



Tuesday, January 12, 2021
Regular Board Meeting
Google Meet - Virtual Meeting, 7:00 PM

1. Call to Order

2. Opening of the Meeting – 7:03 PM

Louis Schwartz called the meeting to order.

2.01 Pledge of Allegiance

2.02 Roll Call

Mr. Louis Schwartz, President; Ms. Rita Kennedy, Vice President; Ms. Shannon Johnson; Ms. Jean Lucasey; Ms. Tracy Baron; Ms. Shannon Stringer; Mr. Massimo Bufalini, Dr. Lisa Brady, Superintendent; Mr. Douglas Berry, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction ; Mr. Ron Clamser, Jr., Assistant Superintendent of Finance, Facilities and Operations; and Ms. Loretta Tularzko, District Clerk.

2.03 Acceptance of the Agenda

Mr. Bufalini moved, and Ms. Stringer seconded, that the Board accept the January 12th Agenda.

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

2.04 Approval of Minutes

Ms. Johnson moved, and Ms. Lucasey seconded, that the Board approve the minutes of the December 15, 2020 meeting.

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

3. Citizens Comments

3.01 Anyone wishing to make comments during the two Citizen's Comment portions of the meeting can do so by emailing their comments to boemeetingcomment@DFSD.org. Please include your name and address.

3.02 Notice

Members of the community may comment on any matter related to the meeting's approved agenda. The Board President may request a brief description of the topic the speaker plans to address. Any group or organization wishing to address the Board must identify a single spokesperson. Presentations should be as brief as possible and no speaker will be permitted to speak for longer than 3 minutes. It is expected that speakers will conduct themselves in a civil manner and will be ruled out of order for any statement that constitutes a direct threat against officers, employees or students of the school district, or that is obscene. Questions or comments concerning matters that are not on the agenda will be taken under consideration and referred to the Superintendent for appropriate action.

One comment from Peter DeFilippis of 369 Ashford Avenue commented on the 5th Grade curriculum.

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4. Announcements

PTSA

- This is the time of the year for recruiting member to the Nominating Committee. Most, if not all, seats need to be filled. If you are interested, please contact Brook Bass at: presidents.dfptsa@gmail.com.
- The PTSA's Dobbs Stories Project that was inspired by TED Talk called "The Danger of a Single Story". They are still looking for the people of Dobbs to write up their "stories". The last date of submission will be January 15, 2021. Please send your stories to StoriesofDobbs@gmail.com

WPSBA

- The yearly February Legislative Round Table Forums will be held virtually this year. Please check your emails for information on the topics and how to register.

Mr. Louis Schwartz - Board President's Statement

As many of you are aware, there is an ongoing litigation between The Landing on the Water at Dobbs Ferry ("the Landing") and the Town of Greenburgh, in which the Dobbs Ferry School District and the Village of Dobbs Ferry are now parties. While we are limited in what we are permitted to say publicly about any pending litigation, we are permitted to share some background information. In the spirit of transparency, we are sharing today some facts and a brief timeline to help inform our interested community members.

Properties in New York State are generally assessed and, therefore, taxed based on their full market value. New York State Real Property Tax Law §581 requires condominiums to be assessed based on their rental value rather than their market sales value. Assessing condominiums in this manner typically results in a substantially lower assessment and, consequently, a lower property tax. Section 581, however, contains an "opt out" provision, permitting towns or school districts to pass a local law or resolution opting out of this provision for homes that convert to condominiums, so that converted condominiums are assessed as conventionally owned homes. The effect of this local law or resolution is not retroactive.

The litigation between the Landing and the Town of Greenburgh, the Village of Dobbs Ferry and the School District centers around whether the Landing's actions to attempt a conversion to a condominium in 2018 met all the legal requirements to do so.

