

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**1adam12**, (9/24/2009 7:05:31 AM)

612 you make some great points. It is my opinion that the two HVAC vendors that you mention probably like some of the other people got sucked into this with the mis information that sisney and updike and stover have been a part of. innocent people have been slandered all because of a disgruntled ex employee. If you wanted to take the attention off of yourself you would create a diversion causing people to look somewhere else instead of looking at the source. Was all of this a diversion so that those good citizens that have been led astray would not look at the real problem. The real question is that when the truth is revealed and it will be, will these people continue their quest to stymie this district and continue to support sisneys lawsuit against this district. He loves this school district so much he sued them? Will stover and updike resign like they should when it is revealed how much they have been working to destroy people (behind the scenes) the district and support the lawsuit against the district that they serve. Will they apologize for what they have done? Will bob lewis (an admitted friend of sisneys) come out of retirement and apologize to the community for his biased reporting? Will Mike Ritz apologize for his inaccuracies about his friend that started this? Lots of people have been sucked in and seem to not see the truth because they are so intent in being right even at the expense of the district. Their never ending FOI requests because it is their rights. Did they ever think that each one of those takes an employee of the district time from their normal job. Who is costing the taxpayers now? Lets keep digging so the district can continue to spend money on attorneys fees. Oh well just had to vent. Keep up the good work jolie and 612

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/24/2009 8:43:37 AM)

Thanks Jolie and 1adam12. You're right, Jolie, the questions are written from the point of view of someone who has been puzzling about this for months. Your suggestions are very helpful. I will update when I get a chance.

I agree, 1adam12, I think most of the vocal Sisney supporters believed his story at the beginning. It was not an unreasonable thing to do based on the news reports. I would have two questions for them: 1) why cling to this belief when so much has been placed in doubt; and 2) why so nasty?

I know Mike Ritze is on Sisney's witness list (spelled wrong, like 2 others - I wonder how Terry Stover likes looking like he's a girl). But I haven't found anything specific that Mike Ritze said - do you know of any articles that are still accessible that mention his involvement?

We know Ms. Updike has been involved in spreading misinformation because the Ledger reported it, and we also have heard that she is involved with the BAParentsForTruth group, working behind the scenes. We know Mr. Stover supports Dr. Sisney with his votes as a board member. Has Mr. Stover also participated behind the scenes to try to make the board members and Dr. Gerber look bad?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/24/2009 9:29:45 AM)

612, you wrote, "We know Ms. Updike has been involved in spreading misinformation because the Ledger reported it, and we also have heard that she is involved with the BAParentsForTruth group, working behind the scenes."

Can you clarify the last part of your sentence? I know we speculated that she may be involved directly with the group because they used her photo as their profile picture on their youtube channel, but were you able to determine more? And may I ask where from, at least in general terms?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/24/2009 10:21:29 AM)

I suspect she is involved with the group, although I don't have anything concrete to point to. My suspicion comes rather from a pattern of Ms. Updike's statements and actions corresponding to the views expressed by the BAParentsForTruth group and Ledger commenters: Ms. Updike's testimony on legal fees back in September 2008, her comments in June where she said the 3 board members were directly responsible for the loss of teacher positions; the accusation of leaking confidential information from executive session (in the statement by Shari Wilkins at the board meeting), the comments on the Ledger whose author claimed to know what went on in executive session.

If she is involved with this group and is providing information/misinformation to them, they may be taking her seriously because, after all, she is in a position to know. That may be why some are so loyal to Sisney's story - they honestly believe they must be getting the real truth from a reliable source.

BTW, the Ledger was happy to slam the board members for attacking Ms. Updike for her comments, but never got around to reporting the statement that Ms. Wilkins read accusing Updike of leaking confidential information from executive sessions twice in 2008. How can that not be part of the story being reported?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/24/2009 12:49:05 PM)

Ann Wade came to Broken Arrow in July 2008 from the Claremore district. I understand she worked in Bartlesville starting in 1998, which was while Dr. Sisney was still there. I believe she also worked in Monroe and Poteau schools, before going to Claremore.

Does anyone know the dates that she actually worked in Bartlesville?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**C. Tharp**, (9/24/2009 10:19:27 PM)

Wow, I am finally on here, does someone want to ask some questions and get any answers from someone who ACTUALLY will put a name on it or do you want to be educated by spineless individuals like 612 and Jolie that act like they are better than us, but yet don't have the gusto to put their names behind their statements??

first of all, I say lets start the fun by guessing who 612, Jolie, and 1Adam12 are?

Answer: I don't know, but something without a spine. Since they stir it up without a name.

Do amphibians have spines?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**C. Tharp**, (9/24/2009 10:24:20 PM)

Hmmmm, had lots of folks tell me that 612 is Ms. Flippo. I don't think so. 1Adam12 gets personal with their posts like Flippo. Especially after the I got the "oh, so ever protected" legal bills. So I will guess first that 1Adam12 is Mrs. Flippo.

This is fun, like Clue. Too bad there is not a Mr. Mustard around when you need him

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**C. Tharp**, (9/24/2009 10:35:24 PM)

Sorry, Col. Mustard

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**C. Tharp**, (9/24/2009 10:39:26 PM)

anybody know about the tape recordings that are listed on the exhibit list also?

Did someone actually tape a meeting with Dr. Sisney and not tell him about it?

Can we FOI those tapes and find out who could possibly do such a thing?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**C. Tharp**, (9/24/2009 10:45:13 PM)

Revisions to Broken Arrow Textbooks:

"This is not a democracy, this is a republic"

You elected me because I know better than you.

Maryanne Flippo. BA school board member

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**C. Tharp**, (9/24/2009 11:12:49 PM)

Center for Education Law Hourly rates: \$150/hr, but they are too cheap, so we terminate them and hire the more expensive law firm

Rosenstein, Fist and Ringold hourly rates: \$250/hr

but of course, for \$250 an hour that doesn't include an understanding of the open record act. The district has to hire another law firm to help decipher that law.

Where is the refund from rfr for the advice they gave the district???

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**C. Tharp**, (9/24/2009 11:28:03 PM)

it is so funny to think about all those board meetings where anything that had to do with RFR was removed from the Agenda right at first on the meetings. But at the end of the day, it is so refreshing that the LAW is on the side of public.

anybody know why the RFR billing is redacted on the day of the AA "rally"? Surely we taxpayers did not pay for "our" law firm, paid by tax dollars, to be there for a vendor. Surely not.

Who at RFR has the initials JHH? What did you do on that day Mr. JHH?

