

**APPROVED MINUTES**



**Thursday, Jan. 11, 2024**

**Business Meeting**

**7:00 PM**

**MS/HS Library**

**1. Call to Order**

Ms. Lucasey called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m.

Ms. Lucasey requested a motion to appoint Mr. Slentz to serve as the Clerk Pro Tem for executive session.

Ms. Bass moved and Ms. Sullivan-Nunes seconded, that the Board appoint Mr. Slentz as Clerk Pro Tem for executive session.

Vote: 5 ayes, 0 nays. Ms. Stringer and Mr. Wood were absent.

**2. Proposed Executive Session**

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board hereby recesses into Executive Session for the following purposes: to discuss a due process complaint for student #15 with legal counsel; to discuss the employment history of a particular probationary pedagogical employee.

Ms. Sullivan-Nunes moved and Ms. Nagarajan seconded, that the Board enter executive session at 6:38 p.m.

Vote: 5 ayes, 0 nays

Ms. Hershberg moved and Ms. Nagarajan seconded, that the Board return to public session at 7:05 p.m.

Vote: 5 ayes, 0 nays

**3. Resume Public Meeting**

**3.01 Pledge of Allegiance**

**3.02 Roll Call**

Ms. Jean Lucasey, President; Ms. Brooke Bass, Vice President; Ms. Shannon Stringer; Ms. Penny Sullivan-Nunes; Ms. Pavithra Nagarajan; Ms. Rebecca Hershberg; Mr. Kenneth Slentz, Superintendent; Dr. Ron Clamser, Jr., Assistant Superintendent of Finance, Facilities and Operations; and Ms. Elizabeth Saperstein, District Clerk.

Mr. Wood and Dr. Stinchcomb were absent.

**3.03 Acceptance of the Agenda**

Ms. Hershberg moved and Ms. Bass seconded, that the Board accept the January 11, 2024 Agenda with the addition of a consent agenda, which consists of grouping all the tax certiorari items 9.06-9.10 into a consent agenda. All certiorari in consent agenda were

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previously approved by the board in previous years.

Vote: 6 ayes, 0 nays

### 3.04 Approval of Minutes

Ms. Stringer moved and Ms. Sullivan-Nunes seconded, that the Board approve the minutes of the December 19, 2023 meeting.

Vote: 6 ayes, 0 nays

## 4. BOE Correspondence

### 4.01 BOE Correspondence

The Board acknowledged receipt of correspondence regarding the 5th Grade Stepping Up Ceremony/Car Parade.

## 5. Citizen Comments

### 5.01 Notice

**The Board of Education values input from the entire Dobbs Ferry School District community. Although we do not engage in dialogue with the public at our Board of Ed business meetings, we are listening. Members of our school district community may comment on *any matter related to the meeting's approved agenda*. If you wish to address the board, please sign in with the District Clerk. Any group or organization wishing to address the Board must identify a single spokesperson. Please state your name for the record and keep your remarks to 3 minutes or less. 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.

## 6. Announcements

Ms. Lucasey made the following announcement:

School bus transportation: Residents of the district whose students will attend a non-public school in 2024-25 and require bus service must submit a request form online **by April 1, 2024** (even if placement has not yet been confirmed) to the Ardsley Transportation Department. To be eligible, students must be at least 5 years old, in grades K-12 (not preschool) and the school must be within 15 miles of their home. You must also meet the minimum district mileage requirements. To apply online, visit [ardsleyschools.org](https://ardsleyschools.org) and click on Departments >Transportation > Transportation to A Non-Public School. Parents should note that a separate request must be submitted for each school being considered. Requests may be withdrawn if a school is not selected, but **may not** be considered if submitted after the deadline).

The School Board has established a firm policy of not considering requests submitted after the deadline.

Mr. Slentz made the following announcements:

The Dobbs Ferry Youth Services Coalition met on Thursday, January 11th. Eight people attended the meeting. Mr. Slentz noted that the Coalition now meets twice a month on account of scheduling challenges. Topics of discussion included the recently administered "prevention needs assessment survey" to 10th grade students. The survey is required as a

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part of a joint grant between the District and the Coalition. Upon receipt of the statistical analysis of the survey results the administrative team will meet to review and bring results to the student activities and athletics for further discussion.

