

# Wasatch Wave letters to the editor Aug 21,2019

## Wasatch School District Truth in Taxation meeting

### Public Hearing or ??

Editor: I attempted to attend the 21% School District Truth in taxation hearing last week, regrettably the hearing room was so packed I couldn't see (or hear) much of anything. With dozens of interested residents in the adjoining entry way, I wondered why the other companion large board room across the hallway was not used. With huge Video display screens in both rooms, it certainly looked like twice as many people could have been easily, and comfortably, accommodated.

It was my understanding these hearings were for the "purpose of hearing comments regarding any proposed increase and to explain the reasons for the proposed increase." In other words after explaining the REASONS for a tax increase, the primary function of the governing body might be construed to mean: 'answer questions' and LISTEN to the PUBLIC comment.

Although I was not able to 'attend' the meeting I was able to view much of it through videos posted on-line after the meeting.

I've attended dozens, if not hundreds, of public meetings in the area in the last 40 years of residence in this valley, and I will have to say I was appalled, and discouraged, to hear a veritable attack tirade from elected board representatives.

In this case, towards the chair of the Wasatch Taxpayers Association after her brief comments. Twenty minutes of Board Member complaints about documents and information on the WTPA website, primarily by the two members on the left side. I was also somewhat shocked to see that the School Board Chair appeared to do nothing to restore proper decorum and return the board to its proper function of HEARING public comments!!

One very odd thing about this public confrontation is that, after months of requests, this same Taxpayers Association were finally 'invited' or allowed to attend the board Work meeting an hour or so earlier, on the SAME NIGHT, to present ideas for working together. I understand NO comments were made or question asked by the board after the presentation.

At the conclusion of the meeting the full tax increase was approved – to no one's surprise.

I would sincerely suggest that those board members would, in the spirit of reconciliation and achieving the common goal of great education in a fiscally responsible manner, offer an apology for their actions – learn how to deal with the public politely or resign!

Robert Wren

Heber City

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# You Could Be Next

Editor: I believe that when we attend public meetings, we should expect all of our officials to be professional, fair and respectful. From August 8th through August 15th, I attended three meetings. On the 8th, I attended an Interlocal Advisory Board Meeting where the Wasatch School District Board had a presentation of the proposed New High School. After the District's presentation, the Interlocal elected officials (Mayors and Council Members) started asking questions that many of their constituents were asking them. Instead of listening, thinking and then responding, the School Board was quite defensive and at one point, one of them told the Interlocal elected officials that "you have to stay in your lane" and that "we are the experts." Remember, the School Board is also elected and we, as their constituents, have EVERY RIGHT to ask questions and if they have nothing to hide, should have no problem stating why they came to their decisions. The Interlocal elected officials are also their constituents.

On Thursday, 8/15, the Wasatch Taxpayers Association gave a presentation to the Wasatch County School District Board at a Study Session that my husband and I attended. After the WTPA presented their information, they asked if there were any questions and were told NO by the District. We stayed for the Public Hearing and when we entered the room where it was being held, it was standing room only and the room had no air conditioning. There were over 100 people attending and it was really hot in the room. We were standing quite a while when I felt my legs buckle and knew we had to leave or I would pass out from the heat. After hearing what happened after I left, I watched the video of the "Public Hearing". I was shocked at how the School Board and some of its teachers disrespected Tracy Taylor after she spoke. They had given everyone else respect but after she spoke, they proceeded to attack her from the information that was given to them at the "Study Session" and the WTPA's website (giving her no notice but the District required the WTPA to send their presentation in advance). Why didn't the District ask questions at the Study Session? My only conclusion was that they waited until they had a room full of school district employees that supported them and they proceeded to throw out questions, statements and innuendos to Ms. Taylor for almost 20 minutes before she could respond. In my opinion, they were trying to embarrass, humiliate and intimidate her while teachers were clapping in the audience. This to me is called BULLYING! I understand that the School District has a bullying program. Is it to teach the students what bullying is and to stop it from happening or to teach them how to do it? If it is the latter, the School Board did a great job and it was a SAD day, in my opinion, for the entire District. After attending all three meetings, I have learned that if you do not agree with the District, they will be defensive and try to intimidate you in lieu of having a free exchange of ideas. Needless to say, YOU could be next!

To verify the above information, go to [www.wasatchtaxpayers.com](http://www.wasatchtaxpayers.com) and you can watch the videos of all three meetings.

Regretfully submitted,

Pam Patrick

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