

OWOSSO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education Minutes
Committee of the Whole Meeting
October 11, 2023
Report 23-45

Present: Easlick, Henne, Krauss, Mowen, Ochodnicky, Webster, Quick
Absent:

Mr. Rick Mowen called the Board of Education Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was held at the Washington Campus Gymnasium, 645 Alger Street, Owosso MI 48867.

Pledge of Allegiance

Venture, Inc.- Water Street Facility Update

Mrs. Mikke Droste and Mr. Brad Michaud from Venture, Inc., the company that entered into a purchase agreement with OPS in 2022 for the old middle school building on Water Street, gave a brief update to the Board on their progress towards receiving funds to turn the building into affordable apartment units. In October 2022, and April 2023, Venture, Inc., was denied the allocation of tax credits necessary to fund the affordable housing project. Mr. Michaud explained to the Board that it is not uncommon for a company to have apply multiple times for funding, and Venture, Inc., fully anticipates applying again in December 2023. While confident the third application will be successful, Mr. Michaud explained to the Board that if they do not receive the funds in December 2023, there will not be another opportunity to apply again until October 2024. Mr. Michaud explained the purchase agreement is in place until December 31, 2024, unless both parties agree to terminate it and OPS receives \$10,000 every three months from Venture, Inc., towards the total purchase price of \$200,000. Dr. Tuttle reminded the Board that these deposits are non-refundable. Both Mr. Michaud and Ms. Droste repeated their commitment to the Water Street facility and to providing affordable housing to Owosso residents. The Board thanked Mrs. Droste and Mr. Michaud for attending the meeting.

Artificial Intelligence

Dr. Tuttle guided the Board through a six-question quiz designed to test their awareness of artificial intelligence in everyday life. The questions and answers were as follows:

Question: ‘Thinking about customer service, which of the following uses artificial intelligence?’

Answer: ‘A chatbot that immediately answers customer questions.’

Question: ‘When playing music, which of the following uses artificial intelligence (AI)?’

Answer: ‘A playlist recommendation.’

Question: ‘When using email, which of the following uses artificial intelligence (AI)?’

Answer: ‘The email service categorizing an email as spam.’

Question: ‘Thinking about health products, which of the following uses artificial intelligence (AI)?’

Answer: ‘Wearable fitness trackers that analyze exercise and sleeping patterns’

Question: ‘Thinking about online shopping, which of the following uses artificial intelligence (AI)?’

Answer: ‘Product recommendations based on previous purchases.’

Question: ‘Thinking about devices in the home, which of the following uses artificial intelligence (AI)?’

Answer: ‘A security camera that sends an alert when there is an unrecognized person at the door.’

Dr. Tuttle explained to the Board how ubiquitous artificial intelligence is in our daily lives and that educators need to prepare for the challenges AI will bring to our education system. She read the following excerpt ‘The integration of artificial intelligence has emerged as a powerful practice with the potential to transform teaching, streamline business operations, and personalize learning. However, the successful implementation of AI driven tools and practices will require careful planning and strategic alliance with a school district’s educational goals, values and priorities. This planning guide provides educators with practical insights and strategies to navigate the complexities to integrating AI into a school district. This process may be especially challenging for schools over the next few years as AI technology matures and as education applications evolve.’ Dr. Tuttle showed the Board a brief demonstration of the website Chat GPT in which she wrote the question ‘Write a paper on John Locke’s theory’. The Board members watched while Chat GPT wrote a full-length paper responding to the prompt, in seconds. Dr. Tuttle explained to the Board that although AI is a fascinating technology and can assist educators and students in various ways, it will also present unique challenges. Educators will need to adapt as the technology evolves.

Sinking Fund

Dr. Tuttle showed the Board a new postcard created by Communications Director Mrs. Jessica Thompson that advertises the sinking fund Election on November 7. The postcard reminds voters of the uses of a sinking fund and that no new taxes would be imposed if it passes. Dr. Tuttle encouraged Board members to educate community members, friends, and family on the importance the sinking fund for the district.

Veteran’s Day

Dr. Tuttle showed the Board the invitation created by Mrs. Thompson for ‘Visiting with Veterans’ at the elementary school buildings. Students are encouraged to invite veterans they know to a special breakfast and to be honored for their service to the country on November 10.

