

JOHNSBURG CENTRAL SCHOOL  
Monday, September 26, 2022  
SPECIAL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING:  
MINUTES

**Board Members Present:** Rachel DeGroat  
Tara Sears  
Tom Ordway  
Erwin Morris  
Sarah Williams  
Chris Jay  
Melissa Freebern

**Board Member Absent:** N/A

**Call to Order:** Rachel DeGroat opened the meeting at 7:00 with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Items for Discussion and/or Action:**

**Discussion:** **Discussion:** Sending a letter to Minerva Central School to discuss researching the possibility of a school-wide merger. Mike Markwica provided the Board with a draft letter to the Minerva Central School's Board of Education regarding any interest in the possibility of a merger study. Mike Markwica stated that both schools would ask BOCES to hire an outside company to create a study. Rachel DeGroat read the letter out loud to the visitors as well as to the people who were listening virtually. Erwin Morris asked if there was a downside to us asking them for the merger. Mike Markwica stated there is no downside but the District should only consider a merger if it benefits our students. Rachel DeGroat responded that it was the Board's belief that if we have more students it would benefit our students. Mike Markwica stated there would be more teachers which would mean we could offer more electives and richer programs. Erwin Morris asked if the feasibility study cost would be split and Mike Markwica replied it would be split. Erwin

then suggested we should do a poll with our community first before we spend any money.

Tara Sears that Minerva may say no and then we are done. There will be time for community input once we find out if Minerva is also interested.

Sarah Williams said there are many steps before we spend any money.

Tom Ordway stated this has been pursued in the past and the first step is finding out Minerva's interest before we go to our community.

Melissa Freebern stated that she believes the first step is to send Minerva Central the letter and wait to hear from them before we go further. We need more information

Sarah Williams stated she thinks we should send the letter. Sending the letter does not mean we have to make any decisions nor spend any money if we decided not to go further.

Chris Jay stated it was a good idea and someone has to make the first move- he thinks it is a good idea and we should send the letter.

Erwin Morris stated that the more information from both sides the better. He said he was stuck on the fact that the larger school wrote the letter but now that he understands why he thinks we should send the letter.

Rachel DeGroat asked the Board if there were any changes they wanted to add or omit from the letter.

Rachel DeGroat asked the Board for a show of hands if they were in favor of sending the letter. She reminded the members that this is not a MOTION just a discussion.

Chris Jay stated the letter asks for input it doesn't state that we need to hire a company for a study. It could be just an open discussion with the two schools.

Mike Markwica advised the Board that if they were going to look into having a merger, then a study would be a necessity. Mike will adjust the letter before sending it to Minerva.

**Visitor's Comments:**

**Mike Sharp:** Stated that this topic was not brought up in the three years he was on the Board. He stated the Board was not being transparent and questioning why there was a special meeting to discuss this. He said that the meeting was not posted in 24 hours. Mike Markwica stated it was posted last Friday. Mike Sharp asked if the Board considered jobs, and what is this going to do about jobs. He said he was not against the concept just the way it was being brought up.

**Jake Sauer-Jones:** Stated the Board was not being transparent. He stated holding a special meeting was not a good idea. He asked if the Board looked into other options before jumping to the idea of a merger. He said the idea of a merger will scare people. He suggested ways to tell people.

Rachel DeGroat stated that there are many options and the merger study should show us all our options.

**Sarah Fink:** asked if we knew of a timeline and if this was a primary benefit to JCS students. She asked if the Board could clarify that this was a Johnsburg request not Minerva reaching out to us. She also asked the Board to clarify if this meeting would have taken place regardless of Minerva's meeting on Friday.

Rachel DeGroat said that Johnsburg did reach out to Minerva first and this meeting would have taken place the following week. It was just moved up because Minerva spoke publicly first and to give our community the same information. Sarah Fink thanked the Board for bringing this idea up now when it is not an emergency but when it can be looked at with time.

**Adjournment:**

Chris Jay made a **MOTION** to adjourn at 8:32 pm, seconded by Erwin Morris and carried.

District Clerk: Cindy Homer

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_