

UNAPPROVED
MINUTES OF SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

A special meeting of the School Board, Spink County, South Dakota, of Redfield School District #56-4 was held at 6:00p.m. on the 1st day of February, 2021 with the following members present: Wurtz, Dickhaut, Evans, Hodges, and Lambert. Also present were Seiler, Kocer, Becker, Lewis, and Stover.

Board Chair Wurtz called the meeting to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public participation-Approximately 20 members of the public attended the special meeting. Heather Morris, Debbie Bowar, Lisa Cosato, and Diane Forgey spoke in favor of remaining in Tier Two with a mask requirement as outlined in the Back to School Well plan to help protect students, staff, and community members. Malinda Fey spoke about the limits placed on the student body for attendance at events. Lance Schade spoke about the restrictions and stated that he did not understand why parents of elementary students could not attend the Elementary Christmas program, but parents of middle school and high school students were allowed to attend their program in person. Mr. Seiler read a letter from Tracy Schutte, who expressed concern about the discussion to move down to Tier One.

Action #71 – Motion by Dickhaut, second by Evans to approve the agenda. Yes – All; Motion carried.

Dr. Randall Waldner from Redfield Community Memorial Hospital provided a presentation. He stated that the Redfield area has done a good job of controlling the virus and other illnesses, as well as the fact that the CMH staff is in full favor of keeping Tier Two in place to continue limiting the spread. Dr. Waldner shared the fact that we are still in community spread status, so individuals are potentially at risk anywhere they go in public in the community. He spoke about the impact COVID has had on the nursing homes and the importance of the use of precautions to help limit the spread. Dr. Waldner discussed the fact that new strains of the virus are appearing and that there has not been enough time yet to fully research the effectiveness of the vaccines on these new strains. He also spoke about the priority groupings for the vaccine in South Dakota, which has now moved into Phase 1D. Dr. Waldner also spoke about studies related to the antibodies levels in individuals who have contracted COVID and the uncertain nature of the necessary frequency of the COVID vaccine going forward after the initial vaccines. Dr. Waldner concluded by saying that he is in complete support of the Tier Two measures and mask mandates staying in place.

Mr. Seiler presented numbers related to the positive cases of students and staff members during the school year. He also shared information on the numbers of quarantined students, attendance restrictions in place for NEC schools, and the methods used by other area schools in their buildings during the school day. He also provided information on the number of attendees at recent events. Mr. Seiler also shared the results of a staff survey in which 59 staff members responded that they would like the school to stay in Tier Two and 12 staff members responded that they would like to consider moving down to Tier One. Discussion followed on the process to get on the list and whether or not tickets should be required going forward. Mr. Hodges stated that as long as a mask requirement was still in place, he felt that there should no longer be a restriction on the number of people in attendance. Mr. Dickhaut shared his concerns with rolling back restrictions and policing mask requirements during events. It was noted that the number of fans attending all recent events was below the total number of tickets available for entry.

Action #72 – Motion by Hodges, second by Evans to have unlimited attendance at K-12 events with masks required and for the school to remain in Tier Two. Yes – Dickhaut, Evans, Hodges, Lambert; No – Wurtz; Motion carried.

Board Chair Wurtz shared her thoughts on eliminating restrictions related to COVID. She stated that as the Board of Education, all of the decisions made by the governing body should be in the best interest of students and student safety. She also expressed concerns about the ability to police the mask requirement during events since concessions are still being served.

Action #73 – Motion by Wurtz to restrict concessions to the Bird Feeder (cafeteria area). No second for the motion; Motion failed.

Mr. Seiler spoke about the need for a new mini-bus because of issues with Bus # 2. He stated that he will continue to work on obtaining the necessary information for this purchase.

Action #74 – Motion by Hodges, second by Lambert to table the discussion of the mini-bus purchase.
Yes – All; Motion carried.

Action #75 – Motion by Dickhaut, second by Hodges to adjourn at 8:01p.m. Yes – All; Motion carried.