Oh, folks, you can go to the RFR website and figure out who JHH is. So why would an accountants actions be redacted?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**C. Tharp**, (9/24/2009 11:51:20 PM)

For those of you that don't know, on the RFR invoices to the district on the front page it says more or less that the details of the billing are protected by Atty client privilege.

Well guess what. That is WRONG!!!!!!

Great legal advice, right?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**1adam12**, (9/25/2009 7:32:36 AM)

to c tharp, did you just grow a spine since you used to hide behind other names like 2112 and others. even some of your buddies do not have spines. but I am glad you finally got one. I say we hire c tharp to represent the district as our lawyer at 10 dollars an hour and really save the district some money. then he can represent the district in the lawsuit against himself. I guess that would be a conflict. somebody cool minime down before he blows a gasket.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**C. Tharp**, (9/25/2009 8:23:43 AM)

Calmed down. But I thought I would be worth more than \$10 an hour.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**1adam12**, (9/25/2009 2:48:52 PM)

Is c tharp an attorney? if so what firm does he represent? If not where does he work. Does he own his own business and what is the companies name? Now that we know he has a spine maybe he will tell us or maybe another reader will help us find out. I wonder if we need to start finding out what his motives are? I wonder if he will soon be an employee of the sperry district? Thanks for calming down chris. I hope you realize what you are doing to this district. You have been led down a path by someone that is an expert at it. when he is done with this district or you turn on him look out.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/25/2009 4:44:19 PM)

More on Chris Tharp of Broken Arrow

There is a Chris Tharp is who is a member of the Broken Arrow Elks.

There is a Chris L. Tharp who lives in the Timberbrook housing subdivision in Broken Arrow. His actual address can be found on whitepages dot com

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/25/2009 4:50:34 PM)

Jolie, regarding Dr. Sisney's contract with Sperry, I heard through an unofficial source that it has been extended for a year. Hopefully we will have confirmation on that soon.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/25/2009 5:11:24 PM)

However, the Chris Tharp who is a member of BA Parents for Truth is also a member on their facebook page. His profile page says he is employed as a estimator/manager at Duncan and Sones\*\* in Sapulpa, OK. He graduated from Yukon (OK) High School in 1986 and graduated with a BA in Chemistry from Southwestern Oklahoma State U in 1992.

\*\* This is likely to be a typo on Chris Tharp's part, as there is no company listed by that name. However, there is a Duncan & Sons LLC in Sapulpa, located at 10088 S. 49th West Ave., Sapulpa, (918) 224-8065 The company description reads:

QUOTE

Duncan & Sons Llc Business InformationClaim This ProfileDuncan & Sons Llc is a private company categorized under General Contractors and located in Sapulpa, OK. Our records show it was established in 1999\* and incorporated in Oklahoma\*. Current estimates show this company has an annual revenue of \$2.5 to 5 million and employs a staff of approximately 10 to 19.

END QUOTE

Since both companies are general contractors, it is possible that the same Chris Tharp worked at one company (CP Integrated) and then moved on to the other (Duncan & Sons) or if his facebook page has not been updated in some time, it could be that the reverse is true.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/25/2009 5:17:04 PM)

Hey, 612, thanks for that information on Sisney's contract. If true, it seems that the Sperry Board is being pragmatic, in case the findings of OSBI and Sisney's lawsuit results are not favorable to Sisney.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/25/2009 5:49:20 PM)

QUOTE

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

C. Tharp, (9/24/2009 10:45:13 PM)

Revisions to Broken Arrow Textbooks:

"This is not a democracy, this is a republic"

You elected me because I know better than you.

Maryanne Flippo. BA school board member

END QUOTE

Mr. Tharp, I read that you got your BA in Chemistry, not Government or Political Science. Here's something to educate yourself with. Excerpted from ThisNation dot com, at the top of an article titled "Is the United States A Democracy?"

QUOTE

The Pledge of Allegiance includes the phrase: "and to the republic for which it stands." Is the United States of America a republic? I always thought it was a democracy? What's the difference between the two?

The United States is, indeed, a republic, not a democracy. Accurately defined, a democracy is a form of government in which the people decide policy matters directly--through town hall meetings or by voting on ballot initiatives and referendums. A republic, on the other hand, is a system in which the people choose representatives who, in turn, make policy decisions on their behalf. The Framers of the Constitution were altogether fearful of pure democracy. Everything they read and studied taught them that pure democracies "have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths" (Federalist No. 10).

By popular usage, however, the word "democracy" come to mean a form of government in which the government derives its power from the people and is accountable to them for the use of that power. In this sense the United States might accurately be called a democracy. However, there are examples of "pure democracy" at work in the United States today that would probably trouble the Framers of the Constitution if they were still alive to see them. Many states allow for policy questions to be decided directly by the people by voting on ballot initiatives or referendums. (Initiatives originate with, or are initiated by, the people while referendums originate with, or are referred to the people by, a state's legislative body.) That the Constitution does not provide for national ballot initiatives or referendums is indicative of the Framers' opposition to such mechanisms. They were not confident that the people had the time, wisdom or level-headedness to make complex decisions, such as those that are often presented on ballots on election day.

Writing of the merits of a republican or representative form of government, James Madison observed that one of the most important differences between a democracy and a republic is "the delegation of the government [in a republic] to a small number of citizens elected by the rest." The primary effect of such a scheme, Madison continued, was to:

. . . refine and enlarge the public views by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations. Under such a regulation it may well happen that the public voice, pronounced by the representatives of the people, will be more consonant to the public good than if pronounced by the people themselves, convened for the same purpose (Federalist No. 10).

(continued on)

END QUOTE

If interested you can do a search online to read the rest of the article.

If Oklahoma textbooks are claiming the US is a democracy and not a republic, then I do suggest that be changed.

If this is an example of your grasp of the facts, Mr. Tharp, I don't see why anyone would place confidence in your opinions with relationship to the Board and their actions.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/25/2009 6:06:55 PM)

612, I haven't been able to find anything about Ann Wade working for B'ville yet. Did she have the same last name then?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/25/2009 6:19:36 PM)

I'm in the process of looking up information online about the confidentiality of school district attorney legal billing confidentiality. This is an excerpt from Florida's Attorney General to a school district counsel:

QUOTE

You also refer s. 119.07(3)(n), F.S. (1990 Supp.), which establishes a narrow exemption for certain work product of agency attorneys. This statute provides a limited exception for records prepared by, or at the express direction of, an agency's attorney which reflect a mental impression, conclusion, litigation strategy or legal theory of the attorney or agency. [b]Such records must have been prepared exclusively for civil or criminal litigation or adversarial administrative proceedings, or in anticipation of imminent litigation or proceedings. If the above criteria are met, the records are exempt from disclosure until the conclusion of the litigation or proceedings.[/b]

END QUOTE

from myfloridalegal dot com  
letter dated 10/01/91 sent to  
Ms. Abbey G. Hairton  
General Counsel  
School Board of Palm Beach County

RE: PUBLIC RECORDS--GOVERNMENT IN THE SUNSHINE LAW--SCHOOL BOARDS--SCHOOLS--  
\*\*\*

I know each state will have its own set of laws, but this does seem to point that the BAPS district attorneys may indeed be following the law by protecting confidentiality of records related to ongoing litigation.