Here are some of the pertinent dates of activity that we can share:

- Since the time they were built, around 2001, the homes at the Landing -- similar to other homes in Dobbs Ferry -- were assessed for property tax purposes based on their market value.
- April 30, 2018: The Landing filed a Declaration of Condominium Status with Westchester County, and sent a letter to the Town of Greenburgh claiming that it was now a condominium and should be taxed as one.
- May 1, 2018: The Assessor of the Town of Greenburgh rejected the Landing's claim because (1) it had failed to provide certain documents and information and (2) it had not obtained a "no action" letter from the Attorney General of the State of New York stating that the AG had no objection to the conversion.
- June 13, 2018: The Town of Greenburgh adopted an ordinance -- Local Law 8 of 2018 -- opting out of the condominium tax provision of Real Property Tax Law §581.
- October 9, 2018: The School District passed a resolution, which took effect immediately, opting out of the condominium tax provision of Real Property Tax Law §581.
- October 12, 2018: The Landing commenced a lawsuit against the Town of Greenburgh claiming that it was entitled to be valued as a condominium rather than as a Homeowners' Association as of April 30, 2018. The District subsequently intervened and joined with the Town in disputing the Landing's claims.
- July 24, 2019: The Attorney General sent a "no action" letter to the attorneys for the Landing.
- November 2020: The School District learned that the Town of Greenburgh's Local Law 8 has not been recorded as filed with the New York Secretary of State.

We know you may have questions about the litigation and some of this information, but the timeline that I've summarized here is all we can share publicly at this time.

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5. Superintendent's Report

District

Happy New Year to all.

Staff Vaccine Update – There has been no direction or process whatsoever provided by NYS or WCDOH. Many staff members have already secured appointments and others are still trying. We provided all staff with an employment verification letter to bring with their staff IDs.

New Quarantine Guidance – We are no longer required to quarantine “the whole class” or “everybody on the bus,” or “everyone in the lunchroom or gymnasium.” Quarantine will now only apply to anyone who was in close contact with someone who tests positive - meaning persons within six feet for ten minutes or more cumulatively over a 24 hour period. It is still considered close contact if masks are worn and barriers are on desks. Also affected would be students or staff who are indoors with a positive person in a classroom when masks are not worn for more than 10 minutes even if they are greater than 6 feet apart (lunch). It is important that there are assigned seats on buses so that an entire bus does not have to be quarantined.

School Required Vaccinations - Are needed for all students including those engaged exclusively in remote learning because it remains an essential requirement to ensure that diseases do not spread in the community. The DOH is extending the deadline for required vaccinations for 30 days until February 9th for students attending exclusively through remote learning. Any families in the District to whom this applies have been contacted.

Graduation Information - It is difficult to plan ahead but we are planning for a 10 a.m. ceremony at Waterfront Park similar to last year. We will see how things evolve over the school year but we want to retain the morning ceremony using the band shell.

Delayed Opening Plans for 2021 - On days when we would normally have a delayed opening - we will move to full remote learning because of the AM/PM schedules. If we had actual delayed openings, we would lose the AM sessions. Students will have a regular day remote schedule. The buildings will still be open and clerical staff and administrators would still come to work on the delayed opening schedule. We will be communicating this to parents at the end of the week following the School & Community Relations Committee Meeting.

Race Matters Committee Update - The Committee met on December 16th and will meet again on January 20th.

The role of the Race Matters Committee is to build capacity and understanding together and to make recommendations to the BOE and create a timeline.

Here are some member suggestions for first moves the Committee might consider:

1. Talk about our history and biases.
2. Have people who have experienced bias talk about it to others.
3. Ask adults to help set an example for their children/students.
4. Provide teachers with additional unconscious bias training.
5. Recruit diverse staff that reflects the student body.
6. Talk about race more than once a month; mind shifts are so important, but we can't wait for that, we have to move ahead.
7. Build upon the NYS imperative stating schools need to be culturally responsive.
8. Address micro-aggressions and macro harms. Mindset and action come together.
9. Unlearn preconceptions and then relearn truths.
10. Talk regularly and engage in dialogue.

