



**Grosse Pointe Board of Education**  
**Minutes of Conference Meeting, September 7, 2004**  
Wicking Library, Grosse Pointe South High School

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**ORDER OF BUSINESS – 8:00 P.M.**

**I. Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call**

President Richardson called the meeting to order at 8:01 p.m.

**Present:** Trustees Broderick, Dindoffer, Ismail, Kennedy,  
Richardson and Vreede

**Also Present:** Superintendent Klein, Assistant Superintendents Allan,  
and Fenton

**Absent:** Trustee Brennan

The pledge of allegiance was led by Trustee Vreede.

**II. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Klein welcomed everyone back to the 2004-2005 school year. Teachers returned on Monday, August 30<sup>th</sup>, and over 9,000 students on Tuesday, August 31<sup>st</sup>. Dr. Klein thanked Ms. Richardson for her welcoming comments to teachers last week on behalf of the Board.

Dr. Klein shared some quotes from a book received from the State School Superintendent, Tom Watkins. The name of the book, "They Help Us Paint Rainbows: Conversations With Michigan School Children" contains interviews from students across the country. Dr. Klein said that this book gives some wonderful 'beginning of school' perspectives on how children view school and their teachers.

Dr. Klein also spoke about the condition of school funding at the state level. She thanked the Grosse Pointe News for the space they gave the information on state funding and said that many news media sources were reporting on it across the state. Dr. Klein noted that the Grosse Pointe budget was approved at the end of June, but that the state school aid budget for 2004-2005 was not yet determined in light of the budget shortfall facing the state lawmakers. There was a possibility that our schools' 20J funds would be removed to help balance the state school aid shortfall. Based on the best information the district has received at this point, it appears 20J funds will remain intact.

The district will continue to monitor this situation. Dr. Klein noted that she will be in Lansing tomorrow with Mrs. Dindoffer to keep abreast of information on the issue. She thanked Senator Gaffney, as well as Grosse Pointe residents, for their interest and diligence in pursuing this issue with state legislators and the Governor's office.

Considering the importance of this matter, President Richardson opened the meeting for comments and questions from the Board.

### **III. Public Hearing on Truth-In-Taxation**

Mr. Fenton spoke on the Truth-In-Taxation Hearing information presented. He explained that there must be a Truth in Taxation Public Hearing prior to the adoption of a tax levy. Information was distributed prior to the meeting regarding the tax levy and the legal notice on rates was published in the Grosse Pointe News on August 26, 2004.

Information included rates for:

- General Homestead: 5.5213
- Technology Homestead: .9894
- Debt: 1.3410
- Sinking: .9867
- Non-Homestead: 16.7875.

Total Homestead taxes (General & Technology) will increase 1.1% over last year, or a \$175,186 increase.

Total Non-Homestead taxes will increase 4.5% over last year, or \$254,835.

The Debt Tax (which is not required for the Truth and Taxation Levy) will be reduced 19.7% or \$948,188.

The new sinking fund millage will increase tax revenue \$2,842,428.

Speakers at the Truth-In-Taxation Hearing included:

Margo Parker, 1100 Berkshire, Grosse Pointe Park, (representing Grosse Pointers for Excellence), spoke on the tax and millage information distributed in the community.

Mary Saylor, 455 Lakeland, Grosse Pointe City, spoke on taxes in Grosse Pointe.

### **IV. Tentative Agenda for the Regular Board Meeting of September 13, 2004**

#### **A. Human Resources Report**

Dr. Klein highlighted the appointments of nine instructional staff, three classroom assistants and one paraprofessional, six resignations

and one leave of absence. She also acknowledged the death of a skilled maintenance employee, James McQueen.

**B. Business Items: Accounts Payable**

The business items were presented for Board approval. Any questions regarding the business items and accounts payable may be directed to Mr. Fenton's office or to Mrs. Vreede, Board Treasurer.

**C. Approval of Minutes of August 9 and 16, 2004, Work Session Minutes of August 9 and 16, 2004, and Closed Session Minutes of August 9, 16 and 23, 2004**

The minutes of regular meetings of August 9 and 16, 2004, Work Session Minutes of August 9 and 16, 2004 and Closed Session Minutes of August 9, 16 and 23, 2004 were submitted for approval. Changes on page 6 of the August 16, 2004 minutes were noted and will be corrected. Any questions regarding the minutes may be directed to the Superintendent's Office or Mr. Brennan, Board Secretary.

**D. Resolution Approval of 2004 Tax Levy**

For the 2003-2004 school year the Homestead Hold Harmless ("GAP") millage rate was 5.6691 mills for general operation purposes and 1.0330 mills for technology. The millage proposal for 2004-2005 is 5.5213 and .9894 respectively. The sinking fund mills of .9867 is new this year. The debt millage for 2004-2005 has been reduced by .4000 mills.

The resolution distributed approving the 2004 tax levy has been reviewed by Amanda Van Dusen of Miller Canfield.

A truth in taxation hearing was held this evening, September 7, 2004 to meet the district's legal obligation.

**E. Approval of Contract with Occupational Therapist**

The school system has contracted in the past with private agencies to provide special education physical/occupational therapy services to the district private and parochial schools. Those therapy services are contracted due to the considerable fluctuation year to year in the need for services. The Board is asked to approve the letter of agreement with Kristen Kohlruss, Occupational Therapist in Private Practice, who services the needs of students at private and parochial school in Grosse Pointe. Corrections to the contract regarding the ending day of

school and Ms. Kohlruss' mileage were noted.

