

Dakota CUSD #201

Board Meeting Summary

December 2016

The Dakota School Board held its regularly scheduled December meeting on the 13th. Below are highlights from that meeting.

Levy Hearing

The board began the evening by conducting a Truth in Taxation hearing for the 2016 property tax levy. The hearing is an opportunity for community members to comment on the proposed levy. One community member did attend and make comments.

Administrative Reports

District Improvement Plan

Mr. Prusator reviewed the status of the 2016-2017 District Improvement Plan which includes initiatives across several areas of the school district.

Employed Craig Mathers as interim superintendent beginning in January

The board approved an employment contract for Craig Mathers to serve as interim superintendent beginning in January through this June. Craig is the recently retired superintendent from the West Carroll School District. He has extensive administrative and superintendent experience. He is replacing Bob Prusator, who is retiring at the end of the month.

Adopted 2016 property tax levy

The board approved the 2016 property tax levy. Earlier, at the November meeting, Mr. Prusator reviewed information regarding the 2016 property tax levy process. Due to the projected increase in 2016 Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) of 7.3%, the total tax rate for the district will likely decrease for 2016 property taxes to be paid in 2017. At the same time, the projected higher EAV provides an increase in local tax revenues. At the December meeting, Mr. Prusator shared the projected rates and the amount of money expected to be received through the 2016 property tax process. Unless there are significant changes to the district's EAV, it is expected that the total tax rate will decrease by approximately 15 cents.

Adopted April 2017 referendum resolution

After discussing the topic for over a year, the board adopted a resolution to place a referendum question on April 2017 election ballot. Mr. Prusator shared that the

total tax rate following a successful referendum would not increase due to the fact that the last payment for the 1999 building bond will have been paid. Additionally, in conjunction with an increased Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) for the 2016 tax year, the total tax rate will actually decrease from the 2015 rate and remain level at that rate following a successful referendum.

The proceeds from the referendum would be used to fund the facility upgrade project that the board has been developing over the past year and to sustain and improve educational programming in the district. The board believes that improved facilities and programming is critical to the future of Dakota CUSD #201 and the surrounding communities.

Approved resolution of intent to issue working cash bonds

In case the referendum does not pass, there will still be some facility needs that need to be met. The intent to issue working up to \$2.1 million cash bonds will provide a revenue stream to complete a very small part of the overall project. If the referendum does pass, there board will not issue any working cash bonds. The board is able to issue these bonds because of still being under the debt service limit prescribed in state law.

Placed update board policies on display

The board briefly reviewed the latest edition of policy recommendations from the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) policy services division. The policies are on display and are expected to be adopted at the January meeting.

Reviewed new courses and/or revisions to existing courses at Dakota High School.

Mr. Rankin, principal, reviewed changes to the 2017-2018 high school course guide. There are no major changes to the guide, except for making Highland College dual credit courses and online course through the Illinois Virtual School more accessible. Additionally, there will be a greater emphasis on promoting courses available through the CareerTEC program. Those courses include career based certification programs that are typically taught at Highland College or Freeport. It is expected that these changes will be approved at the January meeting.

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**Approved authorization to apply for
Qualified Zone Academy Bond (QZAB)**

The board authorized Mr. Prusator to begin the process to apply for the QZAB program. QZAB is a federal program that provides 0% interest borrowing rate for building renovation projects. In order to qualify for the QZAB application, districts must have a minimum of 35% of students on free and reduced lunch; commit to implementing a significant instructional initiative; and receive a certain amount of matching funds. The district would utilize the QZAB to help fund the facility project that would be funded through the April referendum.

Actions from closed session:

Person	Board Action
Bob Prusator	Approved amended superintendent contract
Craig Mathers	Employed as interim superintendent
Stephanie Wirth	Employed as elementary instructional aide
Casey Brokhousen	Approved as volunteer assistant boys' basketball coach

Approved the release of closed session minutes as presented and the purging of closed session audio recording prior to June of 2015.

The next regularly scheduled school board meeting is Tuesday, January 17, 2017.