

**Okemos Board of Education**  
**Okemos, Michigan 48864**  
**REGULAR MEETING JANUARY 8, 2024**

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1-8-2024

The regular meeting of the Okemos Board of Education was called to order by President Gebara at 7:00 p.m.

Call To Order

Members Present: Tom Buffett, Katie Cavanaugh, Shulawn Doxie, Mary Gebara, Melanie Lynn, Andrew Phelps and Jayme Taylor

Administrators: Superintendent John Hood; Assistant Superintendent Stacy Bailey; Finance Director Elizabeth Lentz; HR Director Mario Martinez; DEI Director Lara Slee

The organizational meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

Organizational Meeting

Mary Gebara appointed Superintendent John Hood as temporary chair.

Superintendent Hood appointed Rhianna Walworth as temporary secretary.

The board determined to utilize Robert's Rules of Order for conducting the organizational meeting.

Andy Phelps nominated Mary Gebara as President. No other nominations were made; nominations were closed. The board voted for Mary Gebara as President. Ms. Gebara assumed the chair.

AYE: 7 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 0 **MOTION CARRIED**

Jayme Taylor nominated Katie Cavanaugh as Vice President. No other nominations were made; nominations were closed. The board voted for Katie Cavanaugh as Vice President.

AYE: 7 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 0 **MOTION CARRIED**

Katie Cavanaugh nominated Andy Phelps as Secretary. No other nominations were made; nominations were closed. The board voted for Andy Phelps as Secretary.

AYE: 7 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 0 **MOTION CARRIED**

Katie Cavanaugh nominated Jayme Taylor as Treasurer. No other nominations were made; nominations were closed. The board voted for Jayme Taylor as Treasurer.

AYE: 7 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 0 **MOTION CARRIED**

President Gebara appointed Member Shulawn Doxie as parliamentarian.

Dates of Regular Meetings

MOVED by Tom Buffett, SUPPORTED by Andy Phelps that the board confirm the dates for regular meetings of the board of education for the remainder of the 2023-2024 school year to generally be the second and fourth Monday of each month, adjusted for Mondays with no school; the time of each meeting to begin at 7:00 p.m., with no new discussion after 10:00 p.m.; and the place of meetings to be the Community Conference Room at Central School.

AYE: 7 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 0 **MOTION CARRIED**

MOVED by Shulawn Doxie, SUPPORTED by Katie Cavanaugh that the board continue to manage board meetings according to its established policies, which are informed by Robert's Rules of Order.

AYE: 7 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 0 **MOTION CARRIED**

There were no changes in representatives to the Board Policy Committee, Ingham County School Officers Association or Okemos Education Foundation as they were last updated in July, 2023.

The board completed the organizational meeting at 7:08 p.m.

Senior Center Coordinator Cherie Wisdom provided an update regarding the Meridian Township Senior Center. Ms. Wisdom provided a brief history of the program, partnerships with other programs within the district, reviewed funding sources for the Center, and described the variety of services available to members. It was noted that Meridian Township is currently investigating the possibility of building a new community center to include the Senior Center.

Senior Center  
Update

Members inquired about the following: proposed new community center status; any pool conversations; number of members; which areas are included; and confirmed that members did not have to be residents.

High School Student Representatives reported on the following: recent winter break; upcoming final exams; upcoming NHS meeting; additional flex days to prepare for exams; no school on MLK Jr. day; academic learning center; recent fine arts performances; spaghetti dinner fundraiser on March 8th; and counselor visits.

High School  
Student  
Report

The following individuals addressed the board concerning the proposed Hiawatha carline design: John Leahy; Ron Tamborini; Janet Tamborini, Susan Metcalf; Anthony Huynh, Lynne Page; Richard York; Rick Metcalf; Dorothy Diefenbach; Barbara Forney; Dana Bennett; and Lauren Swanson-Aprill.

Citizens Address  
Agenda & Non-  
Agenda Items

The following individuals addressed the board concerning OPM building and water challenges: Kelly McCarty; Sue Hallman; Ambrose Meteyer; and Laura Bell.

