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South Kitsap School District Board Meeting

Comments posted by Roger Gay on Informkitsap: <http://rogergay.com/south-kitsap-issues.html>

South Kitsap School District

The first [South Kitsap School District](#) board meeting was very interesting. The Zoom meeting had audio and video available, Participants was on, Raise Hand was on in Participants, Reactions was available but Chat was not. There was a meeting id, but no password. The meeting started with about 22 participants including the Directors and school staff. Director Diehl was absent. The first item up is usually approving the agenda and that had Director Daily objecting to the fact there was nothing on the agenda dealing with students. No topic with students as the primary subjects and Director Daily thought that was why the Board was there. There was a vote to accept the agenda as is and it passed 3-1 with 1 absent.

There was no Public Comment at the first part of the agenda to allow public comment. The Board started into the financial statement and I noticed background voices, like someone had their microphone on. The host should be able to limit who is muted or not and who is on video or not. If I am not on video and do not have access I have my name on either a blank screen or a screen with my picture. Audio shows up by a microphone symbol on the individual screen and a microphone and video symbol on the Participant screen that has the stop symbol when you do not have access. Depending on the settings of the host of the meeting and the participant viewers can have

access to audio to listen and talk and look at all the video of the participants and if given the ability the participants can share their screen. It is a very flexible system and I think at times too flexible. I have attended around 50 Zoom meetings since March and I now have my own paid Zoom account, I am still learning the in's and out's of the program. What I am very disappointed at is how nobody has stepped up and given advice on how best to operate in this climate of remote meetings. The Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA RCW 42.30) is clear how the various agencies need to be open with the public in their operations. Add to that the Public Records Act (PRA RCW 42.56) which covers how the public can keep informed via official records. On March 24, 2020, the Governor waived and suspended some of the OPMA & PRA requirements. I think that is scheduled to expire on 16 June, 2020. When you attend a number of on-line meetings as I have, you begin to see a pattern of confusion, lack of coordination and skills. You would think Governor, who voided numerous sections of the OPMA & PRA requirements due to the Covid19 pandemic would have had the foresight, skills and ability to give the thousands of public organizations a path to follow to ensure the public is still involved in the process. Olympia did nothing, it is the wild west when it comes to the OPMA & PRA in Washington. There was no coordination, nor minimal commonality for the public between agencies, no standards or expectations from Olympia's leadership. This failure at the upper levels of Olympia lead to a Zoom bomb of the South Kitsap School District. On one individual screen not long after the background conversations started happening appeared a very pornographic video. The audio seemed to be taken over by very loud, very obnoxious and very racially directed voices. At least one other individual screen started carrying pornographic video. The Directors and school staff were stunned to say the least. I logged off the meeting in a few minutes and waited for about 10 or more minutes before trying again. There were fewer participants, but the issues were still present. The SKSD broadcasts their meetings on Face Book Live and I tried to look there and found a video that contained the same I have seen. I do not think that is available now.

The school district shifted to another Zoom format (webinar) which I did not find out about until almost an hour later. I decided to not view the meeting at that point and I waited until recently to view the new video of the meeting. This Zoombomb will change how the district holds meetings. This will change on how the public interacts with the school board. I seriously doubt the people who did this will be found, but their actions will affect meetings for the foreseeable future.

The new meeting started in a webinar format which gave viewers the ability to see one person who is talking and no video view of other attendees or participants. Commenting at the Public Comment times was limited to a Question & Answer tab in the Zoom program. When the system is set up for Speaker View vice Gallery View you miss the expressions of those on the video side and you get a continual back and forth of the video which depends

on Zoom to identify who is talking. Yes, background noise like dogs or paper shuffling can shift the view.

The new meeting started off where they had left off, the Financial information. Again you can view the video to get more details, just visit the Board Documents page and the webinar video is posted. This budget document has been modified per the request of mainly Director Daily and Diehl. It has had a few pages added and some ways the data has been presented has been modified. It looks like the Connections Academy will have its data pulled from the overall data for the budget document. It seems it skews the data. Director Daily had an issue with some of the information and the conversations are interesting. Basically I think at times there is an apples and oranges issue when it comes to comparing data from month to month and year to year. At one point Director Daily mentioned a budget passed by the Board last year that was a deficient budget. Basically they budgeted to spend more than the received in revenues. It was a planned process as reserves were used to balance the budget. Director Daily had a number of financial questions on specific line items in the data. One item that came up was the school district had \$17,800,000 in extra in the budget in 2019. I am not sure I would not have questioned why the district had so much extra at the end of the school 2019 year. Daily asked how many employees are paid by Olympia and how many are paid by local funds, ie. taxpayers. This went on for a while and then Director Berg had a Point of Order that Director Daily was tasking Superintendent Winter with actions and actions to Superintendent Winter should come from the full Board of Directors and not one Director. Director Daily was not happy with the Roberts Rules of Order comment and Superintendent Winter commented that the staff person presenting (the Assistant Superintendent) should not be burdened with line by line questions on the budget documents. The term used I think was “barraged”. Director Daily said the Board has asked the same questions before while Director Sebren mentioned that most of the questions came from Daily and not the full Board.

