

**Minutes of the General Committee
November 5, 2020**

The General Committee met virtually on November 5, 2020. Vice-Chair Clifford called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Present were committee members Alderman DePoy, Alderman Gorruso and Alderwoman Mattis. Also present were Board President Whitcomb, Alderwoman Davis, Alderman Talbott, Alderman Etori and Alderman Gillam.

Discussion began regarding a motion by Alderman DePoy to put a non-binding question on the March 2021 ballot relative to keeping the Rutland Raider name along with an arrowhead symbol. Board President Whitcomb had previously directed the committee chair, Alderwoman Humphrey, to hold a meeting relative to the motion. Upon her declining to hold a meeting, Alderman Clifford felt it was his obligation to chair a meeting.

Several people spoke in favor and against the proposed Raider name change.

Alderman DePoy spoke in favor of keeping the Raider name and felt it was important to have the voters, taxpayers and students have a voice in the process and not just have the School Board members make that decision.

Alderman Gorruso stated that he supported putting the question on the ballot because that is what the people wanted and explained that people have a right to have a "say" in the matter.

Alderwoman Mattis explained her view of due process regarding ballot items that she has seen during the time she has lived in Rutland. She explained her view of how the School Board did their due diligence in dealing with the subject at hand.

Alderwoman Davis stated that during her tenure on the Board there have been many questions placed on the ballot such as the 10 of 9 whistle. She explained that it was good for the Aldermen to hear from the public to find a solution that was agreeable to the public at large. She explained that the decision to keep or change the Raider name was ultimately up to the School Board.

Alderman Talbott stated that there was some harm in putting the question on the ballot. He felt the vote would be embarrassing and that Rutland's reputation was not the best referring to the issue of the City being too racist to welcome Syrian families and that we don't need to be labeled the City that is too racist to retire its Native American imagery. Alderman DePoy stated his dissatisfaction with Alderman Talbott's comments.

In highlighting public comment portion, several city residents and students spoke on the issue. Butch Paul spoke in favor of keeping the name and how he felt it was important to have the people have their voice heard. Anne Carpenter spoke in favor of keeping the name and to listen to the taxpayers. Kyle Miller spoke in favor of having people's opinions heard. Jill Steigwald spoke against bringing the question to a vote and that it may lead to further harm and divisiveness. Jacob Pluta was concerned that the Board of Aldermen was out of its purview to

take up the matter and agreed with statements by Alderwoman Mattis. He stated he thought the matter was the School Board's decision and hopes that both sides remain civil. Heather Jullisen spoke about white supremacy and that she has a tattoo. She felt that having a meeting on this subject was wrong because the Board did not have a meeting on bias training and that it was textbook racism. Rutland High School student Jenna Montgomery stated that the issue was disrespectful. Jack Arthur spoke in favor of putting the question on the ballot. Stephanie Stoodley thanked the Board of Aldermen for having the meeting and spoke in favor of putting the question on the ballot.

In conclusion, the Committee found that 15 people spoke in favor of putting the question on the ballot and 10 people spoke against it.

Alderman DePoy moved to recommend to the full board that a question be placed on the March 2021 ballot stating "Should the Rutland City Board of School Commissioners change the Rutland Raider name and its logo at Rutland High School?"

The motion was seconded by Alderman Gorruso and the committee voted 3 to 1 with Aldermen Gorruso, DePoy and Clifford voting in favor and Alderwoman Mattis voting against and so moved.

There being no further business the committee meeting adjourned at 6:34 p.m.