

Special Board Meeting (Draft)

Monday, May 22, 2017 @ 5:00 p.m.

Administration Conference Room

Present: Wendy Bremner-Chair, Steve Conway, Brian Gallup, Velden Calica, James Running Fisher, James Evans, Kristy Bullshoe, Jess Edwards.

Ms. Bremner called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Motion by Mr. Evans to approve the agenda with no changes. Second by Ms. Bullshoe. Motion carried.

Public Comment: Ms. Bremner stated that the meeting is subject to the provisions of the Montana Open Meeting Law under Section 2-3-103 and Browning School Policy #1441 for Public Participation at Board Meetings. Wilma Madplume stated that she worked for the school for 28 years and has had 32 or more interviews. Ms. Madplume felt that she was not being recommended for hire because of an incident that took place during a school event. Ms. Madplume let the board know that she was not employed with the school at the time of the incident which took place 2 years ago and stated that it was dismissed by the court. Ms. Madplume stated that she is an advocate against child abuse and will do anything to protect children especially her grandchildren and she had to make sure they were safe. Ms. Madplume felt that her name was being brought up in closed doors which was not fair to her. Ms. Madplume claimed that an interview person told her they had to check her background and smirked at her and stated that she will continue to apply for any positions available..

ITEMS OF ACTION - Reorganization of Board 2017

Elect Board Chairperson: Ms. Bremner stated that a complaint was filed with the county superintendent and she felt that it was most likely because of the board voting by secret ballot, so the board will vote by motion of hands. Ms. Bremner called for nominations for Chairperson. Motion by Mr. Gallup to nominate Steve Conway as Chairperson. Second by Mr. Evans. Motion by Mr. Running Fisher to nominate Wendy Bremner as Chairperson. Second by Ms. Bullshoe. Motion tied with Mr. Gallup, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Evans and Mr. Conway voting for Steve Conway and Mr. Running Fisher, Ms. Bullshoe, Mr. Calica and Ms. Bremner voting for Wendy Bremner. The board voted again with the same nominations ending with a tie vote of 4-4 both times. *Public participation:* Robert Madplume asked for clarification on the voting; the last vote he counted was Steve Conway 2 votes and Wendy Bremner 4. Mr. Gallup stated that the vote is still tied at 4-4. *Board discussion:* Ms. Bullshoe felt that Wendy Bremner is a strong advocate and she has confidence in her. Mr. Running Fisher agreed. Mr. Gallup stated that he has no issues with Ms. Bremner but did feel that there are some communication issues with Ms. Bremner. Mr. Gallup stated that he will support Mr. Conway as he has confidence in Mr. Conway. Mr. Conway stated that he has nothing against anyone else but felt that the directors needed to be stopped when they come to the board in the meetings and doing what they want; there is an avenue through Administration that must be taken and not through the board. If the board continues to allow this to happen, Mr. Conway asked, “why have a superintendent?” In the last board meeting a director stood up and asked for a wage change for his department, this was wrong and there was a legal issue during a termination hearing that is still wrong. Mr. Conway stated that Ms. Bremner is not a lawyer. Mr. Conway stated that he walked in on a couple of incidents that Ms. Bremner is angry about because of his decision but the board made an agreement at the board retreat to give the superintendent a year, then if things are not working they would evaluate him. Mr. Conway felt that the Board should not be undermining and they need to fulfill their agreements, and remember that they pay the superintendent to administrate the district. The school board is here to set policy, hire and terminate, and set the budget. Staff need to follow the chain of command. Ms. Bremner stated that the request from the administrator happened during public comment and he has a right to have public comment. Mr. Conway felt it was a way to undermine the administration. Ms. Bremner stated that Mr. Conway has never discussed any of these issues with her before and felt that the board should have honest, open communications and asked Mr. Conway, “why they couldn’t have resolved these issues between themselves?” Mr. Running Fisher stated that anyone here can be board chairperson; Mr. Conway would be excellent because of his years of service. Mr. Running Fisher stated that he has heard so many wrong doings with this superintendent’s administration, such as being prejudice and a past teacher can’t get a job after 32 interviews. Mr. Running Fisher felt that there are many qualified people in Browning and the school continues to train people and they go somewhere else to work; invest in the Blackfeet,

