

RIVER BEND COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #2
1110 3RD STREET
FULTON, IL 61252
BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES OF THE LEVY HEARING AND REGULAR DECEMBER BOARD MEETING

River Bend Community Unit School District #2

December 18, 2024

The Truth in Taxation Levy Hearing of the Board of Education of River Bend Community Unit School District #2, Whiteside County, Illinois, was held on December 18, 2024, in the River Bend District Office Conference Room.

President Portz called the Truth in Taxation Levy Hearing to order at 6:30pm. Upon roll call by the Secretary, the following board members were present: Elizabeth Falls, Eric Fish, Jane Orman-Luker, Dan Portz, Jay Ritchie, and Mary Simmons, Absent: Andrew Meyers. Others present: Darryl Hogue, Superintendent and Jennifer Griser, Recording Secretary.

President Portz led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Portz asked if anyone would like to speak as part of public comment on the levy. There was no public comment.

It was moved by Member Orman-Luker, seconded by Member Falls, to adjourn the Public Hearing at 6:32pm. Voice Vote, all yea, motion carried.

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of River Bend Community Unit School District #2, Whiteside County, Illinois, was held on December 18, 2024, in the River Bend District Office Conference Room.

President Portz called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:32pm. Upon roll call by the Secretary, the following board members were present: Elizabeth Falls, Eric Fish, Jane Orman-Luker, Dan Portz, Jay Ritchie, and Mary Simmons, Absent: Andrew Meyers. Others present: Darryl Hogue, Superintendent and Jennifer Griser, Recording Secretary.

President Portz welcomed all visitors including: Ken Burn, Paige Emerson, Ella Holmbo, Jack Holmbo, Joe Holmbo, Rebekah Holmbo, and Mick Ryan; Principals: Jeffrey Hoese and Jeff Parsons and Assistant Principal: Kelli Parsons. (Assistant Principal Ray Borgman arrived at 7:10pm)

Dr. Hogue added lunch balance concerns to the Superintendent's Report.

It was moved by Member Orman-Luker, seconded by Member Simmons, to approve the agenda as amended. Voice Vote, all yea, motion carried.

There was no communication from the RBEA.

President Portz asked if anyone would like to speak as part of public forum. There was no one wishing to speak during public forum.

Dr. Hogue introduced Michael "Mick" Ryan to the board members. Mick has been training with Gary and will take over as Building and Grounds Director when Gary retires.

Principal Reports. Mr. Parsons introduced Ella Holmbo, one of the recipients of the 2nd Quarter Overall Student of the Quarter at the high school. Ella's advice to under classmen is to get involved, talk to those you normally would not as you never know who you might become friends with. Ella plans to attend the University of Iowa and study Radiation Therapy. Mr. Parsons also shared that the Thespians presentation of Clue went very well in November and the band and choir concerts held the previous week also went very well. Mr. Parsons shared the Course Handbook updates that the high school is proposing. Mr. Borgman agreed that all of the concerts went very well and shared that 74% of the student body is involved in an extra-curricular activity.

Mr. Hoese shared that the elementary school will again be participating in the Books are Fun program to get new books in the hands of all students in preschool through fifth grade. Mrs. Parsons shared that Bi-County helped facilitate CPI Training for all of the preschool through second grade staff.

Member Fish asked what restorative justice meant that he noticed on the principal reports. The principals shared that this is when a student is asked to take ownership of their actions or wrong doings and make amends. An example that was shared was a student who made a mess at lunch. That student would then have to clean up their mess and apologize to the custodian.

Dr. Hogue introduced Ken Burn from Sauk Valley Community College. Ken shared some highlights of the Sauk IMPACT program with the board members. There are currently 18 area high schools participating in the program. Fulton High School students have completed almost 4500 community service hours since the program's inception in June of 2022. Ken also highlighted the certificate programs that are available at SVCC for those students not on the four-year college track. Board members asked when information about this program is being shared with students and also how do they find out about the volunteer opportunities. Ken shared that currently the program information is being shared with 8th grade students, but agreed that the information should be shared with parents and students earlier to encourage more participation. Paige Emerson shared about the website students use to find volunteer opportunities for their community involvement hours. She also shared that students are able to bring paper forms to volunteer locations for supervisors to sign and submit hours as well. Ken also shared that when the Class of 2025 graduates, this will be the first set of students who are completing the program, and that will allow SVCC to study what does and does not work to guide the program in the future.

Board members shared highlights from the Joint Annual Conference in Chicago. Member Orman-Luker attended a seminar on AI and the New Illinois Literacy Plan. Dr. Hogue indicated that the Tech Committee will be meeting again starting after break and AI is at the top of the list of topics. Member Simmons and Member Portz attended an all-day session regarding student voice on school boards and the main topics were relationship building and building trust. Member Portz shared about a podcast that he has been inspired to listen to after attending this seminar. He also shared an activity he would like to include at the beginning of each board meeting.

