

In response to the letter from the Valley Reporter and the Waterbury Record I wanted to say a few things –

- (1) Respectfully, the press cannot determine that our session violated open meeting law as no reporters were a part of the session and any conclusions are based on the words of a few board members. In addition, the board members who spoke to the press about the session violated OML themselves when they did not stop the meeting they purportedly considered illegal when it was happening as the law requires. In addition, they violated the school board's code of ethics when they spoke about the contents of an executive session to the press.

The VR/WR letter stated that how we handle conflict and strife is relevant to the voters and the public. I believe that the public has seen more than it probably wants to of the board's conflict and strife, as witnessed by Amy Rex's resignation letter. My hope would be that the VR/WR would work to accurately report what is happening in our meetings, not to work to create additional conflict and strife outside of our meetings. We as a board, in turn, will work to make sure that we are all educated and on the same page about OML and executive sessions.

- (2) While the press and one or two board members are concerned about the OML and the executive session and have been publishing and speaking about it for months now, I have had not had a single community member approach me with any concerns other than why is this still being talked about by the press.
- (3) I do not believe that the board or superintendent has violated OML and I would remind everyone that our board has already passed a resolution responding to Heidi Spear and Jill Ellis's letter. However it is abundantly clear that there are at least 2 current board members who feel differently about the executive session. While there is no legal need for this, in the interest of working productively in the future, I propose that we as a board consider actions that are consistent with the remedies suggested

in 314 (4) to prevent any future issues and to allow us to focus on the work we need to do.

- (4) 1. VSA 314 clearly states that if (a) the meeting was illegal, any action needs to be declared void. Since there was no action, 4 (a) is not an issue. 4(b) suggests we adopt specific measures to prevent future violations. I propose that as a board we consider education from our district attorney Pietro Lynn about executive sessions. I would encourage the press to be present for that education also.

In addition, I would ask that Pietro Lynn provide our board with education on how to communicate outside of board meetings in general. Ironically, those board members complaining about OML complaints are operating outside of normal meetings with their emails, and are not using the appropriate forum – our open meetings – to discuss their concerns. Per 1 VSA 310, email communication is only to be used to schedule a meeting, organize an agenda or distribute materials to be discussed at a meeting, not to recommend motions or to complain.

- (5) Finally just to be clear, I would like to propose a motion stating that there was no violation and that as a result no cure is needed. I believe that this board would like the opportunity to focus on our students and schools and to put this matter behind us. I would respectfully ask the press and the entire board to support us in moving forward.