Waters Elementary School

LSC minutes for May 21, 2020

JR called to order 1:04pm

JR – Thanks for your participation

Quorum:

Parent Reps: Kirstin Bacon (KB), Chris Brannan (CB), Greg Foster-Rice (GFR), Jason Rieger (JR), Erica Smith (ES), Lydia Schmidt (LS)

Community Reps: Zach Koutsky (ZK), ~~Lauren Niedespol (LN)~~

Teacher Rep: Rielly Wall (RW), Ms. Ballasch (MB)

Non-Teacher Rep: Mr. Williams (MW)

Principal: Titia Kipp (TK)

Approval of Agenda:

Motion to approve the amended agenda with addition of chair and principal reports, JR, Titia Kipp Seconded. All in favor. No abstentions or nays.

JR – [ground rules – mute, chat function for LSC members only until we get to public comment] Mr Segovia thanks for meeting with us. Context – Friday the 8th we had a budget meeting, for FY 20 and current year budget spend down. Not much disagreement just looking for an itemized list of things. Saw an initial teacher wish list. General concept of technology etc made sense given what the next year may hold. Next LSC meeting was 14th May and we were not able to hold a vote on either budget or CIWP or fiscal year 20 spend down. So we held another meeting on the 18th to vote on CIWP FY 20/21 budget, both of which were approved, and the current year spend down. But that’s when we learned that the spend down for 19/20 was already largely spent. Since it was spent I didn't call a vote. I expressed frustration that this was spent down without an LSC vote since that wasn’t proper procedure. That’s when I requested a meeting with you Mr Segovia as we understand that you requested that the money be transferred and spent so CPS wouldn’t sweep the money.

I would just like to say that I think everyone that was involved, Ms. Alvarez, Ms. Kipp, Mr. Segovia, the LSC, and the teachers had the best intentions. I think everyone was acting in the ways they felt was best for for the kids. I do take exception, with how this was conducted bc I know this is the job of the LSC to oversee these budget spendings of public funds. And this isn’t how it was supposed to happen. So I wanted to reach out to you and speak to you, Mr. Segovia, to explain what happened and to offer guidance on how best to move forward. So, Mr. Segovia would you mind addressing this.

MS (Mauricio Segovia) – Not at all, thank you Jason for sending the email and inviting me to be a part of this conversation. I believe Ms. Kipp has a statement to you, the LSC and the public, understanding the context under which we are performing. It’s very different than what we have faced on the past. It has increased the level of responsibility, not just what everyone is doing, but to ensure our stakeholders, our teammates, without seeing them in their natural habitat but ensuring they do what is expected. This teleworking conditions is bringing a lot of different types of challenges and stress. I want to put that in context, not just at Waters but across the entire country. We are learning how to deal with that. We are being told as district to continue exercising flexibility, empathy, understanding, and grace within the context of this remote learning. It’s bringing a lot families new challenges. I’m going to say a few things then I’ll give the floor to Ms. Kipp…As you know, by the end of the year we face this struggle of finalizing FY spending. The district has established timelines that we all have to follow. We need to secure supplies, tools, to reopen in the following school year. In this context of remote learning, we don’t know when we return to “normality.” When we will be able to open the schools. But we are planning on opening our school buildings in September. We need to make sure teachers are well prepared to receive their students with what they need. This is a responsibility for every school principal. The timeline that we received has a deadline for tomorrow (May 22). I communicated to Network 2 principles back at the beginning of May when we received this timeline that we needed to strategize and develop a timeline and are spending it in the event we open in Sept. So that’s been my communication with all principals, and Ms. Kipp as well. Stressing the need for her to spend FY20 by May 22. So that’s been my stress. And knowing the principals role is to engage LSC and communicate with them on new budget and conversations and spend down. At this time with CIWP and new budget, these are conversations happening across the district. So just to give you the context, how we are being informed, and what is expected from us. Members of Network 2 is to ensure every school is completing these timelines. Now I would like to give Ms. Kipp the opportunity to speak. The frequency of our engagement has increased tremendously. It’s been very busy.

TK – Thanks you Mr. Segovia. So in regards, my statement. I understand its being said that I may have moved too quickly, but during this critical time, I was trying to comply with pressure from the district and Network to spend down my budget lines. At no time did I intend to disrespect the role of the LSC in budget oversight. I assure you that my decisions were not selfish. My actions were not only for the community at large but to help our most vulnerable students should we return to remote learning in the fall. Our school population consist of 160 Title I students, that’s 25% of our population, high needs. And it is my responsibility to have the materials and resources in place for the opening fo the school year. A budget meeting was held on May 8 where the FY 20 Spend down plan was shared. While I was waiting for some quotes on teacher needs and requests, the technology, online needs, and repair work was complete. The total for these expenditures was $142,332.78 of the FY20 spend down. While the timing was out of order, nothing about these past two months have been in order. I strongly feel that while we are in disagreement, I have not done anything but to keep the best needs of our students at heart.

