

School Board stands pat on pay

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Wednesday, 17 August 2011 16:43

Board president finds no support in plan to reduce salaries as a sign of solidarity with district employees

Practicality and politics butted heads last week as the Northern Ozaukee School Board debated whether the salaries of board members should be adjusted.

Board members draw an annual salary of \$600, plus \$30 for special meetings and committee sessions. The board president receives an additional \$150 a year, and the clerk gets an additional \$100 stipend.

School Board President Paul Krause championed the idea of reducing pay for board members as a way to show solidarity with school district employees who have felt the financial squeeze of a changing political climate.

"We've asked for financial concessions from all of our employees. It seems appropriate that we follow suit," Krause said.

In keeping with that rationale, he asked the board to consider reducing their pay by 25% or eliminating board pay entirely. Other possible options posed to the board included eliminating meeting pay, and dropping all board compensation.

Longtime board member Francis Kleckner said board pay hasn't been adjusted for more than a decade and isn't a likely target for a reduction.

"If anyone wants to accept not getting a pay raise for 15 years, that's great," Kleckner said.

Fellow board member Tom Hoffmann said elected officials always have the option of donating whatever pay they receive.

"I know this job is not about the money, but there has to be something to attract qualified people to the board," Hoffmann said.

"I am more interested in attracting good teachers than good board members," Krause countered.

The timing of a pay reduction was also debated, since officials noted that new salaries couldn't take effect until after the next board election. Since board terms are staggered, it could take several years for a pay reduction to be fully in effect.

The board voted 6-1 to keep the current pay rate, with Krause casting the lone vote against.