

**NEW TRIER TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 203  
SPECIAL OPEN MEETING SESSION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**February 7, 2023**

**New Trier Township High School  
385 Winnetka Avenue, Room 210  
Winnetka, IL 60093**

A **Special Meeting** of the Board of Education of New Trier Township High School District 203, Cook County, Illinois was held at New Trier High School – Winnetka Campus, 385 Winnetka Avenue, Room 210 on Tuesday, February 7, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

**Members Present**

Mr. Avik Das  
Mr. Keith Dronen, President  
Ms. Jean Hahn, Vice President  
Ms. Sally Tomlinson

**Administrators Present**

Dr. Paul Sally, Superintendent  
Mr. Christopher Johnson, Associate Superintendent

**Members Absent**

Ms. Cathy Albrecht  
Ms. Kimberly Alcantara  
Mr. Brad McLane

**Also Present**

Mr. Dave Conway, Director of Physical Plant Services; Mr. Jim Maile, Assistant Director of Facilities; Ms. Lindsey Ruston, Board of Education Secretary; Mr. Steve Cashman, Cashman Stahler Group; Mr. Jim Creath, Pepper Construction; and Mr. Joe DiCicco, Pepper Construction.

**BUSINESS MEETING**

**I. CALL TO ORDER – 7:00 p.m. – 210**

Mr. Dronen called the Special Meeting of February 7, 2023, of the Board of Education to order at 7:03 p.m. in room 210 at the Winnetka campus.

Roll call was taken, and all members were present, except for Ms. Albrecht, Ms. Alcantara, and Mr. McLane.

**II. Communications**

Mr. Dronen invited anyone from the audience who wished to address the Board to come forward and fill out a yellow communications request form. There were no requests for public comment.

**\*III. 15 Year Plan Summer 2023 – Bid Package 2**

Mr. Johnson presented the 15 Year Plan Summer 2023 – Bid Package 2. He introduced those who have played a key role in this work: Mr. Jim Maile, Assistant Director of Facilities; Mr. Dave Conway, Director of Physical Plant Services; Mr. Steve Cashman, Cashman Stahler Group; Mr. Jim Creath, Pepper Construction; and Mr. Joe DiCicco, Pepper Construction. In the fall, the Board approved the first bid package for some of the work that will be done this summer, with this second package covering the remainder of it. The reason for splitting up the bids was so the District could have the best drawings to ensure accurate bids from a wide audience. Projects for this summer include modernizing classrooms, replacing cement walkways, and installing solar panels at the Northfield Campus, completing the renovations of the Special Education Transition Center in Glencoe, improving the athletic facilities at Duke Childs Field, and replacing the Bickert Gym roof at the Winnetka Campus. The solar work, the roof replacement, and part of the Duke Childs Field work were previously approved. There were 17 bids for individual trades presented to the Board for their approval. There were 60 bids for these 17 trades, which showed good interest in the project and ensured competitive pricing. The amount of total bids to be awarded in this bid package is \$12,191,566, which represents the hard construction costs. It also includes an alternate for field turf at Duke Childs Field for varsity baseball and softball. The cost of that project dropped from \$700,000 to \$413,000. It will be funded with donations of \$275,000 as well as athletic state tournament proceeds. If the District wants to include this, it must be done now to meet the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) requirements. Mr. Dronen noted that the Village of Winnetka is going to fund part of this too. Mr. Johnson confirmed this, noting that the project will be funded through different sources such as \$5 million in DSEB bonds, donations, athletic state tournament proceeds and the District capital projects fund.

Anytime bids come in, the District wants to make sure they are competitive, and it can support the work. The District, along with Pepper Construction, analyzed the bids and determined they were competitive based on the current construction market. The District accepted an alternate to delay a small portion of the Northfield Campus concrete flatwork as based on the results they were not competitive, and the work could wait until a future year.

Mr. Johnson noted that based on student need, on-going maintenance as well as projections for future construction costs it is prudent to move forward as presented. Particularly the work at Duke Childs Field as it is being done in partnership with the village and was designed and approved in 2019. There is a concern that if this work waited until a later date, MWRD, who sets the guidelines for drainage systems would change those requirements as they do every two to three years. The stormwater system that the village installed, which is saving the District millions, it is likely the drainage requirements would change and that system may not meet those. The District may lose its ability to do improvements if the work is not done concurrently.

