

**Subject:** Re: April Board Meeting

**From:** Kelli MacMillan <macmillank@mokena159.org>

**Date:** 4/24/2025, 1:30 PM

**To:** Eric Bush <bushe@mokena159.org>, Steve Stein <steins@mokena159.org>

Eric and Steve,

I hope you both understand the seriousness of the situation.

First a point of clarification: the interaction that occurred before the board meeting last week between Jim and I was not a conversation. It was an attack. Jim verbally attacked me in the presence of our Superintendent and Board Secretary Anna Briscoe. An attack that was in response to me raising concern of a violation of OMA, because a conversation had transitioned into discussion of board business amongst 3 board members and the superintendent outside of an open board meeting.

Jim's hostility and harassment has created a hostile environment for me. I have a duty and job to do, and I am being prevented from doing that work. I reported harassment, intimidation and threats formally in writing to our board president Mr. Bush and our attorney over a year ago and nothing changed - not even moving Jim's seat so that he isn't sitting right next to me during board meetings. Our board president and attorney are accountable to all members of the board, equally - not just the majority, in event of conflict among members.

The situation has escalated, and I am afraid to be in the same room as Jim. His unhinged verbal aggression towards me last week crossed all boundaries. I believe this escalated harassment and hostility is retaliation. I believe the retaliation by Jim is condoned by others is yet another form of retaliation in and of itself. I can see that Jim and Eric don't like a woman challenging their actions as the only two men on the board. Their reactions to virtually my every word is to dispute, gaslight, accuse or discredit me.

Over the course of many months, I have voiced concerns about what the district is and is not doing. Things that involve non-compliance with school code, board policies, ethical issues, conflicts of interest, misuse of funds and OMA. In response to those concerns, I sense the board, superintendent and legal counsel have joined forces to oppose me instead of making efforts to work with me, to protect the district. Doing so creates more risk to our district which is the opposite of what we need to be doing. I believe Jim is sort of a de facto enforcer that has taken task with harassing me and intimidating me in a larger effort of the whole to get me to quit or be quiet. I have had serious medical issues over the past year, to which stress is a huge factor, and this situation is a major stressor. I can't have this continue and I am begging you to help me.

Eric, you asked Steve's availability for a meeting based on your schedule but you haven't asked mine. Instead, you are telling me that you won't email me anything and that my only opportunity to get information must be on your terms - an in person meeting with me today with no notice and a small window of availability of you and Steve. I work and I have a family with three children; it is not reasonable or realistic that I would be able to drop everything the same day to accommodate your schedule. Forcing an in person meeting with two people that have enabled and contributed to this

situation does not relieve my stress or anxiety with the situation. The meeting seems like just another situation where I can be gained up and no one witnesses. Regardless of schedule, I feel it's best to document this and avoid more stressful encounters unless I can have my husband join me in the meeting. I am willing to have a call if you are willing to have it be recorded.

I am a member of the insurance committee that meets today at 3pm. I have been experiencing anxiety all day and I am afraid to be in the same room as Jim. If he attacks me, no-one does anything to protect me, and I fear for what he will do next. He is twice the size of me and I cannot rely on anyone to interject and protect me from me simply doing my job as a duly elected board member. Steve and Anna were in the presence of Jim last week, and no one did anything. Eric was notified minutes after the attack and has disclosed only speaking with Steve and Anna to date. The event last week was a day after I sent an email asking Jim be removed from the insurance committee due to a conflict of interest. Rather than discussing the conflict with me, the email was forwarded to all members of the board, alerting him of my concern. There is little doubt this was a factor in the verbal assault that occurred the day after. Of note: despite board protocol, I have not been forwarded emails from my fellow board members to the BOE President or Superintendant. Whereas many, if not all of mine are shared, even in instances where a conflict of interest is suggested. This put me in the line of fire of someone that is a known agressor towards me, everyone knew that.

I am not an enemy of the district or the board, but that is how I am being treated. I am here to protect the district and do the right thing. I expect nothing less from others. The board mandated anger management for our previous Superintendent, based on that precedent at the very least, this should be mandated for Jim. I expect something to be done, and I expect it to be documented. I feel like a verbally and psychologically abused woman being attacked and targeted by men in leadership roles in the district, including our board attorney. All of this is all happening because I am raising legitimate concerns of risk to our district.

Kelli

On Thu, Apr 24, 2025 at 9:15 AM Steve Stein <[steins@mokena159.org](mailto:steins@mokena159.org)> wrote:

I can be available between 11:30 and 2:00.

Steve

On Thu, Apr 24, 2025 at 8:19 AM Eric Bush <[bushe@mokena159.org](mailto:bushe@mokena159.org)> wrote:

Good morning Kelli. I am not going to discuss via email. I recommend we meet in Steve's office today. I can meet after 11:30 today.

Steve - Do you have time this afternoon to talk?

Regards,

Eric

On Tue, Apr 22, 2025 at 6:29 PM Kelli MacMillan <[macmillank@mokena159.org](mailto:macmillank@mokena159.org)> wrote:

Ok, thanks for the update. What is your plan to address the harassment from Jim? Discussing it

with Anna and Steve is good information but the important part is what is going to happen to protect me from his continued, escalating hostility and harassment and false accusations?

Thanks,  
Kelli

On Tuesday, April 22, 2025, Eric Bush <[bushe@mokena159.org](mailto:bushe@mokena159.org)> wrote:

Hi Kelli. I have talked to both Anna and Steve to get their interpretations of the conversation before the April meeting between you and Jim. Please let Steve and I know if you would like to discuss further.

Regards,

Eric

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Steve Stein  
Superintendent  
Mokena School District 159  
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