

JOINT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 171

MINUTES

MEETING: Special
DATE: January 9, 2012
TIME: 5:30 PM
SITE: Administrative Office

MEMBERS PRESENT
Cindy O'Brien, Chairperson
Amy Jared
Alyce Arnsberg
Danielle Hardy
Theresa Graber, Vice Chair

MEMBERS ABSENT

Dale Durkee, Superintendent
Janice Sutton, Clerk

A. Roll Call

Cindy O'Brien, Chairperson opened the meeting and Janice Sutton, Clerk, called the roll of members: Amy Jared, Cindy O'Brien, Alyce Arnsberg, Danielle Hardy were in attendance. Theresa Graber entered the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

B. Executive Session

Mrs. O'Brien asked for a motion to recess into executive session to consider the evaluation of an employee per ID Code 67-2345 (b). Mrs. Jared made a motion to enter into executive session, seconded by Ms. Hardy and approved unanimously. The board recessed into executive session at 5:32 p.m. Theresa Graber entered the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Superintendent Durkee and Janice Sutton, Clerk, were excused from Executive Session.

Open session was declared at 7:05 p.m.

C. Call to Order

1. Flag Salute

Cindy O'Brien led the flag salute.

2. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Mrs. Arnsberg, seconded by Ms. Hardy and approved unanimously to approve the agenda as written.

D. Public Comments

Dean Gimmestad had several questions regarding Action Item #1 - Board's inquiry into residence of a Board Member for purpose of determining whether board seat vacancy exists per IC 33-504.

Mr. Gimmestad questioned: What is the residency policy?
Does Theresa's employment effect her role on the board?
Why is it a problem now?

E. Action Items

1. Board's Inquiry into residency of a Board Member for purpose of determining whether board seat vacancy exists per IC 33-504.

Mrs. O'Brien opened the discussion stating her reasons for bringing this to the Board's attention. She said there has been concerns and inquiries from both the public and the staff regarding Mrs. Graber's residency and attendance at board meetings. She feels that the responsibility of this issue falls on her as she is the Board Chairperson.

Ms. Hardy read portions of IC 33-504. She stated that she had been told by Theresa's son, Patrick, that Theresa was no longer living in her Zone 5 residence.

Mrs. Graber spoke on her own behalf. She stated that both her children are attending Orofino Jr/Sr High School. She also stated that because of the closure of the Kamiah office she now works out of Grangeville. With the work schedule that she now has, she finds it easier to stay in Cottonwood two days of the week. Mrs. Graber then went on to explain the reasons for her absences from board meetings.

Mrs. O'Brien read the code of ethics that the board members signed.

Mrs. Graber said that she could not be in attendance at board meetings that begin at 5:30 p.m. as she is still at work and has specified this many times in the past.

Mrs. Jared apologized to the Board for her mistake in thinking that Theresa was able to be at 5:30 meetings.

Ms. Hardy reiterated her earlier statement that Theresa's son, Patrick, had told her that his mom moved to Cottonwood and he is now living in her house and renting his house.

Mrs. Graber stated that she stays mostly in Orofino.

Dean Gimmestad said that if we were going to use participation in meetings then the board should compare participation among all board members. He noted that if you go after Theresa, you need to treat the rest equally.

Ms. Hardy stated that you had to miss four (4) consecutive regular meetings to be disqualified.

Mrs. O'Brien said she has a responsibility to look into what other people have said.

Mrs. Jared asked Mrs. Graber - "Are you living in your residence?"

Mrs. Graber's response was "most nights".

Comment from Mrs. Jared: "I feel the motivation behind questioning Theresa's residency may be for reasons outside the school board stemming from personal conflicts in the professional arena in which both Cindy and Theresa are employed. Theresa has given 8 ½ years of service to the school district and is a valuable asset as a seasoned trustee. Our ultimate goal as trustees should be to do what's best for kids. I do not feel that Theresa's residency or missed meetings are in any way damaging her effectiveness as a board member. I feel she has the best interests of students in mind." She feels that the questions and motivation behind this action is to vacate the seat.

Mrs. O'Brien said she was driven by concerns and calls she has received. She has no agenda besides active participation. She feels that 53% attendance is not meeting obligations.

Jason Kessinger questioned Mrs. Graber's residency/habitation. He feels that when missing ten (10) out of sixteen (16) meetings Mrs. Graber is not fulfilling her responsibilities.

Mrs. Jared said that the board needs to be more considerate in scheduling meeting.

Mrs. Arnsberg said that she did not have a problem with changing meeting times to accommodate Theresa's schedule.

Mrs. Graber apologized for being absent.

Ms. Hardy said she was just trying to follow policy and do what she is supposed to do as a board member and that she would do the same for any of the other board members.

2. Strategic Plan

Since the completion of the draft of the Strategic Plan, Mrs. Arnsberg would like to ask for participation from community and staff members. She would like to hold an open meeting for all interested persons

Dean Gimmestad informed the board that there are seven (7) voting precincts in our school district (five trustee zones). He would like to see the board be more pro-active - get significant persons input from the seven precincts.

Mrs. O'Brien would like to identify people who would be instrumental on the committee.

Mrs. Arnsberg would like to look at a community calendar before setting meetings so as not to conflict with other organization's meetings. She would like to get information out to the public via the district website and/or the media. She would also like to send a written letter to each community group to encourage attendance.

Mr. Durkee suggested that the board should provide more direction. The board should be prepared to give more specific direction - What is it that you want on the strategic plan process?

The board would like to add the Strategic Plan to the January 23, 2012 board meeting to prepare a specific outline of what goals specifically need to be accomplished.

Mr. Durkee suggested that the board adopt the Strategic Plan Draft.

A motion was made by Mrs. Jared, seconded by Mrs. Graber and approved unanimously to adopt the strategic plan as a draft.

A special board meeting to discuss the Strategic Plan has been scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on February 6, 2012 at the Administrative Office.

Ms. Hardy commented on the SD171 Committee Report form. She would like any committee that meets on behalf of the school district fill out the form and return it to the Administrative Office.

Mrs. O'Brien thanked everyone for attending

Cloann McNall, Clearwater Tribune, asked for the status quo of Mrs. Graber. Mrs. O'Brien informed her that there was not enough evidence reported to support indications that Mrs. Graber did not have residency.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Cindy O'Brien, Chairperson

Attest:

Janice Sutton, Clerk