

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING held Tuesday, February 5, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. in the boardroom in the district office building.

The following Board Members were present to begin the meeting: President Stephen Allen, Vice-President Michelle Lambert, Mary Ann Kemp, Dale Brinkerhoff and Michelle Jorgenson-Jones. Also present were the following: Shannon Dulaney, Superintendent; and Kent F. Peterson, Business Administrator. Monica Torres was also present.

The purpose of the special meeting was to discuss and vote on the Cedar High School Mascot.

President Allen called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

Superintendent Dulaney offered prayer.

Michelle Lambert led the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Allen conducted the meeting.

President Allen welcomed everyone in attendance and explained that each board member would be given a chance to speak on the mascot issue at Cedar High School. He reminded everyone there will be no public input at this meeting.

President Allen began the meeting with an overview of the process the Board has gone through to this point. He explained that over the years various concerns about the Cedar High School mascot have come up from students, community members, parents, teachers, alumni, counselors, and administrators. In 2016 a Cedar High drill team performance garnered a great deal of controversy and national attention regarding the mascot. Following the controversy, a member of the school board, CHS administration, student leaders, Tribal representatives and district administrators engaged in several meetings and conversations. At that time the Board decided to not make any major decisions relating to the mascot in an effort to avoid a reactive response. The Board intentionally chose to review the mascot at a time where there was not a crisis. The idea was to take a proactive approach versus a reactive approach. This past November the Board asked that a mascot committee be formed to conduct an in-depth review of the mascot and make their recommendations to the Board. The committee was comprised of CHS students, CHS teachers, CHS alumni, Tribal leaders, CHS staff, administrators, and parents. A special email for public input regarding the mascot issue was created. The committee met several times, they researched and studied at length the emails they received as well as information received from the three public input meetings. In the last committee meeting they held a vote, with the results being in favor of retiring the mascot. On January 22nd, the committee made two presentations to the Board. The first presentation articulated why the mascot should be changed and the second presentation provided rationale to keep the mascot. It was known from the beginning this would be a very difficult process. Through it all it has been

a thoughtful process based on good information. President Allen then turned the time over to the Board for their comments.

President Allen spoke first and pointed out that regardless of what happens tonight he feels a tremendous amount of optimism for Cedar High and for all schools in Iron County. He has worried a lot about the students. He has also had discouraging thoughts that there may not be a positive way out. He expressed his gratitude to those who have reached out to board members with civility and respect. Elected officials have a great responsibility to look to the future and anticipate future needs and challenges. He pointed out the fact that board members don't always agree, but they always stand together and enjoy a level of trust that allows the opportunity for each to express themselves. He expressed his passion for education and desire for all children to have access to education. He explained as he looked at the mascot issue on every angle he continually asked, what is best for students? He thanked the committee for their work and for their commitment to do what is best for students. He pointed out that remarkably 70% of those on the committee came to the conclusion that the mascot should be retired. He also noted the fact that psychologists, sociologists, National Congress of Native Americans, US Commission on Civil Rights, among many other professional agencies all recognize Native mascots are not appropriate for public school systems because of the reinforcement of negative stereotypes. Students are also divided on this issue. He referred to a Native American student who wrote, "I do not feel honored to be a Redmen. I have seen a lot of disrespect on my culture at the school." Families have expressed concern about their kids wearing Redmen attire outside of the county. The Native American community has also been divided. The Kanosh Band of American Indians met on January 22nd and passed a resolution stating in part, the Council supports a change of the Cedar High mascot to protect the interest of Kanosh Band members attending Cedar High School. When asking what is best for students, President Allen expressed his desire to approve the committee's recommendation to respectfully retire the mascot. He acknowledged there are those in the community who feel passionately about the mascot and have asked the Board to keep it. He read a portion of a letter from a Native American Cedar High alum. The student encouraged the Board to be brave to do what is best for all students, current and future, and change the name. Changing the name does not mean taking away the history, Cedar High School will always have the term Redmen as part of its history. President Allen then turned the time over to Dr. Kemp for her remarks.