**F. Approval of General Counsel**

The Board is asked to retain Mr. Mark McInerney of Clark Hill PLC, as the board's general counsel for the fiscal year 2004-2005 at the discounted rate of \$200 per hour with work done by other attorneys at Clark Hill billed at their normal rate but not to exceed the capped amount of \$200.00

**G. Approval of Contract with Jeffrey & Associates**

Jeffrey and Associates has provided software support for administration, instruction, and curriculum and evaluation since 1986. The Board is asked to approve the letter of agreement between the school district and Jeffrey & Associates for the 2004-2005 school year at a maximum amount of \$70,000.

**H. Approval of Resolution for Cash Flow Borrowing for 2004-2005**

The Grosse Pointe Public Schools collects the local Homestead and Non-Homestead school taxes on the December tax bill. Consequently, there is not an even flow of funds over the course of the fiscal year which begins July 1<sup>st</sup>. To address this, the school system has had to borrow funds on some occasions during the fall to meet cash flow needs.

Due to a decrease in fund equity and no anticipated increase in per pupil state aid, it will be necessary to borrow some short term funds for the 2004-2005 school year.

The school system has two options: tax anticipation notes or state aid borrowing. The interest rate for either option is the same, below 1.6%. The cost of the borrowing including legal fees is approximately \$46,000, budgeted in the General Fund, Business Office budget.

Amanda Van Dusen, Bond Counsel for Miller Canfield, has drafted a resolution to address the cash flow needs via State Aid note borrowing of approximately \$6 million. The Board is asked to approve the resolution for \$6 million in State Aid borrowing and authorize the Superintendent of Schools to sign and approve the necessary documents.

**I. Approval of Defer PTO Gift**

On August 16, 2004 the Board of Education rejected a revised gift of \$40,000 from the Defer PTO for partial payment of the second floor air conditioning improvements.

The Defer PTO would like to donate \$20,000 for the start of the second floor air conditioning projects, with money currently on hand. This will provide air conditioning for four rooms. Any other donation will be brought to the Board at a later date. The Board is asked to accept the gift of \$20,000 from the Defer PTO for the start of the second floor air conditioning project.

President Richardson suggested including the following items for the consent agenda for action at the September 13, 2004 Board meeting: **A)** Human Resources Report; **B)** Accounts Payable Report; **C)** Minutes; **E)** Approval of Contract with Occupational Therapist; **F)** Approval of General Counsel; **G)** Approval of Contract with Jeffrey & Associates; and **H)** Approval of Resolution for Cash Flow Borrowing for 2004-2005. Item **D)** Resolution Approval of 2004 Tax Levy, and **I)** Approval of Defer PTO Gift will appear on the regular agenda for action.

**V. Items for Information and Discussion for the September 13, 2004 Regular Meeting**

**A. Enrollment Update**

Mr. Fenton will continue to distribute enrollment changes as they are provided from building principals.

**B. Building and Site and Project Update**

A project update will be provided at next week's meeting after the Building and Site sub-committee meets.

**C. 2004-2005 Elementary Curriculum Guide**

Dr. Allan will explain changes to the 2004-2005 Elementary Curriculum Guide at the Regular Meeting of the Board next week.

**VI. Items for Information and Discussion**

**A. Enrollment Update**

Mr. Fenton continues to distribute enrollment updates as student numbers are reported. As of today, September 7<sup>th</sup>, the actual net increase appears to be 59 more students than last year. Mr. Fenton noted that "hot spots" have been addressed according to the enrollment variations in schools.

## **VII. Future Meetings**

A Board Work Session will be held on Monday, September 13, 2004 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 198 at South High School followed by a Regular Meeting of the Board at 8:00 p.m. in the Wicking Library at South High School, 11 Grosse Pointe Blvd., Grosse Pointe Farms.

## **VIII. Other Comments from Board Members and Superintendent**

Trustee Ismail complimented the Defer PTO for continuing to work on a plan to help fund HVAC improvements at Defer through a generous gift. Mr. Ismail had questions about the how instrument rentals were handled in the elementary schools and thought there might be another way to make it easier.

Trustee Dindoffer welcomed everyone back to a successful start of a new school year. She also commented on the new science wing construction as well as the new floors at South which look spectacular.

Trustee Broderick had no comment.

Trustee Kennedy congratulated Carly Piper on her Olympic win.

Trustee Vreede offered thanks to the many members of the community who made their voices heard in Lansing regarding the state school aid funding. She commented that we need to continue to make this state funding information available to the entire community. Mrs. Vreede also asked for an update of the Strategic Planning process.

President Richardson echoed Mrs. Vreede's comments about the depth of anger felt by the Grosse Pointe residents when they found out that their students would be shortchanged to help offset a state financial deficit. She added that it is not too late to continue to register complaints and opinions about the state financial situation and how schools are being funded in the state of Michigan.

On a happy note, Ms. Richardson thanked the select choir students for two magnificent shows in August. She said it was the best she had seen in 9 years.

Dr. Klein commented on the opening of schools and reminded the parent community of Back to School Nights coming up. She explained the status of the Strategic Planning work and said that more information about the formation of the committee and future plans would be released as soon as they were finalized.



**Ayes:** Trustee Broderick, Dindoffer, Ismail, Kennedy, Richardson and Vreede

**Nays:** None **Motion carried.**

**Absent:** Trustee Brennan

## **XII. Adjournment**

There being no further business, President Richardson adjourned the meeting at 11:55 p.m.

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Board Secretary