

Urbana School District #116 Board of Education Synopsis

December 15, 2009

The Urbana School District #116 Board of Education meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m., by Board President John Dimit. All members were in attendance. There were no public comments.

Under commendations, Dimit read the names of several UHS students who won honors at the [IEMA District III Concert Festival](#). Dimit also complimented the [Champaign-Urbana Schools Foundation](#) for winning the Outstanding Philanthropic Award for 2009.

The Board of Education held a public hearing for the 2009 Estimated Tax Levy and to sell Working Cash Bonds and Tort Bonds. There were no public comments.

Members voted 7-0 to approve the following consent agenda:

- November 17, and December 1, meeting minutes
- November Bills and Checks
- Various Personnel Items

The board voted to receive the following gifts and directed District 116 to send thank you notes:

- Connie Minnes, Urbana, donated \$30 to the Urbana Middle school Library to purchase high interest books for African American teens.
- Elaine Gehrman, Urbana, donated a three-year subscription to the children's literary magazine, *Stone Soup: The Magazine for Young Writers and Artists*, to the UMS library, valued at \$82.
- Terry Patton, Urbana, donated \$250 to Urbana Adult Education to support proctoring an eight-hour exam.
- Rob McCartney of Macks Auto Recycling, Urbana, donated 15 salvaged automotive engines to the UHS Auto Lab, valued at \$1,500.
- Deborah Katz-Downie, Urbana, donated ink cartridges and a printer for district use, valued at \$80.
- An anonymous donor gave \$500 to UHS for its Springfield Band Trip.
- Terrance Baldwin, Danville, donated a 22" China Boy Cymbal and stand along with an 18" China Boy Cymbal and stand valued at \$575.
- Esther Steinberg, Urbana, donated \$15 to the Evelyn Burnett Underwood Music Assistance Program. The following donations were also made in memory of Derek Spooner: \$36 from Evelyn and Lee Melhado and \$25 from Judith and Richard Kaplan.

The board then voted 7-0 to approve the [2009 Tax Levy Resolution](#). Director of Business and Finance, Carol Baker, says the district's tax levy is going up 11% compared to last year, but due to tax caps she says there is "no way" the District will receive that much. Baker says she predicts the actual levy extension will be about 2.5% above last year.

Members voted 7-0 to approve the copy paper bid to Midland Paper in the amount of \$20,697.60.

The board voted to approve Lori Johnson as the District 116 Freedom of Information Officer, in compliance with Illinois State Law.

District 116 administration presented the board with the revised job description of the Community Engagement Facilitator position. [In April](#) the board approved the position, but it remained unfilled. On December 1, [the board directed administration](#) to revise the job description and bring it back to the board. Superintendent, Dr. Preston L. Williams, Jr., reported to the board that the administrative team is of a consensus that the position is no longer a Community Engagement Facilitator but rather a strategic planning recruiter. Williams said of the position, "We could use it but it is not crucial to the community planning process." There followed extensive debate regarding the position. Members Rollins-Gay and Gerhmann expressed support for hiring the position, while members Dimit, Patten, Carter, Fisher, and Summers expressed skepticism of the need for the job. The board voted 4-3 to rescind the board's April action. Member Gehrman moved that the board adopt the revised job description, but have the job pay no more than \$8,000 and last no longer than three months. That motion was defeated by a 5-2 vote.

Under Superintendent's report, Ota Dossett, Director of Facilities Services, gave the board information about the 2010 Requested Working Cash Bond Fund Projects. Dr. Laura Taylor, Principal at Urbana High School, reported to the board that [UHS Received a Bronze Award from U.S. News & World Report](#) as one of the best high schools in the nation. UHS is only one of two high schools in Champaign County to be recognized (Uni High received Honorable Mention). Board members and the public gave Taylor and UHS a round of applause. Dr. Williams noted that the honor is a District honor because the students "didn't start in high school."

The board then discussed how to best study the school board revised policy. It was decided that board members should study the policy on their own time, vote to approve the policy in January, and formally study the topics during 2010 as part of a study session.

The Board of Education adjourned at 9:23 p.m. [The next meeting](#) of the Urbana School District #116 Board of Education will be held January 5, 2010, at 7:30 p.m., at 205 N. Race Street, Urbana.