Upcoming events:

1. 1/17/24 Youth Empowerment Guest Speaker at the High School
2. 1/24/24 "Anonymous Sister" film screening about the opioid crisis at The Look Theater in Rivertowns Square. Dobbs Ferry Police Department will offer Narcan training after the screening. The screening may relocate to a larger theater to accommodate the number of expected attendees.

The next meeting of the Coalition is February 8th.

### **7. Superintendent Report**

#### **7.01 Strategic Planning Process Update**

Mr. Slentz reviewed the revised Strategic Planning Framework document that reflects the feedback from the Board of Education and administrative team members.

The presentation (draft document) is posted on the District website.

Next steps: The District will start the process of assembling the Strategic Planning Committee based on the participation lists developed by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee.

### **8. Board Committee Reports**

#### **8.01 Committee Reports**

Ms. Stringer reported on the Policy Committee's December 18, 2023 meeting.

- A recommended policy on artificial intelligence was reviewed, and it was determined, based upon feedback from the administrative counsel, that a separate policy would not be adopted but that aspects could be incorporated into existing policies. These policies will be reviewed at an upcoming meeting.
- Based on feedback of teachers and administrators, Policy 4810 (Teaching About Controversial Issues) will be revisited at an upcoming meeting.
- Policy 5151 (Students in Temporary Housing) will be reviewed at a future meeting in order to include certain information about mileage limits for students in temporary housing, per the Office of ESSA-Funded Programs, that the current policy lacks.
- The next Policy Committee meeting is January 17, 2024.

Minutes from the Committee meeting are posted on the District website.

### **9. Board Actions**

#### **9.01 Acceptance of Donation**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education accept a donation from the Dobbs Ferry Schools Foundation in the amount of \$30,000 that will support the District's Literacy Initiative.

Ms. Nagarajan moved and Ms. Bass seconded, to approve the resolution.

The Board of Education and Mr. Slentz acknowledged and thanked Co-Presidents Christina Cohen and Carrie Winkler from the Dobbs Ferry Schools Foundation for their generosity. Mr. Slentz highlighted the research supporting the importance of the literacy initiative and the need for piloting programs and teacher training, which the donation will support. Mr. Slentz explained that the Science of Reading and Evidence-Based Practices refer to both the systematic teaching of phonics and buildup of word recognition skills as well as the development of content knowledge and skills in our students.

Vote: 6 ayes, 0 nays

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### **9.02 Personnel**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District, hereby move to approve the Professional Personnel recommendations.

Ms. Hershberg moved and Ms. Sullivan-Nunes seconded, to approve the resolution.

Mr. Slentz highlighted three upcoming retirements of long-time staff members at the end of the school year: Rosemary Mittan, Middle School Counselor; Barbara Guglielmo, Springhurst Teacher, and Stephanie Thyrrre, Springhurst Art Teacher.

Mr. Slentz also announced that Ms. Shari Kaplan will be appointed as Director of Special Education and Ms. Sarah Grosso as Assistant Director of Special Education. Both had been serving in the positions on an interim basis.

Vote: 6 ayes, 0 nays

### **9.03 Proposed Settlement Agreements**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education does hereby approve the Settlement and Release Agreements for Students No. 14 and 15; and

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

Ms. Stringer moved and Ms. Nagarajan seconded, to approve the resolution.

Ms. Lucasey noted that both settlement agreements have been discussed in previous executive sessions and that the Board had the opportunity to ask questions and consult with the legal counsel.

Vote: 6 ayes, 0 nays

### **9.04 Appointment of DASA Appeals Officer**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education hereby appoints Ms. Lisa Rusk, Esq., as the district-level Dignity for All Students Act appeals officer related to case number 010924, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Ms. Rusk will be paid an hourly rate of \$225.

Ms. Bass moved and Ms. Stringer seconded, to approve the resolution.

Mr. Slentz clarified that there are building-level, district-level and board level investigative actions and that the superintendent or a designee can serve as an appeals officer. In this case, Mr. Slentz recommends that Ms. Rusk serve as appeals officer as his designee.

Vote: 6 ayes, 0 nays

### **9.05 Acceptance of Revised Corrective Action Plan for Annual Audit**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District hereby move to accept the revised Corrective Action Plan to the Management Letter issued by PFK O'Connor Davies, LLP, for the audit of the fiscal year ended June 30, 2023.

