

THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 2142, ST. LOUIS COUNTY SCHOOLS, HELD ON MONDAY, JANUARY 31, 2011.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bruns
 B. Larson
 C. Larson
 Feist
 Rantala
 Swanson
 Zupetz

ALSO PRESENT: Rick
 Cox
 Johnson

The special meeting of the Board of Education of Independent School District No. 2142, St. Louis County Schools, was held at ISD # 2142 District Office on January 31, 2011, at 5:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Chair Bruns indicated that this meeting was to discuss the Cook and Orr School for the 2011-2012 school year. Ms. Bruns opened it up for discussion.

Ms. Dawn Benner, Nett Lake school board member and parent of an Orr School student spoke to the board and had a handout for the board. Ms. Benner asked them to consider keeping the Orr School open next year.

Karlene Chosa, community member of the Nett Lake, spoke about her concern that Nett Lake was not included in the discussion on the Orr School. In addition, she was concerned about the lengthy transportation.

Board Chair Bruns discussed the information that Ms. Benner had in her handout and explained that she had a discussion with Business Manager Kim Johnson about her projections.

Member B. Larson asked Johnson about the savings involved in the closure.

Business Manager Johnson told the board that she did a detailed cost analysis by employee for her projections.

Member B. Larson asked Johnson if she thought that \$400,000. savings were still her projection.

Business Manager Johnson replied yes, absolutely.

Member B. Larson said that this is about making education better for our students. We have to think about what we can offer kids when schools are combined.

Discussion followed.

Board Chair Bruns said that if the Orr School closes that it would have a negative impact on the community.

Member Swanson was in agreement with Bruns and said that we don't need anymore negativity up North.

Board Chair invited Mayor of Orr, Dale Long to speak, even though he was not signed up with the clerk.

Mayor Long said that by keeping the school open one more year, it would be beneficial for the City of Orr. Mayor Long asked the board to consider leaving the school open for one more year so the building would be heated, but asked the board to use their best judgment.

Member Rantala stated that we aren't just looking at the dollars. Mr. Rantala said that he had calls from Cook and Orr residents and also a discussion with Indian Education Director, Lowana Greensky. A lot of this problem is our economy and we can't control it. However, we can control the combining of our schools for our students. We are here as a school board to provide the best possible education for our kids. Mr. Rantala asked Lowana Greensky to speak.

Indian Education Director Greensky spoke to the board and indicated that she is aware of Bois Forte and the Nett Lake side and Vermilion side, but it is her job to see the district as a whole. There are issues of racism and miscommunication which are concerns, but it would be better to deal with these issues with both of the communities in the Cook School. We will also need for the school to be involved in cultural things. And with all the students attending the Cook School we will have more offerings.

Discussion followed.

Member C. Larson said the he is looking at it from a different perspective. Mr. Larson said that he feels that the board is not working as a district anymore. We told the people that we weren't going to close the school until the new school was built. How does that make the community feel?

Member B. Larson stated that if we really want to do the best thing in education for the kids, we should put them together.

Discussion followed.

Person not signed up with the clerk spoke to the board. She indicated that she was from the Orr School area and thought that the dialog made the Orr School sound like it was a lesser school. She spoke in favor of keeping the Orr School open and said that it had a pride of identity.

Art Dale spoke to the board and stated that what is happening is nothing less than a miracle, because of the changes that we are going through. We are coming together. Whatever the board decides to do, the 3 communities of Orr, Cook and Nett Lake are coming together. Change is necessary for our survival.

Teacher, Nancy Parvi, spoke and said that she hoped that the Orr School would be kept open because of the risk of losing the Nett Lake students.

Discussion followed.

Member Rantala asked what impact this will have on us with No Child Left Behind.

Superintendent Rick said that we will have a different mix of students and scores.

Member Rantala stated that having been through bump night, what will this do to the impact list.

Superintendent Rick said that we will see more requests for transfers but whatever the vote, we will deal with the impact list.

Teresa Strong, Superintendent of Nett Lake, spoke and said that she understood the educational benefits, but that the community would be impacted. Ms. Strong asked the board to stand by their promise.

Board Chair Bruns asked for a show of hands on the vote.

Motion by B. Larson and seconded by Zupetz to combine the Cook and Orr Schools at the Cook School for the 2011-2012 school year.

Yes – B. Larson, Feist, Rantala, Zupetz

Against – Bruns, C. Larson, Swanson

The special meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.