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Minutes of Governing Board Book Study/Study Session Meeting

Tuesday, April 1, 2025 @ 5:00 pm

Prescott Unified School District Governing Board

A Regular Study & Voting Session Meeting of the Governing Board of Prescott Unified School District was held Tuesday, April 1, 2025, beginning at 5:00 pm in the Boardroom of the PUSD District Office.

All supporting documents/attachments can be found by visiting our website:

<https://www.prescottschools.com/>

This meeting was live streamed and the video recording can be viewed by visiting the following link:

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Board Members present:

Governing Board President, Stan Goligoski

Governing Board Vice President, Jane Robertson

Andy Fraher, Member

Jennifer Bergamini, Member

Brett Mangum, Member

Others present:

Clark Tenney, Superintendent

Brian Moore, Chief Financial Officer

Andy Binder, Assistant Superintendent/Human Resources

Kelsey Secor, Assistant Superintendent/Instruction

Sarah Torres, Administrative Assistant to Superintendent and Governing Board

Karlee Molster, Governing Board Student Representative

Those absent:

Vanessa Ibarra, Governing Board Student Representative

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1. **CALL TO ORDER** - Governing Board President, Stan Goligoski called this meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

2. **STUDY SESSION**

2.A. **Review/Discuss Chapters 5 & 6 of "How Not To Be a Terrible School Board Member" by Richard E. Mayer.**

Presenter: Clark Tenney, Superintendent.

Governing board President, Stan Goligoski introduced the book to the audience and noted, yes, we still do book studies, we are always learning. The book is How Not to Be a Terrible School Board Member and is tongue in cheek as Mr. Tenney says. We have two chapters that we are going to review for 15 minutes and then we'll go into our regular board meeting.

Superintendent Tenney noted, the two chapters or habits that we read this time are terrible habit number five and number six. Number five is Never Question the Administration. The implication is that you should be asking questions of the administration with some regularity. Mr. Tenney asked Board members if they would like to summarize the scenario.

Jennifer Bergamini noted, the Board member had listened to a presentation, had some questions, but realized that no one else seemed concerned or had any questions and felt like they just needed to move the meeting along, instead of asking questions they moved one.

Mr. Tenney noted, the board member even had questions in advance as they read over the agenda a couple of days before the meeting. This wasn't coming from a place of suspicion, but legitimate questions, yet chose not to bring those up. The book suggests that it is a terrible habit to just let that opportunity go by.

The four options are:

- Don't waste everyone's time with naive questions, The board meeting needs to move along efficiently.
- Ask any questions you have after the meeting or during a break later in the meeting.
- Ask your questions directly of the superintendent or the M/O director before the meeting, either by phone or email.
- Ask your questions at the meeting until you are fully satisfied that you understand what you are voting on.

Jennifer Bergamini noted the book suggests that number 3 or 4 are the best practices.

Mr. Tenney noted, I would agree. There is nothing wrong with getting all the information you need and could ask in advance. It did suggest that you might want to make sure your questions and answers are

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shared with all the board members before the meeting as well and that they become part of the public record. One thing I liked is what your constituents would ask.

Stan Goligoski noted I think it is human nature and even in the previous chapter the fact that sometimes you hold back questions because either you are reading a room or you don't feel comfortable. What I highlighted in this one is your job as a school board member is to ask questions, even naive ones on behalf of the community.

Andy Fraher noted how would it work to make sure your questions and answers are shared with all the board members before the meeting. This caught me with open meeting laws.

Mr. Tenney noted, for open meeting law purposes you probably want to do that directly. Either email the other four board members and say, I just talked with Sarah or I talked with Brian or Clark and this is what I found out. You might ask one of us after the conversation to share that information.

Jane Robertson noted, that is the one that caught my attention as well. The other thing I underlined was remember you are simply doing the people's work, and we all need to be crystal clear before we vote on an issue. This means we need to ask questions that seem a little bit silly or that we don't quite know what we are talking about. We have to remember that there is probably somebody else that has the same question.

Mr. Tenney noted, each of these sections has a superintendent lesson learned section and the things I underlined were an ideal situation is to have a board that seeks to be well informed and deliberative in all its decisions. And the other thing I underlined is that a good question or two might even result in improving a recommended course of action. The thing that came to mind immediately for me is when our leadership team brought you our mission statement that we spent a lot of time and effort on, followed a pattern and there were some thoughts around maybe this could be even better; could we table this and bring this back.

Mr. Tenney noted, Terrible habit number six Solicit Complaints from Teachers or Staff. This is saying you probably shouldn't be doing that. Who would like to share this scenario?

Brett Mangum noted, a board member went on a listening tour and discussions spiraled out of control and they became negative and critical of Principals and Administrators and then the board member was stuck.

Mr. Tenney noted, I thought it was interesting that this person started with the same really great idea that Brett and Jen had recently. Is there a way we could get around to each school and have an opportunity to meet with the staff members and you spent a considerable amount of time doing that at each of our sites.

The four options here are:

- Do not have lunch with teachers. You need to keep your distance as a board member.

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- Invite the principal to have lunch with you. That way, you can resolve any complaints about her face to face.
- Have lunch only with school union representatives so they can represent everyone's concerns to you.
- Keep the lunch focused on a productive exchange of information. You want to know what is going on in the schools. And they want to know what the board is up to.

Mr. Tenney noted, Jen and Brett, would you say that the fourth one being focused on productive exchange of information was by and large the case for your meetings?

Jennifer Bergamini noted, yes, definitely. They shared things that weren't necessarily positive and things they were concerned about. It wasn't ever brought up negatively about individual people. The one thing the book pointed out too is that the board member said your principal is not with us and I can assure you we'll keep anything you say confidential. That invites that kind of conversation. Most of our principals chose not to stay in the room with us and allow for more freedom of communication, but it certainly wasn't communicated that way, that you can't be here, or that the principal is not here intentionally.

Jane Robertson noted, it is not our job to become a mediator between teachers and administrators. We need to be tactful, we need to be delicate. I do go to lunch occasionally but you just have to be really careful about what you say and how you say it and what you are asking of them.

Andy Fraher noted, that is where I think the first option does have some value to it. I don't think you have to keep your distance as a board member, it doesn't mean be aloof and not speak to the teachers, but you do have to recognize what is an appropriate conversation and interaction to have in that setting. There is some distance that you need to have in that relationship.

M. Tenney noted, I think our board is exemplary in driving inside the lines so to speak on most of what is recommended here. It doesn't mean just because it is in the book we have to do it, but I think in general, there is a pretty good consensus that much of what is suggested here is something that would be beneficial to us.

ADJOURNMENT - Mr. Stan Goligoski noted, we have two minutes, so if you need to take a quick break we will start the regular meeting promptly at 5:15. Hearing no objections, this meeting adjourned at 5:13 pm.

Sarah A. Torres, Governing Board Secretary