Ms. Hershberg moved and Ms. Sullivan-Nunes seconded, to approve the resolution.

Vote: 6 ayes, 0 nays

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Ms. Lucasey requested a motion to combine action items 9.06, 9.07, 9.08, 9.09, and 9.10 into a Consent Agenda.

**9.06 Authorization of Tax Certiorari Refund 8002a**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District, hereby move to approve the following budget increase to enable the District to pay a tax certiorari refund to Francesco Racanelli/Craig Savage and Nadia Savage as consented to at the May 10, 2022 Board meeting:

<b>Revenue Account to Increase</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Expenditure Account to Increase</b>	<b>Amount</b>
A864 Appropriate Reserve for Tax Certiorari	\$12,220.78	A1930-434-99-8002 Tax Certiorari	\$12,220.78

Ms. Bass moved and Ms. Stringer seconded, that the Board approve items 9.06, 9.07, 9.08, 9.09 and 9.10 on consent.

Vote: 6 ayes, 0 nays

**9.07 Authorization of Tax Certiorari Refund 8002b**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District, hereby move to approve the following budget increase to enable the District to pay a tax certiorari refund to Bruno Maida and Angela Maida as consented to at the February 1, 2022 Board meeting:

<b>Revenue Account to Increase</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Expenditure Account to Increase</b>	<b>Amount</b>
A864 Appropriate Reserve for Tax Certiorari	\$14,699.48	A1930-434-99-8002 Tax Certiorari	\$14,699.48

This item was approved on consent.

**9.08 Authorization of Tax Certiorari Refund 8002c**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District, hereby move to approve the following budget increase to enable the District to pay a tax certiorari refund to 72-75 Main Street LLC as consented to at the April 11, 2023 Board meeting:

<b>Revenue Account to Increase</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Expenditure Account to Increase</b>	<b>Amount</b>
A864 Appropriate Reserve for Tax Certiorari	\$15,096.55	A1930-434-99-8002 Tax Certiorari	\$15,096.55

This item was approved on consent.

**9.09 Authorization of Tax Certiorari Refund 8002d**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District, hereby move to approve the following budget increase to enable the District to pay a tax certiorari refund to Kosov Properties Co. LLC as consented to at the January 10, 2023 Board meeting:

<b>Revenue Account to Increase</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Expenditure Account to Increase</b>	<b>Amount</b>
A864 Appropriate Reserve for Tax Certiorari	\$32,459.21	A1930-434-99-8002 Tax Certiorari	\$32,459.21

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This item was approved on consent.

**9.10 Authorization of Tax Certiorari Refund 8002d**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education of the Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District, hereby move to approve the following budget increase to enable the District to pay a tax certiorari refund to 2 Ashford Realty LLC as consented to at the February 1, 2022 Board meeting:

<b>Revenue Account to Increase</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Expenditure Account to Increase</b>	<b>Amount</b>
A864 Appropriate Reserve for Tax Certiorari	\$23,396.20	A1930-434-99-8002 Tax Certiorari	\$23,396.20

This item was approved on consent.

**10. Acknowledgements**

**10.01 Treasurer's Report**

The Board acknowledged the November 2023 Treasurer's Report.

**10.02 Warrants**

The Board acknowledged warrant No. 0022 Multi.

**11. Citizen Comments**

**Notice**

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A Dobbs Ferry parent expressed equitable concerns about the continuation of the 5th-grade Stepping Up Car Parade.

**12. Old Business**

**12.01 2023-24 District Goals**

Ms. Lucasey reported that the Board of Education will continue the discussion on whether to adopt the proposed 2023-24 District Goals on January 23, 2024. The Board expects to adopt the Budget Calendar on January 23 and to adopt the 2024-2025 District Calendar at a meeting in early March.

**13. New Business**

None.

**14. Upcoming Meetings**

**14.01 Calendar**

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Tuesday, January 23, 2024 - 7:00 PM - MS/HS Library

- Business Meeting

Tuesday, February 13, 2024 - 7:00 PM - MS/HS Library

- Business Meeting

Saturday, January 27, 2024 - Board Room

- Board Retreat

### 15. **Adjournment**

Ms. Nagarajan moved and Ms. Bass seconded, that the Board adjourn the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

Vote: 6 ayes, 0 nays

Elizabeth Saperstein  
District Clerk