

**DECATUR DISTRICT 61 BOARD OF EDUCATION
CLOSED MEETING MINUTES**

DATE/TIME: November 16, 2021

5:00 PM

LOCATION: Keil Administration Building
101 W. Cerro Gordo Street
Decatur, IL 62523

PRESENT: Dan Oakes, President
Alana Banks (via audio)
Jason Dion

Andrew Taylor, Vice President
Kevin Collins-Brown
Al Scheider

ABSENT: Regan Lewis

STAFF: Interim Superintendent Bobbi Williams, Board Secretary Melissa Bradford, Attorney Brian Braun and others

President Oakes called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
Call for Closed Executive Session	President Oakes moved to return into Closed Executive Session to discuss the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees of the public body, emergency security procedures and the use of personnel and equipment to respond to actual danger to the safety of employees, students, staff, the public or public property, the purchase or lease of real property for use of the public body, and discussion of collective negotiating matters between the Board and representatives of its employees, seconded by Dr. Collins-Brown.	Board moved to Closed Executive Session at 5:00 PM.

Hearing no questions, President Oakes called for a Roll Call Vote:

Aye: Banks, Oakes, Dion, Taylor, Scheider, Collins-Brown

Nay: None

Absent: Lewis

Roll Call Vote: 6 Aye, 0 Nay, 1 Absent

For the record, Todd Covault, Bobbi Williams and Rochelle Clark joined Closed Executive Session meeting.

<u>Purchase or Lease of Property Land Acquisition</u>	Dr. Todd Covault, Chief Operational Officer, discussed the building of a new Dennis school. The possible locations discussed were: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fairview Park• Kiwanis Park• Woodrow Wilson Area	Information only.
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Dr. Covault shared maps and data regarding the Dennis boundary (see attached). The City of Decatur were asking for Dennis to remain on the west end of town.

Dr. Covault shared information regarding the market value of the homes around the Woodrow Wilson area. The District should obtain properties around the Woodrow

**Land
Acquisition
Continued**

Wilson area for other additional construction other than the building itself. Chris Harrison, One Main Properties, pulled information regarding renting versus owning of homes in the area. There were 21 owners and 10 had tax bills sent to different homes; the others were renters. Information only.

Kiwanis seems to be in a flood zone.

Currently, there were 538 students attending Dennis, but the District should build for more enrollment.

If the consensus from the Board of Education was to move forward, Mary Ann Schloz, Assistant Director of Finance, Grants and Special Projects, would have to confirm that CARES Act funding is allowable for the new construction. CARES funding would have to be spent by the fall of 2024; the grant cannot be extended due to federal guidelines.

If the Board of Education authorized Administration to move forward, the following would be next steps:

- Select Architect for Project (RFP).
- City of Decatur would condemn Woodrow Wilson.
 - The District take ownership of property – pay full cost of demolition.
 - If the District does not take ownership, we split the demolition cost with the City of Decatur.
- Work with the Dennis students and staff to develop a “deferred maintenance plan” to support the construction cost and obtain a buy-in from students and parents in the neighborhood.
- Establish a Trust to seek out and purchase neighboring properties.
- The District would have to go door to door regarding the housing in the Woodrow Wilson area. Is there a possibility that the District would pay more than the actual market value?

The Board of Education continued discussion with Dr. Covault regarding a new Dennis.

The Woodrow Wilson area is a current “eye soar” to the neighborhood.

Interim Superintendent Williams noted that Administration will meet with the Park District to discuss the Kiwanis area.

The CARES funding allows for a great opportunity for a new building, if approved by the state.

Dr. Collins-Brown noted that he was in favor of the Woodrow Wilson area, but wanted to call it a different name.

**Land
Acquisition
Continued**

Mr. Scheider noted that he was not interested in taking the park space because it was at the far end of the boundaries. He was not in favor of building a new building, but if the Board decided to do it, he preferred the Woodrow Wilson area.

Mr. Dion asked if the District could acquire property around the current West Main Dennis area and expand on it. Dr. Covault noted that the property was too small to expand in that area.

The Board of Education continued discussions on land acquisition for Dennis.

Interim Superintendent Williams noted that the neighborhood may want to sale their home(s).

It could cost \$500k to demo Woodrow Wilson.

Cottage Hill stops at the railroad tracks and Sunset Avenue runs to 48/Fairview Avenue.

Mr. Harrison would be the point person as it relates to if the neighborhood was willing to sale their homes in the Woodrow Wilson area.

Vice President Taylor noted that if we relocated it to the Oak Grove or the Durfee area, the west-enders would not like it.

President Oakes noted that the District may need to ask the parents of the students about the Woodrow Wilson area. Dr. Collins-Brown replied that you could tie it in with Millikin University and the park. President Oakes noted we would need the houses in that area; especially for the buses.

President Oakes noted that the City of Decatur likes the Woodrow Wilson area. Administration replied except one.

The value estimates of the houses were low in that area.

Dr. Collins-Brown liked the Woodrow Wilson area.

Vice President Taylor noted that the Park District would like the Durfee area to expand Garfield Park, but at this time, there was a commitment with the City of Decatur.

Dr. Covault noted that if the District was going to build, they need to get the wheels in motion.

Vice President Taylor liked the Kiwanis area.

Dr. Covault noted that Woodrow Wilson and Roosevelt were sold to the same buyer. They in-turn sold Woodrow to someone in New, Jersey, which was a long time ago.

**Land
Acquisition
Continued**

Ms. Banks liked the Kiwanis area.

Information
only.

President Oakes noted that once they meet with the Park District and the City of Decatur, he would notify the Board of the options.

Dr. Covault noted that even though Woodrow Wilson was not owned by the District, it would be in “good faith” to split the cost of the demolition with the City of Decatur.

Mr. Dion liked the Woodrow Wilson area.

Dr. Covault noted the following:

- He would reach out to the City of Decatur regarding the demolition of Woodrow Wilson and the shared cost etc.
- He would proceed with Stifel regarding the authority to spend the monies.

President Oakes asked the Board of Education to drive by Woodrow Wilson and Kiwanis Park.

There is some background work that still needs to be done, therefore, this needs to remain confidential.

More information forthcoming after the meetings with the Decatur Park District and the City of Decatur.

**Safety and
Security**

[REDACTED]

Personnel

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Negotiations

[REDACTED]

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**Safety and
Security
Continued**

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Personnel

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**Return to
Open Session**

President Oakes moved to return to Open Session, seconded by Vice President Taylor. Returned to
All were in favor. Open Session
at 6:33 PM.

Dan Oakes, President

Melissa Bradford, Board Secretary