

Minutes of the Special School Board Meeting

Of the School Board of Independent School District No. 709 held at the Historic Old Central High School, 215 North First Avenue East, Duluth, Minnesota 55802, on

Tuesday, June 10, 2014

Members Present:

Annie Harala
Art Johnston
Rosie Loeffler-Kemp
Mike Miernicki
Judy Seliga Punyko
Harry Welty
Bill Westholm

Bill Westholm

Others Present:

Bill Gronseth, Superintendent
Bill Hanson, Deputy Clerk
Melinda Thibault, Secretary

➤ Chair Miernicki called the special school board meeting of June 10, 2014 to order at 5:26 p.m.

Member Johnston requested that the meeting be held in public.

Member Westholm read the following statement:

The purpose of this session is for the Board to give preliminary consideration to allegations against Member Art Johnston. As the Vice Chair, I will conduct this portion of the meeting because one of the issues involves the Chair. The allegations against Mr. Johnston, at this time, are:

1. Alleged abuse of authority as a School Board member as it relates to staff member/members.
2. Alleged conflict of interest in relation to a staff member.
3. Alleged violation of the Code of Ethics, Board Policy 8050.
4. Alleged assault of or otherwise improper conduct toward the Superintendent of Schools.
5. Alleged assault of or otherwise improper conduct the School Board Chairman.
6. Alleged racist or otherwise improper comments about a staff member

Typically, in situations such as this, we would have an investigation take place to interview people, gather evidence, and issue a report to the School Board. The School Board would then use that report in deciding future action for this matter.

Member Johnston made a point of order that the agenda had not been approved.

M-Westholm, S-Welty to approve the agenda.

M-Welty, S-Johnston, to add public comment to the agenda.

Discussion took place regarding adding public comment.

Upon a vote to add public comment to the agenda the same failed 2-5 as follows:

Yea: Johnston, Welty

Nay: Harala, Loeffler-Kemp, Miernicki, Seliga Punyko, Westholm

Upon a vote on the agenda as presented, the same was approved – 5-2 as follows:

Yea: Harala, Loeffler-Kemp, Miernicki, Seliga Punyko, Westholm

Nay: Johnston, Welty

Member Westholm presented the Resolution:

RESOLUTION
Investigation

WHEREAS, the School Board of Independent School District 709, St. Louis County, Minnesota, has received allegations regarding School Board Member Art Johnston, and

WHEREAS, the School Board wishes to fully investigate those allegations against School Board Member Art Johnston.

BE IT RESOLVED, by the School Board of Independent School District 709, St. Louis County, Minnesota, that:

1. The School Board hereby authorizes an investigation into the allegations and concerns involving School Board Member Art Johnston, with the investigation to be conducted by the law firm of Fafinski Mark & Johnson, P.A.

B-6-14-3195

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M-Westholm, S-Harala, to approve Resolution B-6-14-3195 - Investigation.

Discussion took place regarding the resolution.

M-Johnston, S-Welty, to remove the words the law firm of Fafinski Mark & Johnson, P.A., and insert a firm chosen by the Duluth News Tribune.

Discussion took place regarding the motion.

Upon a vote on the motion to amend the resolution the same failed 2-5 as follows:

Yea: Johnston, Welty

Nay: Harala, Loeffler-Kemp, Miernicki, Seliga Punyko, Westholm

Member Westholm re-read the resolution.

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M-Johnston, S-Welty, to add item 2 - the school board will be informed on a monthly basis of all costs that are incurred during this investigation.

Discussion took place regarding the proposed amendment.

Upon a vote on the motion to amend the resolution the same passed 6-1 as follows:

Yea: Harala, Johnston, Loeffler-Kemp, Miernicki, Welty, Westholm

Nay: Seliga Punyko

Discussion continued regarding the resolution.

Upon a vote on the resolution as amended, the same was approved – 5-2 as follows:

Yea: Harala, Loeffler-Kemp, Miernicki, Seliga Punyko, Westholm

Nay: Johnston, Welty

➤ Chair Miernicki adjourned the Special School Board meeting of June 10, 2014 at 7:06 p.m.