I'll keep looking for more examples.

END QUOTE

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/25/2009 6:29:13 PM)

There is an online letter dated May 29, 2009, from Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott to Ms. Susan K. Bolm, General Counsel, Lake Travis Independent School District regarding public disclosure of information.

In reading through that document (oh, why can't they say things in common everyday, cut to the chase language and then give their darn references and exceptions. The AG seems to say some items on the billing were exempt from disclosure (and marked by the AG on the actual billing (not shown) as to which items were exempt) but others weren't.

612, you're much better at digesting this kind of complicated document, so if you want to analyze it, I think I've provided enough information for you to pull it up to read it yourself.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/26/2009 8:15:51 AM)

The questions Susan K. Bolm asks of the Texas Attorney General seem to be very similar to our situation. She is asking whether the district's attorney fee bills are confidential.

The Texas AG explains what it takes to be confidential:

“...in order to withhold attorney-client privileged information from disclosure under rule 503, a governmental body must: (1) show that the document is a communication transmitted between privileged parties or reveals a confidential communication; (2) identify the parties involved in the communication; and (3) show that the communication is confidential by explaining that it was not intended to be disclosed to third persons and that it was made in furtherance of the rendition of professional legal services to the client. Upon a demonstration of all three factors, the information is privileged and confidential under rule 503...”

And that the bills themselves are not confidential:

“... section 552.022(a)(16) of the Government Code provides that information "that is in a bill for attorney's fees" is not excepted from required disclosure unless it is confidential under other law or privileged under the attorney-client privilege. This provision, by its express language, does not permit the entirety of an attorney fee bill to be withheld... This office has found that only information that is specifically demonstrated to be protected by the attorney-client privilege or made confidential by other law may be withheld from fee bills.”

Since the information in the legal bills was confidential communication between the district's attorneys and the district, made in connection of rendition of professional legal services to the district,

“...we agree that the district may withhold the information we have marked on the basis of the attorney-client privilege under rule 503.”

It seems clear that the district must release billing information, but also must be very careful to protect any confidential communication, as well as anything prepared for litigation, personnel records, competitive bidding records, and records from executive session in board meetings. In BA's case a lot would fall under these categories.

I don't know what RFR's stance was – whether they were saying the bills couldn't be released at all, or that they recommended not releasing the details because of the extensive amount of legal time (FEES) it would take to comb through it and redact the confidential information.

Chris, do you have any letters from RFR that explain their reasoning?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/26/2009 8:17:01 AM)

From the FOI procedures for Millwood Public Schools in Oklahoma City:

#### Confidential Records

Some district records are confidential and therefore exempt from search and copy. Exempt records are:

A. Records and/or materials prepared in anticipation of litigation;

B. Records and/or materials protected by a state evidentiary privilege - the attorney-client privilege;

C. Records reflecting what transpired during an executive session of a Board meeting;

D. Personnel records which relate to internal investigations including examination and selection material for employment, hiring, appointment, promotion, demotion, discipline or resignation, and/or when disclosure would constitute an invasion of personal privacy such as employee evaluations, payroll deductions, employment applications submitted by those not hired by the district and transcripts from institutions of higher education maintained in the personnel files of certified public school employees;

E. Records on student academic materials; tuition, teacher lesson plans, testing records, teaching material and personal communications with individual students;

F. Personal notes and personally-created materials under the circumstances authorized by law;

G. Records on competitive bids under the circumstances authorized

by law; and

H. Records donated as archives and museum materials under the circumstances authorized by law.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/26/2009 8:24:50 AM)

I agree that Ms. Flippo's statement about democracy vs. republic is correct, though somewhat inflammatory under the circumstances.

I don't know that I would be any less snippy if I had been treated as badly as we have treated her.

Regarding the founding fathers' reluctance to let the people rule directly:

Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays instead of serving you if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

- Edmund Burke (a member of British parliament)

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/26/2009 8:26:55 AM)

So, from what I can understand, the short answer is that an attorney fee bill cannot be withheld in its entirety on the basis it contains or is attorney-client communication. However, this is (of course) not clear-cut. Nothing in law is. Anything that is considered confidential must be redacted.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/26/2009 9:06:20 AM)

Another possible reason that RFR recommended not releasing the bills is of course the one I mentioned a few months ago -

The board could end up having to release information that says what the hourly charges were for, but not be able to explain why they felt it was needed at the time.

Having to release the bills without being able to explain the need is unlikely to go over well, especially with many individuals already assuming the worst about them.

I would be interested in knowing what RFR's official position was. All that has been reported is that Doug Mann insists that the bills fall under attorney-client privilege. There can be many explanations for this, and as we have seen, the Ledger tends to vary the level of detail in their reporting to encourage a certain interpretation.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/26/2009 10:07:13 AM)

Jolie, it might be interesting to look for a connection between Mike Ritze and Mike Reynolds. I have heard speculation that Mike Ritze had Mike Reynolds issue the press release about the sick pay issue so that Ritze would be distanced from the issue for re-election purposes.

I know that they work together on issues frequently, which is not unusual for representatives. What is unusual in this case is that Ritze is a witness on Sisney's list, and Reynolds is the one who incorrectly claimed that legal payments by the school district were illegal, based on documents he shouldn't have had access to. This looks even more suspicious when you consider the fact that the only two people he named were Dr. Gerber and Cheryl Kelly, and the timing of his claims - just before the school board election in which Ms. Kelly was a candidate.

If Sisney provided Ritze with confidential employment documents, Ritze in turn provided these to Reynolds, and Reynolds announced inaccurately that the BA schools, and Dr. Gerber and Ms. Kelly specifically, had violated the law, these are shenanigans that need to be brought to the public's attention.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/26/2009 10:09:46 AM)

P.S. I notice that both Ritze and Reynolds are on the witness list for the defense.

