SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES – BOARD OF EDUCATION
REDFORD UNION SCHOOLS, DISTRICT NO. 1
July 28, 2016

Special Meeting 7/28/2016

A Special meeting of the Redford Union Board of Education was held July 28, 2016 at the Board of Education Administrative Offices, 17715 Brady Street, Redford Township, Michigan, 48240. President Kurland called the meeting to order at 5:08 PM.

Call to Order

Present: Doby (Excused Early 6:07 PM), Graham, Gubachy, Isabell, Kurland,
Absent: Caloia, Pridemore

Roll Call

President Kurland asked everyone to please up their cell phones on silent or vibrate.

President's Remarks

MOVED by Doby, seconded by Isabell, to adopt the agenda of the July 28, 2016 Special Board Meeting as presented:
Yes: 5 No: 0 Motion: Carries

Adoption of Amended Agenda

None.

Call to the Audience on Agenda Items

President Kurland said that the board members had in front of them detailed time-lines reports which she prepared based on the emails received from the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to South Redford. The board members also had a draft letter that would be sent to South Redford alone with time-lines of both Redford Union and South Redford.

Communication with South Redford's Board of Education

There were about 17,000 pages of emails received from South Redford and some of the information the board was unsure if their board was aware of.

There was a question/thought if the board should send an email to South Redford to thank them for complying with the FOIA request and to ensure that they were aware of the full time-line on their end as well as our end and to try to extend an olive branch to be able to work with South Redford in the future. She said because we do have to do what's best for our community, constituents and the children in this township.

Secretary Isabell said she was appalled at some of the time-lines. That people knew about what was going on but said that they did not know about it. There were a lot of rumors going around that things were happening behind the scenes. She hoped it was not as bad as the rumors. She also mentioned Tracey Kobylarz's name as being fully aware of what was going.

Member Doby asked for an amendment to the time-line to include the meetings with David Huilings. The hiring of David, the South Redford meeting and the Redford Union meeting (Feb 23rd). She said we don't have to make the amendment now but they could simply say what is needed.

President Kurland will add when Mr. Huiling met with them individually and the other meeting dates.

A member in the audience asked if they are able to see the draft documents of the time-lines. The board shared the documents with the audience.

The board members discussed the dates of their meeting so they could amend the time-lines. They also discussed amendments to the letter.

Secretary Isabell had a question about the "olive branch". She said she was disturbed that our union rep was working with South Redford without their knowledge. She feels that a second letter should be sent and it should include the "olive branch".

An audience member (teacher) said it was disturbing to hear that an official was not telling them the truth.

President Kurland explained to the audience that what they were looking at was an abbreviated time-line that they will send alone with a letter to South Redford. That the time-line will be part of our board official records.

President Kurland said on April 15, 2016 in the emails from South Redford that there was a note in their union update (South Redford) that they had been working with Mr. Galdes, Senator Knezek and Redford Union president Steve Losey regarding "Interest of any MEA Brothers and Sisters in RU". She said when they submitted the FOIA request to South Redford, they did not request any specifics.

Member Graham said that at one of South Redford's meetings she believes that Senator Knezek said that they would be approaching both unions and their presidents. She was unaware of the content.

An audience member asked if there was a board meeting in which Mr. Losey was asked on the record if he had communications.

President Kurland said no.

When Senator Knezek was at RU's board meeting in September she believes Member Caloia asked him the question because it had been some concern that Mr. Losey had been working with them prior to that. Mr. Knezek said no they had not be in contact and it would be point of contention at that time.

President Kurland said it was one day that she and Dr. Shivers met with Mr. Huiling on the same day he met with Mr. Galdes and his board president early that day. She was trying to look for that date.''

Member Doby asked the board if they have some methodology by which the board could agree to let President Kurland find the dates that they are requesting and insert them into the time-line without the board assisting as wordsmith. The requested dates are related to Mr. Huiling and the town hall meeting where Mr. Knezek announced the grant.