Position at Bryant

Dr. Tuttle shared with the Board that the district has created and posted for a new position at Bryant Elementary, the position title is ‘Elementary Instructional & Behavioral Interventionist’. The position is intended to provide additional support to Bryant’s administration, particularly with student behavioral issues. The position is currently listed as a 1-year term, but may be extended if the district chooses to do so. Dr. Tuttle assured the Board that the administrative team is in full support of this position, and it will be paid for by a grant.

SAT Class

Dr. Tuttle informed the Board the district has implemented a SAT class. The class is designed to teach key concepts, the structure of the SAT, and help students develop test-taking strategies. Dr. Tuttle shared that OHS teacher Mrs. Erin Moore will be teaching the class and about 50 students are enrolled in the class.

Trustee Ochodnicky asked how many OHS students went to college after they graduated last year. Dr. Tuttle responded approximately 30-35%. Trustee Ochodnicky asked how many of those students stayed in college after the first year. Dr. Tuttle responded there is a decline but she will have to look into the exact numbers.

Curriculum Director Mr. Brooks shared that the SAT will be moving into a digital format as of Spring 2024, and learning that format will be a process for both students and staff.

November 7 Professional Development

Mr. Brooks shared with the Board that November 7 is an all-staff professional development day. Some of the opportunities offered are Crisis Prevention training, Secondary Math, High School Chemistry/Biology, Flat Panel training, AP World History, Positive Behavioral Intervention Systems, among others. Although there are a few required trainings, teachers will be able to pick and choose the trainings that appeal to them.

Policy Update

At the last Board meeting, Treasurer Quick asked which social media applications are blocked on district property, and why does the district not block all social media applications. Dr. Tuttle read the following response from Technology Director Mr. Watson: “As part of our standard operating procedure, we carefully manage website access in strict accordance with the legal stipulations outlined by the Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA). CIPA mandates the prohibition of sites featuring explicit adult content and engaging in gambling activities. Although social media sites are not explicitly obligated to be blocked, we exercise our discretion to restrict certain platforms if they are found to violate CIPA. Currently, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, and Twitter are among the social media sites restricted due to such violations. Our overarching

objective is to ensure the safety of children while simultaneously providing them with the freedom and opportunities to grow into responsible digital adults.”

Business Report

Chief Financial Officer Julie Omer shared a budget update with the Board. She gave a summary of the 2022-2023 final budget, the Fiscal Year to Date for 2022-2023, and discussed with the Board what percentage of funds were used compared to what was budgeted. CFO Omer said the report delineates grants and what the district has to fund salaries and wages. The budget for grants was \$13 million, the budget for non-grant revenue was \$32.6 million, giving a total revenue of over \$45 million. CFO Omer said the fiscal year to date grant amount was \$9.4 million, compared to the \$13 million budgeted. She assured the Board this does not mean the district ‘missed the mark’, it just means some grants were not utilized. For the non-grant revenue, CFO Omer informed the Board the district received \$300,000 more income than expected; this primarily came from interest income, facility-rental agreements, and some money was received from the state to offset retirement costs. CFO Omer included a summary of grants and some of the more significant variances for the Board to review. Trustee Ochodnický asked when the ESSER funds run out. CFO Omer responded that ESSER II is done, credit recovery programs are done, and ESSER III will end in September 2024. Trustee Ochodnický thanked CFO Omer for her answer.

Board Comments

Dr. Tuttle and the Board gave condolences to the Clapp family, for the recent loss of Kathy Clapp, a beloved Bryant Elementary teacher. Dr. Tuttle said Mrs. Clapp gave 29 years of service to the district, and she will be deeply missed by all students and staff.

Public Participation

President Mowen stated that the Board of Education is a public body and recognizes the value of public comment on education issues. Time has been included in the meeting’s agenda for public participation. Members of the audience were reminded they should announce their name and group affiliation when applicable and to limit their participation time to three minutes or less. Comments should be directed to the Board and be relevant to the business of the Board of Education. This is not an opportunity for dialogue with the Board of Education. The rules of common courtesy should also be observed.

No public participants addressed the Board.

Upcoming Dates

- **October 25:** Board of Education, Regular Meeting, 5:30PM, Washington Campus Gymnasium
- **November 8:** Board of Education, Committee of the Whole, 5:30PM, Washington Campus Gymnasium

- **November 29:** Board of Education, Regular Meeting, 5:30PM, Washington Campus Gymnasium

Adjournment

Moved by Quick, supported by Easlick to adjourn at 6:58 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes recorded by Brooke Barber.

Respectfully submitted,


Ty Krauss, Secretary