

By JESSICA CRAWFORD

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Back in September Cliff Abbott resigned from his USD No. 480 board of education seat in order to take a coaching job at West Middle School. His intent was to submit his application upon the conclusion of the football season and regain his board seat. There was no guarantee he would be reappointed, but he did what he felt was right for the community. By the end of Monday evening, Abbott was once again sitting comfortably in the board room after being reappointed by the board.



“What lead up to my resignation, which was earlier in the fall, there was a need in our district for some coaching staff at West Middle School,” Abbott said. “Through a series of events, they were a coach short.

“The legality of it, you cannot be employed by the district if you are on the board,” he explained. “So at that point through some very hard studying and prayer, what I felt in my heart was best for the kids of our district at that time was to step down.”

At Monday evening’s school board meeting, two applicants sat before the board – Abbott and Crystal Clemens. Dan Diepenbrock stated that although both applicants were very qualified, he felt Abbott was the most qualified for the position.

“I think it’s obvious that we have two qualified candidates here,” Diepenbrock said. “Mr. Abbott has been a board member for 10 years now, I believe. Ms. Clemens, I believe, would make a good board member.

“I think under the circumstances and visiting with our school attorney, he advises that Mr. Abbott is eligible to make the application,” he added. “In my view, I think Mr. Abbott is more qualified for the position.”

Vice president Cheryl Louderback made a motion to nominate Abbott to the vacant board seat. The motion received a second from board member Bob Maier.

The board extended their gratitude towards Clemens for her interest in the board and urged her to run for a board seat in April.

“I would like to say, Crystal, I appreciate you applying,” Maier said. “My vote was for Cliff because he was elected by the public and he felt like he had to take basically a leave of absence in a way.”

“Since there is an election coming up,” said Tammy Sutherland-Abbott to Clemens, “Don’t give up – I didn’t.”

Clemens was very understanding of the reasons the board gave for reappointing Abbott. She stated he was a great board member and the best one for the job at this time.

Abbott was sworn in immediately following his reappointment. Directly upon being sworn in, he found his way back to his seat on the board and continued the meeting with his fellow board members.

“I feel very honored to have been reappointed,” Abbott said. “I want to serve the community, and I am thankful for the opportunity to continue to do so. I appreciate Ms. Clemens interest in the community.”