President Kurland said so far the dates that will be added to the time-line are:

- (South Redford) meeting with Mr. Huilings, South Redford's Board President and Superintendent Galdes,
- Then later that same day the (Redford Union) meeting with Mr. Huilings, RU's Board President and Superintendent Shivers.
- January 26th was RU's Town hall meeting where Ms. Knezek came and made an announcement regarding the feasibility study.
- February 22nd RU's Town hall meeting with Mr. Huilings, and March 8th Redford Union meetings with Mr. Huilings.

President Kurland will confirm the dates.

In terms of the letter to South Redford it should be without any assumption that we will or will not receive a response. We should send a cover letter to the time-line, the invitation to join us on the cultural proficiency training and the restorative practices.

The board members continued to revising the letter and once completed they all thanked President Kurland.

Also, the May 23rd meeting with Mr. Huilings at RU High School will be added to the time-line.

The board wanted the audience to know there were a total of 17,435 pages with many duplicates.

An audience member asked if the records were public.

President Kurland said yes the records are public. If anyone is interested in obtaining a copy of the report, please make your request with the Superintendent's office. We asked that you provide a flash drive due to the size of the file is approximately a full gig.

An audience member asked if the board could give a summary of the findings; good, bad whatever they found.

President Kurland gave a brief synopsis.

- South Redford has been speaking about annexation since 2014 at the very least. It could have been before then but we only requested 18 months' worth of information.
- South Redford was in contact with Miller Canfield about refinancing bonds in 2014-2015.
- There where information sent to Senator Knezek for his review in January 2015. Internal documents from South Redford regarding annexing RU.
- They were in touch back and forth throughout.

- They were in contact with the Michigan Dept. of Education (MDE).
- MDE was apparently on board and South Redford actually reviewed the letter that was sent to us (RU) from former State Superintendent Mike Flanagan. The catalyst that was told to the public that they started working on this legislation because of the letter from Mr. Flanagan was incorrect. South Redford was the reason why the letter from Mr. Flanagan was sent to RU.
- Then apparently they brought Representative Love and Supervisor Kobylarz in the loop. Representative Love was concern after speaking with RU Board Secretary Isabell that we were in the dark.
- The draft language was constantly going back and forth between Senator Knezek and Mr. Galdes.
- Michigan Association of School Administrators (MASA) was aware as well and supportive. That time-line was May 24, 2015. They were looking for money for kids "situation".
- The letter from Mr. Flanagan was supposed to encourage us not to look into hiring a new superintendent. Which was not what the letter said.
- Everything else was public time-lines that people have seen through the news releases, etc.
- One important thing people need to know about our supervisor is that on December 22nd is when South Redford submitted their grant for annexation and that same day Supervisor Kobylarz sent an email to Mr. Galdes with information on the gag law. The gag law is currently pending in court about municipalities not being able to speak on local millages, local campaigns, which effected libraries, school districts, etc. The day that South Redford applied for the grant (before RU knew it was a grant) Supervisor Kobylarz sent South Redford information about the law letting them know that they would be able to campaign for annexation without any problems.

Member Graham asked to go back to May 21st 2015. Ms. Kobylarz was in involved back to May 2015. Member Graham said this would not have moved forward unless all the key players were in agreement with taking over and dissolving our district. This goes all the way to the State Educators Level.

President Kurland said it goes all the way to the Governor's Office.

Knezek gave a presentation multiple times to the Governor's Office and the presentation was sent to RESA in January. They requested to make sure that the presentation remained secret and that RU was not to know about that presentation.

President Kurland said all the documents mentioned in the emails, Redford Union BOE does not have copies of those documents. RU only has copies of the emails and headers of the documents, etc.

Member Graham said the Senator Knezek has put out another study so he can start this process all over again.

President Kurland said we received a draft of the Redford Connection today that should be out in the next couple of days. There is an article that Senator Knezek has that apparently there is a State Study that they did on schools. Andy Dillion did this. The State has a want to reduce the number of school districts in our State by 100 – 150 school districts. The want to get rid of school district that they feel are unnecessary. Andy Dillion was kept in the loop and he was sent that presentation. They are still trying to combine districts by Mr. Galdes.

When Plante Moran sent a draft of their study, it was also sent with Senator's Knezek's knowledge in that request and he sent back a request to remove the word annexation and to use only the word unification. So to ensure that the incorrect information and verbiage was being used in all of this information. That was a specific request from Senator Knezek.

