

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES DIXIE SCHOOL DISTRICT

February 28, 2019

District Office

380 Nova Albion Way

San Rafael, CA

94903

Open Session 6:00

Attendance

Trustees:

Brad Honsberger

Alissa Chacko

Marnie Glickman

Megan Hutchinson

Brooks Nguyen

Administrators

Dr. Jason Yamashiro - Superintendent

Tracy Smith – Assistant Superintendent

Tanya Michel – Chief Business Officer

1. Call Meeting to Order

The special meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Dixie School District was called to order by Mr. Honsberger at 6:00 at The Dixie School District Office. A quorum was present.

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance/Patriotic Salute

The Board said the pledge of allegiance

1.3 Approval of the Open Session Agenda

Motion: MG

Second: MH

Vote: Unanimously to approve of the open session agenda (Honsberger, Chacko, Glickman, Hutchinson, Nguyen)

1.4 Public Comment on the Open Session Agenda

Mr. Honsberger reminds the public that due to ED Code and the Brown Act the Board is only able to meet in a public forum to discuss these matters. He goes on to say that the discussion will not be about whether or not to change the name of the district. The Board will be talking about a processes for outreach and inclusion. He asks for

decorum and respect for the board and fellow speakers. He asks that people please limit their speaking time to 2 minutes and that the public will be allowed a total of 2 hours for comment.

Speaker #1 Says that she believes with the support of the Home and School Club plan the community will be able to separate from the past and move forward well. She asks that we have civil conversations on line and in person.

Speaker #2 Says that the HSC offers its support in any way that unifies the school community. If the board votes to move forward, they will facilitate that. She suggests a plan for renaming Dixie School and the district.

Speaker #3 Thanks the Board. He suggests letting the issue go to a vote.

Speaker #4 Thanks the Board. She encourages the Board to adopt the Home School Club plan for choosing a name. Also asks that it be done by the start of school next year.

Speaker #5 Thanks Board. Not in support of a name change. Says that Marnie Glickman indoctrinated the children in the district who believe Dixie is racist.

Ms. Glickman disagrees with the way the previous speaker addressed her.

Ms. Chacko asks for guidance on the legal boundaries that speakers must adhere to.

Mr. Manuel Martinez legal counsel says the public has a right to speak at Board meetings. It is a meeting of the Board in front of the public. Not a meeting of the public in front of the Board. This is the time the public is allowed to speak on items on the agenda. The Board has the right to limit discussion in terms of content. It is up to the Board president to manage the speakers.

Ms. Chacko clarifies that the board isn't allow to limit what is said.

Mr. Martinez says the Board is not allowed to pick winners and losers. As long as the comments are directed to things on the agenda they are allowed. The public should maintain decorum and refrain from obscenities.

Mr. Honsberg reminds the public to please not attack individuals and to limit comments to process. He asks that people in the audience do not make cat calls, boo, clap or cheer.

Speaker #6 asks that the board please get with the process of changing the name. He adds that the name should be changed by the new school year. He says that a staff member should have the authority to take the name change over the finish line. He says that he is disappointed by a lack of an action item.

Speaker #8 offers to show the board and district survey tools that will enable the name changing process to move faster.

Speaker #9 asks that the board not put off the name change.

Speaker #10 thinks there should be a community vote.

2.1 Discussion and Action Regarding the Processing of Petition(s) for Potential District Name Change

Superintendent Yamashiro says that the purpose of this section is to confirm the process for any petition the district receives going forward. He adds that there is a memo attached with a summary.

Mr. Honsberger asks Mr. Martinez if there is anything with regard to legality that the Board needs to change.

Mr. Martinez says no the process for handling the petitions legally is very minimal. What is not stated is that when you receive the petitions, you are in a quasi-judicial role. You have to consider the petitions as a collective group of 5. The law doesn't allow you to delegate the consideration of petitions to a subcommittee. Whatever is considered has to be considered as a collective. That is the starting point. The concept of a repository is fine but you don't have to have one. It's completely extra.

Ms Glickman asks with regard to the petitions when does the 40 day period start.

Mr. Martinez replies that the day after the petitions are received is day one. But when a due date falls on a holiday, you are allowed to push it out to the following business date.

