

LEYTON BOARD OF EDUCATION, DISTRICT 17-0003  
BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES – SPECIAL MEETING  
April 9, 2020 – 4:00 p.m.

The Leyton Board of Education held a special meeting virtually via Zoom on Thursday, April 9, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. Publicized notice of the meeting was posted in the Leyton High School, Leyton JH/Elementary School, at various businesses in the community, and on the [www.leytonwarriors.org](http://www.leytonwarriors.org) website on or before April 3, 2020. Said posting gave date, time, and zoom connection information.

1 CALL TO ORDER

1.1 Board President Jed Benish called the special school board meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. He stated that the meeting would follow the Open Meetings Act guidelines which may be found at:  
[https://nitc.nebraska.gov/documents/statutes/NebraskaOpenMeetingsAct\\_current.pdf](https://nitc.nebraska.gov/documents/statutes/NebraskaOpenMeetingsAct_current.pdf).

1.2 ROLL CALL

1.2.1 The following Board of Education members were present: Galen Bartling, Jed Benish, Ryan Borges, Colleen Cruise, Kevin Henke and Anne Rexroth. Absent: None.

1.2.2 The following Administrators were present: Superintendent Chris Geary, Elementary/JH Principal Dana Morgan and HS Principal Nick Brost. Absent: None.

1.3 President Benish stated that bids for the science room remodel were opened on Tuesday, April 7, 2020.

Paul Reed Construction: Base Bid - \$267,262; \$6,194 deduct for tables

Anderson Shaw Construction: Base Bid - \$262,357; \$5,219 deduct for tables.

2 REGULAR AGENDA

2.1 EXCUSING A BOARD MEMBER

None

2.2 STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT BENISH

“Welcome everyone. I have been in contact with members of the board and as their spokesperson I am going to address a few things. These items got brought up due to a Facebook post from a possible future board member.

The board does not hide behind the inability of a public forum style meeting. This board follows the Open Meetings Act. People are welcome to address the board if they get on the agenda. It is a meeting held in public not a public meeting.

Facebook is not the place to get your information. I pleaded with people at the last meeting to call and get information, but no one has. Not even possible future board members. Instead they post their own figures. Never in the discussion of the science room did the figure 400,000 + come up, but it gets posted on Facebook and people start sharing it as gospel. Why are we invoking fear in people based on misinformation? This project has been discussed in length for several years at several meetings. In fact it was put on a three year plan, hence the reason for starting the process of design last fall. It was budgeted for with the

building fund levy. This is also a false statement of Facebook. This would not deplete the depreciation fund as it was coming out of the building fund. As far as truth and transparency everyone in the community was invited to be on the committee. Here are a few of those great committee members: Community Members: Bud Gillespie, Dan Carlson, Chris Morgan, Shad Benish, and Kelly Reimers; Board Members: Galen Bartling and Colleen Cruise; School Members: Chris Geary, Dana Morgan, Nick Brost, Tracy Cooper, Jesse Henderson, and Rylee Blomenkamp. I am sure that I am missing some, but these are a few of the people involved. It was also questioned how we select people to be on committees. In the fall of 2018, Mr. Geary put in the newsletter asking people to serve on the committee. Anyone and everyone is welcome.

Also I would like to thank Dave Weideman for attending our public board retreat, where the findings of the committee were also discussed.

I also read on Facebook yesterday that the track is over-budget. It indeed is not. It actually is under-budget. It was budgeted just shy of 1 million dollars which included football lights and grandstands. It was not 1.4 million dollars which was also posted on Facebook. The board and committee are made up of many intelligent and rational people who educate themselves before they make a decision as a whole. Why do we assume that a decision hasn't changed due to recent events? That is why the need for the meeting today. If people would call board members or the superintendent there would not be the need for these Facebook posts full of zero facts. I feel sorry for every person on the committee and the board when people look to Facebook to slander them. But in the world today, fake news is everywhere and the misrepresentation of this project by a possible future board member is no exception.

The board is no place for an agenda, unless your agenda is the success of all our students. If you are the person spreading false information about this project or any other project, I feel you owe the board and community members an apology. The opening of the bids was also a public meeting. Before people spread false information they should attend those meetings. The low bid came in at approximately 262K not 400K+. I only hope the same people who read and shared the false post attended this zoom meeting to get the facts. I personally invited the person who made the false post to contact Mr. Geary to get exact facts. That invitation was denied. Consequently the Facebook post full of false information occurred. I am not sure why the need to invoke fear needed to happen. Opinions are more likely to be heard when discussed rationally instead of being slandered on Facebook. It is not up to board members to reach out to people and correct them when false information is put on social media. Instead people should reach out to board members or to the school to get the correct information before going to social media

To address the budget, here are some facts. I went back eleven years because that is how long Colleen and I have been on the board. Including the amount that was levied for the science room, our annual budget increase is at .71%. To keep an annual increase that is less than three quarters of one percent makes me feel this board has been fiscally responsible.

Do any other board members wish to speak? Otherwise we will go to Galen Bartling - chair of the buildings and grounds committee.”

2.3 STATEMENT BY MEMBER BARTLING

“My name is Galen Bartling and I’m the board chair of the Leyton Building and Grounds Committee.

Social media is ablaze with misinformation today, including personal attacks on board members who aren’t even on the committee. If you have questions – get a hold of me! I started this idea two years ago. It’s been in board minutes at least four times, but no questions until today.

I first brought my desire for the science room remodel to the board retreat in March of 2019, where it was first discussed. The board felt it necessary to proceed due to the failing plumbing, asbestos level and just the need to update the learning space.

There have been informational meetings. On November 4<sup>th</sup>, where community members (invited by committee members) attended, I personally invited Bud Gillespie and Alex Frerichs. The room was discussed and ideas shared with the hope of this information going into the community by all in attendance. The same people were then invited to another meeting on February 24, 2020, that involved layout and Mr. Henderson’s vision of what this classroom should look like; and we went with his ideas almost to the letter.

With architect estimates, we levied \$0.05 into this year’s budget for the science room. We opened our bids on Tuesday and today, we will make decisions based on those bids.

I can’t stress enough – if you have questions, please contact a board member and we will do our level best to get you factual information.”

2.4 APPROVAL OF SCIENCE ROOM BID

Discussion was held regarding the science room remodel. Board Member Bartling expressed his concern that due to many COVID-19 business closures, that there may be a delay in getting materials to finish the project on time. He recommended that this decision be tabled until February 2021.

Motion by Bartling, seconded by Borges to table approval of bids for the High School science room remodel until February 2021. ROLL CALL VOTE:

VOTING YES – Benish, Borges, Cruise, Henke, Rexroth and Bartling. VOTING NO – None. MOTION CARRIED: 6-0.

3 INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Until the statewide directed health measure (DHM) is lifted or expires, future meetings will be held virtually via Zoom connection.

3.1 Next Regular Board meeting via Zoom Monday, April, 20, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.

4 MEETING ADJOURNED

Motion by Cruise, seconded by Rexroth to adjourn the special board meeting at 4:14 p.m. ROLL CALL VOTE: VOTING YES – Borges, Cruise, Henke, Rexroth, Bartling and Benish. VOTING NO – None. MOTION CARRIED: 6-0.