

MINUTES
OHIO COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT #505
SPECIAL INFORMATIONAL MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2025 AT 6:30 P.M.

The Special Information meeting of the Board of Education of the Ohio High School District #505 was held on Tuesday, February 25, 2025 in the school auditorium.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M.

1.1 Roll Call

High School Board members present: Harold Albrecht, Brock Kaecker, Chad Deery, Janice Campbell, Reka Albrecht, Courtney Forristall

High School Board members not present: Cindy Hacker

Administrator present: Superintendent Jennifer Hamilton

Board Secretary: Kelly Becker

Other attendees: Kristen Ryan, Linda Downey, Don Reuter, Brenda Reuter, Bob Reuter Jr, Cara Kniss Tara Cassidy, Liberty Cassidy, Linsey Deery, Mike Walker, Bob Gonigam, Don Reuter Sr, Nash Piper, Beka Piper, Robert Albrecht, Greg Albrecht, Jacob Albrecht, Matthew Allard, Christini Christensen, Skyler Spohn, Heather Loftus, Audry Roberts, Kim Younge, Rebecca Albrecht, Jonathan Albrecht, Janet Miller, Susan Wolf, Darren Bell, Angie McDonald, Vinni Zembruski, Ron Kaecker, Harleigh Hiebing, Brittany Gonzalez, Jacob Leffelman

1.2 Approval of Agenda

Motion by Deery, second by Kaecker to approve the agenda as presented.

The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

II. PUBLIC SESSION

2.1 Question and answer for Ohio Community Vote on April 1, 2025 "Resolution to Deactivate Ohio Community High School."

President Albrecht started out the Public Session reading the following statement:

Public questions and comments will be limited to 30 minutes total. A community member who wishes to ask a question or make a comment is asked to state their name and what specifically they will be speaking about. Each community member speaking will be limited to 3 minutes.

The audience is asked to refrain from commenting while others are speaking. The Board members will listen to each speaker, but will not comment. The Board President or Superintendent will respond to questions. Once 30 minutes has expired, the Board will conclude the Public Session and begin its regularly scheduled Board meeting.

1. Deb Anderson: How come the Board decided not to let the registered voters in the community know about this meeting?

Superintendent Hamilton: The board held a community meeting on May 2024 before voting on the resolution to deactivate. All posted agenda are available on the school website, meeting minutes are printed in the Walnut leader and posted on the school website. An informational

document was sent in the February monthly newsletter. The next Special Informational Meeting will be on Tuesday, March 18, 2025 AT 6:30 P.M. in the auditorium.

2. Don Reuter: stated that the Board needed to find some way to let the community know about this Town Hall meeting, especially the people who do not have kids in the school or are active in the school. He stated he only found out about the meeting that morning. He feels there is a lot of confusion concerning the deactivation. Second is concern about transportation. Other schools around us are also having trouble finding bus drivers. Do we have a plan in place if the deactivation goes through?

President Albrecht: Clarified that this was not a Town Hall meeting. This is an informational special meeting with an agenda in place so we could post it as we do our Regular Board meetings. He gave out the information for the next Special Meeting on Tuesday, March 18, 2025 AT 6:30 P.M. in the auditorium. Child care will be provided as it was tonight.

Superintendent Hamilton: Concerning the transportation Ms. Hamilton referred to Deactivation Q & A handout (#4). Who is responsible for transporting Ohio students to Amboy or Bureau Valley? The HS Board will provide transportation to school and from school to either Amboy or BV. One AM bus route will collect all high school students who live in the country and bring them to the Ohio school. Once they arrive at Ohio school, they will get on with a bus to Amboy or BV. All students who live in town will meet at the Ohio school and be transported to either Amboy or BV. If preferred, students/families may drive themselves to Amboy or BV. Parents will be responsible for transporting their student(s) home from extracurricular activities. It is anticipated that a second route will run in the morning for GS students. If the April 1st vote is to deactivate, the total number and types of buses will be evaluated.