JR – We agree that you acted in the best interest. We’ve seen the spend down list, which was clearly something that you were following the teachers wish list. But I take a couple of exceptions. One is the concern implied that the LSC could not engage quickly enough to pass the FY20 budget. We had 4 meetings between the 11th and 18th in order to pass the budget and CIWP, so we were engaged. I also expressed my concern about getting the spend down authorized, so I emailed our OLSCR rep Luis bc our first concern was indeed to pass this in a timely manner. What I would have liked is to have been given the opportunity to have worked with you and the teachers to support the students. My other concern, is that much of the spend down was done by the 12th, almost entirely done by the 14th. There were a lot of emails that went back and forth during that time, so there was a lot of work time by the LSC members…we are limited in the amount of time and for some of us its one of multiple volunteer jobs. So beyond spending the money without out vote, there’s the concern that we’d spent quite a bit of time analyzing and working on something that was already spent. It caused a lot of stress for a lot of members – the money had been spent while were still doing analysis. I would argue that …I don’t see that there was a reasonable expectation that we couldn’t have been brought into the process. We knew the timelines. The LSC had shown great willingness to work with Ms. Kipp and NA to quickly work through the issues. We were motivated to pass it. So if we were able to have 4 meetings in a week, I think we could have had one to pass this. We were not informed of this accelerated timeline. We only heard about the deadline of May 22. We were not given a chance to have a meeting to help make this happen. I would like this not to happen again. Absolutely we understand the extraordinary circumstances, I totally get that. But even excepting that, given everything else that went into passing the CIWP, I don’t see that we couldn’t have been involved.

Mr. Segovia – In my communication with the principals, I have recommended that schools prioritize new technology as an expenditure. Most of our technology is already in student’s hands. Across Network 2 we did a good job of distributing technology. So 70% of technology is in students’ homes. Knowing that technology would never come back in the same condition, so I strongly recommended that they prioritize expenditure to renew their technology. Something that the district is recommending is that families will not be held accountable for damaged technology. …

JR – Let me respond quickly then KB. I am not arguing the merits of the spend down list. I do understand the priorities. We were going to work with Ms. Kipp to pass it. That’s not the question. The concern is that we were not brought into the equation to approve and vote which is our role as an LSC.

KB – Yes, I wanted to add to that. Yes, I completely agree that grace needs to be given due to what we are all experiencing. This is a difficult time. I am speaking personally but I feel misled in several areas and that’s where it hits hard. I believe we have gone above and beyond to have extra meetings to make sure teachers got their wishlist by the 22nd. When there is a meeting on the night of the 12th and the 14th and both of those we were led to believe that there was this entire spend down to discuss…I believe that had nothing to do with whether we could have a meeting or not. We were also led to believe that it was a direct order from you, Mr. Segovia that it didn’t LSC approval. Which led to Jason’ email to you. Now we are learning that the timeline schedule came at the start of May. We were not apart of that conversation. So from my point of view it is not that we weren’t able to not have a meeting bc we had meetings during times that the money was spent without our knowledge. At the very least, on the 14th there could have been a simple “guys I’m so nervous about this money, we gotta make this happen,” I know that we would have. For me, this isn’t on behalf of anyone else, but I feel there was a lot of misleading. Ms. Kipp you often ask us to trust you’re doing this on behalf of the kids, but I feel that when things happen purposely to go around the system, that’s when there’s a bad taste in my mouth.

[period of silence]

JR – I hope there was not a desire to go around the LSC because of a fear we wouldn’t pass it. We passed a spend down of $80k last year, so there’s no lack of commitment. So Mr. Segovia do you hear and understand our concern?

Mr. Segovia – I do and I think it’s a reasonable concern. Just learning the context of the complexity we are all facing…we have to meet the responsibility as an elected offocal in LSC case and as a principal to be more explicit, I think, in urgent matters that need the LSC’s attention. There’s a number of things happening to help us learn new lessons. Again, I trust the judgment of Principal Kipp in following her heart in making this decision understanding that she has 25% of her students that are identified as Title I. If we don’t spend the money…I can see you have the good proactive support of that expenditure. We need to be more explicit. But the decisions itself I think Ms. Kipp did the right thing to secure funding for the school, for the new annex, securing the licenses that students need. …All these expenditures to sustain the tech capacity or improve it at Waters needed to be acted upon quickly. Was this justifiable to go around the LSC? No, I agree you need to approve all expenditure. The fear of having the money swept or having the purchasing system collapse are always risks that we face at the end of the school year. As a principal myself, I faced this problem because the system collapsed at the end of the school year. Because of the numbers…people in the system.. it tends to collapse…so the risk of losing the money is always real. Many principals develop high concern and ask for extended time. But the district is very clear, May 22, 5pm is the deadline, after which the system automatically shut down. …

