

Interviews

Reed Sutman conducted interviews at the Board of Education Meeting.

Where "quotes" are used, this is a direct quote. Where quotes are not used, it is a paraphrase. Many minute details are left out of the notes.

Denise Swarthout

Reed: asked why the district didn't come forward sooner to let the public know about structural issues.

Denise: Says she doesn't have more info than what's on website & that Reed can direct questions to Dr. Clark

Reed: Asks if Kent Metzger available for interview

Denise: Says Dr. Clark is spokesperson for the district

Reed: "And does the district have any specific plans for how to ensure more transparency in future issues like these?"

Denise: "We are sharing all of the information that we have available right now with our community, and we plan to continue doing that."

Reed: "Okay. That doesn't address the delay in getting the information to the public. There are a lot of people concerned"

Denise: interrupting, "You'll need to direct all those questions to Dr. Clark."

Dr. Clark / Melissa Bradford

Dr. Clark did not speak

Reed: "Yeah, I was going to ask if I could ask Dr. Clark for a couple questions."

Bradford: "No, sir. Not right now, you can talk to Denise Swarthout."

Some back and forth between Reed & Bradford

Swarthout says to Dr. Clark "We can discuss that"

Mark Reynolds

Says he's speaking as an individual, not a rep of the board.

Mark: He asked how transparency could be pursued. Mark suggested going out for coffee sometime to discuss.

Reed: detailed the March 23rd contract proposal and suggested timely publishing of purchase orders so public would get earlier access to information.

Mark: You feel that information is vital?

Reed: That information might be vital because it involved structural issues

Mark: One of the problems is "you tell competition what they lost to," which "kind of puts the winners at a disadvantage"

Mark: "some of these other things would probably make some of our vendors really uncomfortable."

Mark: "At least if you were a business bidding on something here at the school, you don't want your competition on what you're

willing to do the work for."

Mark: "But I'm not naysaying the idea of transparency because it was one of the things that I campaigned on"

"We have a bad reputation about transparency and I want to do everything I can to improve the reputation."

Reed: Suggests a "sort of sunshine act" allowing to "open up access to journalists" ... "So that journalists could get internal access to some of that information, and then if they see something of concern like the structural issue,"

Reed: I'm writing an article on this and will include ideas for transparency & will send to you

Mark: Says he wants to see that and provides personal email mark.reynolds5180@yahoo.com

Jason Dion

Jason Dion declines to answer questions, says the Board President is the spokesperson for the Board and says "It'll be hard to reach me"

Al Scheider

(6m45 seconds, need to listen & notate)

Reed: How long have you known about the structural issues?

Al: The evening before they announced

Al: "And as far as other structural things, Kent [Metzger] had twice this year has gone through a whole list of all the schools and what they were doing"

Al says he doesn't look at the lists because he doesn't understand construction.

Al: I asked Kent once for an update and asked the other day "are we very close to getting that whole list done?" and he said it was also part of the BOLD plan - wrapping up repairs, or renovations

Al: "[Kent] said, well, construction hasn't gone as good as I hoped."

Al asked me not to quote him on something, so I briefly paused recording.

Reed: Do you have policy ideas to mandate more transparency with issues like these?

Al: "I don't know how; I agree with being as transparent as; I'm not good about writing policy." He says he would like to work on it, but "I don't have any specifics"

Al was too quiet to be understood in the recording, for a brief portion.

Al: "And at least, I think, at least it has been announced to the public, you know, why there was a closure" and "I'm glad about that"

Reed: "Yeah, they've been relatively forthcoming since the news broke."

Al: "This is all happening so fast"

Reed: It would have been a real headache if the inspection had been done earlier and schools closed before the end of the

school year.

AI: Says we are expecting more details about specifically what needs to be done, and that discussions will take place over the summer.

Reed & AI discussed some uncertainty about how long the schools would be closed - That the press release was very clear about being closed during Fall 2023, but less clear about Spring 2024. (*Note: As of July 14th, it is very clear that the buildings will be closed through Spring 2024*)

AI was very quiet for the end.

Personal Memo

I, Reed Sutman, recorded (and published) personal memos after finishing interviews. I'm only including new & pertinent details here in the notes.

I provide some details about my interview attempts that evening. That I first approached Swarthout, who directed me to Clark, then Bradford directed me to Swarthout.

I detail that after speaking with Mark Reynolds, I tried to catch Dr. Clark, who had already left the room. Melissa Bradford was leaving the room, but she "walked out of the room without acknowledging me."

I claimed that Jason Dion said Dr. Clark usually runs out of the room real quick after meetings.

Security directed me to collect my things while I was trying to speak with Jason Dion.

I spoke with AI Scheider in the parking lot.

I saw Dr. Clark & Ms. Bradford getting in their vehicles. I hollered at Dr. Clark seeking interview, and Ms. Bradford appeared to notice and make a gesture toward Dr. Clark, but then Dr. Clark closed her door and I gave up.

"That's my memo"