We are scheduling workshops with SWBOCES for the administrators on implicit bias. We will be working with Dr. Sean Joseph, Visiting Associate Professor, Educational Leadership, Administration and Policy, Fordham University. This will be a series that will run for several months. We will also be doing a book study with the administrators using Dolly Chugh's book on implicit bias - The Person You Mean to Be.

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February 23rd Work Session Update - This is an Executive Session for the BOE to discuss tenure candidates and probationary staff. The next Race and Equity Work Session is scheduled for January 26th and the following Race and Equity Work Session will be on March 23.

DFHS

- On track for our in-person AM/PM enhancement that will begin on January 27th. We will send out specific information about the cohorts and procedures next week.
- Midterm Week Workshops. We will not run regular classes next week and will instead offer four days of interactive workshops and club meetings that are both remote and/or in-person.
 - The workshops include a blend of topics from across the disciplines. We will also have sessions connecting to mindfulness, fitness, student wellness, and counseling. Most sessions will be offered both remote and in-person.
 - We will run an AM/PM split over those four days. Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday will be workshop days, and Wednesday will be a remote only co-curricular club day. Some clubs may meet in-person as determined by the specific club.
 - Some teachers will set up separate meetings with students as needed.
 - Students must sign up for sessions in advance via Pick-A-Time.

Springhurst

- School Dismissal Manager. Thank you parents/guardians for your cooperation. This new program is providing a safer and more efficient procedure and system for student dismissals. It is essential that all parents/guardians log in to set their child's dismissal plans, moving forward we will use this system exclusively. If you have not logged on yet and need assistance, please contact the Springhurst Main Office.
- Big Conversations with Little People: Parenting in Challenging Times - Our Springhurst Librarian, Lauren Rodriguez, and Gina Elbert, the new Children's Librarian at DFPL, came up with the idea to set up a lecture aimed at parents about talking to their kids about what's happening in the news. They have also created a treasure trove of literary resources to support parents in this effort. The event is this Thursday (1/14/21) evening via Zoom at 8pm. They have partnered with Dr. Rebecca Schrag Hershberg who will be the guest speaker.
- The 4th and 5th grade Harmonaires have started 2021 on a great note rehearsing virtually with Mr. Wardlaw. Between the two groups there are almost sixty 4th and 5th grade Springhurst students participating. They are rehearsing virtually with Mr. Wardlaw on Wednesday mornings before the school day starts as well as completing virtual singing assignments throughout the week. The group is looking forward to putting together a virtual performance for the community of Dobbs Ferry that will be released sometime in May.
- We ran a successful ELA Academy for students in need (October 20 - December 17, 2020)

Total Number of Invites: 34	Total Number of Accepted Students: 29
Free/Reduced Students	11
ENL Students	7
SPRING Students	7

- Our new Librarian [Lauren Rodriguez](#) is also running a 5th grade book club & the author is coming for a virtual visit tomorrow. The book: From the Desk of Zoe Washington - they've had discussions about social justice (one of the themes of the book).
- Teachers are starting to integrate Virtual Field Trips - although we cannot leave the building we're still finding ways to have those fun and worthwhile educational experiences
- Building Bridges - starts fully remote this week with Kindergarten. Thanks to Jessie Cooper, Hallie Malbin and Lisa Konstadt for spearheading this effort

Middle School

- Trivia Night - Nycole Tobey and members of the MS Student Government hosted a trivia night on Friday, 1/8. The event was very successful. We had over 80 participants several of whom won prizes donated by community businesses.
- Parent Academy - With support from the Dobbs Ferry Schools Foundation, the MS Student Support Team is offering a series of workshops designed to educate/train parents to provide effective home support and

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strategies so students can successfully participate in relevant activities. The first workshop, Navigating and Organizing Google Classroom and Parent Portal, is on Wednesday, January 27th.

6. Correspondence

None.