the best relationship will be with the tribe. Mr. Running Fisher stated that 2 weeks ago his phone rang off the hook; people are dissatisfied with this administration, there is no confidence in this administration. Mr. Conway stated that the board voted 5-3 to rehire this guy, we are a split board and it is important to have the retreats and learn to work together. The school board has to agree for a whole year and they have a chance to work things out but the board is not being notified of changes, we were to give him one year and reevaluate and it did not happen, why? There is no board member that would want to be a supervisor and have that happen to them. Mr. Running Fisher stated that he did not vote to hire Mr. Rouse when the board voted 5-3 and he did not feel it was fair for him to evaluate Mr. Rouse his first year on the board. Ms. Bremner stated that the board has never had a vote on Mr. Rouse and they were told that they had to vote on his contract at his evaluation and vote for a 2 year contract until she received guidance from MTSBA. Ms. Bremner asked why did we had to vote right then? Mr. Gallup asked the board members not to discuss the executive session held to discuss Mr. Rouse. Ms. Bremner stated that she is not discussing Mr. Rouse, only the agenda. Ms. Bullshoe stated that people come in to do public comment to defend themselves. Mr. Conway stated that he has nothing against it but when staff brings a wish list to the board instead of bringing it to the administration it is wrong, micromanaging. Ms. Bremner stated that she is not micromanaging. Mr. Calica stated that there is a culture of fear in the district; people are afraid to have a voice; it is the board's job and role to make absolutely sure they are treated fair. Mr. Conway stated that if a person is not willing to put their complaint in writing it is hard to support and there are a lot of people that say things to the board; the board can be sued. Again Mr. Conway suggested having retreats so the board can work things out between them and when they agree on things, they all need to support it. The board needs to remember they are not the administrator and when locals ask to use the gyms or other school facilities, the board needs to remember these things are here for the kids. Ms. Bremner asked Mr. Conway if he is complaining because the board does not take things through the process. Ms. Bremner stated that she does tell people to go through the process and if not satisfied to bring it to the board. Ms. Bremner stated that she does not see a split board and told Mr. Conway that he has been saying this for a long time. Mr. Conway stated that when an illegal meeting is held, he will not be there. Ms. Bremner stated that she was elected for certain reasons and everyone does not have the same beliefs. Mr. Gallup stated that if the board was split, they would be tied on every vote, but they are only tied on the vote for the board chair. Mr. Edwards stated that he ran for school board because of the students, staff and policies. Mr. Edwards stated that he is strictly a policy person and if someone is hired through the process and if rated number one, that person better get the job, not the person that rated number 8. If he sees anything not handled fairly, he will let the board know; he will fight for the kids and the staff because without students and staff they would not be here. Mr. Edwards stated that he is a team player and always will be. Also, if a staff person has a concern let them speak their mind, because he is here for them. Mr. Edwards felt that the board should not listen to gossip and make decisions, go by policy because problems will happen if you do not follow policy. Mr. Edwards felt that all board members should be at the upcoming powwow to support the kids and the culture and wants to see more classrooms with Native Americans to teach the kids how to talk and if they need money then we should not eat at the meetings, use it for the kids. Mr. Edwards stated that he will speak his mind, even if it causes hard feelings because he is here for the students. Ms. Bullshoe stated the board is here for staff too because they have to come to the board when all else fails. Ms. Bremner stated that she has hard feelings when talked about behind her back. Mr. Rouse suggested that the board nominate someone other than the same people in order to break the tie. Mr. Conway nominated Brian Gallup as Chairperson. Ms. Bremner nominated Kristy Bullshoe as Chair. Second by Mr. Running Fisher. Mr. Evans nominated Jess Edwards for Chair. Second by Mr. Conway. Motion to close nominations by Mr. Conway. Second by Mr. Evans. Ms. Bremner noted that they did not close the nominations for the second vote and recommended to remove the nominations and start over. Mr. Conway and Mr. Evans removed their motions to nominate Jess Edwards for chair. Mr. Running Fisher and Ms. Bremner removed their nominations for Kristy Bullshoe. Motion by Mr. Conway to nominate Brian Gallup for board chair. Second by Mr. Edwards. Motion by Ms. Bullshoe to nominate Wendy Bremner for board chair. Second by Mr. Running Fisher. Motion by Ms. Bremner to nominated Kristy Bullshoe for board chair. Second by Mr. Running Fisher. Motion by Mr. Gallup to nominate Steve Conway for board chair. Second by Mr. Edwards. Move to close nominations by Mr. Edwards. Second by Ms. Bremner. Nominations closed. Mr. Conway and Mr. Edwards for Mr. Gallup. Jimmy Running Fisher, Veldon Calica, Kristy Bullshoe Wendy Bremner for Wendy Bremner. Ms. Bremner noted that the tie was broken with 4 votes for Wendy Bremner and 2 for Brian Gallup. Wendy Bremner was voted as Board Chairperson.

