

# Walled Lake board censures Trustee Callahan

The Walled Lake Board of Education publicly censured Trustee Janet Callahan last week because of what board members called her "reprehensible" behavior.

"Because I feel so strongly that Mrs. Callahan's behavior as a school board member is reprehensible and cannot go

unchallenged, I call for the board to publicly censure Mrs. Callahan," said Board President Stephen Lasher at last week's board meeting.

"While I recognize that such action carries with it no punitive measures, I believe that it is time for the board to publicly express its displeasure with

the irrational behavior exhibited by Mrs. Callahan," Lasher added.

The board voted 6-1 to censure Callahan. Callahan dissented, telling the board members they were making fools of themselves.

"There's such a thing as freedom of speech and I intend to continue to exercise that right. My job is to represent the public, not the administration and other board members," she said in response to the board's action.

LASHER BASED the move for a Callahan censure on three incidents.

• Callahan's call for dismissal of Deputy Superintendent Rolland Langerman. Langerman requested the charges be discussed in a closed session and Lasher said Callahan agreed to

that request. But after failing to convince the board to dismiss Langerman, Callahan leveled her charges at the board's January session, Lasher said. He added that her actions "unquestionably violate any moral or ethical code under which we are presumed to operate."

• Lasher said Callahan secretly taped the January board meeting, a charge denied by Callahan. "While her taping of our meetings is not in violation of any law, such action certainly violates the ethics of her position. But then I question whether Mrs. Callahan has any ethics. As a board member, I am outraged that Mrs. Callahan would tape record our discussions without at least having the decency to inform us of that fact."

• Lasher said Callahan requested police protection at the Jan. 15 special meeting. Callahan allegedly requested police protection after she was verbally criticized by a teacher following the Jan. 12 board meeting. Lasher said the incident is the "clearest evidence of Mrs. Callahan's inability to adequately perform her job."

THE MOTION to publicly censure Callahan came after Lasher submitted a strongly worded statement at the start of last Monday's board meeting. "All of us who are concerned about the welfare of the Walled Lake School District must be cognizant of the irresponsible behavior exhibited by Mrs. Callahan during the past year," he said.

"Regardless of the merit of certain of Mrs. Callahan's proposals (and I

don't deny that certain of her concerns are valid), her irrational behavior, her total inability to reason, to compromise, or even to listen, has caused irreparable harm to the board of education and the school district."

"By her actions, I am convinced that Mrs. Callahan is determined to destroy the potential effectiveness of the board of education," Lasher added.

Later in the meeting, Callahan charged that board members have used "various tactics to keep me from talking ever since I was elected to the board."

"I'm trying to change things for the better in this district, not sweep them under the rug," she said, adding that she has community support for her efforts.

## Residents support administrator

Deputy Superintendent Rolland Langerman received a strong showing of support from about 50 persons who attended the Walled Lake Board of Education meeting last week.

Speaking on Langerman's behalf was former Walled Lake Superintendent George Garver who called Langerman "one of the most competent and most people I have been privileged to be associated with."

The show of confidence was prompted by Trustee Janet Callahan's call for his dismissal at the January board meeting.

Callahan said that Langerman "has violated state law over the last 10 years in regard to the use of public funds, thereby causing the district and the board of education to be in violation of the law."

Callahan's charges related to Langerman's handling of the 1971 Building and Site Fund, a \$9.15 million

bond issue approved by voters to construct, equip and furnish a senior high school (Walled Lake Western), new elementary school buildings and additions to existing school buildings.

GARVER, WHO served as Walled Lake superintendent from 1965 to 1970 when the bond issue was proposed and approved, said he believed the charges to be "totally false, inappropriate and truly injurious to the reputation of a dedicated and competent member of your administrative staff."

Garver said the school board had been authorized by the State Department of Education at the time the bond issue was approved to utilize earned interest from the \$9.5 million bond issue "as a hedge against inflation and for other projects that might be approved at a later date by the board of education and the department of education."

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