Ms. Glickman Asks Mr.Martinez what the district's obligation to verify signatures is.

Mr. Martinez responds you don't have an obligation to verify signatures. He adds you could do everything on day 40. There is no obligation to use county services. But I recommend you do that. I would also recommend you take care of it sooner rather than later.

Ms. Glickman asks whether the district has to notify the public .

Mr. Martinez says that the district has to put the public notice in the local newspaper twice. He adds there is no need to have a hearing unless the signatures are valid.

Mr. Honsberger notes that one thing he is hearing is that we have gone above and beyond what is legally required. He asks if that is something they are still comfortable with.

Ms. Hutchinson says she thinks so. She says that people are working and they need a chance to give input (the repository). She adds that she thinks the repository should be available longer.

Ms. Chacko reminds the board it was open on January 24 and closed on February 3rd.

Mr. Honsberger notes there was a grey period.

Ms. Chacko adds we went live as soon as we could but there was a dead period while we set up.

Ms. Hutchinson says that they should clarify that the board shouldn't be receiving emails during that time frame.

Ms. Nguyen says that they should hold a similar time line to the one used in the first round of petitions.

Ms. Chacko says she would like to see additional outreach efforts to notify the public.

Dr. Yamashiro adds that we would like to add the process for written submissions to the public notice we send out to newspapers and HOAs.

Ms. Hutchinson asks that we add homeowners of retirement communities to the list of contacts

Ms. Nguyen notes that she expected specific information about the names on the petitions themselves. Is that within our control?

Mr. Martinez answers the board is free to communicate to the public what it finds persuasive. These are petitions to ask the board to take action. The board can say this

is the information we would like as a board. You can say we would like history or something else. If I'm a petitioner, I want to convince you and get your vote.

Ms. Glickman says that the board is in a situation with lots of details. They have two interesting related ideas. One from the home school club and one from Natasha Berry. Many schools have naming criteria. That is something the board might consider. I have 5 criteria.

Ms. Nguyen say she has ideas too but how the board processes the petitions is important and she would like to focus on that.

Mr. Honsberger says that he would like the petition process to involve more of the community.

Dr. Yamashiro asks for clarification on what the criteria is for the Board to consider a name controversial.

Ms. Chacko says the board would pick up controversial names by reading public comments from the repository. She goes on to say she doesn't believe Jason should have to make the decision on what makes a name controversial.

Dr. Yamashiro says the research can get difficult for the Board and the staff.

Mr. Martinez says it is not the board's or the district's responsibility to research. If you aren't getting the information you need with the petitions, you don't have to act.

Mr. Honsberger says the burden of explanation is on the person who presents the petition.

Ms. Glickman says maybe there should be a description on the web form that asks for explanation for rationale for the petition. It would be helpful. She adds that all comment is welcome but the rational would be helpful.

Ms. Chacko says the repository is meant to serve people who can't attend the public meetings.

Mr. Honsberger says the end date to act on the petition at hand is March 22nd.

Ms. Glickman asks assuming the petition signatures are valid can we consider both petitions?

The Board decides to hold a Special Public Meeting to vote on the petition on March 19th 5:00 at the district office.

Mr. Honsberger adjourns the meeting at 7:30 for a 5 minute recess.

Mr. Honsberger returns the Board to session at 7:36.

2.2 Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Process for Outreach and Inclusion in the Potential Name Change of the District

Mr. Honsberger opens the next session by asking what outreach and inclusion process is the board interested in doing to gain input from the public.

Ms. Nguyen says that the board has gotten many great suggestions and has researched the processes conducted by other districts. She adds none of it is fast moving. In order to engage the community we need a longer process.

Ms. Chacko says that only a few districts have changed their names. In the research she did she didn't find a quick process. The shorter processes resulted in many mistakes.

Ms. Nguyen says she likes Ms. Glickman's idea about defining criteria.

Ms. Chacko says she didn't come prepared to make a decision but she would like to give ideas.

Mr. Honsberger says regarding the process for giving the community a chance to be heard, in the case studies he reviewed Palo Alto did a lot of research. They started with a citizens committee.

Ms. Nguyen says she thinks that first a Board committee is needed then a citizens committee.