Construction of Phase II of the Playground Project: Motion by Mr. Evans to approve Phase II of the Playground Project. Second by Ms. Bullshoe. No public participation. *Board discussion:* Mr. Conway asked if this \$1 million on top of what was already spent and also asked what has been spent and if the fencing is included. Dixie Guardipee stated that fencing is not included. Mr. Rouse stated that this amount is in addition and phase I equaled \$700,000. Total project is at \$1.7 million, the original cost was \$1.2 million and the fencing could cost \$200,000 more. Mr. Gallup stated that he is okay with the fencing that is in place now and asked if the fencing is already budgeted. Mr. Rouse stated that the funds would come out of Impact Aid Reserve funds and the reason it is over is because of the extraction portion of phase I which was over what Tim Peterson estimated. Mr. Rouse stated that they took out rubber and went with pea gravel. Mr. Gallup stated that it is time to look at being more conservative even though this is already budgeted. Mr. Evans noted that the pea gravel is not an increase. Mr. Running Fisher asked if the district can afford that big of an increase because of funding cuts and suggested going another direction to cut some costs. A \$1 million playground is expensive and is being taken out of the district reserves. Mr. Rouse stated that the wrought iron fencing cost is \$200,000. Mr. Rouse noted to the board that it is the board who votes on the construction costs, the administration makes the recommendation to the board and the original cost was \$1.3 million and the district has reserve money to cover this plus the setaside. Ms. Bremner stated that if the board passes this amount, it does not mean that the district can't look for ways to make cuts. Ms. Bremner stated that the facility committees hears these discussion but all of the board are not on the committee. Mr. Conway suggested to set it up where all board members can be at the meetings, and just leave it open and only the committee can be involved in the final decision before bringing it to the board. Mr. Calica felt that the playground was a good plan that will help with some of the behavior issues in those schools. Mr. Conway was concerned with the quality of concrete and who would inspect the concrete. Mr. Running Fisher asked if the board could hire an inspector. Mr. Gallup stated that the A&E should make sure there is an inspector for this and the whole thing will get done right. Mr. Rouse stated that the last project he and Malcolm were at every pour. The general contractor should be doing there with test results to the A&E. Mr. Rouse stated that Swank did the test then took it to the mechanical engineer, LPW. The district needs to make sure the concrete is being inspected and Swank will show every slump test. Mr. Conway stated that Swank is building in Kalispell and he doesn't see that kind of work over there. Mr. Rouse stated that Swank did Glacier High School and they had the same floor problems as Browning had. There were issues with how the base/perimeter foundation was done at the high school. Mr. Conway asked if the district can we hold them accountable after more than one year. Mr. Rouse stated that there is no statute of limitations. Mr. Gallup stated that is the reason we need to get done this summer. Swank has the lowest bids, and it is about communication and being personal. Ms. Bremner invited all board members to attend the facilities meeting on June 8 and discuss. No further discussion. Motion passed 7-1 with Mr. Running Fisher opposed.

Motion by Mr. Conway to adjourn at 6:17 p.m. Second by Mr. Evans. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted:

_____ Carlene Adamson, Board Secretary

_____ Wendy Bremner, Board Chairperson

_____ Stacy Edwards, District Clerk