

SOUTH KITSAP SCHOOL DISTRICT

Lid blows off at contentious SKSD board meeting

Director Daily calls for his own censure to bring dysfunctional allegation to the forefront

By Bob Smith

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SOUTH KITSAP
SCHOOL DISTRICT

PORT ORCHARD — Trouble has been percolating during South Kitsap School District's board of directors meetings over the past few scheduled meetings conducted virtually.

And at Wednesday evening's meeting, the proverbial tea kettle popped off its top when Jeff Daily, who was elected a school board director after defeating president Greg Wall in November, brought forth an odd twist to a motion that was already on the agenda that night: a censure resolution — but, at his suggestion, issued against himself.

The resolution on the agenda — a censure submitted by John Berg, also a new board member — called for sub-committees to look into “alleged offences (sp) and improprieties of Director Jeff Daily.”

Daily shortcircuited that discussion after board member Rebecca Diehl introduced a motion to remove Berg's agenda item, which was defeated by a 4-1 vote. He told board members that, instead, he wanted to bring the issue to the forefront:

“I propose that Director Daily be censured for his behavior and remarks. I have no idea what they are, but let’s end this right now because that’s where you’re going.”

The director, who represents District 5, accused Berg of disrespecting him in public and denying him “the right of due process, freedom of speech and confidentiality.”

When board President Eric Gattenby interrupted Daily and called his statement “not germane,” Daily chided him, asking Gattenby not to interrupt him.

“We are going to keep it here. We are going to solve it tonight — right here.”

Berg defended his action by citing the board’s policy concerning violations by directors. He said the Coherent Governance policy gives the board the authority to censure a director if that individual has willfully violated policy.

Gattenby reminded Daily that he had been warned of an instance in which he had likely violated the policy by disclosing a Public Disclosure Commission complaint that the board had discussed in an executive session.

Demanding that the board vote on his censure, Daily said the outcome had been “pre-determined.” With that being a “fait accompli,” the director said the effort would do nothing to “change things.”

Daily continued: “You get your censure, so now what? What does that fix?”

The school board voted on the two motions: Daily’s motion for self-censure was defeated 4-1, with his “yes” the sole vote in favor; the Berg motion for sub-committees to investigate the allegation passed by a 3-2 vote. Diehl joined Daily to vote against it.

Berg urged additional training so that directors could address the board’s dysfunctional operation. He said it’s not so much that the board has difficulty working within its governance model, but rather it’s that the personalities of the board members clash when working on school district matters.

“All the training in the world won’t do any good if the individual board members don’t work together,” he said.

Board member Liz Sebren said she hoped board members could eventually get beyond the name-calling and dysfunctional tone.

“We have a dysfunctional school board right now,” she said. “We need intensive training to help us get over our personalities.”