

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING
OF
BOARD OF EDUCATION, SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 172
ADAMS COUNTY, ILLINOIS
HELD ON JULY 2, 2009**

Meeting Convened The Board of Education of School District No. 172, Adams County, Illinois, met in special session on July 2, 2009, at 4:00 p.m. in the Round Room in the Baldwin Intermediate School Building located at 3000 Maine Street, Quincy, Illinois, in said school district.

Roll Call The meeting was called to order by President Niekamp, who directed the secretary to call the roll. On the call of the roll, the following members were present and answered to their names: Members Bemis, Daniels, Dickerson, and Niekamp; and the following members were absent: Members Krause, Lovelace, and Mays. Whereupon the president declared that a quorum was present.

Arrival of Member Lovelace Member Lovelace arrived at 4:03 p.m. which was duly recorded by the Board Secretary.

Questions and Comments President Niekamp opened the meeting to questions and comments to members of the Board, by members of the public and employees of the district, in compliance with state statutes.

Regional Superintendent of Schools Ray Scheiter presented some information on the role and duties of the Regional Office of Education. He also reported on the legal opinion from the Illinois State Board of Education regarding the vice-president assuming the position of president of the board and whether school districts can hire two law firms. Copies of the ISBE's response were distributed to Board members.

President Niekamp asked Attorney Gorman to the podium to answer questions he had emailed regarding the legality of calling a special meeting without the president's approval. Attorney Gorman indicated that three Board members legally may call a special meeting. President Niekamp told the attorney that he gave him a direct order to provide answers to questions contained in the email. Attorney Gorman said direction would need to come from a motion by the full Board.

Member Bemis requested to speak and was ruled out of order by the President. Member Dickerson appealed the decision of the chair, which was seconded by Member Lovelace. The parliamentary question presented was, "Shall the ruling of the chair be sustained." On the call of the roll, the following members voted Yes: None; and the following members voted No: Members Bemis, Daniels, Dickerson, Lovelace and Niekamp; and the following member voted Nay: None. Member Bemis was then allowed to speak.

Member Bemis answered President Niekamp's questions that were sent

to Attorney Gorman about who was notified of his resignation and when. Member Bemis said that he requested Members Dickerson and Krause to join with him in the call of the Special Meeting. He said he played a major part in why we are here today. His reasons for resigning were extremely personal. He confided in Member Dickerson about his decision, and asked him if he would be willing to step back in as president because of his integrity and experience. He asked Member Niekamp to resign as vice president and he refused.

Community members and district staff made comments. Joseph Kerkhoff and Nicole Hinds spoke in support of President Niekamp. Jim Carlock commented that President Niekamp deserves a fair chance and due process. Mike McKinley questioned President Niekamp's qualifications and experience to serve on committee and negotiation teams. Several speakers called for Niekamp to resign as president including Rick Jones, Bob Brewer, Jill Butterfield, and Wendy and Steve Venvertloh. Keith Smith asked that the squabbling and jealousy be put aside for the sake of the children. Julie Clifton stated that as a parent it is painful to listen to the comments and that President Niekamp is not qualified to be president and does not have an understanding of the needs of parents, students and the community. Otis Pleasant said he is disheartened by the nature of the whole situation. He said President Niekamp should never have been voted for as vice president if he is not qualified to be president. He asked for the Board to be open and honest and bring items for discussion to the full Board, not two or three members in back door meetings. Brenda Rees said this drama reflects negatively on the Board and district. She said good teachers will go elsewhere.

Former Board President Jim Citro stated the president needs the support of the majority of the Board in order to lead. Deanna Kroeger commented on President Niekamp's visits to schools and said that he had no understanding of special education requirements and paraeducators' jobs.

President Position

Attorney Gorman explained that by law, as Vice President, Member Niekamp is the President Pro Tem. Due to the resignation of the president, Mr. Niekamp is the president. No vote is needed.