JR – Just so you can understand where we are coming from. I share the same concern. I will have three kids at Waters (two now, one starting next fall). We share that concern in a real way. We want everything for Waters. I can assure you we will engage in everything we have to do to make sure that money stays in Waters. I see other schools that have a $180,00 budget shortfall …It’s frustrating to me that we are having a meeting about something that should be a positive thing. We are a fortunate school. We are a good school. Mr. Segovia, I know we only have you for an hour…we want time to LSC and public comments.

I’m just going to conclude and reiterate that the LSC really wanted to help and support the administration, teachers and kids. We simply wanted to do our job. This is not an indictment of the teacher wishlist, or a target for the spending. We want to support the 25% of the kids who are below the poverty line, our own kids. That is all fundamentally true. We wouldn’t be volunteering for this job if we didn’t care about Waters. I know that sometimes people don’t appreciate that. I can speak for myself, I have a full time job and this job and another near full time volunteer job. We are being asked to volunteer to offer oversight and approval these things because it is a positive. We are not saying it is a bad spend down. I think that I will close this out and move to public comment.

ES – Thanks everyone for joining the call. Echoing what Kirstin was saying, if this was an isolated case I don’t think we’d be having a meeting w 60+ people including the network chief. But I think this is part of a larger pattern in which the LSC’s role in monitoring the budget, monitoring and developing the CIWP has been bypassed or we feel excluded from the process and that is problematic. We are all very active and prior to these last few years, a very functional LSC, but now we are being held at arm’s length and share an interest in helping and supporting the school, supporting our teachers, supporting our students. Which is why we as an LSC have asked Mr. Segovia to join us to help us in the spirit of continuous school improvement, but also transparency and accountability as elected officials.

JR – Thank you, Erica. I’m going to start the public comment section [reads notice below]

Public Comment

*Please note: This period is dedicated for questions/comments that directly pertain to the 3 functions of the LSC: Budget, CIWP, and Principal Evaluation. Other questions/comments will be directed to administration (general school operations), teachers (specific classroom/grade level questions), or WatersToday (fundraising and volunteering).*

JR – reading a comment from email:

Having attended the previous two meetings, I would like to formally voice my concern with the apparent lack of transparency when it comes to both the hiring of the additional clerk for the office as well as the manner in which the FY20 budget spend down took place.

Making a hiring before the budget has been approved or seeking after the fact approval for funds already spent, cannot become the norm in which our school operates. I appreciate the time being spent by the LSC to get the details that surrounded these two specific actions, but ask that the LSC remain diligent when it comes to matters like these going forward. Transparency is a fundamental element of any successful organization and we cannot settle for anything less.

Respectfully,

Sam Kaune

Waters Parent

Next public comment, Ms. Soto

Ms. Soto – First I wanted to say to the LSC, thanks for bringing this to Mr. Segovia, I’m a teacher union rep and teacher at the school. I understand what was going on. I don’t think it can be overemphasized how stressful it is to spend the money before it disappears. All principals know the deadline isn’t really the real deadline; they’re a wee before, if you wait then it will get swept early. It’s like entering grades as a teacher, you cannot wait to the last minute. The district is very unapologetic about sweeping that money away. So it makes sense to get the requests from the teachers and jump on those POs. And I want to comment that I don’t appreciate the tone, if you will, that somehow Ms. Kipp is circumnavigating the LSC or isn’t working towards the benefit of the school. I understand Jason, and I really appreciate what you’ve been doing, but…

KB – [unclear]

Ms. Soto – I’m sorry, I’m talking…

JR – KB, could you let Ms. Soto finish..

Thanks. Appreciate it. I don’t appreciate this tone that Ms. Kipp has to be apologetic or kiss the ring. I think it’s just messed up. Because literally there’s nothing on that list that isn’t going to benefit the school. The idea that somehow the LSC’s time isn’t appreciated, is just not true as much as people want to paint that picture. That’s just not the way that it is.

JR - I’m sorry that’s what you heard during this meeting, that I was asking someone needs to kiss the ring, or seek the approval, or it was negative. I tried very clearly to make it clear that I supported the spend down. The LSC does exist for a reason and purpose. I see that the staff doesn’t see that reality and there is a purpose to the approval process, and that is something that we’ve been dealing with throughout the school year and I find that unfortunate.

Next comment I will follow up by email. Ok, now Mr. Raman.