Mr. Johnson noted that the total costs for these projects have increased from the initial budgeted amount of \$16 million as many of these cost estimates were done in 2019 and carried typical construction escalation percentages in the budget. As seen elsewhere, significant inflation has impacted the construction industry as there has been over 20% construction inflation increase in the Chicago area over that time. The project scopes have also been refined, which Mr. Johnson detailed. These projects also include appropriate contingencies. Mr. Johnson reviewed the funding amounts from DSEB bonds, fundraising, the intergovernmental agreement with the village, the capital project fund as well as planned fiscal year 24 transfers to the capital projects fund. The solar project will cost \$4 million, with \$1.2 million expected in rebates in the first year which will be used to reimburse some of the construction costs. Mr. Johnson noted the District's excitement as these projects will support all students.

Dr. Sally inquired if there were any additional perspective on the increase of the cost of the Duke Childs Field project. Mr. Conway shared that in his conversations with Pepper Construction and the Cashman Stahler Group, that one trade, earth work, has gone up more than any others. The Village of Winnetka, when they went to bid that work as well, came in drastically over their budget as well. Most of this project is earth work, and while other trades had a more typical rate increase of 10-20%, earth work increased by 50%. Mr. Johnson shared that a security system was also added to the project. He added details around this with Mr. Cashman sharing that a security system is important too for the synthetic turf as it can be vandalized. Discussion ensued amongst the group.

Ms. Hahn noted that part of the work at Northfield will be delayed until the District receives bids that are competitive, which Mr. Johnson confirmed explaining that it will be incorporated into a bid package in a future year. Ms. Hahn stated that contrasted with Duke Childs Field which the District bid alternately to see if it could delay it, but decided it still made sense to do the work now. Mr. Johnson noted that the District likes to ensure it has options if there is something that needs to be cut or adjusted with the project. It is a good project, and, particularly with Duke Childs, it could cost more in the future due to inflation and MWRD requirements.

Ms. Hahn inquired about an update on the Innovation Hub as she understood it to no longer be a physical space. Mr. Johnson shared that adjustments may be made to a space at the Northfield Campus, with that cost being \$500,000. Ms. Hahn noted this was different than the initial plan, stating that the New Trier Educational Foundation (NTEF) was going to fundraise to cover a large physical space. Dr. Sally replied that NTEF has been asked to move towards more of the staffing part of the Innovation Hub. Ms. Hahn noted it is a much smaller scale, which Dr. Sally confirmed. Ms. Tomlinson inquired if this is a permanent solution or if it was \$500,000 now, potentially needing to do something different in the future. Mr. Johnson replied that a good space has been identified and the school continues to work on what will be offered next year and how the space supports that. Dr. Sally added that he does not anticipate that the space will be much more expansive than it already is. It would hold a couple of classes and integrate well with the Applied Arts space. He went on to share that there are already spaces at Winnetka with Mr. Johnson further explaining the specific areas at that campus. Ms. Tomlinson established that the \$500,000 is not a band aid where potentially that work would need to be redone at a future date, which Mr. Johnson confirmed and explained further. Dr. Sally shared it is a good addition in general and while a classroom could be used, a different space is more beneficial.

Mr. Dronen inquired about an issue with the existing electric or gas lines in regard to the Transition Center which would not allow for ovens. Mr. Conway shared that Mr. Maile and Mr. Cashman met with ComEd today and updates will be able to take place. Mr. Cashman shared that three electric stoves will be added and electric capacity will be increased to accommodate them. He shared that the Transition Center will also include a meal prep area and a life skills apartment which is designed to mimic independent living. Since this project was divided up into two phases, planning has occurred for two years with faculty. Mr. Johnson noted that the teachers have been a wonderful part of the process and thanked Mr. Cashman

for meeting with them on a weekly basis. Mr. Cashman shared that plans changed as teachers were able to think about the possibilities and being in the space for a year helped them to see what their needs might be.

Ms. Tomlinson motioned that the Board of Education approve 17 prime trade awards in the amount of \$12,191,566 and assign those contracts to Pepper Construction and Owner's Cost in the amount of \$2,693,940. Ms. Hahn seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the members voted as follows:

AYE: Ms. Tomlinson, Mr. Das, Ms. Hahn, Mr. Dronen

NAY: none

ABSENT: Ms. Albrecht, Ms. Alcantara, Mr. McLane

The motion passed.

**\*\*IV. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Dronen asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Hahn moved. Mr. Johnson noted that he will report on this at the Regular February Board Meeting. Ms. Tomlinson seconded the motion, to adjourn. Upon a voice vote being taken, all members indicated they were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lindsey Ruston, Secretary

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Keith Dronen, President