

May 6, 2024

The board met in session at 8:30 a.m. Members present Diana Dawley, Jeff Tindle and Jason Roudabush. Also present: Weston Widmer, Jacki Bolen, Boyd Sparks, Archie Kuntz, Cori Henkle.

Moved by Roudabush, 2nd by Tindle to approve agenda. 3 ayes. Motion carried.

Moved by Tindle, 2nd by Roudabush to approve May 2, 2024, board minutes. 3 ayes. Motion carried.

Board received Recorder's report of fees collected for month ending April 20, 2024.

Roudabush provided an update from his Iowa Workforce meeting he attended last week. Iowa Workforce is in the process of hiring a fiscal agent/sub-recipient to handle the federal funding.

8:40 a.m. John Clayton joined the meeting.

8:44 a.m. Randy Johnson joined the meeting.

8:49 a.m. Sandy Ross, Treasurer joined the meeting.

8:50 a.m. Winona Whitaker, Hometown Current; Kevin Rempp, Teri Rempp, Mike Edgington, Kristin Fantazia, and Kari Chandler joined the meeting.

9:00 a.m. John Clayton met with board to discuss the Poweshiek County logo. Clayton stated he would like the Poweshiek County logo changed and wants a logo acceptable and welcoming to people of all backgrounds. Clayton presented five reasons why he feels the logo should be changed (1) the icon is not of Chief Poweshiek face; (2) The feathered headdress is not of Meskwaki Native American culture; the headgear style is instead of a what is currently used is that of Sioux or Cheyenne culture; (3) advocating for the county name to be changed isn't sought and removing a stereotype inaccurate portrayal delivers honor to Chief Poweshiek; (4) the National Congress of American Indians has passed numerous resolutions calling for elimination of Native American mascots, icons, logos, by non-Native American associations. The Meskwaki Nation are members of this Congress of American Indians; and (5) the American Psychological Association calls for the retirement of all American Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities, by schools, colleges, universities, athletic teams, and organizations, due to the harmful effects of racial stereotyping and inaccurate racial portrayals. Clayton stated the following steps should be initiated to pursue a change in the logo: 1) the county appoints a task force committee; 2) receive recommendations from the task force committee; 3) hold a public hearing on the recommendation; 4) final decision.

Jacki Bolen inquired if Clayton had spoken with anyone at the Meskwaki Tribe and Clayton said he had and that the current icon is not an accurate portrayal, and they do not want an icon image of Chief Poweshiek.

Roudabush stated he realizes the logo is not historically correct but does not think it is racial. Roudabush spoke with individuals of the Meskwaki Tribe about the county logo, and it was taken to tribal council where they remain neutral. All individuals Roudabush spoke with stated they did not find the logo to be racist. This is a generic design of a Native American to represent Poweshiek County and Chief Poweshiek. The logo does not have a trademark or patent. It is an artist rendition of a Native American. It is a generic picture to represent.

Kevin Rempp asked Clayton is he was representing a group or if this was his opinion. Clayton stated this was his opinion and feels this emblem is a problem.

Randy Johnson asked Clayton if he had ever been to any of the tribal activities and seen the various headdresses worn so with what Clayton is saying, they wouldn't be representing either. Johnson wondered what Clayton's motivation is behind this and where this idea came from. Clayton stated he is sensitive to other cultures and the image struck him as not appropriate and so he started doing research and wants the image to be different and more welcoming. Johnson stated Chief Poweshiek was chosen for his leadership.

Clayton stated he just wants to get the information out there for people to think about as this is an evolutionary process, and he appreciates all in attendance today.

Cori Henkle asked Clayton if he had researched the time and financial cost changing of the logo would be to Poweshiek County and Clayton stated he had not. Henkle stated it would be a huge cost to the county. Mike Edgington stated just to hire someone for a re-design would be expensive. Edgington stated he has a problem with Clayton stating the logo is racial and wanting to cancel history by removing the name and logo, which is in honor of Chief Poweshiek. Edgington stated that the image is generic, and it is to honor Chief Poweshiek, what he accomplished, and the man he was.

Dawley stated the Montezuma School years back, when they were utilizing Braves and an Indian headdress as their mascot, went to the Meskwaki Tribe and discussed the use and at that time they did not have any issues with it and further provided a letter approving the use of the headdress.

Roudabush stated he did research and the Meskwaki set up camp around the Carnforth area and many other articles relating to the tribe within Iowa and Poweshiek County. Roudabush stated the logo is a generic picture, which honors Chief Poweshiek and none of us were there in the 1800's and each artist depicts in their own way. Clayton contradicted Roudabush that the tribe was not in that area.

Edgington stated to Clayton that the logo is on the Freedom Rock so does he want to remove that too?

Henkle asked Clayton if he was there to know the correct depiction of Chief Poweshiek; further stating none of us were there in the 1800's.

Roudabush stated that history is not there for you to like or dislike but there to learn from it. If history offends you, then you are less likely to repeat it. History is not yours to erase or destroy.

Dawley stated this is much about nothing and there is history here and she does not think there is any need to change the logo. Dawley stated she is a lifelong resident and is proud of the history of Poweshiek County.

Archie Kuntz inquired with Clayton if others have indicated they are offended by the logo and Clayton said some have stated they feel it's derogatory towards Chief Poweshiek. Edgington stated if others felt this way, why were they not in attendance today to support your request for a change. Edgington feels the logo honors Chief Poweshiek and he was an influential man and was known to bring people together. The logo signifies Poweshiek County is proud of the Native American culture. Edgington further stated he does not like Clayton throwing out the word racism as a reason to change the logo and feels Clayton could have addressed this a better way.

Clayton brought up that in Brooklyn there are two flags being flown that are not official flags, being Mississippi and Minnesota, which were changed by the states because of the racist imagery on them. Brooklyn still flies those flags and Clayton has asked for them to be removed. Johnson and Kuntz were deeply against Clayton wanting to change flags and then left the meeting.

Dawley stated she had an article from the Poweshiek CR with the headline "Supervisor candidate wants 'racist' county logo changed" and then the article starts out saying "A candidate for the Poweshiek County Board of Supervisors is asking officials to replace the current Native American logo with one that isn't racist." Dawley stated to Clayton that he did provide information stating racism. Clayton stated yes, he did but not in his presentation today. Clayton stated he believes it is racist.

Bolen asked the board if they have ever been contacted by the Meskwaki Tribe regarding issues with the county using this logo and the board stated they had not. Bolen stated Meskwaki is a strong tribe and feels if they had an issue with the county using this logo, they would address the board on the matter. She feels if they don't have an issue with it than neither does she.

Board of Supervisors stated they are not in support of changing the logo and there are no plans to take any action on the logo change.

Dawley stated Pow I-80 held interviews last week for candidates for the executive director position. Three candidates interviewed are being called back for a second interview.

Roudabush stated he has a landfill meeting Wednesday.

Tindle stated he has a conservation board meeting Tuesday.

9:57 a.m. Moved by Roudabush, 2nd by Tindle to adjourn. 3 ayes. Motion carried.

Melissa Eilander, Poweshiek County Auditor

Diana Dawley, Chairman