Mr. Honsberger says he thinks costs still need to be explored. He adds the board should reach out to Home Owners Associations, Swim Teams, Soccer clubs, Little League, there are a lot of avenues that haven't been explored. We need to help the community unify before we move forward.

Ms. Chacko says when she looked at the Palo Alto case study they started at ground zero. Then decided on a process to select a citizens committee. They spelled out

exactly what they would look for as a criteria for the name. Maybe we should form a subcommittee of the board to select a citizens committee.

Ms. Glickman says It would help to clarify where the board is today if they had a resolution to commit to changing the name of the school. I want to make I clear I mean a request for that to be on the agenda, and it's not on the agenda. I think the board should revoke the advisory election.

Ms. Chacko asks if Ms. Glickman is making a motion.

Ms. Glickman says it's important to consider if we are de-naming the district before we rename it. She asks do we have a resolve to dename Dixie School District and if so, can we talk about renaming.

Ms. Hutchinson says she thinks that is a good point but thinks talking about process is important.

Ms. Glickman says that after 22 years she is ready to move that we make a motion to dename Dixie School District and rename Dixie School. (Motion)

Mr. Honsberger asks if there is a second.

Ms. Glickman says she is open to amendments.

Ms. Hutchinson says your motion is to resolve to change the name. My motion would be with community input and more time. (Amendment)

Mr. Martinez says Ms. Glickman has an amendment to her motion. She needs to accept or deny the amendment.

Ms. Glickman says she accepts with community input and doesn't accept the less rigid time line because she didn't say anything about time line. (Amendment is denied)

Ms. Glickman moves the Dixie Board resolves to change the name of the Dixie School District and the Dixie school with community engagement. (Motion)

Mr. Honsberger asks if there is a second

Ms. Glickman says she is open to amendments.

Ms. Hutchinson says she would welcome the motion with more discussion.

Ms. Chacko says she is interested in forming different committees and to be inclusive the question of “if” the name will be changed has to be on the table. If we start out as done, we shut out a lot of the community.

Ms. Nguyen says she would like to include the voices of people who are opposed so that she can learn why they are opposed.

Ms. Hutchinson says a 2020 ballot doesn't sit well with her because it's not informative.

Some members of the board raise concerns regarding costs of the name change and how they will be covered.

Ms. Glickman says she will amend her motion to include the costs being covered by private sources.

Ms. Nguyen says she is very grateful for the organization that has offered to cover the costs of the name change. However, she would like to see a timeline and the cost thresholds.

Ms. Glickman says her motion would be to rename the Dixie School District with community engagement on the condition that costs will be covered. She adds that she does think they need an advisory committee or two. But today they need to come up with a resolution stating where they are formally. (Motion)

Ms. Chacko says she has received threatening emails saying that if she doesn't do x than y will happen. She is concerned that this motion will create more bullying.

No second to motion

Mr. Honsberger adjourns for a short recess at 9:35

Mr. Honsberger calls the meeting back to order at 9:44

Mr. Honsberger motions to engage the public with a survey. There would be three questions: have you heard about the name change, are you in favor, if yes, please suggest a name. (Motion)

Ms. Nguyen Seconds

Ms. Glickman says she is concerned about the purpose and cost of such a survey

Mr. Honsberger says his motion is to engage the public in the questions: How do you feel about the name change? If the name is changed are you in favor yes or no? What would you like the name to be?

Ms. Glickman says she thinks a survey is a good idea.

Ms. Hutchinson says we all agree a survey of some sort is a good idea. She adds that people will not respond if they feel the decision has already been made and they weren't included.

Ms Chacko suggests a subcommittee to develop the survey questions.

Ms Glickman says there are other aspects of the process that would help. For example naming criteria. If we rename a facility in the future, there are 5 things that are important. That could help us focus and lead. She adds that she is not comfortable doing a survey.

Ms. Hutchinson says what if the survey is a postcard and if you would like to contact the board it would direct them to a website.

Mr. Honsberger says a two question survey almost like a public notice. We are getting information back and we are giving an opportunity. What would that cost?

Ms. Nguyen says it can be done thru email.

