

School Board Minutes  
Special Meeting  
Wednesday, September 4, 2024

The Special Meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by Chairman Lemke at 6:00 pm, Wednesday, September 4, 2024 in the Secondary Auditorium. Board members present: Gohman, Lemke, Levin, Jager, Tonder and Wright. Wolf was absent. Others in attendance were: Superintendent Daniel Ludvigson, Tammy Cebulla, Barton Rud, Brad Evenson, Kelsey Paurus, Mitchell Ganske, Kevin Trierweiler, Bonnie Middendorf, Cindy Dalton, Jenny Thelen, LeRoy Uhlenkamp, Gwen Spieker, Renee Kreemer, Pat Schultz, Stan Mensen, Kyle Lamb, Amanda Hinson, Steve Hinson, Luan Brunkhorst, Carissa Bitz.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present.

Roll Call was taken with members Gohman, Jager, Lemke, Levin, Tonder & Wright present. Wolf was absent.

Chair Lemke stated the meeting was called by members Gohman, Tonder & Wolf to discuss the unauthorized buyout of Superintendent Ludvigson. Chair Lemke asked Mr. Ludvigson if he was waiving his rights and he denied.

Gohman read a note from Wolf asking the Board who authorized the proposed buyout offer and who gave the lawyer permission to give the buyout offer to Mr. Ludvigson. Lemke stated that she had contacted multiple people in regards to similar situations and buyouts. She stated that no offer was given and was just asking if there was any interest on Mr. Ludvigson's behalf for an early buyout given the circumstances. Tonder asked the Board if there was any contact with legal counsel before talking to Mr. Ludvigson. Mr. Ludvigson was not made aware of anything prior to the lawyer contacting him. Tonder stated that the Board should be making these kinds of decisions as a whole and not just the chair. Tonder also wondered if there were any other board members that have had discussions about this prior to the last meeting where they did a non-renew. No board members would respond. Board Chair Lemke stated that she had given lawyer Kristi Hastings full permission to have a conversation/present an offer to Mr. Ludvigson. Mr. Ludvigson let his mentor know several times that he was not interested in leaving or a buyout.

A motion was made by Tonder and seconded by Gohman to allow public speaking from guests that were present at the meeting.

LeRoy Uhlenkamp - Former Teacher and School Board Member, questions for the board

Gwen Spieker - Parent of students in school - Addressed board responsibilities and code of ethics

Renee Kreemer - Community member - Support for Daniel, Board members were in violation of the open meeting law.

Patrick Schultz - Community Member - Referred to the School District Mission Statement. Addressed that the community was feeling uncertain and wanted answers.

Stan Mensen - Former GE school employee & concerned community member - Addressed concerns about the board not acting as a whole but rather making decisions as a partial group.

Kyle Lamb - Teacher at LPGE, concerned private citizen and community member - Addressed the fact that no proper authorization of a buyout was done at a public meeting. The board needs to regain the trust of the community as it is the foundation of any community.

Amanda Hinson - Former reporter for the Long Prairie Leader, parent and concerned citizen - Addressed actions that were done that violated her own civil rights. Stressed the fact of everything having to be done in an open meeting. Outlined Mr. Ludvigson's job duties.

Steven Hinson - Former Board member, parent and concerned community member - Had a successful working relationship with the board. Voiced concerns of the image of the school with all this controversy. He had many conversations with the staff and teachers who now are in fear of what is to come. He asked for the Chair of the Board to step down.

Luan Brunkhorst - parent of LPGE students, Chamber of Commerce Director - Speaks of the community and school involvement of Superintendent Ludvigson. Positive influence for the school and community alike.

Carissa Bitz - Teacher at LPGE, community member and parent - Addressed the Board as to what they were looking for when they hired for Superintendent and Mr. Ludvigson had checked off all of the boxes for things they were looking for. Very good involvement with the kids and staff.

Tonder and Gohman thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Lemke stated that the job was not easy and what they can and cannot share is not always fair.

Levin addressed the community about being a child care provider and now having some of those very same people that trusted her with their children not trust her on the school board.

Tonder addressed the Board with hope of future discussions.

Motion was made by Levin and seconded by Jager to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 pm by Chairman Lemke.

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Tanja Levin, Clerk