

**MINUTES OF THE CLEVELAND HEIGHTS-UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Special Meeting of April 30, 2008

The Board of Education of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District, Cuyahoga County, held a Special Meeting with University Heights City Council at Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education, 2155 Miramar Boulevard, University Heights, Ohio on Wednesday, April 30, 2008, to enhance communications on topics of mutual interest as well as to discuss any business that may be lawfully conducted.

The Special Meeting began at 6:30 p.m.

Present at Roll Call: Mr. Michael Cicero, President
Mr. Kal Zucker, Vice-President
Ms. Nancy Pepler, Board Member
Mr. Ron Register, Board Member

Also Present: Beryl Rothschild, Mayor
Adele Zucker, Vice Mayor
Frank Consolo, Council Member
Frankie Goldberg, Council Member
Steve Sims, Council Member

Absent: Kevin Murphy, Council Member

Eric Coble, Board Member, arrived at 6:40 p.m.

Frankie Goldberg, University Heights Council Member, attended the pre-meeting but left before the actual meeting began.

The attendees engaged in informal conversation during the pre-meeting dinner.

Gearity Elementary School

Board President Michael Cicero reported that Gearity Elementary has been re-designed and is now known as Gearity Professional Development School. It serves Pre-Kindergarten through Fifth Grade. We have entered into a partnership, now in its third year, between John Carroll University, Wiley Middle School, and Gearity. John Carroll's Education majors have a practicum at both Wiley and Gearity. Professors from John Carroll can observe, through a one-way mirror, John Carroll students teaching classes. The International Center for Leadership in Education recently named Gearity a National Model School, one of only eight in the country.

Wiley Middle School

Starting this fall, Wiley will be renamed Wiley Professional Development School to mirror that of Gearity. Board President Michael Cicero promised Mayor Rothschild a news release noting this change.

Facilities

Mr. Cicero noted there are three facilities currently unoccupied within the District: Millikin, Taylor and Coventry. The Coventry Study Committee is proceeding. Kal Zucker and Eric Coble are the Board members serving on the committee. The Coventry Study Committee will make a recommendation to the Board of Education on what should happen with the facility. The Lay Finance Committee will then scrutinize the decision to determine its economic feasibility.

Following the Coventry decision, the Board will turn its attention to Taylor. Currently, numerous programs are housed at Taylor. The Administration will determine if there are other District-owned facilities that can accommodate these programs so the Taylor property can be sold.

The Millikin property is being mothballed right now. There were potential buyers that did not come through. All the utilities have been shut off with the exception of minimal electricity. The last appraisal completed on the property was for \$2.4 million. Offers received so far have been too low. Since the cost to maintain the property is only \$33,000 annually, we will only entertain offers at the right price. Council Member Frank Consolo asked if there were deed restrictions on the property. Mr. Cicero responded there was none.

Student Behavior

Michael Cicero, Board President, described the current discipline initiative at the high school. He stated that Superintendent Deborah Delisle has taken a hard-line stance on student misbehavior for the last several years. In response to an incident that took place almost two years ago, it was requested that a Safety and Security committee be formed. This committee, along with the Student Rights and Responsibilities Committee, has been working to deal with behavioral issues. The focus is not only on enforcing the rules, but on proactive prevention as well.

Mr. Cicero stated that one of the issues leading to the problems at the high school is that 43% of those students did not attend our middle or elementary schools. We have a lot of turnover in the District from year to year due to the large amount of transient housing in Cleveland Heights. Behavioral expectations are different in other school districts from where these students transfer. Students have to be taught and indoctrinated on the behavior expectations in the Heights system.

The discipline plan we are currently following will not tolerate misbehavior in or outside of the schools, which is a distraction to the students that want to learn. We have hired two fully uniformed off-duty police officers from Cleveland Heights to work at the high school from 10:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. every day. Feedback from students and staff since the employ of these officers has been nothing short of astonishing. There have been no incidents at the high school

since the implementation of this procedure. New technology has been put in place to ensure students are attending the correct lunch period. This has shaved fifteen minutes off the time it takes to get students in and out of the cafeteria. Everyone has noticed how much more orderly the process has been.

University Heights Mayor Rothschild asked about the number of students who are causing the majority of the problems. Mr. Cicero responded about 35 to 40 students. Mayor Rothschild suggested this is a very small group of students. She added that it is important to emphasize more of the positive things at the schools rather than focus so much attention and publicity on the bad behavior of a very small group.

Mr. Cicero expressed that this new discipline plan serves to develop non-confrontational relationships between police officers and teenagers. Whether or not D.A.R.E. keeps kids off drugs, he has seen the relationships that have developed between students and officers have served to keep potentially volatile situations from escalating.

Council Member Steve Sims asked what resources are available to help new students coming into the District. Michael Cicero discussed the formal student assessment that was conducted at Taylor. Board Member Ron Register steered the conversation toward what we should be doing as opposed to what we have done in the past. Mr. Register stated Administration is working on this now so that we can have more of an in-depth orientation for new students. Currently, this is not in place.

Board Vice President Kal Zucker mentioned the transition program at the high school is similar to what Taylor used to be. He said the reason for locating the transition program at the high school is that it would be easier to mainstream the students back into the high school setting. Mr. Zucker mentioned that this Administration has recognized the importance of trying to find solutions to problems. He agreed with Mr. Register that there is no formal program in place for new students to the District.

