

In Board Briefs, we summarize key agenda items and discussion topics from previous Board of Education meetings. Full meeting minutes are usually not available until approved by the Board at a subsequent meeting. The community is encouraged to attend each meeting, and the Board welcomes questions and comments. Previous Board Briefs can be found on the district website [here](#).

November 13, 2017 Board of Education Meeting

After an executive session and a meeting of the audit committee, the Board conducted a public work session regarding Phase II of the district's proposed facility initiative.

Phase II Work Session

Phase II projects entail the remaining work identified in the district's building condition survey, as well as a new traffic loop at Syosset High School, air conditioning solutions at all buildings, energy conservation measures, renovated high school science rooms, a new weight room at the high school and the renovation of the main athletic field and expansion of the track. Considerable feedback has been provided by the public, including parents and parent committees and other community groups. Public informational/input forums have also been held.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Tom Rogers outlined key components of Phase II, including recent developments that will negate the need to relocate the main athletic field while still upgrading several other fields. It was also determined that installing split air conditioning units was the preferred option over two other possible scenarios: less expensive but inefficient and impractical window units and the more expensive central air conditioning systems. Additional projects recently added to the Phase II proposal include new security enclosures at Syosset High School and South Grove Elementary School. Dr. Rogers presented two options for the South Grove project, which encompasses an enclosed walkway to connect the South Grove main building with the school's kindergarten annex. The more costly of the two options allows for the ability to create new classroom space to accommodate future enrollment increases (the District study shows the potential for an enrollment increase should the Town approve the Syosset Park development). Other new projects proposed for Phase II include the creation of additional parking at Baylis and Berry Hill elementary schools and a new car drop-off loop at Walt Whitman Elementary School for safer traffic flow on the campus.

A representative from Johnson Controls, the proposed energy contractor to carry out the energy conservation portion of Phase II, gave a detailed overview of the proposed energy performance contract, including the new equipment to be installed (boilers, lighting, etc.) and the guaranteed savings to be realized by the district. Dr. Rogers also detailed the total Phase II cost of \$72,610,000 and the multiple revenue sources that would be used to help fund the work (capital transfers, capital reserves, budgeted maintenance, financing). A total of \$34,345,500 in bond financing would be required, with a net annual cost to the taxpayer of approximately \$20 per

\$10,000 of school taxes. The Board later addressed Phase II in the Discussion Items portion of the meeting.

Following the Phase II work session, the regular meeting was called to order and the minutes from October 16, 2017 meeting were approved. The Board also approved the Treasurer's Report.

The Superintendent's Monthly Report and Other Items

- The district's independent external auditor Jill Sanders, CPA, gave a report on the district financial statements for the 2016-2017 school year. She described the district's internal fiscal controls to be "good" and deemed the district to be in "strong financial condition." The Board later formally accepted the report.
- South Woods Middle School Student Government representatives Michael Meneshian and Michelle Shleimovich provided an update on recent activities at the school, including: charitable activities such as the Halloween walkathon, book, clothing and food drives; the school's upcoming production of "Beauty and the Beast;" and numerous student club activities.
- Science Research Facilitator Veronica Ade introduced Syosset High School student Rahul Parthasarathy, a finalist, and Jarrad Li, a semifinalist, in the Siemens Foundation Competition for Math, Science and Technology. Both students had the opportunity to present their research to the Board and community.
- Director of Athletics, Physical Education and Recreation Drew Cronin introduced the boys varsity soccer team, which was named a co-county champion. The team fell to Uniondale in a shootout, thus prohibiting further advancement to the state tournament; however, Dr. Rogers and head coach Brett Waxer praised team members for demonstrating great sportsmanship in defeat.
- As a follow-up to a discussion at last month's meeting regarding the formation of a girls varsity gymnastics team, Dr. Rogers announced that Mr. Cronin was able to navigate eligibility logistics in time for the newly created team to compete in this winter's athletic season. Dr. Rogers also thanked the Massapequa School District, which has offered its facility to the Syosset team for practices this year.
- Dr. Rogers updated the community on a recent Tolerance and Unity Forum held in conjunction with the district and several outside community-based organizations including the Interfaith Clergy Council and the Holocaust Museum and Tolerance Center of Long Island. The forum consisted of three separate roundtable discussions involving students, parents, school officials and community representatives that generated many good ideas and themes for moving forward from the August anti-Semitic graffiti defacing Syosset High School.
- In response to concerns over school buildings hosting elections, Dr. Rogers reached out to the Board of Elections to dialogue over the possibility of relocating the general election polls to alternate, non-school sites. The Board