7. Committee Reports

School & Community Relations – 12/3

- The Committee reviewed the design and features of the new Race and Equity webpage. Liz, Diane and Kevin have been working diligently on the webpage and the Committee looked at the timeline design and the layout of the categories portion of the webpage.
- They will investigate the cost of having a separate website for the Race and Equity information (similar to the Reopening Website). This would allow for flexibility and content.
- Kevin has met with Natalie Zwerger and is working on ideas for a video that will archive the stories of students, staff and community members. The video would be part of the Race and Equity website.

Curriculum & Instruction – 12/16

- The committee discussed adjustments being made to the Hybrid Instructional models at the MS and HS effective January 19th (MS) and January 27th (HS) barring any unforeseen complications.

Springhurst

- No Changes
- Maintain AM/PM model M,T,Th,F
- Flex Wednesday remains in place

Middle School

- Shift to an Alternating AM/PM Model M,T,Th,F
- Students will remain in their current Blue and White Cohorts
- Wednesdays 8:12 - 2:20
 - No students will be on campus
 - 9 period day - fully remote - combines Blue and White cohorts
 - 38 minute periods

High School

- Current 9 period remote instruction model continues M,T,F
 - 2:20 - 3:20 for in person continues
- All students on campus W and Th using AM/PM Cohorts
- Students will be divided into 2 cohorts AM and PM
- Further details will be sent out to parents and students.

All schools

- The committee also discussed evolving plans to support learning for students required to be in a DOH mandated quarantine. Such plans would only apply to students in quarantine and would include 'real time' access to what is occurring in the classroom. The District is engaged in ongoing dialogue with the DFUT about this.

Facilities – 12/21

- Capital Project Update
 - Tom and Garrett shared an update on the 2019 Capital Project. The project is under review by the State Education Department (SED) and we have received a few questions that require some clarification on the engineering and architectural specifications. Tetra Tech is preparing a response to the SED questions. The project is still on schedule for going out to bid in February 2021.
- Springhurst Space Planning
 - Tom and Garrett presented a few sketches that reflect options and ideas to help address short-term and long-term space issues at Springhurst in anticipation of increasing enrollment. The short-term solutions consider utilizing current space in different ways. The long-term solutions include options such as identifying areas for possible building expansion through construction or renting temporary space. At this stage, the ideas are conceptual only, with the intent of starting the conversation and to begin thinking about these challenges.
- COVID Cleaning Protocols

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- Dave shared an overview of the district's COVID cleaning protocols; specifically, what the process is for deep cleaning the building when the district has received notice of a confirmed positive COVID case.

Finance – 12/22

Monthly Financial Reports included:

- Revenue Update
 - Ron reported that there was nothing new to report regarding the revenues.
- Expense Update
 - Ron reported a summary of the July through November expenses, including a year-to-date comparison of major expense categories. Ron reported that this year's expenses are trending similar to previous years.
- 2021-22 Budget Development
 - Ron shared with the committee the following items related to the development of the 2021-22 budget:
 - Health insurance premiums will increase 3.91% with a total budget impact of \$190,000.
 - TRS rate is projected to be in the range 9.5% to 10%. The current rate is 9.53%. Each 0.5% increase in the TRS rate has a budget impact of \$105,000.
 - The 2 CSEA collective bargaining agreements have reached a tentative settlement anticipated to be approved at the January 12, 2021 board meeting. The total budget impact with step is approximately \$145,000.
 - The DFUT collective bargaining agreement remains unsettled so the total budget impact at this time is unknown. Lisa, Doug and Ron will begin meeting again with the DFUT in January to resume negotiations with the hopes of reaching a settlement agreement.
 - The CPI (consumer price index) used for the Tax Cap calculation is trending at 1.2%, so it's likely to be below 2%. This year was 1.81%. The committee members communicated their desire to present a budget to the voters that remains within the Tax Cap limitation, as has been every year since the Tax Cap implementation.
 - Budget meetings with the principals and directors to discuss their staffing needs and budget requests have begun.
 - Lisa and Ron will be meeting with the demographer to revisit the enrollment projections.
 - The first initial presentation of the budget will be at the board meeting on Tuesday, February 9, 2021.

