

Committee of the Whole

January 14, 2016

Public Comment & Questions

Earlier Meeting

- 1. The format of this Committee of the Whole is not as in past meetings. This meeting shut down public conversation, back and forth dialogue, for best "communication" and feedback. Why?**

The Board hasn't changed the Public Comment procedure; we are employing our established process. The new look to our 1st monthly meeting continues to be a work in progress. We know that the public gets most of their information about our District through the committee meetings and our website. When that is combined with multiple requests for more information regarding Board initiatives, we felt the Committee of the Whole format was a positive change. We're not adverse to conversation, but we want to make sure that the answers given are thorough and completely factual. Often a question during public comment requires research, so we ask for contact information in order to get back to the questioner. We have recently asked for questions to be submitted in writing so we may provide a FAQ sheet on the website so all may review the questions and answers. It's also important that all those who have comments feel comfortable sharing them with the Board. Our established format allows for that.

January 14, 2016

- 1. The 16-17 budget calls for a 3.2% tax increase. Why consider the additional expense of FDK when you cannot meet the budget without a tax increase?** The additional expense related to FDK will be absorbed from the district's fund balance as described in the budget presentation. Moving forward, the additional expense will be offset by lower tuition payments depending on the number of students that will return to the district from the charter schools. The majority of any tax increase is the result of a significant change in the retirement rate from 25.84% to 30.03%, healthcare increase etc.

- 2. Does the board expect tax increases every year?** The board does not enter the budget process expecting to increase taxes every year and in fact has held the line on tax increases in four of the past eight years. The Board has to weigh many variables that will affect the current year as well as future budgets while considering the limitations imposed under Act 1 of 2006. Act 1 limits annual tax increases to a formula driven index.

- 3. Will there be a five year plan review?** The Board will be discussing the need for a five year plan and what should be included in that plan at our retreat in February.

- 4. If FDK goes forward, what won't get done?** At this point no programmatic or facility related programs have been put on hold as a result of FDK. As mentioned above, the additional expense related to FDK in the first year will be absorbed by the districts fund balance.

- 5. What are the plans for the overcrowding at the high school?** This topic has been touched on briefly during the FDK discussions but has not been determined at this point. This issue is also mentioned in the feasibility study presented in the spring of 2015 and available on the district's website.

6. If the District moves forward with FDK, would there still be an opportunity for parents to still do a half day program as an option? If the District moves forward with FDK, there will not be a half day program.

7. Why wasn't there a vote tonight to put a motion on the board agenda for 1/28/16? The agendas for the Board meetings are prepared by the Board President and Superintendent in accordance with past practice.

8. Is the entire Board in favor of the current COW format, i.e. no back and forth dialogue? The Board follows the same established public comment policy/procedure for committee meetings as it does for the legislative meetings. All policies are approved by the Board.

9. What is the process to connect to the new Communications system? A link will go live on the web sometime during the later part of the week of January 18 for interested community members to sign up.

10. Did OJR abandon their FDK program? No

11. What is the logic employed by the Board to justify increasing taxes to the full extent that the index will allow each and every year? There seems to be a strong focus on new programs and revenue sources with little attention to controlled spending. Taxes have been adjusted in four of the past eight years. Although there may have been new programs that have increased spending in the past, there have been programmatic changes that have saved the district money. As mentioned above many factors are considered during the budget process.