Only Ritze is listed on Sisney's witness list.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/26/2009 11:24:47 AM)

If the trial for the defamation lawsuit is held, the defendants' lawyers should be able to cross examine Ritze and Reynolds to determine where the documents/information came from. Unless someone who works for either one or knows the details and is willing to go public, I assume that is the trial testimony would be the only way we'd know the

answers. Even then, it's possible that one or both men might not tell the truth while under oath. (Gasp...a politician lie? Say it ain't so!)

612, do you have a way of remaining anonymous but contacting someone on the board (perhaps Whelpley as she's one of the three original amigos and has been on the current board so long), Dr. Gerber, the attorneys for the case, to make them aware of this thread of discussion, but more importantly, to bring attention to your forum. They might get some ideas from the discussion and also recommend to others to use your forum as a reference source. I hope they already have all their ducks in a row in preparation for court, but you never know, there might be some comment or thought in here that they haven't considered that might prove helpful.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/26/2009 11:50:58 AM)

Mike Ritze will be one of three Oklahoma lawmakers holding a town hall health care forum here in Broken Arrow next Tuesday night, Sept. 29, at 6:30 pm, at the Arrow Heights Baptist Church at 3201 S. Elm Pl. The Ledger has a September 24 article on the event.

Maybe you could get a friend to attend and ask some OT questions about the confidential files and Ritze's connections to Sisney which have him on the witness list for the defense and if he is on the list because of the Reynolds' story on pay for unused sick leave. Maybe ask about any affiliation with the BA Parents for Truth group. The questioner would have to be someone who is very forthright, eloquent, and brave to stand up to ask those hard questions unrelated to the topic of the night. I'm fairly sure the questions will be evaded, and as there is pending litigation, he would have grounds for doing so, but it would get the questions out into the community to consider.

I'll bet there might be other people present who will be asking questions about the 10 Commandments monument to be placed on the state Capitol grounds that he co-authored a law for the 'right' to do so and which goes into effect November 1. Those he'll be expecting.

btw, you win a prize for writing the 1,000th post on this thread. :)

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/26/2009 11:52:30 AM)

I thought the same thing - our politicians? Involved in shady dealings? Noooo...!

hm, my reader612 at yahoo dot com email address doesn't give anything away. I have wondered if they are aware that we're here puzzling away. It could be helpful to them to at least know there are some who are trying to be fair. Or it could be amusing if we're way off track!

I'll think about that.

I noticed that on a yahoo search on "Sisney Broken Arrow", brokenarrowforum comes up number 1. It probably has something to do with the fact that yahoo is the hosting service. It's further down on other search engines. Or it could be that it's just so awesome a site. :)

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/26/2009 11:58:25 AM)

Whoo-hoo! 1000 comments! Check that accomplishment off my list.

I would like to see what Ritze would answer to those questions, but I don't think I know anybody who would be able to get them asked.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/26/2009 12:02:53 PM)

612, I thought you'd be interested in reading this comment posted on this thread back in March:

QUOTE

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

2112, (3/9/2009 5:03:16 PM)

Jolie,

I can't speak for her, but after the meeting where Dr. Ritze and Dr. Sisney spoke at during the public comment section about Mann. Those "minutes" made it to the I think to the board website fast. and I don't think they liked that. Since there have been more public comments it "appears" they don't want the public comments to be in depth about what they discussed. She even said at a meeting that she thinks public comments should be "Mr/Mrs. ----- spoke" and leave it at that.

END QUOTE

So Rep. Ritze has been present at one of the BA School Board meetings during this controversy. Let's go see if we can find out which ones and what, if any, of his comments we can uncover, shall we? :)

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/26/2009 12:04:21 PM)

I made a few minor updates to the 33 reasons document, but haven't had time to add much in the way of background. I would like to add a summary document that illustrates the timeline. In my spare time...

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/26/2009 1:17:00 PM)

I went to the August 2008 board meeting minutes (only regular meeting minutes appear to be available) from the 4th and the 18th. The ones from the 18th are so sanitized of information that they might as well have just used the agenda to write down the votes and if the motions passed or failed. Pretty much useless. At least it has a list of those attending the meeting. The minutes of the 4th only show the board member present. The "Also in Attendance" information is left blank. The agendas for both meetings do not mention hiring additional counsel.

Doing a search online, I found that the BA Parents for Truth website had gotten a copy of the special board meeting of August 25, 2008, through FOI, and the attendance list includes Mike Ritze. This meeting covered how the board meetings would be recorded (the motion passed said they would be videotaped in their entirety (I'm sure just the public, not executive, sessions). There was also discussion and votes on what the superintendent cannot do in relationship to public comment on the Board's actions and on individual board members, relationship with the board, etc.

No mention of hiring other legal representation is mentioned.

Although Chris Tharp's questions are detailed regarding agenda items, there is no mention of anything said by Mike Ritze.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/26/2009 1:26:15 PM)

BATV doesn't keep an inventory online of the Board meeting videotapes. They only broadcast the most recent meeting video periodically (on a schedule they've posted on their website) after the board meeting until the next board meeting.

The BAParentsfortruth youtube channel has only 7 videos, clips from some of the meetings in 2009 only.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/26/2009 2:35:12 PM)

Found it. Ledger article "School board hires law firm in split vote", 8/15/2008

QUOTE

BROKEN ARROW - In a split decision, the Broken Arrow Board of Education voted Tuesday evening to enter into a service agreement with the law firm of Rosenstein, Fist and Ringold.

The vote came after board clerk Stephanie Updike expressed concerns about previous dealings between the school district and the firm and fees that could increase BAPS's legal expenses by as much as \$100 an hour.

"It is irresponsible to hire a firm with past issues and higher costs at a time when the district is facing a budget crisis," she said.

There were also several heated exchanges between Superintendent Dr. Jim Sisney and Doug Mann, a principal with the law firm, over past issues.

Dr. Mike Ritze, newly elected state representative for District 80 and an incoming member of the state education committee, opened the special meeting by urging the board to reject the Rosenstein, Fist and Ringold pact for financial reasons.

Deputy Clerk Maryanne Flipppo supported the proposal, saying she "felt comfortable (the law firm) could help her do the job she was elected to do."

In the end, Vice President Sharon Whelpley, and member Sherry Wilkins joined Flipppo in voting for the pact. Updike and board Pres. Terry Stover voted against it.

When an agreement is reached, the school district will be represented by two law firms. The other is The Center for Education Law, Inc. that was represented at the meeting by Laura Holmes.