Dr. Kemp explained that to her knowledge this issue has been brought to the Board only because they are a governing body. She pointed out there is often times confusion about what a mascot means. She read the definition from the Webster's dictionary: a person, animal, or object adopted by a group as a symbolic figure especially to bring them good luck. She thanked the committee for volunteering their time and efforts. She praised the community for being wonderful, courteous and kind. She expressed her desire has been to remain neutral through this process in an effort to listen and learn from both sides of the issue with an open mind. It has become fashionable to become offended, which makes it hard to recognize when true offense is warranted. She pointed out many sports teams on all levels are moving away from human mascots for various reasons. One reason being the difficulty negotiating what is honorable and

what is not. This can become a challenge for schools represented by a group of humans because there is no rule book for this. She also brought up an example of having a hornet as a mascot and how only an occasional entomologist may care that the insect is misrepresented, which makes things comparatively simple. In 2001, the US Commission on Civil Rights called for an end to the use of Native Americans images and team names of non-native schools. She gave examples of other entities who have called for the retirement of Native American mascots. Dr. Kemp then questioned, who performed the research for these claims? She also questioned if the research had been politicized? Is this cultural or political? She brought up the term Redskins which has been said to refer to “scalps”. However, there is no clear evidence of this, and in fact, a case referring to the meaning of the term “Redskins” lost in the United States District Court in 2003 because the prosecutors couldn’t provide any evidence. This leaves us in a difficult decision trying to figure out what is accurate and what is not accurate. This is not an issue that will be quickly settled. Native American Organizations are working on both sides and various polls show Native Americans are split on the issue. Dr. Kemp spoke of the feelings of pride and respect she has when she walks into Cedar High. She expressed her desire and the Board’s desire to do what is right for their community, school and students. While the Board cares about the well being of all of our students, does that mean the majority must always forego their beliefs to please the few? We often disregard the values of the many in favor of the values of the few. She expressed her desire for the community, in this age of offense and outrage, to find forgiveness and understanding so that we can find unity in the storm. Whatever the Board decides today will displease some who have worked hard for one cause or another. She informed the Board she is here to represent the people and it appears the people overwhelmingly desire to keep the Redmen mascot. As such, her vote is to keep it.

Mr. Brinkerhoff spoke of the bullying, ridicule and stories of threats that have been voiced in the multiple public hearings. The Board has heard testimonies on both sides of the issue. He agreed we should do what we can to minimize the bullying and to make our schools safe and pleasant, but we cannot employ enough people to ensure we have zero bullying, it will always go on to some extent. He referred to the past bond election and brought up the fact there was nothing in the plan for the cost of a mascot change. Money and cost shouldn’t always be a determining factor if it’s that important of an issue. He feels this issue is not that important. Mr. Brinkerhoff reviewed a letter from the Paiute Tribal Chair that was given to the Board dated January 22, 2019. The letter lays out ten educational items they would like to see implemented if the Board votes to keep the mascot. Mr. Brinkerhoff reviewed the ten educational items with the Board and pointed out the Tribe has expressed a willingness to collaborate with the District. He brought up the question of what can be changed to retain the Redmen mascot? Do we change the imagery, pageantry, dress, the dance, or do we just dump the whole thing? He then read through the 27 states with Native American names and informed the Board there are 2,129 native mascots registered in the United States. 75 of the Native American mascots are Redskins and 17 are Redmen. He then showed a petition that was given to him with signatures in favor of keeping the Redmen mascot. He referred to a comment by a local Paiute Tribe member requesting they leave the mascot alone. Mr. Brinkerhoff discussed the difficult process of replacing the mascot. He explained that because pretty much everything can be found

offensive, including birds and animals, it will be hard to come to an agreement as to what we want to represent the school. He feels there are too many on the outside telling those on the inside to be offended and fears we are being forced to whitewash the beautiful American culture and heritage out of American history. His vote is to keep the Redmen mascot.

