

**Board of Education Special Community Meeting - 7:00 pm  
Tuesday, May 17, 2016  
Genoa-Kingston Community Unit School District #424  
Genoa-Kingston High School Auditorium  
980 Park Avenue Genoa, IL 60135**

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Mission Statement
4. Facilities and Usage
5. Adjournment

**Board of Education Special Community Meeting Minutes - 7:00 pm**  
**Tuesday, May 17, 2016**  
**Genoa-Kingston Community Unit School District #424**  
**Genoa-Kingston High School Auditorium**  
**980 Park Avenue Genoa, IL 60135**

**Call to Order**

**Paul Kruse** called the Genoa-Kingston Board of Education Special Meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

Present: Taunya Fischer, Angie Lauderdale, Kristen Andrews, Heather Edwards, Barb Gustafson, Kristin Brynteson, Paul Kruse.

Absent: None

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Mr. Burgess led the guests and members of the Board of Education in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Mission Statement**

Mr. Burgess read the Mission Statement, "Preparing students to excel and contribute to their community."

**Facilities and Usage**

Mr. Burgess shared a Power Point Presentation about the district's facilities and building usage and the future of G-K CUSD #424. Mr. Burgess commented on the district's declining enrollment and Illinois state funding issues. He also stated the importance of being proactive and looking at all options for the district under cost containment. Mr. Burgess commented that expecting answers was not the intentions of the meeting but rather to seek input from the community. He also commented on the existing bonds reaching maturity and the significant impact it will have on property owners' taxes.

Mr. Burgess stated the Board will be hiring a new Superintendent due to his retirement and this process is vital to the district. Mr. Burgess stated the direction for our district is very important to the future of our students as well as the community. Mr. Burgess shared a progressive timeline stating it is important not only legally but to get things done in a timely manner for our students and their future education. He also shared the financial concerns of the district. Mr. Burgess stated to look at cost savings by restructuring the district to create classrooms and expand educational opportunities to enhance current programs and put G-K ahead in DeKalb County. He also stated questions and concerns will be documented by Mrs. Mulso and shared with Board Members at a future Board of Education Meeting.

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Mr. Burgess stated school districts are the center of most communities. Mr. Burgess stated he was previously from a small district where he watched a new high school be built due to asbestos and safety concerns. He also stated it took a lot of convincing but since the new high school was built new life was breathed into that community. Mr. Burgess stated it is important to look at all options when considering what we want for our district as well as our students and community. He also commented on looking like we are a thriving district or a dying district. Mr. Burgess commented on the declining enrollment. He further stated a dying district will not attract new families or new business to a community.

Mr. Burgess shared an example of a potential timeline for the district: Forming a committee, purchasing existing homes, design infrastructure meetings, hiring an architect, bidding projects, hiring construction managers and move in date.

Dr. Shortridge shared financial information regarding existing bonds, new bonds, the tax rate impacting tax payers, utilities, and transportation.

Mr. Burgess stated the bond payment on the high school will double in the next few years and is a large portion of the community's tax bill. He also stated the importance of restructuring the current bonds as well as existing buildings without raising taxes.

Dr. Shortridge stated the Board has discussed the financial concerns of the district for quite some time. Dr. Shortridge stated 35 % of our districts revenue comes from state aide (student attendance), 62% from property taxes and 3-4% from grants. Dr. Shortridge stated the district currently has an A1 credit rating. He also stated due to the concerns in Springfield district ratings overall are dropping rapidly. He further stated that if the G-K District does not restructure the current bonds and deficit spending continues due to lack of revenue the G-K Districts rating will decline as well. He also commented on the referendum that was passed 14 years ago. He further stated 14 years ago bonds were financed to grow at a rapid rate based on the growth in the community. Dr. Shortridge stated due to the consistent decline in G-K's enrollment if nothing is done to the current bond it will increase by 4% in 2022 and 42% in the 3 years after. Dr. Shortridge stated issuing a new bond would not increase taxes. He also stated by restructuring the current bond the district will save the money and have facilities that the community is proud to have students attend. He also commented on the cost savings regarding maintenance and transportation.

Mr. Burgess commented on the district financial information and stated why it is important the board take action now. Mr. Burgess stated the educational rewards for our students through consolidation. Mr. Burgess also stated the course offerings, pooling of resources, curriculum alignment, higher level content, and student mentoring as important to our students' academic growth. He also stated enhancing programs by consolidating PLTW (Project Lead the Way) students to include 7th-12<sup>th</sup> grades in one building. He also stated the bi-lingual opportunities and access to high school Spanish students.

Mr. Burgess summarized the presentation by stating the immediate financial concerns and stating the educational advantages, projected leaders and embracing a change to make G-K a better place for our students as important to the future of G-K. He also stated committees and volunteers are going to be important in the process.

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Mr. Burgess shared options the board and district have considered as a start to the future of G-K. He stated designing the current high school to house 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade with a separate wing and commons area for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, as well as adding on the Genoa Elementary School to create a Pre-K-6<sup>th</sup> grade academic center. Mr. Burgess stated the board has also discussed closing all buildings, keeping the high school, purchasing land and building one brand new PreK-6 building. Mr. Burgess stated the board has discussed many options and would like the communities input about the deficit we face coming from our declining revenue, enrollment and the state funding issues. He further stated trying to stay as independent as possible and not to use the state as a crutch.

Several questions and concerns were shared by community members including safety, financial and building concerns.

Kruse thanked the community for their input. He also stated the board will form a committee that will address questions and concerns in the near future. He further stated it is important to understand that if the current bond is not restructured and the district continues to pay the current bond the district will run out of money in 2019. Kruse invited community members to adjourn the meeting to the library to discuss forming a committee.

Andrews stated many of the questions and concerns will be addressed through the committee that will be created. She also stated questions will be addressed as soon as possible.

Edwards stated the next Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 24, 2016 and the public is more than welcome to come.

Brynteson stated community input is important to look into all options and what is important to you and your students as well as the community.

Edwards asked Mr. Burgess to comment on the schools and empty classrooms.

Mr. Burgess stated there are currently enough empty classrooms at Kingston Elementary and Davenport Elementary for a whole grade level to attend. He also stated the concern over empty classrooms is the reason the Board began discussions about the deficit under cost containment. He also stated the community meeting is important to hear concerns and have direction.

Dr. Shortridge stated over the last 5 years the district enrollment has declined by 2.5% or 250 students. He also stated student enrollment has gone from 2000 students to 1750 students in the last 5 years.

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**Adjournment**

A motion was made by Brynteson, and seconded by Lauderdale, to adjourn the Board of Education meeting at 7:49 pm.

Voice vote: All. Motion Carried

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

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Paul Kruse, Board President

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Heather Edwards, Board Secretary