Under terms of a contract it has with the school system, that firm charges \$150 per hour for services of its shareholders, \$125 an hour for senior associates and \$110 an hour for associate attorneys.

Rosenstein, Fist and Ringold's rates are \$250 per hour for its senior attorneys and from \$225 to \$150 per hour for other attorneys on its staff.

#### UNQUOTE

The question is - were Dr. Sisney and Mr. Ritze concerned solely about the costs, or were they more concerned about the board members having their own counsel, separate from Dr. Sisney's - especially Mr. Mann? Did Sisney bring Ritze in because he needed some backup?

Clearly there was already a history of contention between Dr. Sisney and Mr. Mann. We have heard people say it's because Mann and his firm did a bad job and charged too much. How do they know this is true? Is it based on their own knowledge and experience with RFR?

If, on the other hand, as we have heard from others and suspect from observing his recent behavior, Dr. Sisney has a pattern of publicly discrediting people who won't give in to what he wants, that could easily explain not only his opposition, but the opposition of the other two board members, Mike Ritze, and some members of the public.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/26/2009 3:03:21 PM)

The meeting that Mike Ritze attended was the week before the meeting that the 3 board members boycotted. One of the agenda items that Dr. Sisney and Mr. Stover allegedly wouldn't allow on the agenda was a motion to authorize legal counsel (Mann) to review board policies and recommend revisions.

It seems likely that the 3 board members consulted with Mr. Mann beforehand about the problems with getting items on the agenda. I wonder where the idea to boycott the meeting came from. Some people are very critical of board for doing this, but for all we know, they were in a very difficult position, and may not have had many options.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/26/2009 5:17:42 PM)

When did the public start becoming "involved" in the controversy surrounding the board? Was it when the board members boycotted the August 18 meeting? The first news article related to problems with the board that I can find in the Tulsa World was dated 08/24/08. The Ledger ran the August 15 article you just reprinted regarding Ritze's presentation at the August 12 board meeting regarding legal counsel and Bob Lewis published his editorial on 08/28/09 (is that date right?) about Sisney's contract not being renewed and what a great guy he was. Sisney sent his e-mail to the school district employees some time in August. The 2 members boycotting (I think Sharon Whelpley had another obligation and couldn't attend), the August 18 school board meeting followed Ritze's appearance at the special meeting on August 12 to discuss hiring RFR as counsel. Was the general public at that time (on the 12th) aware of the conflict between the board members and Sisney? Ritze must have been specifically invited in by Sisney to make an impression and influence people, which, of course Ritze has every right to do, as a citizen of and representative for (south) Broken Arrow (as well as Bixby).

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/26/2009 5:24:11 PM)

I did find one previous Tulsa World article dated 08/18/08 titled "No-shows cancel BA meeting." I found it with a search term of "Maryanne Flippo." Before I was searching for "BA School Board" "Broken Arrow School Board" and such. Apparently, no where in this article were those words all together in a string.

I do believe the meeting boycott was the beginning of the public's awareness of a problem among the board members and between the board majority and Sisney.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/26/2009 5:33:50 PM)

Bob Lewis' article praising Sisney was published 8/8/2008. Then the board voted against Sisney's recommendation on 8/12 to hire RFR. An editorial was published in the Ledger on 8/12:

#### QUOTE

Board's actions 'unbelievable'

I can't believe what's going on with our school board. Like a lot of other people in this community, I couldn't be more

pleased with Dr. Jim Sisney. In my mind he is the best superintendent of schools this city has ever had. But for some reason, the school board seems intent on making his life so miserable he will quit. They obviously have no idea what they are doing.  
Billie Jackmore

Broken Arrow

UNQUOTE

Besides the "glittering" article by Bob Lewis, that's the first thing I can find in the Ledger archives referring to the conflict.

The article I quoted earlier from August 15 was really first published on August 12. It was in the archives with both dates.

I had been under the impression that two board members officially boycotted, because Mrs. Whelpley was not at either the meeting or the rally. In the Ledger article from August 18, "School board conflict grows in intensity", I noticed something I hadn't noticed before:

QUOTE

Stover said he had been informed by Attorney Doug Mann that board Vice President Sharon Whelpley, Deputy Clerk Maryanne Flippo and Member Shari Wilkins would not attend the meeting to protest the failure of certain items to be placed on the meeting's agenda.

UNQUOTE

So she officially boycotted in protest, but then I guess she couldn't show up either place, because that would have made a quorum.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/26/2009 5:39:24 PM)

I wonder when Doug Mann informed Stover. Was it just before the meeting, or was there enough time to address the problem?

Since Stover already knew there would be no board meeting, I wonder why he didn't cancel the meeting, and reschedule it to allow enough time to get things straightened out? Maybe because it was an opportunity to make the board members look bad to the public?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/26/2009 7:18:10 PM)

Those are good questions. I wouldn't be surprised at all if the answer to the last one was yes.

Thanks for using your treasure trove of Ledger articles to answer some of these questions, such as Whelpley's position on the boycott, that would be difficult to answer otherwise.

Flippo and Wilkins held a news conference at the park that night. That takes a certain amount of prior arrangement to allow media to be present. Was Bob Lewis present at the news conference (he wasn't listed at the Board meeting--big clue--so I'm guessing he was). As connected to Sisney as Lewis seems to be in this drama, I'm sure if he had heard about the press conference, he would be right on the phone to Sisney to alert him and/or pose questions. Yet, Sisney was present at the meeting. Do you know of anything to confirm that Lewis was at the press conference that evening? (I do try to check for myself, but not exhaustively. I already spend too much time with this some days, as it is. :))

I just started watching and listening for the first time to Maryanne Flippo's February 2009 news conference, posted on youtube. (remember how I had trouble getting the video to work on KTUL's website? If you haven't heard it and would like to, you can do a search for the first part and go on from there. The video is titled "KTUL - Broken Arrow School Member Speaks Out (Part One)" and was posted by KTULPuck.

[smack my forehead] I just figured out why the minutes of August 18 on the BAPS board site were almost blank except for the motions that were to be made, which were never voted on. The district still had to have a record of the meeting, though, since there was a meeting scheduled and two board members, the superintendent and staff, and members of the public were present.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/27/2009 8:04:26 PM)

Hey 612, 612!!

New Article up at the Tulsa World

"MONDAY: BA Schools' attorney fees jump during strife-ridden year" by Clifton Adcock 09/27/09

He's interviewed Doug Mann for this piece and includes several quotes from him.

He updates us and says the audit by the State Auditor and Investigator and the OSBI and storage unit and arson investigations are still ongoing.