Special Ed – 1/5

- The Committee reviewed the CSE/CPSE recommendations for tonight's meeting. Questions were asked and clarified.
- The Impartial Hearing settlement discussed at the BOE Executive Session on 12/15 will be on tonight's agenda.

Student Activities & Athletics – 1/11

- The Committee discussed Indoor Track and Field which is the only Dobbs Ferry based Winter Sport currently running. The Armory was set to host runners for meets but pulled out at the last minute because it has now been identified as a vaccination site. Runners are running outside and schools are hoping to host outdoor meets among themselves.
- The Ski Team merger with Ardsley is happening this year, but Ardsley is unable to accommodate the four Dobbs Ferry skiers on the bus due to COVID restrictions. Skiers will need to find their own transportation to Thunder Ridge this year. Andrew has informed parents about this.
- High Risk Sports such as basketball are still "on hold" and schools are waiting for NYS to make a call on this. Determining a "drop dead date for beginning the season" is preferable to the "limbo" that the sports are in currently. If NYS doesn't make a decision, Section One will have to decide what to do.
- All spring sports are low risk, with the exception of boys lacrosse, so we anticipate a regular season for baseball, softball, golf, outdoor track and field, boys tennis and girls lacrosse. As of today, the spring start date is April 19th. This date is subject to change.
- The Committee discussed the HS Racial and Social Justice Club at the high school and endorses this proposal.

Personnel – 1/6

- The Committee reviewed the Personnel Recommendations for the tonight's agenda.

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- The Board acknowledged the retirement of Mr. Douglas Berry. Mr. Berry's last day will be June 30th. They thanked him for his many years of dedication and passion for our students and school district.

This meeting can be viewed on TV DFTV - Channel 77 & 47 or visit the website for the video of the complete meeting.

8. Reports to the Board

None.

9. Board Actions

9.01 Dobbs Ferry School Foundation Grant

Ms. Johnson moved, and Ms. Lucasey seconded, that the Board accept the following grant from the Dobbs Ferry Schools Foundation:

Item Description	School	Quantity	Unit Cost	Subtotal
Westchester Anxiety Treatment Workshops	Middle School	(4) 1-hour sessions	\$300 per hour	\$1200

Thank you to the Foundation for their support and to Ms. Hacker who worked hard organizing and preparing the grant.

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

9.02 Settlement Agreement

Mr. Bufalini moved, and Ms. Stringer seconded, that the Board approve the following:

"BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education does hereby approve the Settlement and Release Agreement in regard to Student No. 8; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education does hereby authorize the Superintendent of Schools to execute such Settlement and Release Agreement on behalf of the District."

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

9.03 Retainer Agreement

Ms. Baron moved, and Mr. Bufalini seconded, that the Board approve the following:

Resolved, that the firm of Shaw, Perelson, May & Lambert, LLP is authorized and retained to defend the Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District and the Dobbs Ferry High School in the action currently entitled P.C. v. Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District and the Dobbs Ferry High School, commenced in the Supreme Court of the State of New York, County of Westchester, Index No. 64701/2020 under the terms of the District's retainer agreement with that law firm until such time as a responsible insurer may designate different counsel for those defendants.

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

9.04 Additional Refund of a Previously Approved Tax Certiorari Proceeding

Ms. Johnson moved, and Ms. Lucasey seconded, that the Board authorize the following:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District, hereby authorize an additional refund of taxes in the amount of \$2,514.36 for a previously approved tax certiorari proceeding captioned 14 Cedar Street Realty v. Town of Greenburgh and Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District.