Mr. Raman – I teach 7th and 8th grade. I wanted to offer my perspective, a general perspective, so I will refrain from saying “We,” but I think many of the staff feel the way we do, and I’m not addressing everyone in the LSC or in the community. So I want to be clear on that. I’ve been teaching 22 years, so I’ve worked at many different schools in CPS. I think this is the most caustic LSC, school, community collaboration I have seen. And the level of vitriol is sad and embarrassing. I’ve been to meetings before in person and in virtual meetings and I find I have to bite my tongue in these meetings. I’ve come to realize it is indicative, so you’ll excuse me from adding to the vitriol but when in Rome… Jason, when you graciously met with us earlier and I thought there would be a recognition of our poor relationship, and I thought we were of one purpose and mind for the children of Waters but I don’t understand how we can have this relationship which its antagonistic….it’s harming the children and what we are trying to do as a school. It is my impression that that mission isn’t what everyone has. I think there’s other agendas and I can see it in nasty emails that go around about the staff and administration. I see it when there’s screenshots on social media, Facebook groups bashing teachers. I teach my 13 and 14 year old students not to do that and I see it here and its sad. I think there’s people who hate the admin and willing to do what it takes to remove them and that’s their agenda. I think there’s people who don’t like some teachers. I think there’s people who want to take the position of the admin and teachers. That’s their agenda. That helping the children mission…. I don’t think it’s everyone’s agenda. I feel in these meetings that it becomes clear that I am not trusted and consequently I don’t have trust in you. And again, I’m not talking about everybody. I think bc we are not a team, that Waters suffers because of it. Everyone is free to have their agendas but not at the expense of the kids, who, excuse my French, that I bust my ass to help. I think that some people may get what they want…and teachers may be forced out, and people may be forced out, and people get to decide what I should teach or how I should act,…but at the end of the day destroying the combined force of what we want for the success of the students….I think that in 22 years of teaching all my former students and their parents, I hope they would say, that they are better for having had me as a teacher and you’re going to lose teachers like me. And there’s many teachers better than I am, more importantly, that you will lose. And at the end of the day, you may feel that you’ve won, but the children are gonna lose.

JR \_ Thank you Mr. Raman. I’m not entirely sure how this came out of this particular meeting.

Mr. Raman – I apologize for this segue way and apologize if this wasn’t the right time, but I’ve been biting my tongue. Wanted to offer this perspective.

Ballasch, - I’m just looking at time here and tomorrow we have money that is going to disappear if we don’t make a motion to spend it. there’s money that needs to get spent so we’ve got to vote.

JR – there’s no motion here. The money’s gonna get spent. That’s what’s gonna happen. It’s not on the agenda. The money’s already been spent. There’s nothing to vote on.

TK – Can I just chime in? There is a remaining balance of $67,000 that has not been spent, and if I don’t spend it then it will be lost.

JR – spend it.

TK – then I need affirmation from the LSC members, realizing what happened in the earlier meeting, I to be here with everyone, and get permission to spend that money otherwise we will lose it.

JR – Go ahead and spend the money. It’s been demonstrated that the money can be spent either way. What makes the distinction between this money and the past money? There’s obviously no reason for LSC approval. That has been demonstrated.

Segovia – Yes, to continue improving how we do business, the LSC needs to approve. The fact that the principal worked too quickly, that is something that is reasonable. But we need to change that practice. That is not a practice that we want to happen. I am encouraging the LSC to take the time and approve the leftover expenditure money. Because if you don’t approve that the money will be taken from you guys. And you have until 5pm tomorrow.

[period of silence]

KB – in the last meeting I asked about the remaining money and brought up if we should vote on that. The response was very unclear. We’re stuck between a rock and a hard place. If we were going to follow the letter of the law then that should have been put on the agenda. We want her to spend the money. I hope everyone understands that. I hope no one walks away thinking we don’t want it to be spent. We just want to be included in the conversation. Is everything in line to be spent?

TK – I want to be clear that the timeline. There is a timeline that we had multiple meetings. The budget conversations were happening back in April. All the info on budgets was shared with the council on May 8 after the budget meeting. Immediately after that meeting I emailed the entire council that document.…I then spent time refining that document to make it more user friendly. There is a request list, I held those documents up in the meeting on Monday. There’s an invoice of teacher needs request and an Xel spreadsheet to align with all the requests. This has been a document that our LSC subcommittee has had since May 8.

GFR – Jason, can I add quickly, I added up the numbers on those documents and the numbers we received on May 8 are for about $155,000. And we are now talking about $194,000 so there is still significant… I’m not sure we have anything fully updated between May 8 with the most recent numbers.

TK – I know that on May 18 I sent out additional documents and I had spent the weekend documenting and refining those documents. According to the Oracle system …money that has been set on certain lines came to a certain total…materials and supplies $13,000…what I can say there’s $67,231.82 left on the spend down. Large majority of this has been allocated based on teacher wishlist, …there is the PE request, art request, furniture, curriculum requests….This money will be gone as of tomorrow.