(612, did you go ahead and send information to any of the TW reporters, as I suggested?)

I jumped in as soon as I saw this article and posted the following comment:

QUOTE

Jolie2, (9/27/2009 7:55:35 PM)

You can read the official documents from both of the court cases Sisney filed related to the BAPS/BOE at brokenarrowforum dot net

Pay close attention to the list of exhibits that the school district and board members plan to present at trial, including Dr. Sisney's employment records.

Documents related to BA Board Member Stephanie's Updike's recent filing for bankruptcy (for quite a hefty sum of debt) is also linked to there.

Many other documents are easily accessible through that website as well and will be a useful reference tool for people who want to know more in-depth information about the controversy, instead of one side's presentation of it.

BAParentsfortruth dot com was notified of this the brokenarrowforum dot net website and offered the opportunity to post a link to it on their site but chose not to do so, even though they link to other sites. Is it because their members are only interested in promoting their own agenda instead of discovering the truth?

The Broken Arrow Ledger refused to print any comment that referenced (but not linked) brokenarrowforum dot net, even though many attempts were made. This is no surprise to me, as Bob Lewis, now retired, showed a specific bias in favor of Sisney in his reporting, editorializing, and censorship of comments submitted related to the stories involving the Board, the District, and Dr. Sisney, et al.

We want people to be able to make up their own minds about what is happening and not take anyone's claims as gospel.

You will find much more information available for understanding what is happening and more balanced points of view than what has been presented in the media, particularly on the BA Ledger, if you also use both the forum and the Feb. 26 article comments as a reference.

Also, several of us interested in this topic have over 1,000 posts of an ongoing conversation on this topic continuing after an previous TW story titled "BA School Board rejects probe" dated February 26, 2009, that you are welcome to read and/or join in on, if you can treat others with respect and avoid name calling and personal insults.

END QUOTE

I hope you'll see the article soon and post something quickly as well, if you have anything to add.

Would you do me a favor, if you have time? Please re-save up-to-the-minute the comments we have on this Feb. 26 article?

Let's keep posting to each other here (as well as there) and then, if you want, we can move the discussion over to the other, new Sept. 27 article, once things quiet down there, unless you can think of a good reason to keep this adding on to this one and keep it going.

Good new on the Madeleine McCann case. When you have time, go to the "Police Halt Probe on Absent Girl" article

here for a quick update. :)

Jolie

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/27/2009 11:14:20 PM)

You pretty much said it all, but I echoed your reference to brokenarrowforum dot net.

I wonder what inspired this article at this particular time? There wasn't any new event that I know of that would have brought the subject up. Is there about to be?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/27/2009 11:17:46 PM)

Remember all the fussing people did because the board didn't allow comments at the meeting where they voted to suspend Sisney?

Well, that's because allowing comments would have been violating school board policy. From the BA school board policy regarding public comments at meetings:

QUOTE

Public Comment Guidelines:

School Board policies, state law, and federal law establish separate and distinct procedures and forums for the resolution of employee grievances, employee complaints, employee suspensions and terminations, complaints against individual employees, student suspensions and appeals, political campaigns and litigation.

To avoid circumvention of these separate proceedings and to assure fairness to all parties concerned, no person will be allowed to speak regarding the following:

An issue in a pending lawsuit, complaint, or investigation filed with an outside agency, wherein the District, employee(s) or the Board is a party;

A pending grievance;

A pending employee complaint filed with the District or an outside agency;

An employee disciplinary action including suspension or termination;

A pending student disciplinary action including suspension or appeal that may reach the Board.

UNQUOTE

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/27/2009 11:21:22 PM)

I have also heard that Sisney's attorney, Gary Richardson, frequently signed up to speak, and used the time to harrass the board.

People may not be aware that the allowing the public to speak is at the board's discretion, and this is standard for school boards, not just a Broken Arrow thing. From TW article "School board meeting agendas are posted", 3/15/2007:

QUOTE

Many school boards — but not all — allow for public participation or comment, which usually requires that the person register in advance. "It's hard for the public to understand, but they don't have a constitutional right to speak at school board meetings," Miller said. "If they speak, they have abide by the rules of that body."

UNQUOTE

The person quoted is Julie Miller, general counsel for Oklahoma State School Boards Association.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/27/2009 11:23:04 PM)

It's very likely that the board explained why comments would not be allowed, but their explanation was not reported. It seems pretty clear-cut to me. I don't know how anyone can object when the policy is right there in black and white - the board could not have allowed comments if they had wanted to.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/28/2009 12:33:05 AM)

612, glad you're back online and that you mentioned the "33 questions" from the forum on the new TW article.

I don't know why the legal billing is being reported on now, except that I can think of two likely possibilities: 1) Chris Tharp or someone from his group who is disappointed in not getting as many details in the billing as they had hoped, due to the redactions for confidentiality or 2) Doug Mann, taking a proactive step in addressing the reasoning behind the steep increase in legal expenses, knowing that Tharp, et al, would not be satisfied with the results of their request.

Tomorrow, we'll know more, when we read...the rest of the story, as promised by Mr. Clifton Adcock.

As far as the board policy regarding public comments during board meeting that you've posted here today, are you sure that same policy was in effect last summer? It wasn't long ago that the board sat down to review all board policies and revise them, as necessary.

I keep checking in on the TW story published today am so frustrated by those posters who insist on staying ignorant and making thoughtless posts based on what--wishful thinking?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/28/2009 8:41:25 AM)

I am so disappointed in the more detailed article that Adcock published today. It's obvious this came from Tharp or someone from his group. Yesterday's article is no longer available and the comments from it weren't forwarded to this one. I wonder why not, when that is standard procedure on the TW, when a nearly identical article is published the next day.

Luckily, I saved the first post from yesterday here to copy and paste immediately this morning and added to that for new readers to get a chance to see.

If you haven't already, please re-save these comments, just in case, because this might heat up and tick some folks off. Have you thought of putting a link on your forum that would bring up a separate pdf file of these comments (and just keep updating that?) as an extra measure?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/28/2009 8:58:21 AM)

I do have all the comments saved in Word documents, and can easily convert them to PDF and post them.

I posted a cranky note on the other article to all the new people who are just now weighing in with their considered opinions. I suggested they educate themselves about this issue before making more accusations against people they don't even know and making themselves look ignorant. Something to that effect. It was definitely cranky.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/28/2009 9:00:41 AM)

Ok, I can see the both articles now when I do a search. Here's my comment:

-----  
**612**, Broken Arrow (9/28/2009 7:56:58 AM)

Where have you been, sirwinston and others? This has been going on for over a year. You're just now weighing in with your considered opinion? That is, jumping to conclusions based on the little you've seen reported?