Cancel Special Session

It was moved by President Niekamp to cancel the meeting scheduled for 5:30 p.m. today. The motion died for lack of a second.

Forensic Audit

It was moved by President Niekamp to retain a qualified accountant to conduct a forensic audit of the Quincy School District for 2001-2002 through the prior school year. The motion died for lack of a second.

Forensic Audit Ad Hoc Committee

It was moved by President Niekamp to form an Ad Hoc Committee to review, investigate, and report on the need for a forensic audit. The motion died for lack of a second. The president intends to appoint a Forensic Audit Ad Hoc Committee which does not require approval of the Board.

Change in Legal Counsel

It was moved by President Niekamp to retain another legal counsel for the district. The motion died for lack of a second.

Legal Ad Hoc
Committee

It was moved by President Niekamp to form an Ad Hoc Committee to review, investigate, report on the lawsuits and legal activities involving the Quincy School District and pursue remedial action. Member Dickerson asked for clarification of “pursue remedial action.” President Niekamp said he will not answer questions and the agenda is self-explanatory. The motion died for lack of a second. The president intends to appoint a legal Ad Hoc Committee which does not require approval of the Board.

Arrival of Member
Krause

Member Krause arrived at 6:00 p.m. which was duly recorded by the Board Secretary.

Questions and
Comments

President Niekamp again opened the meeting for questions and comments.

Krys Duesterhaus said she has major concerns with the direction the district is headed. She said that President Niekamp is not answering questions, is not open minded and not willing to learn. This meeting has lasted 1½ hours and nothing has been accomplished. She said people used to look up to the Quincy School District but now we are a laughing stock. Jen Bell said President Niekamp needed to do his homework before he tried to lead a meeting. David Harbin spoke about President Niekamp’s questionable status as a member of the Adams County Board and School Board. He said anything President Niekamp does will be held suspect so how can he lead effectively. He said there were many punch lines written here today. He spoke against Attorney Slattery filing his Tort lawsuit when he does not even live in Quincy and was only interested in lining his own pockets. President Niekamp spoke about his desire for positive change and how the district cannot continue to borrow itself out of debt. Kay Dyer commented about the forensic audit proposed by President Niekamp and that it would be wasting money. Several others supported this comment. Lynn Hummel said when she does not know answers, she looks to someone who does. She told President Niekamp that right now he does not have the answers. She said he should let people lead who have the answers, to be proactive as in the 7 Habits. Claire Don said she was very impressed with the school district and staff when she moved to Quincy from Oregon. She expressed concerns that quality staff would go elsewhere due to what is going on with the Board.

Member Dickerson questioned President Niekamp about the 178 letters he has received from Daniel Bastean instigating the review of the district’s finances. President Niekamp said that one error was found by this individual and there could be more. Member Dickerson read a letter from Mr. Bastean sent to Holly Wagner, Herald Whig Reporter, and copied to Board members and other individuals, to shed some light on Mr. Bastean’s character. The letter attacked Superintendent Lemon, his integrity, his morals, and called him a liar repeatedly. Dwight Bower questioned the necessity of an audit that could cost the district \$500,000. Beth Toumbes asked President Niekamp if he would consider resigning from the Adams County Board so there would be no question about compatibility of the seats. She expressed concern that he would not be able to sign bonds since his status is in question.

President Niekamp thanked everyone for their comments. He told the audience he will not be stepping down, he is not a quitter. He will not resign from his seat on the Adams County Board either. He said the other School Board members need to work with him. He is not the problem.

Adjournment

It was moved by Member Dickerson and seconded by President Niekamp that the special meeting adjourn. On the call of the roll, the following members voted Aye: Members Bemis, Daniels, Dickerson, Krause, Lovelace, and Niekamp; and the following members voted Nay: None; and the following member was absent: Member Mays. Whereupon the president declared the motion carried and the special meeting was duly adjourned.

Melvin J. "Bud" Niekamp
President

Phyllis Stewart
Secretary