JR – Mr. Segovia, the point I was making is that there was not…the money was spent without LSC approval….there’s no such thing as voting to approve purchases to be made. So if that was not necessary last week, why is it necessary now? seems like there was not a concern with CPS for us to vote and approve these funds. Why not make the POs again and move on. What is the difference here?

MS – I can say, …does it matter or just let the principal expend without formal approval…it’s not the way it works. You the LSC need to exercise your authority in overseeing that expenditure. The situation that took place before should not have happened. It should not be now an indication for you to say, if you did it before, then just it doesn’t matter. We need to fix this, concluding this year…we need to make sure this situation will never take place again at Waters,…moving forward to ensure that the communication would be more fluid, that the actions taken would be more timely, that you need to collaborate with the principal to make decisions, timely, and you need to trust your principal when she comes with this type of report and recommendations. I cannot say, let her do…you need to complete that type of work. It is very now concerning that we have tomorrow as the deadline.

JR - What I have to do is call OLSCR relations and call another meeting today. I have been instructed that I’m not allowed to call a vote or amend an agenda to

GFR – Mr. Segovia, I feel like what we would ask here is some acknowledgement from you and Ms. Kipp that the process did not work this year, it was broke, we need to fix it. We need to make it better next year. And at this point, a vote would require me, as an LSC member, to see exactly what is remaining, which is unclear at this point. I would need the budget sheets to show the remaining money and how it will be spent. It seems the process this year didn't’ work …I think we need to move on,…we need some guidance and some oversight so we can do better. I also don’t feel like its appropriate to ask the LSC to do a vote when we are 2/3 of the way through a spend-down, as if that is going to amend or fix this process. It’s not going to fix this process this year.

JR – we are also still in the public comments section. I’ll try to reach Luis at OLSCR right now for clarification.

Laura Earle – my question was about the ability to spend what remains has been addressed sufficiently. I waive my comment.

KB – Jason might be frozen [technical glitch w the video call]

LS – I can take over as Vice Chair.

Carolyn – I would just like to say, Mr. Segovia thank you for acknowledging that the LSC is just trying to do their job by approving the budget. I feel bad that the teachers feel the LSC is attacking the teachers or admin. I don’t feel that way at all. The parents have just been elected to do a job. This is something that schools and businesses do every day. I know that the LSC has worked really hard to get budgets approved. Maybe principals need to be reminded not just to spend the money but also to come to their LSCs for approval... Thank you for coming to this meeting.

JR - I got kicked out so I lost the chat. Lydia would you mind letting me know who is next?

LS – That’s fine, I think it’s Ms. Booczko.

Ms. Booczko – Can you hear me? I’m in a car. I’m Annette Booczko, a Special Ed teacher……”we support the teachers” sounds a bit hollow when facebook posts are misleading and worded to ignite specific responses, snarky, condescending, and quite frankly…… [dropped call]

TK – I think we may have lost her.

JR – Yeah we lost Ms. Booczko. I hear about he FB posts. I’ve never seen a member of the LSC making snarky or denigrating posts. I definitely have not myself. I would never…and that’s not how I feel. I have not seen it before, so I apologize for the teachers who may have seen negative social media attacks.

Ms. Aguilar – I guess this is gonna sound repetitive at this point. But things that I heard said in this meeting…words like misled, accountability, transparency that is being lacked, but this is how I feel with regard to the parent reps with the LSC. Going back to the fact that you’re all supposed to working together, this display to the public makes it ok to other parents in our community to approach teachers in this way. I am speaking as a teacher who goes to a lot of these meetings…Like Mr. Raman, I bust my butt to be a good teacher and these things that are being posted by LSC members and things that are being exposed by present mode in a previous LSC meeting that was virtual. I guess this comment is for the public to consider who they are electing…

JR – I wanted to address one thing…but I will concur that its regrettable that we have such a bad relationship with the staff. I do not seek that. And I will not be running for the LSC next year because I don’t have a desire to be seen as an oppositional force by the staff and I regret that is how it is viewed.

Stuart Lange – I’m a kindergarten parent, this is my first year at Waters and I just wanted to get in the line and say I feel sad. This has been so disappointing and saddening. This has been an awful disappointing conclusion to what’s an awful disappointing marathon of two weeks of meetings. And especially to see the LSC making an effort to do their job and provide the oversight that’s required and to be met with …I don’t know how to term it…a lack of collaboration from the school, to be met with information that was known and not shared (I don’t want to believe that’s intentional), but things that were known on Tuesday weren’t shared with the LSC in a public meeting on Thursday. And I just don’t see how…the teachers that are making …I can tell they are upset. That’s unfortunate and terrible, but I hope that the teachers, staff and administration principal, and Mr. Segovia can see it from the perspective of the parents that there’s information being hidden, there’s a lack of collaboration. We have a wonderful supportive community here. It’s sad to see it so acrimonious and dysfunctional and I think that we need to work on this as a community. It needs to be a two-way street. You’ve heard the LSC and the parents speaking these past two weeks, very much trying to reach out and do their part and meet the school halfway. And frankly I’m just not seeing the other side of it. That’s all I had to say. I’m so sad. And I hope we can do better.