Member Doby said this is critical because the processes for annexation and the processes for unification are completely different processes.

The biggest different is everyone here would lose their jobs and would have to reapply in South Redford if they annexed. If they unified you, they would have to put everyone together and choose.

A member in the audience said that the verbiage is every important.

President Kurland said she sent a personal email to Mr. Galdes, Senator Knezek and to their bosses as well. She also sent the email to South Redford's School Board, the Chair of DMC in Michigan and the minority leader Jim Ananich. In that email she expressed her personal concern over the use of language, their level of unprofessionalism. And they used her email as an excuse as to why they did not want to work with Redford Union. But then on February 19th Ms. Kangas sent an email to her board that apparently the South Redford Board in their conversations which is not in any of the emails that RU has. But what she eludes to is that the annexation conversations are about who is better to lead the Township as one district. She also stated that the female mind works differently.

Member Isabell said it was said at one time that our board could not handle this school district because they are an all women board and women are too emotional. Member Isabell said she take offence to that. She has been on the board since 2004 and they have done a lot of work since 2004.

President Kurland said it is also important to know that the current Township Trustee Jay Johnson and current Parks Commissioner Adam Bonarek who is also running for Township Trustee were also involved in all this information per their business. They were involved in helping to write some off the press releases through South Redford.

Member Graham said this goes from the top of the Governor's Office all the way down to our own school system.

Member Gubachy said on May 7th 2015 Mr. Knezek noted in his email that he was working to narrow the language of his drafts for only Redford. He also wrote a letter to several people at the MDE on May 18th. On March 15, 2016 there was also an email about it being $7.5 million the first year on the table for them to annex us beside the per pupil funding.

South Redford was only interested in annexation if money was attached to it.

On August 20, 2015 Mr. Galdes sent out news to his staff that said Ron Stoneman departure prompted the letter from Mr. Flanagan that Senator Knezek will introduce to legislation and It will create a more stable operating base for South Redford.
Member Gubachy said that the grant budget that South Redford submitted to MDE includes the language that says, funds are set aside for staff cost related to obtaining and providing all the information to the consultants.

Member Gubachy said she don't believe any of those funds were offered to RU for our staff time. They were not interested in reimbursing us.

Member Doby asked the Board to please excuse her because she had to leave. But before she left she thanked President Kurland and the entire board. She also said she want to see the district get off to a new school year focused on being a board that is in partnership with one of the most spectacular Board of Education leaders' that she has ever met in four states. She is so pleased they will get a chance to move forward with Dr. Shivers. Her hopes are that these distractions will be nothing more than distractions. Let's through our selves behind this visionary leader and let's focus on the work that she has started.

President Kurland thanked Member Doby and excused her from the meeting at 6:07 PM.

President Kurland asked if anyone else wanted to speak before they moved to approve the letter and time-line as amended.

There were no other speakers.

President Kurland entertained a motion to approve the letter to South Redford School Board and the Time-line to the South Redford School Board as amended.

MOVED by Gubachy, seconded by Isabell, that the Board of Education, approve the letter to South Redford School Board and the Time-line to the South Redford School Board as amended.

Yes: 4 No: 0 Motion: Carries

President Kurland said that the letter will be sent out by Monday, August 1st. She will work over the weekend to clean it up before Monday.

Resident Ms. Smith asked for a lawn sign.

Call to the Audience on Non-Agenda Items

Monday, August 8, 2016 - Regular Meeting at 7:30 p.m.
Board of Education Administrative Offices, 17715 Brady Street, Redford MI 48240

Wednesday, August 24, 2016 – Special Meeting – 8:30 M – 12:00 PM
Wayne County Community College District (WCCCD) Wester Campus
9555 Haggerty Road, Belleville, MI 48111

Future Meeting Dates

President Kurland said that the August 24th Special Meeting (Board Workshop) will be a discussion on transgender students and there will be a legal discuss on it as well.

MOVED by Isabell, seconded by Graham to adjourn the meeting at 6:13 PM. Adjournment
Total: Yes: 4 No: 0. Motion: Carries.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Isabell,
Acting Secretary
Board of Education of Redford Union Schools