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Iowa-Grant School District Public Hearing on Petition to Alter District Boundaries

February 12, 2024

Meeting Minutes

Iowa-Grant School District Board President Ross Leix called the hearing to order at 7:00 PM on February 12, 2024, and stated that minutes should reflect he will serve as chair of the public hearing as noticed in the posting of the hearing. The Chair stated that it has been suggested that Board Treasurer Katrina Rickard serve as Secretary.

A motion was made by Board Vice-president Mary Schauff and seconded by board member Tim Lundell that Ms. Rickard serve as Secretary for the hearing. Upon hearing no other nominations, the Chair called the question and the motion carried on a voice vote with no opposition.

Upon request of the Chair, the Secretary read the notice of the hearing as follows:

Pursuant to Chapter 117, Wisconsin Statutes, the School Board of the Iowa-Grant School District has set February 12, 2024, for the public hearing on the petition of Brian and Shonda Pete to detach property from the Iowa-Grant School District and attach it to the Mineral Point School District. Iowa-Grant School District Board President Ross Leix has been designated to serve as chairperson of the hearing. The hearing is scheduled for 7:00 PM in IGEMS Library.

Iowa-Grant Superintendent Michael Shimshak stated, "Let the record indicate that School Board President Ross Leix, Vice-President Mary Schauff, Treasurer Katrina Rickard and board members Tim Lundell and Tony Ritchie are present and are represented by Shana Lewis as counsel.

The Chair provided an overview of the petition to provide a common background of developments and issues for the school board and those present at the meeting.

At this time, I will present an overview of the petition to provide a common background of developments and issues for the school board(s) and those present at this meeting.

On January 22, 2024, the Iowa-Grant School District received a Petition to Alter School District Boundaries from Brian and Shonda Pete of 2253 Rhoda Road, Mineral Point, Wisconsin.

(Exhibit B) The petition lists the property parcel proposed for detachment as, Parcel # 0140784; A, Sec. 20, T5N, R2E, Pt NW ¼ of NE ¼ 4.070 acres at 2252 Rhoda Road Mineral Point, Wisconsin. The petition was signed and dated by the petitioners on January 7, 2024.

The aforementioned property is located in the Iowa-Grant School District, in the town of Linden, in Iowa County and was valued at \$331,200 in 2021 as certified by municipal clerk Sam Pulzkill.

The Iowa-Grant School District Administration certifies that there are three (3) school aged children residing at the property listed in the petition who are currently open-enrolled out of the Iowa-Grant School District into the Mineral Point School District.

The Chair made general comments regarding procedure and order of speaking.

Before taking testimony, I would like to review the rules applicable to this hearing.

This is an informal hearing, but we will record all the information presented.

Each person offering information will come to the table where you may either sit or stand. Please state your name, address, and school district. Speak distinctly so that we can be sure that your information is recorded.

The procedure is to hear from the proponents and opponents of the petition. The proponents, those people asking the school board(s) to transfer the territory, will be heard first. Following the proponents, the opponents of the petition, those people who do not want the territory transferred, will be heard.

Following the initial presentation by the proponents and opponents, there will be a short time allotted for rebuttal and/or summation by both sides in the same order as before.

The Chair invited proponents of the petition to speak.

The petitioner, Shonda Pete of 2252 Rhoda Road, Mineral Point, Wisconsin stated the reasons she and her husband Brian Pete (also present) are seeking the detachment of property she and her husband own in the Iowa-Grant to the Mineral Point School District. Mrs. Pete stated that because the property in question is on the border between the Iowa-Grant School District and the

Mineral Point School District, no island would be created if there were to be approval of the petition. She further stated that she and her husband operate three businesses in the Mineral Point School District and own other property not listed in the petition, which they are not requesting be detached from the Iowa-Grant School District into the Mineral Point School District.

Mrs. Pete further stated that all three of their school aged children have been open enrolled out of the Iowa-Grant School District for the past three consecutive years and that she and her husband have no intention for their children to return to the Iowa-Grant School District for enrollment, with the expectation that their children will graduate from the Mineral Point School District.

Mrs. Pete cited parent convenience. If the family's children were members of the Mineral Point School District, they could use the Mineral Point School District-provided transportation.

Mrs. Pete stated that with the status quo, she and her husband are unable to vote in the Mineral Point School Board elections and unable to vote for a referendum in the Mineral Point School District.

Finally, Mrs. Pete offered that she knew "a guy" who owns property in the Mineral Point School District who would be willing to swap property of equal value into the Iowa-Grant School District and that they, the petitioners, would be willing to cover any associated expenses to make this happen.

The Chair invited opponents to the detachment to speak.

Iowa-Grant Superintendent Michael Shimshak advised the board that he opposes the detachment for a number of reasons. He suggested that the Mineral Point School District would be acting on this same petition during the Mineral Point School Board meeting and predicted the Mineral Point School Board would vote in favor of the detachment. Why, because this is a zero-sum proposition. Every gain to the Mineral Point School District represents an equivalent loss to the Iowa-Grant School District. The detachment would mean a loss of membership and revenue authority to the Iowa-Grant School District and could result in loss of programming for the students who do enroll in Iowa-Grant. The Iowa-Grant School District is already in declining enrollment and cannot afford to lose membership. Further, Mr. Shimshak defined "all students"

to include future students, who might reside in the property in question if the petitioners were to sell the property. The Iowa-Grant School District Board of Education has heard reports from Mr. Shimshak about the lack of housing in the district and how this is influencing the ability for new families to live in the Iowa-Grant School District. He opposes the loss of a single-family home in the district under these circumstances. Mr. Shimshak argued that the open enrollment law in Wisconsin is designed to afford parents choice in the school district they want their children to attend without having to go through a detachment process. Finally, Mr. Shimshak argued that approving one petition to detach a property on the border of the district could lead to other detachment requests, and the district's border would be whittled away, bit by bit.

Hearing no other opponents to the petition, the Chair invited any further information from the proponents. There was none.

The Chair then provided an opportunity for opponents to offer any further information. Iowa-Grant School Board President Ross Leix spoke in opposition to the detachment, noting first that as board members they each have a responsibility to look out for the best interest of the district. (talk to Ross). The Chair asked the board if there were any questions or further discussion.

The chair reviewed and explained alternative decisions.

Grant the request for transfer of the territory described in the petition. Or,
deny the request for transfer of the territory described in the petition; or
take no action, and by de facto deny the request of the territory described in the petition.

The chair entertained a motion and requested that any motion be read into the record. A motion was made by Schauff as follows:

I move to deny the transfer of the territory described in the petition. That the reorganization requested in the petition filed on January 22, 2024, to detach territory described in said petition from the Iowa-Grant School District and to attach it to the Mineral Point School District be denied and that said petition be dismissed.

The motion was seconded by Rickard.

Ballots were distributed, collected, and tabulated.

A 5-0 vote in favor of the motion to deny was recorded.

A resolution authorizing the issuance of an order was introduced by the chair and seconded by Rickard. A 5-0 vote in favor of the resolution was recorded.

Lundell moved the public hearing to be adjourned. Ritchie seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:26PM.