Steve Sims suggested focusing on these particular students and their parents. He encouraged the Board to emphasize the District's behavior standards to these students and families possibly through a two or three day orientation. He discouraged magnifying behavior problems since it involves such a small number of students and works to lead families away from our schools and communities. The perception that we give should clearly emphasize the good news and level of achievement that actually occurs within the District.

Board President Cicero stated he feels the problems are magnified mainly due to their proximity to Cedar Road. A lot of the perception of the District, Mr. Cicero commented, is based upon motorists going up and down Cedar Road. He said our Superintendent is committed to finding alternatives to suspension in dealing with discipline issues.

Mr. Cicero pointed out the positive aspects of our music and athletic programs, and the benefit they add to our District. He mentioned Superintendent Delisle's vision to have everyone in the District accountable for educating our students. For better accountability, athletic positions are posted each year.

University Heights Update

Mayor Rothschild reported that what will really affect University Heights will be the new South Euclid side of Cedar Center. She is hopeful that the University Heights and South Euclid sides will blend together in color and style.

The Mayor reported that the University Square garage is safe. Repairs are being made to the structure and a report will be given to the University Heights City Council at its June meeting.

University Heights Vice Mayor Adele Zucker asked about the status of illegal students in the District now compared to five years ago. She commented that she does not hear as many complaints about it as she used to. Mr. Cicero said he could not provide an exact figure on it. He remarked that University Heights does a good job with rental registrations. The District has hired a full-time individual who handles our residency investigations. Mr. Cicero remarked that this can be a difficult job because people move around so much. He stated that it has been the case that we do not obtain student records for up to six months after a student transfers into the District.

Ron Register commented that it takes some time to obtain information from other districts because of the overwhelming number of transient students. We end up requesting records for students coming into our District when the other district may not be aware of a student leaving.

Kal Zucker expounded on the complexity of the issue. He feels that while we are very proactive about trying to uncover illegal students, he would rather err on the side of ensuring that all students who come to our doors receive a quality education.

Mayor Rothschild asked Council Member Frank Consolo if there was anything he would suggest to change the perception of and increase interest in our school system. Mr. Consolo commented that on the sports side of things, private school coaches used to come to the school and to athletic practices to recruit students. Mr. Consolo said the rules have since been changed and private school institutions are not doing this anymore. Board Member Nancy Pepler asked if the school could be more aggressive and possibly invite GESU 8th grade students and parents to come for a presentation about our academic and sports programs.

Kal Zucker, Board Vice President, mentioned that we already do something similar to this through PATH. Ms. Lita Gonzalez, Coordinator of PATH and an audience member of this meeting, explained that this program has been in place for the past four years. Ms. Gonzalez stated every year she attends the information night event at private schools and distributes literature about our academic and extra-curricular programs. Although PATH has quite a bit of information to distribute, Ms. Gonzalez said they could always use more.

Council Member Frank Consolo suggested it would be a good idea to get John Carroll University more involved at Heights High. In this way, we could keep more of our students in our District as opposed to losing them to private schools at the high school level.

Board President Cicero and others discussed providing better opportunities and more athletic attractiveness in order to maintain students in our District.

Mr. Cicero verified that University Heights will have the Heights High Band this year for the Memorial Day parade. University Heights has the band in even years; Cleveland Heights has the band in odd years. Mr. Cicero said he is still working on getting contributions for the parade from Dave's Supermarkets.

Mr. Cicero continued that we would like to hold a Joint Boards get-together with the cities of Cleveland Heights, University Heights, South Euclid, and the CH-UH School Board at the Cleveland Heights Recreation Center. A tentative date of Wednesday, May 28, 6:00 p.m., has been selected. Board member Ron Register pointed out that Senior Awards Night is scheduled for May 28 at 7:00 p.m., and it would be good for the Board members to attend. Mr. Cicero requested alternative dates for the get-together, possibly June 4 or June 11.

Mayor Rothschild commented that she would only be interested in attending if there is an open forum. She said that these meetings in the past have been very restrictive and non-productive. Mr. Cicero replied that this meeting is intended to be an informal, relationship building gathering. Mayor Rothschild asked if the Library Board would be invited. Mr. Cicero said the proposed meeting would be an opportunity to meet new board members from the school district and from the library. He said he would chair the meeting if the Mayor would promise to attend. Mr. Register said we should not allow the setting of past Joint Boards meetings to discourage anyone from attending this occasion to socialize and be cordial to one another.

Mayor Rothschild continued to stress the importance of having a different format for this meeting if University Heights is to attend. Council Member Frank Consolo suggested each entity put two issues into a hat that it wishes to discuss, pulling from the hat and discussing those issues. Board President Cicero said he wants this meeting to be a free-flowing discussion. He does not want the meeting to be too rigid where the parties might feel obligated to talk about certain issues.

Ron Register, Board Member, supported the Mayor's stance on the purpose and format of the meeting. He stated that the School Board and the Library Board are the commonality and should exercise control of the meeting. Mr. Cicero agreed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Michael Cicero, President

Scott Gainer, Chief Financial Officer