support for a bond issue, at this point in time, is not there. Depending on one's point of view, many conclusions can be drawn from the survey results. However, the following comment to me is troubling, and should be taken to heart. And this has to do with tax increases on the ballot. And we have Mr. Dykes here. This is in his report that he presented to us. The comment was in the report:

"If the election were held today, or if there is not a strong campaign run, neither of these issues would pass. This is because typically for a tax issue to have a good chance of passing, initial results must be 55% or higher and the percent opposed must be 30% or lower. Neither of these issues meets the two criteria in the first vote question."

There are other points in the survey which I could go through specifically, and we could do that if that's your choice, but my feeling is that at a minimum, based on the survey results, and the fact that after two years discussing this topic in the community, we must consider, discuss or at least come to the realization that lack of full support and stronger poll numbers speaks to the issue of need. Further, one would think that after two years, there would be stronger movement toward support of the current plans being recommended. Thus, this all or nothing approach we have taken this past two years has truly denied us, as a community, the opportunity to fix our immediate problems. We must ask ourselves if new facilities are the only answer to academic distinction.

3. Are there other alternatives or more cost effective options to consider that will allow us to maximize community support to fix the problem? Ironically, we have a unique opportunity and obligation given our wealth ranking as a district. We're #11 out of 614 school districts in terms of wealth, and that's a ranking by the State Board of Education. We have an opportunity to bypass state funding like other school districts in the region that have followed this similar path, to realize significant cost savings, which ultimately should be the interest and priority in the interest of all taxpayers, so we can fix this problem now.

This is not to suggest that a problem does not exist, because it does, and we need to act. In this respect, perhaps new facilities are not the only answer to the challenge or the issue of overcrowding and structural and maintenance deficiencies. Therefore, we must further explore and consider the option of renovation and additions to deal with these problems.

In sum, fiscal discipline at a time of economic uncertainty ultimately protects our children given that we ensure that additional debt will not impact our future ability to fund important, vital academic programs and initiatives, and to anticipate the unexpected.

Thus, given my evaluation of these three critical criteria and other options that I believe do exist, I do not support putting an \$84 million bond issue on the ballot this May, as I strongly believe that alternatives, which have not been given full consideration at this point in time, will allow us to confront this challenge. I continue and am willing to discuss those other options at any given time with anyone so that we can indeed deal with this problem together as a community.”

Verbatim Statement of Timothy Sullivan
January 11, 2010

“I want to thank everybody for being here tonight, and for your concern, and for your comments also. I want to thank Dr. Keenan, his administration and staff, our community groups, and all others who have worked so hard the past two years to address facilities’ needs. I am continually impressed with your professionalism, talent, and dedication to our school district and students, and I am honored to serve on this board.

On a personal level, I want to thank the people at Hilliard Elementary school, including Barb Detwiler who I know is here tonight, who did amazing work for two years with my special needs child. I also want to thank our taxpayers, the vast majority of whom are not here tonight, who generously provide the enormous resources that are needed for our district to do its great work.

I want to congratulate everyone involved with the district – students, parents, teachers, staff, administrators – I apologize if I left anyone out, for our district’s consistently outstanding academic performance. Our community basks in the glow of the great results you produce. Our school district is a large reason why Westlake is the premier community in northeast Ohio.

Another reason is our great residents. I’ve developed more new friendships in the nine years since my wife and I moved here with our children than I ever thought imaginable, and I am extremely proud to point out to others why I believe this is the premier community in Cleveland.

I am a believer in public schools. My wife is a product of public schools who then went on to graduate at the top of her class from two of our nation’s top colleges and law schools. My wife is the brightest, most accomplished, and well rounded person I have ever met in my life, and I believe that is due in large part to her public schooling and that reason.

I have learned about myself that when I believe in something, I have a desire to serve, whether it is my past military service, service to Westlake as a youth sports coach, my service to an organization whose mission is to prevent youth suicide, and my service to our students and community on this school board.

I took an oath of office last week when I was elected Vice President of our board in which I swore to faithfully and impartially discharge my duties as Vice President to the best of my ability. As a veteran and a lawyer, I am familiar with serving under oaths of office. I can assure you that I let nothing stand in my way of upholding my oath.

In the past two years, the district’s administration has presented the board with what is in my judgment convincing evidence that our schools are aging and moderately overcrowded. I have said consistently and repeatedly that, while our facilities have needs that we must address, I am very reluctant to support an extremely large spending plan requiring a very large tax increase during this brutal and painful recession.

Our taxpayers are living in a period of unprecedented economic uncertainty and forcing themselves to a level of frugality and fiscal restraint that they never have experienced before. And they too are

dealing with problems in their own lives like the ones that our schools are experiencing. Very few, if any, of our taxpayers are undertaking massive spending programs to address their needs. Furthermore, in the next two to three years, this board will be asking these same individuals for additional monies to fund our essential school operations. I do not support increasing our residents' tax burden any more than is absolutely necessary during this period.

I promised our voters fiscal responsibility. I do not believe this \$84 million proposal is adequately fiscally responsible in terms of timing, scope and cost. I have been urged to vote yes on this resolution and in doing so let the voters decide what they want to do. I do not agree with this. I was elected to exercise my judgment. In my judgment, this plan is not in the best interest of our students, taxpayers or our community at large.