Superintendent Hood reported on the following: recent testing at OPM and upcoming cleaning; newly formed OPM facilities committee; Hiawatha carline redesign and upcoming meeting on Wednesday, January 10th; upcoming start times committee meeting and presentation; introduced new Operations Director Brian Lieber; upcoming discussion item regarding OPM; OPM improvements already implemented; and clarification regarding the bond process and how it pertains to OPM.

Superintendent's  
Report

HR Director Mario Martinez summarized the recent wage adjustments included in the 23-24 budget revision.

Members discussed the following: requested a list of improvements that have been implemented the last 5-10 years in one place; communication with community; Ingham County and Meridian Township involvement in the Hiawatha carline design process; noted that OPM was represented and advocated for during the citizen's committee; OPM facilities committee; possible additional bond; transportation data; timelines; and representatives attending Wednesday's Hiawatha meeting.

Board Reports &  
Request

President Gebara acknowledged correspondence from the following: Jerome Fine, Dorothy Diefenbach, Minesh Mody, Charles Ashley, Jan Phelps, Michelle Gallagher, Theresa Rice-Olowolafe, Rick and Susan Metcalf, Marlene Stover, Marcilyn Daniels, Henry Chen, Karen Fielek, Momammad Yusaf, Trevor and Sandy Wagenmaker, Steven Roth, Yuan Wang, Leonard and Kay Zuckerman, Lauren Swanson-Aprill and Robert Aprill, Jenna and Zachary Shiver, Spring Lake Home Owners Association concerning the proposed Hiawatha carline design; Drew Ruonavaara regarding attendance at music performances; Mike Callahan regarding OPM water testing; Erin Bowling requesting an interview; and Lucas Precise regarding the Scholastic Book Fair.

Members reported on the following: Advocacy committee update including a recent meeting with Representative Julie Brixie; and January is School Board Recognition Month.

MOVED by Andy Phelps SUPPORTED by Tom Buffett that the board approve items 1 through 4 for immediate implementation and appropriate action. Item 1: Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 11, 2023; Item 2: Approval of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of December 18, 2023; Item 3: Approval of the minutes of the Executive Session meeting of December 18, 2023; Item 4: Acknowledge receipt of the December financial statement and approve payment of bills for December.

Consent Agenda

AYE: 7 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 0 **MOTION CARRIED**

MOVED Katie Cavanaugh, SUPPORTED by Jayme Taylor that the board adopt the 2023 annual evaluation of Superintendent John Hood.

Superintendent  
Evaluation

Roll Call Vote

Tom Buffett	Yes	Melanie Lynn	Yes
Katie Cavanaugh	Yes	Andrew Phelps	Yes
Mary Gebara	Yes	Jayme Taylor	Yes
Shulawn Doxie	Yes		

AYE: 7 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 0 **MOTION CARRIED**

Food Service Director Emily Swirsky presented information regarding a food service purchase to be funded through the food service budget as part of their spend-down plan. The proposed purchase is for ovens at the elementary buildings to enhance offerings. Bids have been sought for this purchase.

Food Service  
Purchase

Assistant Superintendent Stacy Bailey and the board discussed the following high school course proposals, which have been approved by the district's advisory committee: Music Appreciation (music elective); Exploring Songs as Poetry (language arts elective); World Languages & Culture (world language elective); Astronomy (science elective); AI Assisted-Programming (computer elective); and Statistics (math elective).

New Course  
Proposals

Superintendent Hood shared a draft agreement between OPS and Meridian Township that formalizes their commitment to working together and sharing of public resources. The letter of understanding would be adopted by both boards. The LOU includes use of facilities and cost, field maintenance, and prioritizes scheduling school events and activities.

Meridian  
Township Letter  
of Understanding

The board discussed items to add to its agenda planning calendar, and scheduled the following: Superintendent goal setting meeting will be February 15th at 6 p.m.; A preliminary budget discussion will be included on the February 26th meeting agenda; a labor relations workshop with MASB will be in the spring; and the board will discuss a possible Community Forum at its next meeting including schedule, location, and topic.

Agenda Planning  
Calendar

Superintendent Hood proposed school start times as the topic for the Community Forum.

Susan Metcalf and Ron Tamborini addressed the Board concerning the proposed Hiawatha car line design.

Public Comment

There were no other matters.

Other Matters

President Gebara adjourned the regular meeting at 10:02 p.m.

Adjourn

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Andy Phelps, Secretary