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Proposal to pay elected officials extra for lengthy meetings gets shot down

Northern Ozaukee School Board member Kendall Thistle floated a trial balloon about raising board pay at last week's meeting, but the suggestion found little support.

Thistle asked that the board's Policy Committee consider altering the pay schedule to compensate members for attending meetings that drag on too long.

He suggested the pay rate for committees be increased from $25 to $30 for the first two hours, with an additional $30 for meetings that run longer than two hours.

Thistle said a similar approach should be used for board meetings, paying members an additional $30 for sessions that run longer the 2-1/2 hours.

Board members are paid $600 a year.

To avoid the extra expense, he said committee chairman would have to make sure deliberations are kept on point. Better decisions are made when officials are not weary, Thistle said.

"The amount of distributed materials at meetings could be absorbed at home if it was provided in advance," he said.
Board member Stephen Burmesch saw little reason to talk about boosting board pay.

"In the economic conditions we are living in, now would not be a good time to look into this," Burmesch said.

Board member Rick Hamm said he has no complaint with the way he and his colleagues are paid.

"I can't believe we get paid what we get now," Hamm said.

A better solution to the problem of lengthy meetings is to put a limit on agendas, said longtime board member Francis Kleckner.

"Meetings should run only two hours. If there are leftover items, they should be deferred until the next meeting," Kleckner said.
"Otherwise, we could go to two meeting a month if we have that much on our agenda."

As a point of information, board members asked that a comparison of what other school districts pay their board members should be prepared.

"I hear interest in finding ways to shorten our meetings, which is what Kendall is trying to accomplish," said Board President Paul Krause.

"But even if we find out other school districts are paying their board three times what we are, are

we really looking to raise our pay? Really?” Krause asked.