

Union Township Board of Supervisors
Special Meeting
August 1, 2012

The Board of Supervisors Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Linda Evans-Boren at 7:30 p.m. The meeting was held at the Finleyville Community Center, 3547 Marion Ave, Finleyville, PA 15332. The pledge of allegiance was recited. Board Members in Attendance by roll call were Larry Spahr, Linda Evans-Boren, Andrew Tullai and Brenda Cushey. Stephen Parish also attended but arrived at 7:47 p.m. Also in attendance, Dennis Makel—Solicitor, Debra Nigon—Secretary.

The solicitor addressed all present in regard to the areas he had been authorized by the Board to research relative to the closing of Finleyville Middle School and the renovation of the currently closed Monongahela and Donora elementary schools. He said that, in his estimation, based upon the financial figures and information supplied to him along with what he gleaned personally at the Ringgold School Board Meetings he's attended, the residents have a basis for an injunction or other action, although he could not guarantee their success.

The solicitor addressed the viability of seceding from the school district and the steps that would be necessary if the residents chose to make that decision. He stated that the necessary steps were provided to the Board of Supervisors and anyone interested could request a copy. The initial burden of the petitioners seeking secession would be obtaining the signatures of 51% of the taxable inhabitants of the district. Mr. Makel said that he was surprised to have found as many cases as he had where seceding had been approved by the State Board of Education. In the likely event that a petition by Ringgold School District residents be approved, the State Board of Education would assign those residents to an adjacent school district, Thomas Jefferson, South Park, Peter's Township, Jefferson Hills, etc.

Mr. Makel also made residents aware of the formal complaint procedure that is available through the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) should the School Board decide to seek reimbursement through PlanCon, an acronym for Planning and Construction Workbook which is a set of forms and procedures used to apply to the Commonwealth for reimbursement of construction costs.

If the School Board does not go through PlanCon, and the residents continue to be dissatisfied with the financial decisions made by the Ringgold School Board in terms of construction monies spent, he discussed his research in terms of filing an injunction and what would be required for the injunction to be successful.

The attendees had questions about the referendum that is to appear on the ballot in regard to millage increases to support construction or renovation activities. Mr. Larry Spahr instructed the group on the election law surrounding referendums. Specific language is dictated by the Unit Debt Law and the onus of determining whether the question is in compliance with statute requirements is ultimately up to the County solicitors. Per a law recently passed, a referendum cannot be used simply as a measure of public sentiment. The voting results are binding.

Board Approved: 9/10/12

The solicitor fielded questions by those in attendance.

The Board and solicitor advised the School District residents to create a citizen's group comprised of residents of the townships served by Ringgold School District. That citizen's group would need to be incorporated. His recommendation is that at least 200-300 active members be recruited. He advised the residents to obtain any necessary documents to support their cost estimates by using right-to-know requests to get copies of the budget, design plans, studies, etc... In addition, he suggested finding individuals interested in running for School Board at the next election. The solicitor also suggested that a petition for regionalization may be in order.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 p.m.

Motion by Brenda Cushey, Second by Larry Spahr

Roll call vote: Parish-yes, Spahr-yes, Evans-Boren-yes, Tullai-yes, Cushey-yes. Motion carried.

Debra A. Nigon, Secretary