JR – One other thing I wanted to address. I did not want this to be a public meeting. I asked if this could be a private meeting. But we were not able to do this. I wanted it to be a private executive session but it's a matter of the budget and not principal evaluation so I could not make it private. I was trying to avoid a public meeting – it’s just the rules, OMA requires it. No one was trying to publicly shame anyone. I sent multiple emails to make this a private meeting…which is maybe not in the best interest…anyways...I was trying to actively avoid that…

LS - Michael Heneghan has the next comment

Mr. Segovia – I’m sorry I committed the time to be with you from 1-2, I am late for my next meeting, if you need anything for me I can spend another two minutes.

JR - I appreciate you giving so much of your time. That’s very generous of you. We all have so much to do and need to get back to our jobs and families. Thank you for your work for CPS.

Mr. Segovia – Thank you, I would just like to say this publicly, I’ve been working very closely with Ms. Kipp, a year a half as Network Chief, and have seen nothing but exemplary leadership from her performance. She is supporting the Network and district because of her experience and leadership. I just want to say this publicly, that I hold Principal Kipp in high regards because I see in her, professionalism and integrity in her daily performance.

Tk – Thank you chief.

JR – let’s conclude public comments

Michael Heneghan – Hi gang. Just to address the fact that emotions are going back and forth – the fact that you’re emotional means that you do care. You want the best result. Having been a parent at Waters for a number of years…LSC and all that was more distant…I’ve been paying closer attention and what I can appreciate is that everyone wants to improve. LSC members realizing they want things to be better. Teachers are emotional because they are built-in and all fully present. More towards the point of what you listed on the agenda….there’s been LSC members on the board a number of years and acknowledging that this always happens. I am surprised that anybody was surprised ..I was aware that the dollars needed to be spent down. The money was understood from a time frame… Ms. Kipp being pushed by her boss….but I also appreciate the LSC’s point that there should’ve been a final conversation….but I think the perfect storm wasn’t there. I think unfortunately …this meeting and the meeting prior was spent trying to figure out who failed and that bulk of money that needs to be spent tomorrow needs to be addressed rather than the integrity issue. The reality is that CPS is not a perfect being. So rather than take this as a he said/she said, who did/who didn’t, I would like to see as a parent that this turns into how do we fix it right now. If you have to call another meeting for the remaining funds. Failure is not a word. None of you have failed. You’re all here because you want to do a good job…progress. So that’s my comment.

ES – [doesn’t need to make a comment afterall]

Arylle Smith – Hi everybody, I’m actually the general counsel of the Chicago Principal’s Administrators Association. I’ve had a great time listening to a variety of perspectives today, and I’m glad you chose to have this in the public eye, because its been valuable for me to hear what the public thinks with respect to this issue. I can really appreciate what Michael H said. I would like to ask what will happen with the rest of these funds. I personally think that it is so ludicrous to say there’s no item on the agenda to vote, when the reason why we are here today is because the chair… a meeting. Certainly that could have been added to today’s agenda. And the entire reason why the meeting was called today was because there was a decision not to have that added to the agenda. So I just want it to be clear to all the members and the public that if there’s no vote it will be for two reasons. Either truly, there was no vote needed, which it sounds like was the original position of the LSC. That they appreciate the opportunity to have a vote but that’s not codified in any policy. Or as Mr Segovia said, perhaps that what should have happened and we need to vote today. I think we need to watch closely to what’s happening. I think if the reason we can’t spend that money going forward, then it needs to be acknowledged that’s because there was a choice today not to have that vote added to the agenda.

KB – Can I respond to that? First of all, I appreciate you being here. I think we agree we need to spend that money down. I think that puts Jason in a bind. I would feel like a hypocrite if I were to ask Ms. Kipp to follow protocol when we aren’t going to follow protocol. According to OLSCR a vote needs to be on the agenda. The agenda needs to be put together ahead of time and everyone needs to know what votes are going to be made. If the LSC were given the chance then I think absolutely we would put it on and vote for it, but I would feel like a hypocrite asking Ms. Kipp to follow protocol if we are doing the opposite.

