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USD 480 New Travel Policy Stalls

The USD 480 Board of Education met Monday night for a regularly scheduled meeting at the Education Service Center.

The hot topic of the meeting was the new travel policy that was up for a vote that was put together by the district task force committee. The new policy included a per diem for cost of food. The new policy didn't pass though as the vote was 3-3 with Stacy Johnson, Dan Diepenbrock, and Cheryl Louderback opposing, while Nick Hatcher, Reid Petty, and Dr. Jim Jury voted in favor of it. Tammy Sutherland-Abbott was absent.

Diepenbrock said he opposed it because he wants a per diem that just hands out cash with no receipts, while Hatcher and Petty disagreed with that method citing accountability and transparency to taxpayers as a reason for wanting the per diem to include the use of receipts. Johnson said he doesn't feel a per diem in general is needed because he trusts the district employees to spend the money wisely.

The district task force committee will now put together more then one option for a new travel policy and present it to the board for a third time as this first came to the board back on October 5, in which it was tabled.

Other action items that were on the agenda was the consent agenda which included three overnight trips for students, a gift, and two waivers of building rental fees. This passed 5-1 with Diepenbrock opposing.

The board also voted to change their policy on voting during meetings. The old policy read that board members must raise their hands to cast a vote. Since the board votes on laptops now, the new policy states that the vote will be read out loud by the presiding officer of the meeting. This passed 6-0.

There was an item on the agenda that was the Schools for Fair Funding Act, which is a group of schools who are filing a lawsuit to force the state to give Education more money. Joining this cause would have cost the district over $20,000. This item died though due to the lack of a motion.

The Board of Education will next meet on Monday, November 9.

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