

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

Friday, January 6, 2012

Members Present:

Mary Cameron
Art Johnston
Tom Kasper
Mike Miernicki
Judy Seliga Punyko
Ann Wasson
Bill Westholm

Others Present:

Bill Gronseth, Interim Superintendent
Bill Hanson, Deputy Clerk
Sue Talerico, Interim Secretary

➤ Chair Wasson called the special school board meeting of January 6, 2012 to order at 5:30 p.m.

M-Johnston, S-Kasper, presented a motion to amend the Agenda by allowing Public Comment prior to reading the resolution.

Chair Wasson stated that, although public comment is not a normal agenda item in personnel issues, in this instance she would allow if voted unanimously by the full board

Johnston expressed his belief that it is important to allow public to speak if and appropriate and critical if they choose. Wasson needs a unanimous vote

Upon a vote the same passed – unanimously.

Public Comment

Portia Johnson, 504 N 12th Avenue East, spoke to the board, expressing her concerns that there are many questions in the community as to what's going on and what is going to happen to Dr. Foster's office, and how this has been handled in the newspaper, which she believes has not been fair. Ms. Johnson urged the board to look very carefully how this happened and how it's been handled.

Carl Crawford, 38 2nd Street, spoke to the board regarding his concern when looking at this as a holistic opportunity to change the look of the community, to move forward as a diverse community, and that it means a lot to have someone in this community to show students they too can be superintendent.

Claudie Washington, 11 West 4th Street, spoke to the school board regarding his belief that Dr. Foster was the most qualified candidate to set a great example, close achievement gap, and show diversity in this district. Mr. Washington expressed that Dr. Foster qualifies for the license, that this is a minor and correctible infraction and urged the board to have sense of justice.

Marcia Stromgren, 6179 Lakewood Road, spoke to the board regarding her belief that I.V. Foster was the best person for the position, that his executive secretary should have handled this, given the scope of his job, and that he is extremely qualified and needs to be given the chance.

Sharon Witherspoon, 1049 University Drive, spoke to the board, hoping they would be swift to hear, slow to speak and slow to wrath.

Member Kasper presented the resolution:

RESOLUTION
Executive (Closed) Session

WHEREAS, Pursuant to Minnesota Open Meeting Law, Minn. Stat. 13D.05 subd.2(b) allowing a closed session for preliminary consideration of allegations or charges against an individual subject to its authority.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, By the School Board of Independent School District 709, St. Louis County, Minnesota, that the School Board shall meet in Executive (Closed) Session on Friday, January 6, 2012 at approximately 5:30 p.m. in the Board Conference Room of Historic Old Central High School for the purpose of preliminary consideration of allegations or charges against an employee.

Resolution B-1-12-2963

January 6, 2012

M-Kasper, S-Seliga Punyko, to approve the Resolution B-1-12-2963 - Executive Closed Session.

Member Johnston expressed his concerns about this meeting, and that over three weeks ago the board passed a resolution authorizing an investigation and put I.V. Foster on paid leave. Our superintendent is I.V. Foster and he should have been given the opportunity to be at this meeting. Member Johnston stated that, because of this, he will be voting against this resolution.

Upon a vote the same passed 6-1 as follows:

Yea: Cameron, Kasper, Miernicki, Seliga Punyko, Wasson, Westholm

Nay: Johnston

➤ *The Board Recessed into Executive Closed Session at 5:51 p.m.*

➤ *The Board Reconvened at 6:48 p.m.*

Member Kasper presented the resolution:

RESOLUTION
Approval of Terms of Separation Agreement

WHEREAS, the School Board of Independent School District 709, St. Louis County, Minnesota, has received allegations regarding Superintendent Dr. I.V. Foster, and

WHEREAS, the employment contract between the School District and Superintendent Foster expires on June 30, 2014, and

WHEREAS, the School Board and the Superintendent wish to resolve this matter in a mutually acceptable manner and without the costs and burdens associated with further consideration of the allegations.

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

1. The Superintendent will resign from employment with the School District effective immediately.
2. The Superintendent will be paid the salary specified in his employment contract through the end of March 2012.
3. The superintendent will receive the benefits as provided in his employment contract through the end of June 2012.
4. These terms will be part of a formal separation agreement, to be drafted and approved by the School Board's legal counsel, that will also include other standard terms for separation agreements.
5. The School Board Chair and Clerk are authorized to sign the agreement on behalf of the School District once it has been finalized and signed by the Superintendent.
6. William Gronseth will continue to serve as interim superintendent until further notice from the School Board.

Resolution B-12-11-2966

January 6, 2012

M-Kasper , S-Seliga Punyko , to approve the Resolution B-1-12-2966 – Approval of Terms of Separation Agreement. Upon a vote the same was approved – 5-2 as follows:

Yea: Kasper, Miernicki, Seliga Punyko, Wasson, Westholm

Nay: Cameron, Johnston

➤ Chair Wasson adjourned the Special School Board meeting of January 6, 2012 at 6:52 p.m.