



Board of Directors, Special Meeting-Executive Session
February 15, 2022
RICHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 400
BENTON COUNTY, RICHLAND, WASHINGTON

The Board of Directors of Richland School District No. 400 met for a special meeting February 15, 2022, at 3:30 P.M. via zoom and in person at 6972 Keene, Richland, Washington, Benton County. School Board Vice President Kari Williams presided. Board members participating: Semi Bird, Audra Byrd, and Rick Jansons. Jill Oldson participated via Zoom.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Williams called the special meeting to order at 3:34 P.M. and stated the Board would move immediately into executive session, discussion to include personnel, real estate and legal. The Board will reconvene for a special meeting at 4:15 P.M.

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION (Personnel, Legal)

The Board adjourned to executive session at 3:34 P.M. to discuss qualifications of an applicant for employment or review of performance of an employee (final actions must be taken in public and discussions affecting employees generally must be held in public) 42.30.110 (1) (g); and discussion with legal counsel, of enforcement actions, litigation or potential litigation, if public discussion might result in an adverse legal or financial consequence. (Does not permit an executive session solely because attorney is present.) 42.30.110 (1) (i). The executive session was expected to last forty-five minutes, with no action expected. Executive session ended at 4:20 P.M.

Ms. Byrd and Mr. Bird requested several times that all in attendance put face masks on. The Board returned to the special meeting at 4:23 P.M.

3.0 NEW BUSINESS

3.1 Resolution No. 940 – Local Control

Ms. Williams opened the meeting. Mr. Jansons moved that the meeting be moved to zoom. Ms. Williams asked all to please put masks on. With masks on, since there was no second, the meeting began. Ms. Williams stated the meeting was called to discuss a resolution-local control regarding masks. Ms. Williams then turned the time over to Mr. Bird.

Mr. Bird moved that-

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY THE BOARD VOTE TO GO TO MASK CHOICE IN THE RICHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT.

Ms. Byrd seconded the motion.

Discussion followed:

Mr. Jansons stated the motion is out of order. This was not given to the Board ahead of time. His understanding was that the Board was discussing a resolution for local control. Mr. Jansons stated

he will vote no, that the vote is illegal, and the motion is willfully and knowingly violating the law and Board member's Oath of Office. It leaves all personally liable for any claims made by students or staff in the District. Mr. Jansons advised it is important for us to follow the law.

Mr. Bird stated his decision is not based on pressure or personal gain. He shared information from Dr. Person, Benton Franklin Health District, and stated the University of Washington group, baring a new variant, is predicting a consistent downturn of cases. Mr. Bird feels the mandate is not a law and Chris Reykdal, OSPI Superintendent, supports ending the mask mandate. Mr. Bird is not prepared to wait for this decision from the Governor. He feels mask choice is the equitable decision. Mr. Bird also stated this is not the Superintendent's doing, this is the Board's decision and asked that both sides be respectful.

Ms. Oldson is not willing to remove the mask mandate when the finish line is near and feels there will be unintended consequences.

Ms. Byrd is advocating for students and families. Since many states and countries have released the mask mandate, she feels students and staff should have choice for both wearing masks and receiving vaccines.

Mr. Jansons stated under this motion this Board would be directing staff to break the law and feels the vote is illegal.

Ms. Williams stated she fought for families to have a voice. She didn't want to force students to come back stating several options available. She feels the District should look at local hospitals, not the number of cases. Ms. Williams called for a vote.

Bird, yes;

Mr. Jansons added: there was no discussion or notification that a motion for mask choice would be on the agenda. He feels ambushed. There was discussion to have a workshop to consider Local Control at the last meeting. There is a lack of trust and the ramifications are personal to those who vote yes since they are violating the law and directing staff to break the law. Mr. Jansons strenuously voted no.

Olson, no; Audra, yes, Kari, yes.
The motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:43 P.M.

RICHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 400

SECRETARY, BOARD OF DIRECTORS