Mrs. Jorgenson-Jones thanked the committee and those in the community who have reached out to the Board, especially past Cedar High graduates. She addressed the fact that she is the only Cedar High graduate on the Board. She expressed her love for the school and understands the heritage and the things that have taken place there. She pointed out that for the past ten years Cedar High has been a school without a mascot. "Redmen" has not even been printed on athletic uniforms, etc. for years. She suggested making minor changes to the mascot name to give the current and future students something they can be proud of. She assured the Board she has read every email and listened to both sides and pointed out there are definitely two sides to this issue. She has spoken to the school's administration and teachers and they have different views on what they feel needs to take place. She spoke of the respect she has for each board member as she has served on the Board the past ten years. She reminded everyone this issue is about Cedar High School. It is about the students and educating them and giving them the best opportunities we can. She expressed her belief that a solution can be found by making adjustments to the name. Her desire is to make changes, but come up with something that will maintain the heritage in the school. She would like to discuss this further with the Board members.

Mrs. Lambert introduced herself. She has lived in Cedar City for a number of years and has served on the school board the past eight months. She has had two children graduate from Cedar High School, a child who is currently attending Cedar High and she has a future student of Cedar High. Just like everyone else, this has become a personal issue for her. She thanked everyone for their input through email and public hearings. She explained why she feels having this conversation feels threatening. She pointed out we cannot unlearn the things we've learned by having these conversations. We've heard voices we haven't heard and we know things now that we didn't used to know. She feels that no matter what happens tonight, we will come out of this process with a better school. Our memories and feelings are powerful, our sense of identity is powerful and every voice matters. Both voices have to matter. She brought up the fact that there has been a lot of concern about outside special interest groups being involved. She assured those in attendance that the only outside special interest group the Board has heard from is the Native Americans Guardian Association. She expressed her appreciation for their presentation last Saturday. There is no outside group motivating this, this is our conversation, it is about us. She pointed out she doesn't want to lose the prominent visual aspect of Native Americans in this community but questioned if the use of school mascots is the best way to do this. She also pointed out the debate in the private sector, an example being the debate regarding the Washington Redskins, cannot be compared to that of the public school system. As a public school system we have a different mandate, our mandate is: creating a better tomorrow for all. If we only worry about the majority we are dropping the ball. She reminded everyone that there are no bad people in this conversation, and there's no enemy, we are just a

community trying to figure out what is best for our students. She took a moment to speak to the institution side of things that she felt the public deserves to know and understand. This mascot demands a lot of time and resources. Our administrators have been dealing with this continuously for weeks, even years. It's a drain moneywise and timewise and every time we have a viral video, it's another crisis. She shared an email that was received from a former student that shed some light on something she feels we may not have thought of before. In the email the student refers to the mascot appearing on her high school transcripts and how she has been questioned by different entities as to why the symbol exists on such an official document. The student asked that the mascot be removed from the transcripts as it negatively impacts our students' futures. Mrs. Lambert then referred back to the ten educational items the Tribe requested if the mascot is not changed. If we keep the mascot, we will give final approval to the Tribe on all mascot related issues. Meeting these requirements may seem to make everyone happy, but administratively this is a significant challenge as the Tribal leadership changes regularly. What one leader may approve, the next may not. She pointed out this issue is not going to go away and we need to look at the future and decide if this is a burden we are willing to continue to carry. It is important to remember we are talking about our children and their experiences, not birds or animals. We need to make a place in our community for our Native American friends and neighbors to share their culture and celebrate their heritage in their own way. She pointed out we have the opportunity to give our students and future students a mascot and she feels confident that as a community we love each other enough to make it happen.

The Board briefly discussed ways to retain as much of the mascot as possible while adjusting the name to something that will not target our children.

Mrs. Lambert moved to respectfully retire the Cedar High Redmen mascot effective at the end of the 2018-2019 school year. President Allen seconded the motion. Dale questioned on the motion. By voice vote the board members voted as follows:

Mary Ann Kemp - keep mascot  
Dale Brinkerhoff - keep mascot  
Michelle Jorgenson-Jones - retire mascot  
Michelle Lambert - retire mascot  
Stephen Allen - retire mascot

The motion passed with a two to three vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:13 p.m. by President Allen.

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Board President

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Business Administrator