

Bolivar Herald
Free Press
Bolivar, MO
Circ. 6843
From Page:
7
8/12/2009
17549



800

R-6 board makes improvements, says audit report, offers follow-up meeting

By Jessica Oliver

jessicao@bolivarmonews.com

Sunshine Law compliance was the main concern of the Pleasant Hope R-6 school district audit discussion on board meetings.

According to the audit report, the district did not document some discussed issues and votes taken during closed session. Meeting minutes did not always have detail of matters discussed, and the report stated there were cases in which the minutes indicated a passed motion, but lacked a record of number of votes for and against.

During the March 17, 2008, closed session meeting, the board discussed the district's budget with its bonding company. During the Sept. 10, 2008, closed session meeting, the board discussed an upcoming study session.

Meeting minutes did not appear to be accurate; during a March 17, 2008, closed session meeting,

minutes show a board member left early, but then voted to return to open session.

Meeting minutes were not prepared or retained for the sports complex advisory committee and according to the report, it is unclear how often the committee met and what decisions were made.

The report also found that district business was conducted outside of regular open meetings in study sessions held at restaurants in Springfield.

The district provided the following response in the report: "The current superintendent and board believe topics allowed during closed session are only being discussed as of the 2008-09 school year. The discussion that took place on Sept. 10, 2008, was not for a study session, but a board retreat which only discussed the goals for the superintendent, which he would be held accountable for during his evaluation later in the school

year. ... The superintendent and board are very aware of the Sunshine Law and will make every effort to discuss only allowable topics during closed session. ... The district is no longer conducting study session meetings."

Dr. Tom Allen, Pleasant Hope's current superintendent, said that the state audit has brought some things to light that the district will improve upon, if they have not already done so. He plans to offer a meeting in the next couple of weeks to allow patrons to ask questions about the current state of the district and how their money is being spent.

"I don't want anybody to walk away thinking that this is a bad school district," he said. "Patrons are going to see, by the end of this school year, that we're not doing business any way that we used to. I invite anybody to come and see what our district is doing right."