

SIERRA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Monday, May 22, 2017

5:00 pm

Virginia B. Causey Educational Center
29143 Auberry Road, Prather, CA 93651
Board Room

I. OPENING BUSINESS

A. CALL PUBLIC SESSION TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm by Mr. Ron Eldridge, Board President.

B. ROLL CALL: Board Members: Ron Eldridge, President; Chrissy Falk, Vice President; Tom Mendenhall, Clerk; Norm Saude; Bert Weldon; Don Fowler (A); and Connie Schlaefer

C. ADOPTION OF AGENDA: Motion to adopt agenda: Falk: Second: Saude: 6/0

D. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Tom Mendenhall led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance

II. PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING CLOSED SESSION ITEMS – NONE

III. BOARD PRESIDENT STATEMENT

Mr. Eldridge made the following statement:

The meeting this evening has been convened to hear the appeal brought before this board by Mrs. Tami Alec. For the record, I am not part of this investigation nor have I been interviewed. I am however, deeply involved in the basketball program at Sierra Unified School District and while I feel I can be completely objective in this matter it is my choice and my choice alone to recuse myself from hearing this appeal. I hope this action speaks volumes to all parties about the transparency and unbiased approach this board takes in these kinds of matters. It is most important to us that we get it right and do it in a way the complainant feels their issue was fairly heard and that all parties respect the decision that is made regardless of favor. The board is the community's representatives to the School District and we take that representation very seriously. This is the process we have for peer review, oversight and democracy when we have disagreements and provides for an unbiased review of the facts. I am confident this board will come to a fair and impartial resolution. With that, I will leave this meeting and turn over the proceedings to the Vice President, Chrissy Falk. Good evening.

IV. CLOSED SESSION - The Board of Trustees went into Closed Session at 5:04 p.m.

A. Personnel - Public Employee Discipline / Dismissal / Release / Complaint / Appointment / Employment (Gov. Code § 54957)

1. Complaint against employee

V. RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION – The Board reconvened at 9:13 p.m.

A. Adjourn Closed Session and Reconvene Open Session

Sierra Unified School District

B. Report Action Taken in Closed Session (Education Code 48918(j))

The following was reported out of Closed Session:

We want to thank you all for waiting for our decision. We hope you understand how seriously we have deliberated on this issue and how we want the best for our students, staff, and parents.

Matter #1 (revised as indicated following conference with legal counsel)

Request to overturn the following investigation finding: SUSD Employee intentionally targeted Student in order to humiliate her, discriminate against her, and keep her from playing on the girls' basketball team for the 2016-2017 season.

It is the conclusion of the board that the finding of unfounded will be upheld due to the lack of evidence that the actions of Employee were based on the protected class status of Student. This conclusion is based in part on the statement by the parent of Student, relating that it was not the intent to claim discrimination of a protected class.

It is also the conclusion of the board that Employee did target Student to keep her from playing on the girls' basketball team for the 2016-2017 season and that those actions did result in the humiliation of Student.

Matter #2

The actions regarding personnel have been taken, and are confidential.

Matter #3

Going forward, the expectation of the governing board of the Sierra Unified School District is that summer athletic programs are developmental, and as such are open to all students who meet board approved, clearly defined criteria. At this point in time no such board approved criteria is in place.

Related to the student in question this evening, we are directing the following action:

1. Provided the student is on track to graduate with her class, and meets academic eligibility requirements, she will be permitted to participate in the summer program effective immediately.
2. If there are other requirements for participation, the student will be expected to take part in those activities.

The board would like to strongly encourage both parties to participate in a restorative mediation process for the well-being of everyone involved. If both parties are willing, the superintendent will facilitate this mediation.

Again, we thank you for your time and patience this evening.

VI. ADJOURNMENT - The meeting was adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

Ron Eldridge, President

Melissa Ireland, Ed.D, Superintendent

Tom Mendenhall, Clerk