Mr. Honsberger amends his motion to a committee to define costs of what a survey would be an email address and questions that could be submitted to the board at once. Then assign two board members to do some research on the costs of mailing and emailing an announcement with a website. (Amendment)

Ms. Nguyen seconds

Ms. Hutchinson says she like the email idea and forming a renaming committee. Then having a website for people who are interested.

Motion taken off table.

Ms Chacko motions to create an ad hoc subcommittee of board members to establish a criterion for a citizens committee.

Ms. Hutchinson says we already know people are offended by the name of our school. We already know people in our community are offended. Palo Alto didn't have that information when they started. My concern is that we would be reliving the past 6 months. I'm past the *if*. We have incurred costs and no one is offering to cover those. An advisory committee isn't helpful to me. Having a citizens committee working on the selecting of the name seems like the best way. A citizens committee to decide on the "if" seems like a huge ask.

Mr. Martinez says Ms. Chack has a motion on the table to create an ad hoc subcommittee.

Ms. Nguyen seconds.

Ms. Glickman says she would love to form an advisory committee.

Mr. Honsberger calls recess at 10:45pm

Mr. Honsberger calls to clear the room after a disturbance breaks out in the audience.

The Board leaves the room.

Mr. Honsberger reconvenes the meeting at 10:58.

Mr. Honsberger tables agenda item 2.2 and moves on to agenda item 3.1

3.1 Public Comment on items not on the agenda

Speaker #1 reads the anti-Semitic letter received by Ms. Glickman

Speaker #2 Asks why the public wasn't offered the proposals the board talked about.

All you have to do is reconsider the vote on LOVE.

Speaker #3 says these are all stalling tactics.

Speaker #4 says we can do better

Speaker #5 says the longer you wait to make a decision, the more bullying you will get.

Speaker #6 says she doesn't see the board trusting the staff to make decisions. She believes the board should let the staff take more leadership in this process.

Speaker #7 Says they will not leave until the name changes.

Speaker #8 says he thinks once people understand they will make the switch. He would like to see moral leadership. He says that if the board prolongs the name change process, things will only get worse.

Speaker #9 apologizes for letting his temper get out of hand

Speaker #10 is disappointed with the leadership on the board. The board has the ability to make the decision they were elected to make. It's a matter of right and wrong. There is nothing she can say to a white person to convince them that something is racist.

Speaker #11 Wishes the board had come out against the racism that just happened in the board meeting.

Speaker #12 Apologized for shouting. Suggests that if the board wants an advisory arm they should get out into the community and educate them on this issue. Educate them about why the name is racist.

Public Comment Ended at 11:34

4.1 Identify Items for Future Agenda

Ms. Glickman asks what is the process for getting something on the agenda. If I make a request to get a resolution on the agenda, how does that happen?

Mr. Honsberger says the items are noted but we can't decide which agenda it goes on.

Ms. Glickman asks who decides?

Mr. Honsberger says Jason.

Ms. Chacko says Jason puts together an agenda.

Ms. Glickman says she is requesting an item be put on the next board meeting March 12th. How is that going to be decided?

Ms. Chacko says you put together the agenda based on what is discussed here and what the school district needs then put together a draft.

Mr. Martinez says identification is just identification.

Ms. Chacko says to Ms. Glickman you were a VP and you know how this process works.

Ms. Glickman says it is important for her to know what she needs to do to get her item on the agenda.

Dr. Yamashiro recommends that Ms. Glickman review board policy regarding agenda items.

Ms. Chacko says Jason puts together the draft based on school business and what is needed. The Board president and VP review it with the superintendent. Then the Board President and VP finalize it. Requests are taken but school business is important.

Dr. Yamashiro confirms.

The board decides that item 2.2 from this agenda will be placed back on the March 12th agenda.

Mr. Honsberger reminds the board that 2.2 is a priority and also they have second interim to review.

Ms. Chacko asks what other board business exists.

Dr. Yamashiro says there is board business that has been getting put off. However, not too many things are time specific.

Ms. Glickman asks that Dr. Yamashiro present a process option to make a process for the name change. She also asks for more information about how the agenda process works.

Ms. Glickman motions to adjourn

Mr. Honsberger seconds

All are in favor.

The meeting adjourns at 11:50pm