Member Portz shared he would like to have a board retreat in May or June. There will be one to three new board members after election day in April and he feels this would be a good time to host a retreat. This will also help with the relationship building. Member Falls shared she would like board members to start visiting buildings along with the board's efforts to build relationships and trust. Principals and board members alike shared that communication about why board members are visiting and their goal needs to be clearly communicated to staff members. Member Portz asked Paige Emerson to also reach out and gather student input on board members visiting classrooms.

Dr. Hogue shared that enrollment is holding steady. The district typically sees some shift at the start of second semester.

Dr. Hogue shared the professional development schedule for the second semester with the board members. The district will also be holding a reunification training on April 30th with Clinton County Emergency Management as part of a cross training to aid in their reunifications.

Dr. Hogue shared the preliminary 2025-2026 school calendar with the board members. The calendar had been shared with staff members for input. Some staff members would like to see school start later in August, while others like that the school year would be completed before Memorial Day. Many staff members also commented on not using Holidays as potential weather make up days.

Dr. Hogue shared that he, along with Mr. Parsons, Mr. Borgman, Mrs. Parsons, Gary Wolfe, and Mick Ryan met with Veregy to discuss a general concept of what the district is looking for in a new multi-use facility. This new space would include a gymnasium, auditorium space, and potential parking area at a cost of approximately 20 million. There is potential to have ground breaking for this facility in 2026 with the building being complete in 2027. The facility would be adjacent to the middle school in the large grassy area. In order to achieve this, the district would have to put forth a referendum for vote in April 2026. Members Fish and Portz both advised the district involve community members right away and gain support prior to attempting the referendum. Member Ritchie feels a better images and drawings of the potential facility are needed prior to sharing the information. Board members discussed potential issues with students going from the high school to the middle school for use of the new facility. Board members also pointed out that the football team walks up to the elementary school for practice every day. Paige shared she felt high school students would gladly travel to the middle school if they had their own space.

Mrs. Parsons shared with the board an overview of what the administration team has been working on with Mark Hansen. The admin team and Mark first met in the summer and continue to meet monthly to work on two professional learning plan targets and are learning to create better meeting habits to utilize time constructively. The two learning plans are Teaching and Learning and Operational Excellence. To aid in these, the admin team is looking into ways the district can increase leadership amongst teachers. The principals are offering options of committees and teams that teachers can lead, for example, a science curriculum committee, grade level data teams.

Dr. Hogue shared information on Vision 2030, the state's strategic plan for education. The district will sign a resolution in January.

Dr. Hogue shared that the districts current negative lunch balance is approximately \$18,000. The district will be mailing letters home to families who are in the negative and are looking into different legal options to recoup the lost funds.

It was moved by Member Fish, seconded by Member Orman-Luker, to approve the consent agenda including the November 20, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes, November Treasurers Report, and December Bills Recommended for Payment in the amount of \$472,917.06, subject to audit. Roll Call Vote.

Member Falls, yea

Member Portz, yea

Member Fish, yea

Member Ritchie, yea

Member Orman-Luker, yea

Member Simmons, yea

Motion carried.

Dr. Hogue recommended approval of the 2024 Tax Levy. This levy represents a 10% increase and will allow the district to receive all funds if the Estimated Assessed Value were to increase from the predicted value given in October.

It was moved by Member Orman-Luker, seconded by Member Fish, to approve the 2024 Tax Levy as presented with estimated total levy extension, without bonds of \$6,488,000 and direct toe Board President and Secretary to sign, and to authorize the recording secretary to process the required documents with the County Clerk. Roll Call Vote.

Member Falls, yea

Member Portz, yea

Member Fish, yea

Member Ritchie, yea

Member Orman-Luker, yea

Member Simmons, yea

Motion carried.

Dr. Hogue and the policy committee recommended approval of the first reading of select policy updates.

It was moved by Member Fish, seconded by Member Orman-Luker, to approve the first reading of select policy updates: 2:105, 2:110, 2:120, 2:140, 4:10, 4:30, 4:40, 4:60, 4:150, 4:160, 4:170, 4:190, 5:10, 5:20, 5:30, 5:35, 5:90, 5:120, 5:125, 5:150, 5:230, 6:20, 6:60, 6:65, 6:135, 6:270, 6:340, 7:10, 7:100, 7:160, 7:180, 7:200, and 8:10. Roll Call Vote

Member Falls, yea

Member Portz, yea

Member Fish, yea

Member Ritchie, yea

Member Orman-Luker, yea

Member Simmons, yea

Motion carried.