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Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

9.05 Budget Increase

Ms. Lucasey moved, and Ms. Baron seconded, that the Board approve the following budget increase to enable the District to pay a tax certiorari refund to 14 Cedar Street Realty as consented to at the March 9, 2019 Board meeting:

Revenue Account to Increase	Amount	Expenditure Account to Increase	Amount
A864 Appropriated Reserve for Tax Certiorari	\$2,514.36	A1930-434-99-8002 Tax Certiorari	\$2,514.36

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

9.06 Budget Transfer

Ms. Kennedy moved, and Mr. Bufalini seconded, that the Board approve the following budget transfer to cover legal fees:

Account	Decrease	Increase
A 2250-470-03-0000 Spec Ed-Tuition 9-12	\$50,000	
A 1420-401-00-0000 Legal-Other		\$50,000

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

9.07 CSE/CPSE

Ms. Lucasey moved, and Ms. Baron seconded, that the Board authorize and direct the following:

WHEREAS the Committee on Special Education and Committee on Pre-School Special Education had issued to the Board by written confidential report dated December 21, 2020, its IEP recommendations for the students who are identified therein; and

WHEREAS the Board is responsible for arranging for appropriate special programs and services to students with IEPs, as recommended by said committee;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District hereby authorize and direct the administration to immediately arrange for the special programs and services as set forth in said report dated December 21, 2020.

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

9.08 Personnel

Mr. Bufalini moved, and Ms. Johnson seconded, that the Board approve the civil service and staff personnel recommendations.

The Board and Dr. Brady congratulated both Mr. Berry and Mr. Poccia on their June 30, 2021 retirement.

Mr. Berry will be irreplaceable and Mr. Poccia leaves big shoes to fill at the Middle School.

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

10. Acknowledgements

10.01 Warrants

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The Board acknowledged receipt of the following warrant:
Warrant No. 24 Multi.

11. Citizens Comments

11.01 Anyone wishing to make comments during the two Citizen's Comment portions of the meeting can do so by emailing their comments to boemeetingcomment@DFSD.org. Please include your name and address.

11.02 Notice

Members of the community may comment on any matter related to district business. The Board President may request a brief description of the topic the speaker plans to address. Any group or organization wishing to address the Board must identify a single spokesperson. Presentations should be as brief as possible and no speaker will be permitted to speak for longer than 3 minutes. It is expected that speakers will conduct themselves in a civil manner and will be ruled out of order for any statement that constitutes a direct threat against officers, employees or students of the school district, or that is obscene. Questions or comments concerning matters that are not on the agenda will be taken under consideration and referred to the Superintendent for appropriate action.

None.

12. Old Business

None.

13. New Business

None.

14. Executive Session

14.01 Executive Session

At 8:03 PM, Ms. Baron moved, and Ms. Johnson seconded, that the Board recesses into Executive Session for the following purposes: *to discuss the retirement of a staff member, a staff member's request for unpaid child-care leave, a Settlement and Release Agreement, and the ongoing litigation - The Landing on the Water at Dobbs Ferry Condominium v. Town of Greenburgh.*

It is not anticipated that the Board will return to public session to take any action(s).

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays

Ms. Lucasey moved, and Ms. Baron seconded, to appoint Ms. Kennedy as Clerk Pro Tem.

Vote: 7 ayes - 0 nays

At 8:47 PM, Ms. Lucasey moved, and Ms. Stringer seconded, to move back to the Public Meeting.

Vote: 7 ayes - 0 nays

15. Upcoming Meetings

15.01 Calendar

Tuesday, January 26, 2021 - 5:45 PM - Virtual

- Board Retreat

Tuesday, January 26, 2021 - 7:00 PM - Virtual

- Work Session - Bias

Tuesday, February 9, 2021 - 7:00 PM - TBD

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16. Adjournment

At 8:52 PM, Ms. Lucasey moved, and Ms. Baron seconded, that the Board adjourn the meeting.

Vote: 7 - ayes - 0 nays



Loretta Tularzko
District Clerk