Do us a favor and try to educate yourself on this issue before you join in with the sheep chorus, heap more undeserved criticism on people you don't even know, and make yourself look ignorant.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/28/2009 9:23:51 AM)

Yeah, I read it. It WAS cranky. :)

Glad to see we're not the only ones posting an alternative viewpoint to the media reports slant.

Now that we've made it quite clear that there is more information available on this issue and how to find it, there is no excuse for the Tulsa World reporters to keep from digging further when reporting on this issue.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/28/2009 9:35:30 AM)

Have you had a chance yet to look at the pdf file of the attorney billings with the TW article?

Why is Tharp not satisfied with that? There is PLENTY of detailed information, date by date. It appears on cursory review, the ONLY information redacted are NAMES OF WITNESSES AND PERSONS INTERVIEWED. Was that the intention of the FOI for the billing, to get the names of persons who have testified and will be testifying about Sisney and other matters related to this controversy? I suspected this, but still it upsets me to think that could be the reason

why Tharp has been hammering away for this information. I am so ANGRY!

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/28/2009 9:43:27 AM)

Dear Mr. Adcock,

Several of us have been puzzling about this issue since it started. We have gathered a lot of information and looked critically at Dr. Sisney's claims and actions, and the actions of the school board. We are fairly convinced that there is nothing to Dr. Sisney's claims of a conspiracy on the school board, and that the turmoil in the district (including the legal fees) is the result of his actions, not incompetence or corruption of the school board.

Please see the documents posted on brokenarrowforum dot net, and read the "33 questions" posted on that site, and see if they don't put a little doubt in your mind as to the veracity of Dr. Sisney's claims. For starters, the idea that the board suddenly and without warning suspended Sisney because they were trying to cover their tracks is preposterous. They know what the legal requirements are, and through all of this have tried their best to prevent opening the district up for lawsuits.

At this point, the board members, including Maryanne Flippo, appear to me to have much more credibility than Dr. Sisney and his supporters. The reporting on the Broken Arrow Ledger has been extremely biased, highlighting the views of a select and organized group of individuals who support Sisney, and leaving out important information that casts doubt on his story. Sisney's actions are highly questionable, while the board members have continued to act in a professional manner in spite of the nasty things people have been saying about them.

In addition, the board members are unable to speak about anything that relates to anyone's employment, or anything that is part of a lawsuit. They have no way of getting the truth out to the public.

Please look at the information on brokenarrowforum dot net. I would very much like to see an article that shows that there might be another side to this. I hope you will read Ms. Flippo's news conference, where she states that Dr. Sisney threatened her with a "PR nightmare for herself personally and the district" if she did not get the board to agree to what he wanted in his employment contract. This is blackmail, and it's a felony. Why does no one seem to want to know if the superintendent committed a felony, yet they're all up in arms about legal bills - with the obvious explanation right in front of them?

TW article "BA School Board Rejects Probe" from February 26, 2009 has over 1000 comments about this controversy. They should raise many questions in people's minds.

It may also be of interest to readers that the same board member who was so concerned about wasting money, Stephanie Updike, filed for bankruptcy in June 2009. She is four million dollars in debt on her real estate properties. The houses are being foreclosed. The bankruptcy petition is also posted on the website.

Thank you,

612

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/28/2009 9:48:13 AM)

Wait, the attorney bills ARE about Sisney? Surprise, surprise.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/28/2009 9:50:54 AM)

I have something interesting for you, Jolie, but I don't want to post it. If you have an anonymous email address, you can email me at reader612 at yahoo dot net and I can send it.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/28/2009 10:15:31 AM)

612, your letter to Mr. Adcock is very good. I hope he takes it seriously.

I do have a yahoo dot com e-mail address (a secondary account) and use an alias of Jolie on my profile. However, when I send e-mails from it, my real full name shows up as the sender of the e-mail, and I can't figure out how to change that from the account pages I've gone through. Do you have any suggestions?

I trust you (as much as anyone can trust another person they've never met :) ) but still would like to keep my identity private, if possible.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/28/2009 10:27:40 AM)

Try this:

- 1) Open your yahoo mailbox
- 2) Click on the link at the top that shows your email address
- 3) Click on Account Info
- 4) It will ask for your password.
- 5) Click the "Update your contact information" link
- 6) It will bring up a window where you can edit any of your information, including your name.

When you're done, you can test by sending yourself an email to make sure nothing shows up that you don't want.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/28/2009 10:43:47 AM)

612, I hope it was okay to do this: I went ahead and copied and pasted the board members' exhibit list in detail onto today's article. Is that legal/acceptable to do? If not, we can ask for the post to be deleted.

I will follow your instructions to see if it works better than my attempts on changing settings on my e-mail account.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/28/2009 10:45:48 AM)

I don't see a problem with posting the exhibit list, since it's public record.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/28/2009 10:50:51 AM)

It's the darndest thing. Earlier, I had changed and saved the contact information to my alias "Jolie Adams." Nowhere in the profile or account information can I find my real name, yet when I send an e-mail to myself from the secondary account, my real name still shows up as the sender.

How important is this information you want to share? :)

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/28/2009 10:56:22 AM)

I bet your real name is not being sent, but is showing up in your regular email box because it's in your Contact list with your real name. Try deleting the contact in your regular email address, and see what shows up.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/28/2009 11:06:26 AM)

P.S. I forgot to mention that I also emailed the letter to Mr. Adcock. I don't know anything about the newspaper business, and there's no telling how much time he would be able to spend on this story.

But I hope that, since it was worthy of the most recent article about the legal fees, it would be worthy of spending a little more time to present the questions that show there might be another side. Especially since we've already done so much of the work!

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/28/2009 11:11:06 AM)

I had to have another, second e-mail address as my home e-mail account and it couldn't be a yahoo account. I went ahead and set up a new e-mail account under 'Jolie Adams' at Google and will now send you an e-mail so that we can start communicating directly with each other, in addition to posting here at the TW. :)

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/28/2009 11:13:52 AM)

:)

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/28/2009 11:18:17 AM)

Messages (2) sent, 612. Please confirm that your yahoo e-mail ends in dot net, not dot com.

Thanks,

Jolie

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/28/2009 11:25:36 AM)

You're right - it is dot com. Sorry about that.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/28/2009 11:30:11 AM)

Message has been sent to corrected address. Thanks!

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/28/2009 2:46:07 PM)

Posted on the 9/28 story too:

-----  
I am pleased with the level of detail in the billing details.

