

VIRGINIA CITY COUNCIL

SPECIAL MEETING

COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

CITY OF VIRGINIA, MINNESOTA, March 18, 2014

Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of Virginia, Minnesota, was called to order by Mayor Russo at 9:00 A.M. in the Council Chambers, City Hall.

Roll Call:

Present: Ralston, Baribeau, Sipola, Baranzelli, Cuffe, Littlewolf - 7

Absent: None

The purpose of this Special Meeting is an overview of the of the school's process to attempt to co-locate.

The City Council had the opportunity to voice their concerns to the proposed co-location and here are some of them:

- The plan seems to be an accelerated plan triggered by money with a lack of information across the board.
- Future Economic Development would be jeopardized if funds from the Douglas J. Johnson tax fund are depleted.
- Student's would lose their school identity and their school pride being required to co-mingle
- Open Enrollment would be affected.
- Districts could lose control of curriculum.
- Future costs to citizens because nothing is for free.
- The co-location seems to be opening the door to a consolidation plan.
- The businesses and downtown areas would be affected in these communities that would be losing their school.
- Current debt service on existing buildings they are proposing to tear down.
- Losing the School in Virginia could affect the LEA Steam income resulting in residents having to pay increased utilities in the future.
- Operation of 3 districts sport's programs at one facility.

The City Council is looking for additional information and answers to the following questions:

- Where are the new school plans?

- Their definition of proposed World Class Education
- Economic Impact Study on all communities effected needs to be done.
- Would they have adequate funding without letting other economic funding suffer?
- What are the entire costs for the plan including all expenses for demo on the buildings they plan to tear down?
- Who are their consultants? Which firms are they working with? What are the recommendations of these firms?
- Have you preformed an energy audit to account for the remaining schools you plan to utilize after the colocation?
- What about our current Levies on buildings you are proposing we demo
- How will funds be disbursed with supplies and teaching materials among the districts in the school?
- How do you propose you will not reduce staff: administration, custodians?
- Have you outlined your transportation plans and expenses?
- Why is Mt. Iron the only location you have chosen for this proposed school?
- How will salaries be distributed and who will decide curriculum?
- Where are your studies showing co-location has been successful in other Minnesota Communities?
- What happens with funding if the co-located school turns into a consolidation down the road?
- Why hasn't the school board moved forward in looking to updating or repairing current facilities?
- Why hasn't the City of Virginia been asked by the school board to show them land options for a school?

There seems to be a lack of information that has triggered many questions. Several comments regarding a consolidation plan is more how this feels instead of a co-location. There also seems to be an accelerated plan at this co-location in order to secure funding making this more of a political decision instead of an informed decision.

Many comments focused on the fact that a world class education does not come from new brick and mortar but instead from teachers and a new building will not increase our testing scores.

Moved by Baribeau and supported by Baranzelli to gather all letters of concern regarding the proposed co-location of the school that have been received by the City Council and make them part of the record of this Special Meeting. Motion carried.

Moved by Baribeau and Supported by Baranzelli to continue dialogue with the school board by scheduling a question and answer meeting with the school board the day of their board meetings.

Councilor Ralston opposes this motion and felt that the proposed co-consolidation discussion should stop until it has been put on the Ballot so the citizens of Virginia have an opportunity to have a voice and vote on this.

Councillor Baribeau withdrew his motion and Councillor Baranzelli withdrew his support of the motion.

Motion withdrawn

Moved by Sipola and supported by Baranzelli to pay for the costs to video tape and air all of the School Board Meetings on all of the Public Access Channels in the communities to give the citizens the benefit of the information to make an informed decision if the school board is not willing to do. Motion carried.

Moved by Ralston and supported by Cuffe to come out against the current Legislation House File 2629 as currently written for funding of this co-located school.

There was discussion regarding the fact that several Council Member wished to review the House File 2629 before voting on the motion.

Moved by Littlewolf and supported by Baranzelli to table the motion to come out against the current Legislation House File 2629 as currently written for funding of the collocated school until the next regular meeting. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 10:20 A.M., with the next regular City Council meeting to be held at 6:30 P.M. on Tuesday, March 25, 2014.

LOUIS J. RUSSO
Mayor

(CORPORATE SEAL)

KRIS JOHNSON
Administrative Assistant-
Network Technician