Arylle Smith – I really appreciate that perspective, but lets be clear. That’s good that you’re saying that if you had the opportunity you’d take it. That opportunity was presented prior to this meeting. And the reason why we are here is that Jason already said, I’m not going to vote on this. If you already spent a portion of the spend-down, comments were made here today, then just go ahead and spend it. So I think that what what we have, intentionally or not is a little bit of double talk and mixed messaging. Either we need to have a vote and we have to approve that money, or we don’t need a vote. I think its unclear where we are and the public deserves to have some clarity about what’s going to happen with that money. Do you agree?

KB – I would agree. I think everyone wants clarity. I think the way the last meeting ended left things a little murky. I don’t think the LSC should be blamed for not putting it on the agenda. I walked away from the last meeting with the impression that since the bulk of it had been spent, I was under the impression that Ms. Kipp was going to spend that money. Obviously I was wrong, but I thought that had already been done. We are in a difficult position. I appreciate your perspective and we need clarity.

JR – if I could, because as Chair I am responsible. Yes, it was left unclear to me last time. I thought the money was already going to be spent. We cannot vote to approve money that was already spent. So I sent the budget nearly 48 hrs ago, or what I could piece together, I didn’t want to vote on more money that was already spent. Didn’t realize Ms. Kipp was waiting on us. In the future it would be great if Ms. Kipp could collaborate more on the agenda.

Arylle Smith – Certainly I could understand that perspective, but it was clear that there is a remaining portion of the spend down that hasn’t been spent. And that you were not going to vote on that because the previous portion had already been spent.

LS – I just want to clarify. I appreciate that you are asking these difficult questions – it is a difficult situation. It’s a difficult legal situation. It’s not just that we would like to be included. We are required to approve these budget transfers and expenditures. That is why the LSC exists, one of the three reasons we exist. When that didn't’ happen last week, we needed clarity on what was going to happen. We did not then subsequently receive a remaining spend down that was itemized that we could vote on. Even if Jason wanted to call a vote, which he cannot because of OMA, which is a federal law, we don't’ have anything to vote on. We cannot vote on an approximate amount. That’s not how it works. I heard Jason say earlier that he was offering to call an emergency meeting tonight to vote on this spend down. I cannot speak for others but I could attend that meeting. Everybody on the LSC who has spoken has said we don’t want to lose the money, we want to spend it, we want to spend it in the way Ms. Kipp has outlined. It’s not a matter of will, it's a matter of procedure and legality.

JR – I’m asking you as the legal counsel…Given the need for us to vote on the remaining 40-60,000, I’m asking you as the legal counsel if there is a consistency issue that we vote on the last 40-60,000, is there then an issue with the previous 140,000? Where does that leave us? I’m not clear.

Arylle Smith – Is that directed at me, Jason? What’s clear to me with the previous $140,000 is that the LSC was notified with respect to the spend down. When I listened to Ms. Titia’s comment on which date and when the budget were shared wether with the budget committee or the LSC it became clear that there was notification on this issue. With respect to the legalities one way or the other on the first portion or the second portion, I’m not going to talk about that today, what I am saying is…sort of like pick a line and stick with it. Either it’s ok for her to spend the $140,000 and Ok for her to move forward with the remainder. Or not. Certainly, my position would be …[garbled] and that was had…I hear something different from some individuals on this call. And in light of that I’m just here to get clarity. Is it OK, is it not OK? If a vote is needed then vote. Follow proper procedure…you cannot scapegoat the individual who raised her hand in the first place and uh-oh you didn’t add that to the agenda when there was a request to have that voted on.

JR – Let’s be clear, no one emailed me and said please add this to the agenda. I did not receive that request. That is not an accurate statement.

RW – Jason, I know I don’t comment very much in these meetings. I listen very closely. We need a solution. I don’t know who to ask in this call. I guess you’re saying we cannot have a formal vote as an LSC body bc it was not on the agenda? Can we have an informal vote? Can we come to agreement? We have to come to a solution in a timely manner otherwise we lose the money.

KB – As Jason said, Luis needs to be chimed in and if he gives approval for an emergency LSC meeting we will all find time to make that happen tonight. I don’t find comfortable requesting that Ms. Kipp follows protocol if we aren’t going to.

JR – I’m apologize. This is not supposed to be so difficult. The original issue was that the public’s money was being spent without LSC approval. So I cannot argue that we should not be voting on it. I will say that I was a little confused because it seemed the money was already moving. So yes, we can vote. The only thing I can do is put together an agenda so we can vote on it.

Arylle Smith – if the concern is the 48hr issue, technically this meeting wasn’t set within 48hrs either. You know what I mean.

JR – Yes, I was figuring in the issue of expediency we could bypass that.