I understand Director Daily when he asks questions, the public has felt left out of the process at SKSD for decades. I think Director Daily needs to focus on questions that have a purpose and quit playing around. At times it seems as if Director Daily wants to make a point but is having a difficult time getting there. If the Board of Directors gets the information packet for the meeting days ahead of time, that should leave time for the Directors to come up with questions, get the answers and then at the meeting succinctly clarify a particular point that is being made. Instead we see a back and forth between Daily, the Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent. The Board of Directors Chair was mostly silent during this.

They went quickly through Board Linkages, Legislative Report and jumped into Board Discussion. The only document was the changes to the Public Comment process that had been updated by Director Berg, were discussed

quickly and passed 3-1 with Director Diehl absent. Of course there was another document regarding having two presentations for action items as Director Daily did not want the process to feel rushed, basically back to the first and second reading that have been prevalent earlier. Director Berg was not in favor as it would add to much time to the process and if more time was needed it could be brought up for a vote to move the action to another date. This also passed 3-1 with Diehl absent.

On to the Consent Agenda and its 5 line items. Director Daily had numerous questions on this area. Most dealt with Employment Reports, Vouchers & Payroll and the membership renewal. Some were answered easily by explaining the status of a Dean at the high school. It was basically moving a staff person into a job they were already doing, basically catching up paperwork. The issue was it showed it being caused directly by school attendance while actually it was not attendance related. It seemed to be more verbiage than poor data. The Consent Agenda passed 3-1 with Diehl absent.

It is funny at times how Director Daily brings up questions and the answers revolve around the wording or the underlying definitions of the subject. I wonder if anyone at the school district is paying attention to this. If an elected School Board Director is asking questions based on not being fully aware of the intimate details, what the heck do you think the general public/taxpayers are thinking? It could be the general public goes over the information and relying on what they read and can figure out from the data and the write-up that maybe the school district has problems. If the school district has questions from the Directors, how competent can they be in keeping the general public informed in a way that is easily understood? Odds are the typical voter and taxpayer who wants to spend time looking at the reams of data on budget, attendance, expenses and projects will have questions pop up and not actually take the time to ask either their Director or the Superintendent. They will just put the detail in the memory bank and bring it out when they are asked to support something the district wants.

In new Business there was a contract with the Washington School Information Processing Cooperative (WSIPC). I give thumbs up to the district with their addition of the Background Information to the agenda. This along with the Superintendents comments are a good path to follow for the district. Maybe questions the Directors have on the various elements of the agenda before the meeting can be addressed here as potentially the general public may have the same questions.

The WSIPC contract is an annual event and this year the district is getting charged a base cost of \$20.34 per student FTE, \$1.25 per student FTE for New Student Online Enrollment module and \$1.50 for WSIPC hosting

services. The total per student FTE is \$23.09. Funny that at no time did the question come up how much was paid in 2019 and what was the expected amount for 2020. The Head Count data showed 10,079 so that is \$232,724.11. I expect it would be lower as the numbers for the year change. When asked if this was worth it, Superintendent Winters said yes. This passed 4-0 with one absent. The second Action Item dealt with the Dairy contract and it passed. This was authorizing the 1 year extension the contract has in it. Director Daily seemed to be little confused with this, but he did vote yes.

The Superintendent Report had two items. The first was regarding the graduation. It looks like the district did the graduation where the students walked up on the stage individually to accept the diplomas and process was video taped. Social distancing was used. The actual video will be out to the public, the parents and the graduates around 9 June. Overall it seemed a very good process and the students and parents were happy.

The next discussion dealt with the opening of the district in the fall. Believe it or not Olympia and the Office of Public Instruction (OSPI) have not been fully engaged in giving direction to the school districts. I gathered the this district, like many others, was ready to start planning for the fall. The issue is you have difficulty in planning for the unknown. Until Olympia and the OSPI get their ducks in a row and give out advice and direction the school districts are spinning their wheels. The fall could see a blended model of education. It could be split between on-line and at school with classes split to meet social distancing requirements. Think about a bus that may have had 20+ students but due to Covid10 social distancing now will how 8-12 students. How many parents will continue with on-line education? How many will actually go elsewhere? There is a large group of school staff and parents involved in the planning, but a significant amount has to wait on Olympia and the OSPI.

The last Public Comment time actually had a few Zoom Q&A responses. It seemed some were asking how to comment. The Board went into an Executive Session and had to log off one meeting and log into another. The Chair ended up coming back and waiting for a specific time to close the official meeting. So if you want to see the Board of Director Chair in a close up for 10 minutes, watch to the end of the video. I suspect a better way to handle this will be found. That is one of the lessons I fault Olympia for in their changing the OPMA rules during this crisis. It seems like Olympia comes up with a partial solution and then throws various agencies into the deep end of the pool and tells them to figure it out. That is why there is no consistency or coordination in the 39 counties in Washington.