I also promised to focus on being the best school district in Ohio. We can achieve this goal as we maintain our facilities, weather this recession, and develop a long-term investment plan our community will support. During this time, we must address the fact that the real hallmarks of an outstanding education system are attention to detail, hiring, retaining, and rewarding the best employees, and working hard to achieve clear goals.

I have repeatedly urged taking a more incremental approach to addressing our facilities needs. First and foremost, I believe this board must approve a permanent improvement levy to address our maintenance problems. Our generous and fiscally responsible community will understand and support this.

I understand and respect the deep disappointment of those who disagree with me. Be assured that I believe our facilities have needs and I will support an investment plan that is, in my judgment, proper in scope, cost and timing. Today I do not support the plan that is on the table.

Thank you."

Verbatim Statement of Nate Cross
January 25, 2010

“I have repeatedly stated my belief that we need to develop a fiscally responsible plan to correct existing problems in our school facilities as these are important taxpayer assets that need fixed and maintained.

In this respect, we must do everything we can to assure that any solution we present relative to facilities has the best chance to win at the ballot box. To do so, we need to be certain that the timing is right, community support is assured which, in my mind begins at this table, and that we have presented the best and lowest cost solution to address this problem.

I am still not convinced these three criteria have been met and will vote NO today as I do not believe we should proceed to place this particular \$84 million plan on the ballot at this particular time. As we know, the current problem we are faced with did not evolve overnight and therefore will take time to correct. I would ask that we take the additional time we need to get this right, with an approach we all support.

To place an \$84 million plan on the ballot funded on the backs of taxpayers for what is essentially a plan for new facilities at this point in time is not the right move or the right time.

We must remember that a defeat on the May 2010 ballot could complicate the renewal of our Operating Levy in either 2011 or 2012, which must remain our first priority.

And while interest rates and construction costs may be low now, as has been argued, the argument in favor of moving forward rests upon the premise that we have an \$84 million pot of money to capitalize on favorable interest rates and lower than usual construction costs. Unfortunately, this is not the case as the jar is empty. For us to ask the taxpayers to fill the jar now, or tin cup as was recently satirized in a Sun News editorial last week, to the tune of \$84 million is an unfair financial burden to ask of taxpayers at the worst possible time.

The bottom line is that the timing of this measure is terrible. And while this is a terrible reality to acknowledge, despite our collective best wishes, the timing is still terrible. As a board, we appear tone deaf to this reality. People are hurting. Not a day goes by that we don't hear about layoffs, mandatory furloughs, foreclosures, rising unemployment, decreasing property values, competing tax increases, mandatory job sharing, or employers holding off on investing and hiring.

We are not the only ones that need to tighten our belts. Families throughout Westlake are delaying financial investments, deciding to defer big purchases, or holding back on major repairs of their own.

Before we act, let's be clear about what we are doing today. By placing this on the ballot, we are asking voters to approve a huge tax increase during one of the worst economic recessions in a long time. We also will be doing so as a divided board. This is not the type of message we should send; nor is it a winning strategy.

If for no other reason, I would urge my colleagues to vote NO on this resolution to proceed or to table this vote until consensus can be reached. Ultimately, we have until February 12th to reach a compromise. We could also consider other timing options relevant to a ballot issue, whether this year or next. If we can't reach consensus, this speaks volumes about this plan and should be reason enough to not move forward.

However, despite these strongly held beliefs and my previously stated position, my belief in the democratic process is paramount to any views I have shared at this time.

In this respect, should a majority of members on the board vote to put this on the ballot, I will support the will of the majority and therefore the right of taxpayers to make this decision for themselves. Voters are smart, and they'll make the right decision for themselves. Again, I support the democratic process and the right of taxpayers to decide for themselves."

Verbatim Statement of Timothy Sullivan
January 25, 2010

“Congratulations to the teachers honored tonight. It is you and almost all of you that make the difference for our schools.

I want to also thank you again to Dr. Keenan and the committees who worked so hard on this facilities issue. I want to thank again our generous taxpayers, thousands of whom are not here tonight, who provide the resources needed for our district to do its work.

Again, I understand the deep disappointment of those who disagree with me, and it is very difficult to say no in that situation. I respect Mr. Bradley. I know him pretty well. I always look forward to speaking with him because I respect his opinion and the strength of his convictions, and I think he speaks clearly. I’m on the receiving end of it, which is okay, that’s the seat I’m in. I know his disappointment. I’ve heard it the last two weeks, but at the same time, we have a vibrant community of 30,000 people, and I need to do with my vote what I think is the right thing at the right time.

Two weeks ago I stated on the record the reasons for my vote, and I won’t repeat them here. They’re on the record. I think at this point, the best thing to do is move forward. I respect the will of the majority. I support your votes and respect your votes. I don’t agree with them, but I respect your decision to put this on the ballot, and I respect the right of the taxpayers to decide what is the best thing to do.

So now I think it is time to move forward. I look forward to this next year on the board working with Carol in a position of leadership to try as much as possible to achieve consensus among the board to take in all viewpoints and opinions and realize that always the best way to get things done is to respect everybody’s opinion, bring everybody on board, and let everybody be heard. I look forward to working under Carol’s leadership to try to do that. I think we’ve got a good year coming up ahead of us in the future. Those are my comments.”

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