of Elections maintains control over where general election voting takes place. Dr. Rogers informed the Board that he would be developing a calendar for 2018-19 that does not include instruction in buildings hosting elections. He also reminded the community that the district streamlined its own polling centers for school budget and Board elections. He also solicited input from the district's principals regarding the most recent general election voter traffic and how it impacted their respective schools.

Citizens Advisory Committee for Finance Update: a member of the committee reported on discussions at the October 18 meeting, which included the updated Phase II facilities presentation and financing, an update on the progression of Phase I projects, enrollment trends and the beginning of the 2018-19 school year budget development process.

Board Member's Report

NYSSBA Update: Board of Education member and district delegate for the New York State School Boards Association Carol Cheng said this year's conference, held in Lake Placid, NY in October was informative and productive. She reported on activities, including:

- Productive workshops she attended on communication, school financing and a discussion held by NYS Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia regarding new learning standards.
- The annual NYSSBA business meeting, where 26 resolutions were approved as position statements to lobby lawmakers for various legislation.

Audience to the Public

- A parent presented the Board with a letter on behalf of South Grove School parents, urging the Board to move forward with a proposal to enclose the walkway between the annex and main campus for security purposes. The project was discussed during the Phase II work session held earlier in the evening, when the administration proposed including it as an additional project in the Phase II planning.
- Another resident praised Mr. Cronin and Dr. Rogers for their diligence in working with Section VIII to ensure the new girls varsity gymnastics team was eligible to compete this year.
- A concerned parent delivered a plea to the Board to implement stricter discipline policies toward any student who is found to have committed an anti-Semitic or bias-related action. One suggested action would remove the student from all celebratory ceremonies, including graduation. She also suggested that the distribution of all religious symbols be prohibited from the classroom and asked other community members to speak out if they encounter a potential incident of anti-Semitism or bias. Dr. Rogers also invited any community members with information or concerns to come forward. Board trustee Josh Lafazan revisited his proposal to install additional security cameras around the school campuses.

Discussion Items

- Board President Dr. Michael Cohen addressed multiple parental concerns over a cluster of exams being administered in a condensed period of time. Dr. Rogers said he would review testing schedules as part of the future calendar development process.
- Revisiting its earlier work session discussion on Phase II construction projects, the Board authorized Dr. Rogers to draft a resolution for the December meeting that would set a date and parameters for voting on Phase II projects. Following legal counsel's advice, the Board agreed to authorize a separate resolution for the Energy Performance Contract (EPC) for conservation projects. The resolution is being proposed separately due to avoid any confusion between the wording of the EPC and the overall Phase II language that could render the resolution vulnerable to a challenge. The Board also agreed to move forward with all additional Phase II proposals, including recent additions discussed at the work session inclusive of the South Grove enclosure project, opting for the design that would accommodate potential enrollment expansion. The majority of the Board agreed to propose Phase II through two resolutions, rather than extract the field and weight room to a third proposition. They also agreed to retain current polling locations for school district balloting.
- Dr. Cohen acknowledged the first reading of a proposed new residency verification policy, which would require reregistration upon entry to the middle school or the high school. The resolution will be considered for adoption at the next Board of Education meeting.
- Board Vice President Tracy Frankel and Trustee Susan Parker were selected to represent the district on the Nassau BOCES Budget Advisory Committee. Their appointment was officially approved via resolution during the New Business portion of the meeting.

New Business

- Various resolutions were approved including coaching, special assignments, and staff service appointments, acceptance of contracts, committee policy readings (including the residency policy) and appointments, student club charters and service contracts.
- The Board ratified a stipulation of agreement for contract renewal with the Syosset Administrative Assistants' Association.
- The Board approved the appointment of special counsel for real property legal services pertaining to a boundary dispute for a single parcel of land since both school districts are represented by the same law firm.

Next Meeting

- The next meeting of the Board of Education is Monday, December 11, 2017 at 8 p.m. at South Woods Middle School.