The Board will meet on January 28, 2025 at 6:30pm at the River Bend District Office for the superintendent’s evaluation.

It was moved by Member Portz, seconded by Member Fish, to approve the Special Meeting Date on January 28, 2025, at 6:30pm at the District Office for the superintendent’s evaluation. Voice vote, all yea, motion carried.

Dr. Hogue recommended approval of the mutual aid agreement with Clinton County Emergency Management. This will allow for collaboration with River Bend schools and neighboring schools in Iowa in case of an evacuation and reunification situation.

It was moved by Member Fish, seconded by Member Portz, to approve the mutual aid agreement with Clinton County Emergency Management. Roll Call Vote.

<i>Member Falls, yea</i>	<i>Member Portz, yea</i>
<i>Member Fish, yea</i>	<i>Member Ritchie, yea</i>
<i>Member Orman-Luker, yea</i>	<i>Member Simmons, yea</i>

Motion carried.

Dr. Hogue recommended approval of the River Bend Middle School Yearbook Stipend request.

It was moved by Member Fish, seconded by Member Simmons, to approve the River Bend Middle School Yearbook Sponsor stipend request. Roll Call Vote.

<i>Member Falls, yea</i>	<i>Member Portz, yea</i>
<i>Member Fish, yea</i>	<i>Member Ritchie, yea</i>
<i>Member Orman-Luker, yea</i>	<i>Member Simmons, yea</i>

Motion carried.

Dr. Hogue recommended approval of a vehicle for Drivers Education. Billion Auto offered to sell the district a 2024 Rav 4 for \$30,529.

It was moved by Member Portz, seconded by Member Orman-Luker, to approve the purchase of the vehicle for Drivers Education. Roll Call Vote.

<i>Member Falls, yea</i>	<i>Member Portz, yea</i>
<i>Member Fish, yea</i>	<i>Member Ritchie, yea</i>
<i>Member Orman-Luker, yea</i>	<i>Member Simmons, yea</i>

Motion carried.

Dr. Hogue recommended approval to purchase the Stukent Software for the Fulton High School Business class.

It was moved by Member Orman-Luker, seconded by Member Simmons, to approve the purchase of Stukent Software, at a cost of \$2800 per school year, for Fulton High School business classes. Roll Call Vote.

<i>Member Falls, yea</i>	<i>Member Portz, yea</i>
<i>Member Fish, yea</i>	<i>Member Ritchie, yea</i>
<i>Member Orman-Luker, yea</i>	<i>Member Simmons, yea</i>

Motion carried.

Dr. Hogue informed the board the district received \$1,000 from Wherry Brothers, LLC for Fulton High School FFA, \$4900 from Sauk Valley Area Chamber for Fulton High School FFA, \$750 from the Whiteside County Cattleman’s Association for Fulton High School FFA, \$2,000 from Brad Stuart for Fulton Elementary School student activities, and \$1588.39 from FES PTO for 2nd Grade Field Trip, Swing Set, and teacher color copies.

It was moved by Member Fish, seconded by Member Simmons, to accept gifts to the district as presented. Roll Call Vote.

Member Falls, yea

Member Portz, yea

Member Fish, yea

Member Ritchie, yea

Member Orman-Luker, yea

Member Simmons, yea

Motion carried.

It was moved by Member Orman-Luker, seconded by Member Simmons, to approve the following personnel items:

- Approve the recommendation to hire Tiffany Smith as Kindergarten Teacher at Fulton Elementary School, starting January 6, 2025.*
- Approve the recommendation to hire Kim Barsema as Paraprofessional at Fulton Elementary School, starting January 7, 2025.*
- Approve Conner Sheridan and Rich Pannell as Middle School Volunteer Wrestling Coaches for the 2024-25 school year.*
- Approve the following Girls Basketball Volunteer Coaches at River Bend Middle School for the 2024-25 school year: Lynn Schipper, Stacy Collachia, and Stephanie Woodin.*
- Approve the resignation of Derek Germann as Assistant Football Coach at Fulton High School.*

Roll Call Vote.

Member Falls, yea

Member Portz, yea

Member Fish, yea

Member Ritchie, yea

Member Orman-Luker, yea

Member Simmons, yea

Motion carried.

The next Regular Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 22, 2025, at 6:30pm, at the River Bend District Office.

It was moved by Member Fish, seconded by Member Portz, to adjourn the meeting at 9:50pm. Voice vote, all yea, motion carried.

Dan Portz, President
 Board of Education
 River Bend CUSD #2
 Whiteside County

Eric Fish, Secretary
 Board of Education
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