3. Haley Foster: Asking about why this Q & A wasn't more advertised and feels people have been blindsided and this Board should be more transparent?

She found out about this meeting on social media. This will probably be one of the biggest deal our little town will go through. She doesn't know where to look for the Agenda. She suggested that we post something at the gas station, the post office, and the restaurant.

President Albrecht gave the date and time again for the next meeting and also asked the people that were in attendance to spread the word about the next meeting.

4. Jacob Albrecht: How long will our agreements with Bureau Valley and Amboy be and what if in 2 years later they decide they don't want to keep our students and our agreement? How hard will it be for us to reopen our HS?

Superintendent Hamilton: We will have a 2 year agreement with Bureau Valley and Amboy. We cannot guarantee that they will not keep our agreement. A referendum will be required to reactivate the high school.

5. Linsey Deery: Do we have a guidance counselor and who is preparing our students and are we meeting our students' emotional needs? I feel we are not giving our students the opportunities and the education we should be. Also, Bureau Valley and Amboy require 4 more credits. How will our students catch up?

Superintendent Hamilton: We have a High School teacher who is completing her Internship and classes. As far as emotional needs we have a Social Worker in place for our students' needs.

Superintendent Hamilton then referred to # 6 on the Deactivation Q & A handout. Our students' transcripts will be evaluated and students will be given credit for the courses they have passed. Our students who have passed all of their required Ohio courses will receive transfer credits to keep them on track with the credits required at Amboy or Bureau Valley. We are and have been

doing our best to provide the academic curriculum required to graduate from Ohio.

6. Angie McDonald: What's the basis for deactivation instead of a consolidation and if we deactivate how is that going to affect our High School teacher?

Superintendent Hamilton: Consolidation requires both Ohio and one other community to vote in favor of the consolidation. If the consolidation is passed, the communities begin the process of becoming a consolidated school district and a new board is created that is representative of both communities. The consolidated school district becomes the taxing body and all fund balances are combined. Deactivation keeps the fund balances in the Ohio High School District and the taxing body continues to be the Ohio High School District. The decision to place two neighboring school districts on the referendum is so our families have a choice of which district they want to attend.

President Albrecht: When you deactivate we still have the option to reactivate if we choose. We can still actively control our tax base for our Community. Whichever school we would consolidate with we would take on that school's tax base. If we consolidate, we lose control of our assessed value (EAV).

Superintendent Hamilton: Our High School teachers are assured a job at either Amboy or Bureau Valley. The teacher is placed on the same lane and step in their new school district.

7. Kim Younge: If our students are passing their classes and getting their credits, why do we have to deactivate if our kids are getting what they need here?

Superintendent Hamilton: Yes, our students are able to take all of the required classes to graduate from high school. However, students have very limited additional courses to select.

8. Haley Foster: If we deactivate, does the Board have any decision making or input in our students' education and what voting process will this election be?

Superintendent Hamilton: No, once we deactivate we are only responsible for the financial aspects of our student's education and the maintenance of the building.


Superintendent Hamilton: A simple majority. Which means it could come down to one vote. It comes down to the people that care will vote.


President Albrecht closed with the following statement:

Thank you for your questions and comments. This concludes our public meeting and we will begin our regularly scheduled Board meeting. If you have additional questions, please call the school and set up a meeting with either the Superintendent or me, the Board President. An additional Public meeting is scheduled for March 18th, 2025 at 6:30 in the school auditorium.

III. Adjournment

3.1 Motion by Reka, seconded by Kaecker to adjourn this meeting at 7:02 PM. The vote was unanimous, whereupon the meeting was declared adjourned. **A Special Board Meeting (Question and Answer) will be held before the regular Board meeting Tuesday, March 18, 2025 @ 6:30 with the Regular Board meeting starting at 7:00 PM in the auditorium.**


Harold Albrecht
President


Kelly Becker
Secretary