

Report for the West Shore School District
School Board Meeting
Jan 11, 2024
6:30 p.m.

- The meeting started at 6:42 p.m. as they were in an executive session that ran over. The meeting proceeded according to the agenda, except that there were two items that were not listed on the agenda which were both discussed at length during the meeting.
- The first part of the business meeting went smoothly until they got to committee assignments. This item was not listed on the agenda. There was pointed discussion about how the assignments were made and why requests for certain assignments were not fulfilled by the President. It was resolved later in the meeting, but again the topic was not on the agenda.
- The budget presentation was made. The fiscal year for the district runs from July 1 to June 30. The process begins in Oct. with a final adoption in June. It was the second time this presentation was made with the first presentation being made last month. This presentation included information about what requests have been gathered from the staff between Oct. and Nov. These requests form the basis of the initial budget review. From this point they will begin to pare down these requests to a final operating budget for 2024-2025.
- An item was placed on the agenda which was, again, not on the agenda. Two members of the Board, the President, supported by the Vice-President introduced an RFP to do a search to find a solicitor for the district with a plan to send it out, conduct interviews, and appoint a new solicitor by March 1, 3 months before the end of the present contract with the present solicitor. This was a very intense discussion and it was clear that sides were forming. There had been no previous discussion about this; several board members were unaware that there was a problem; when the names of the individual(s) who had prepared the RFP were requested the VP refused to provide that information; no one could point to a problem with the present solicitor that would necessitate the need to do this except the president said that because the board membership has changed this should be done; other members pointed out that this new process did not follow present board policy. The topic was tabled after much discussion and after the present solicitor indicated that this was not an emergency topic that would permit this item to be added to the agenda less than 24 hours before the meeting as the Sunshine Law requires. What a mess...Sadly, politics are alive and well in the district.
- At the end of the meeting I was permitted to speak and it was then I introduced myself and told the board about Lemoyne's plan to develop a closer communications connection with the district. It was well received.
- I did talk with the superintendent afterwards and he said our sending a liaison has come at a good time. With the opening of the new schools and a change in the configuration of Washington Heights (from K-5 to K-4), the population size will change as will the attendance area. We can be useful in getting this information out to our residents and those in Wormleysburg.

Submitted: J. Gargiulo