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SWEETWATER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 2

## Expert: Board's secrecy with meeting begs legal questions

Rhett Wilkinson reporter4@rocketminer.com Dec 8, 2017

GREEN RIVER — A meeting between the Sweetwater County School District No. 2 Board of Trustees and the Green River Education Association invites legal questions on the board's end, according to a Wyoming Open Meetings Act expert.

That the board's chair, Brenda Roosa, called the meeting and that the board took minutes but didn't have a "quorum," or majority of board members, is what makes for the questions, said Jim Angell, executive director of the Wyoming Press Association.

"If I was a smart attorney type, I would go into court and say 'you've had an improper public meeting,'" Angell told the Rocket-Miner.

On the Nov. 1 meeting, "if I took a wild-ass guess, it would be an effort to skirt public-meetings laws," Angell said.

The board clerk and Sweetwater No. 2 Superintendent Donna Little-Kaumo acknowledged the board took minutes. The Rocket-Miner asked Little-Kaumo, to whom the clerk transferred the newspaper, for the agenda and minutes of the meeting.

"That wasn't a public meeting, so no," Superintendent Donna Little-Kaumo said. "There was not a board quorum or anything."

But Angell said that "if there wasn't a quorum, there should not be a meeting and no minutes."

"You can't have it both ways," he added.

"If they lacked a quorum, they never should have had a meeting," Angell said. "The minute they lacked a quorum, they should not have met."

Roosa's calling for the meeting is "half of the requirement for a public meeting" because it was "called by the presiding authority — and that would be her," Angell said.

"I called the meeting," Roosa said.

"I had initiated the meeting; I had requested the meeting with them," she said later, when responding to questions about GREA's requests for an agenda after Roosa's request and her reply asserting to meet.

It's also a problem that the minutes "aren't official," Angell said, noting later that he meant "public" when saying "official."

"Short story, there's no way those minutes should have been withheld," Angell said. "It's either a public meeting or ... they met improperly."

The questions only surround the board and not the GREA, Angell said.

"It's only the governing body; the teacher's association is a private organization, so they aren't covered under the Public Records Act," he said.

The meeting concerned disputations between the board and GREA, which is recognized as being the sole legitimate representative of district "staff" in the board's eyes, according to the "Professional Negotiation Agreement between Board of Trustees of Sweetwater County, Wyoming School District No. 2 And Green River Education Association."

