

# LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS™ OAK PARK / RIVER FOREST



**Oak Park River Forest District 200**  
**March 20, 2008**

*Angelika Kuehn, Observer*

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. All board members (Allen, Conway (Chair), Fisher, Lee, Millard, Patchak-Layman and Rigas) were present, although member Fisher was late. Superintendent Weninger and senior administrators were present. Some six to eight local residents were present in the visitors' section, as were numerous teachers and staff from the high school and from District 97.

*Board member comments:* Among others: Member Patchak-Layman reiterated her request from last month that the high school's law firm be changed to obtain a firm on the "Brown" side of "Brown vs. Board of Education" that does not spend taxpayer money to circumvent the law.

*Outsourcing custodial services.* This was the principal agenda item and drew public comment from many custodians, family members and stakeholders. All speakers opposed replacing the current custodians for reasons ranging from their familiarity with students and concerns for them to the consequent decline in the community's economic wellbeing. Many letters of commendation to the custodial staff were read. A representative from the custodians' union made a statement about racial issues and the outsourcing for which the context was missing; it appears that there had been allegations by an unauthorized union representative that the outsourcing recommendation was racially motivated but the "authorized" union representative denied that the union thought this was the case.

Near midnight when the matter came up for considering the outsourcing resolution, none of the board members was willing to make the motion to outsource custodial services. Several spoke about their fiduciary obligation to look at more economical options than the current arrangement. The motion failed for lack of support.

*First semester discipline report.* A new disciplinary model had been adopted and as a consequence, the number of infractions in "all categories" was down from previous years. The board members asked many questions about the report, including questions concerning the racial breakdown of students subject to discipline in the first quarter; the relationship between discipline and academic achievement; and whether it could be determined from the report whether there had been an improvement in student behavior. The staff was unable to answer most of the questions and was asked to bring back a more formal report for the next board meeting.

*Hiring.* The hiring of two assistant principals and the Science Division head was approved.