I notice that entry after entry deals with issues that Sisney forced. If it's true that Sisney blocked board members from putting items on the agenda, denied them access to legal counsel, communicated with them only through his attorney (thus forcing the board's attorney to get involved in ALL communication), made false accusations of illegal financial and bidding issues related to Air Assurance, and filed lawsuits that required research, advice, interviews, and copious documentation, the board had absolutely no choice in requesting the work that resulted in the legal bills.

In addition, if the board's claims in Sisney's termination letter are true, he gave them no choice but to incur the legal fees to fire him, pay off the remainder of his contract, and hire another superintendent, with all the legal services required in drafting and negotiating a contract.

I also notice that what I have seen so far corresponds with what the district has communicated about what was happening during that timeframe.

As the timeframe moves into November, you can see how more attorney fees are incurred because of actions of Sisney's supporters – see entries involving John Lare and the grand jury petition.

In January, we see all the time (and money) spent dealing with the outrageous and bogus claims of illegal sick pay that was inappropriately brought up by Rep. Reynolds.

Then, of course, in April, we begin to see the legal fees incurred by the action that brought us this document.

Anyone who can look at this document objectively will see that we have Sisney to thank for the increase in legal bills.

Wow, I wonder who allegedly attempted embezzlement of funds by using forged checks (see 10/20/2008 entries). Hadn't heard that before.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/28/2009 5:03:13 PM)

Posted on 9/28 story:

-----  
Apparently the board and BA administration were not really using legal counsel much before the board hired RFR. That explains the \$8,000 for legal expenditures over a whole year, compared with Union's 170,000 budgeted. If Sisney was really the authoritarian that people say he was, he may have considered it "going over his head" if they requested legal advice, particularly if it was something he had already made a determination on. So, again, the very thing he bragged about - bringing legal fees down to 8,000 - was possibly yet another indication of what a disservice he was really doing for the district.

I don't see how anyone can think publishing the billing details for the public actually shows wrongdoing. To me it's just the opposite - it provides a much clearer picture of all the obstacles the board has been forced to overcome, and all the money that has been wasted by the self-serving actions of one man and his group of followers. And what about all of the time that's been wasted? Either the board members have had to work overtime (at a volunteer job!) or they have been prevented from attending to the business of the district.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/29/2009 9:25:32 AM)

Posted on 9/28 article:

-----  
Thinking about the \$8000-something (let's round up to \$9000) that Sisney brought the legal fees down to for a year - at \$100 per hour, that's 90 hours per year, or 7.5 hours per month.

Is it sensible to try to run a district of this size on 7.5 hours of legal counsel per month? Where were they getting their legal advice on everything from staff and student issues to vendor contracts?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**612**, Broken Arrow (9/29/2009 1:49:22 PM)

Posted on 9/28 article:

-----  
I'm very glad this issue was brought out into the light. It confirms a lot of what we expected to see, and brings up some interesting points.

Why did Sisney think it was a good thing to run a district with nearly 16,000 students with access to legal counsel so severely restricted? His 8,501.18 in legal fees for FY 2006-2007 allows for only 7.1 hours per month, at a modest \$100/hour. What would superintendents of other comparable-sized school districts have to say about that? Union, with 14,573 students, budgeted 170,000 for FY 2007-2008, or 141.6 hours per month. What needs was legal counsel fulfilling for Union that BA was doing without?

It seems extremely dangerous and negligent to conduct the business of a large school district with practically no legal counsel. I wonder how much we have been paying since then because of mistakes made that opened the district up for litigation? Of course any fallout from that fiscal year would have gone into the legal fees incurred in 2007-2008, which Sisney was blaming the board for in his email.

Because of the extreme irresponsibility of this policy, it seems unlikely that saving money was the motive, except in the very short term. It suggests that Sisney was intentionally shutting out legal counsel, in order to impede the board's ability to properly handle legal challenges in the district, while at the same time setting himself up to point out the drastic reduction in legal fees he had achieved. Was he positioning himself to criticize the board for hiring appropriate legal counsel, knowing that of course the costs would go up (to something more reasonable), and setting the stage to lead the public to blame them for the increased costs to taxpayers that are really due to his own actions? Anybody feeling manipulated yet?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (9/29/2009 5:39:08 PM)

Posted today on the TW 09/28 legal fees story:

QUOTE

Jolie2, (9/29/2009 5:35:38 PM)

An excerpt from the BA Ledger article dated March 4, 2009, contained an explanation of why the legal bills have increased, other than the litigation spawned related to the Sisney allegations-against-the board and AA controversy:

QUOTE

Interim Superintendent Dr. Gary Gerber said there are two reasons why these expenses are higher than was budgeted. The first, he said, "is a significant amount of time required by our legal counsel" to defend the district and three members of the board of education against a lawsuit filed by former Superintendent Dr. Jim Sisney and a taxpayers' demand initiated by a group of 10 citizens.

Second, Gerber pointed to what he called an expanded role assumed by attorney Doug Mann when he was hired by the school board just before Sisney's termination.

To illustrate this point, he pointed to a list of 15 general legal activities ranging from advice on federal programs and finance and tax issues, to contract reviews, compliance with various laws, review of school district policies and personnel issues. The superintendent also said Mann and his associates are called upon to provide advice on collective bargaining issues and provide training for staff personnel in a variety of legal procedures and processes.

"With 1,200 teachers plus support staff and administrators, this is a big operation that faces a number of instances when legal advice is necessary," Gerber said. "But even with all our counsel does, its fees represent only a tiny fraction of our total \$100 million budget."

QUOTE

Pay attention to the last sentence: a \$100,000,000 budget. It puts things a bit into perspective, doesn't it?

The same Ledger article published figures for legal expenses for BA, Union, and Jenks:

Union Public Schools, with 14,573 students, budgeted \$170,000 and (as of 3/4/09) has spent \$14,368. Jenks Public Schools, with 10,000 students, budgeted \$105,000 has spent \$75,150 (as of 3/4/09). Broken Arrow budgeted \$50,000 for this school year, significantly lower than similar districts in our area, even though BAPS student enrollment is higher: over 16,000 students.

I do think 612 has hit on something here. It's not so much about why BAPS has sky-high bills this year. Any thoughtful person would expect much, much higher legal expenses than normal after the lawsuits and other actions were initiated against the Board and district, as well as the preparation of documentation related to the suspension and then dismissal of Sisney's employment.

Her question as to why BAPS was so significantly underusing legal counsel in previous years deserves to be answered.

END QUOTE