ES – If memory serves me correctly we are within our function as an LSC to be able to come together in less than 48hrs. …[garbled video]

GFR – I believe what Erica is saying is we can bypass the 48 hr rule. Per Counsel Smith’s comments I would be perfectly happy to vote as long as I knew what I was voting on. My concern is whether I am able to get an accurate accounting for exactly how much money is left.. from the $194,000 amount. How much has been spent, how much is remaining,..what the exact remaining amounts are going for…then I would be comfortable doing my due diligence as an elected member of the local school council to vote on it.

Arylle Smith –Of course

GFR – If that was able to be gotten to us…then we can do a vote. The question is whether we can get that in time in order to look at it and to do our due diligence and then vote on it. If that’s possible… then that’s a possible solution going forward…speaking to Mr. Wall’s feedback because I’m sure Mr. Wall wouldn’t want to vote on something that he didn't’ know what it was he was voting on. Nor would any other LSC member. That’s part of our due diligence But I also think we should recognize, part of the reason we are in this pickle is because we didn’t follow the procedures, we didn't have all of that clear information. We had piecemeal bits and we had money being spent before we had the ability to vote on it, so I’m just hoping that we can put that in the past, vote, move forward and figure out ways not to do that in the future.

Arylle Smith – I’m certainly with you on that. You said you don’t have the information needed, I think Principal Kipp would be more than happy to provide that information, timely. If she hasn’t done that she should, would have if provided the opportunity. If any of these issues should arise again, feel free to raise your hand with any item on the budget or with the spend down…or any other information. Keep the dialogue open, keep asking questions. That’s a relationship that needs to go both ways.

TK – I’m gonna jump in here. I have a calendar of events and I have emails to back up everything, all those clarifying questions that were asked of me. I believe even at the Monday night meeting I indicated what all of the line items were. And the remaining balance that we have left would go to supplies to the classroom (toner, ink, staplers, …) I did share that information. I didn’t withhold any information. I don’t want to keep going over and over this…from May 8 I shared the budget with everyone. Every LSC member had opportunities to ask question…all of my emails said – if you have questions. Some did and some did not.

JR - I don’t want to run down circles. But again I don’t want to keep going back and forth. We were given notification of the spend down, but we were not given an opportunity to vote on that very large spend down. I would like to suggest we have an emergency meeting at 5 or 6 after Ms. Kipp provides us with the spreadsheet with all the amounts. We will trust Ms. Kipp and that you’ll do a god faith effort to line up the money. We can hold a vote on that. I didn’t realize Ms. Kipp wanted to have a vote on that. My lack of experience may have been part of the problem.

Zack Koutsky – Rather than jamming this in tonight, can we try to reach out to the network …While I agree with Erica that we can hold a quick meeting and that happens all the time under OMA, but if we can give more notification it would be better…can we push meeting to Friday morning?

JR – we have heard many times that there are concerns with the budget process at CPS …getting the purchases made…unless they are already made…if they haven’t been made I don’t want to wait until the 11th hour on Friday. We don’t know the exact what’s left…but maybe we can figure it out tonight. We have been given partial notice of the totality of the spend down…I don’t think that should take very long and there’s not a concern about the approval of it…I would suggest we just get it on the books properly on the books for a vote…I don’t want to belabor the point. We can wait a few hours to let Ms. Kipp put together the spreadsheet. Maybe 5pm is a little better. We do need a quorum.

KB – can I throw in another monkey wrench…Greg I understand what your concerns are and I’m with you, but given the crunch, can we just hang up, redial in, and hold an emergency meeting? At least then it’s before EOB before the day it is due. Then if she has a jam in the system she has all day tomorrow. Hang up, redial in, take a vote and be done.

JR – perhaps…I’d be fine with that too. We definitely cannot amend the agenda on an emergency situation.

ZK – you cannot do it in the meeting. And I would have issue with attendance at 5pm today. To Kirstin’s point if we can do this consecutively. I want to give time for the wider public. We’ve been having fairly intense engagement ..and wonderfully so…if there was any realization from her end to put eyes on it, I don’t think that’s in bad governance. But also understanding Ms. Kipp has to deal with the overloaded system.

JR – I don’t want to push it too far. We have seen the larger picture. None of this is blind.

ES – We do have to post an agenda.

JR – The best we can do it 3pm. I need to get together an agenda and post it.

TK – do you have a timeframe?

JR – I would say 3pm…I can leave the zoom open, adjourn the meeting. Then will post an agenda and call the meeting back to order.

LS – Chris’s audio isn’t working, he sent a message for Ms. Kipp - can you send your spreadsheet and accounting.

GFR – I would be very grateful to see that spreadsheet. That would make me feel like I’m doing my due diligence and I think you would want me to do my due diligence.

JR – Gimme 10 minutes and I’ll post an agenda.

ES – motion to adjourn, LS seconded. 2:50pm. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned. 2:50pm.