

These documents were provided to www.accountabilityinthemedia.com by the Mount Vernon City Schools. The Mount Vernon Board of Education held a special session on February 24, 2010 regarding pending litigation. The meeting began as a public meeting; all five board members voted to go into executive session. MVBOE's attorney David Millstone said, regarding Paula Barone and Steve Thompson, "Both Board members left the meeting after returning to public session and before reconvening into executive session to discuss the pending litigation." (This would mean that night there were at least two public sessions and two executive sessions.)

**PAULA M. BARONE
200 EAST VINE STREET
MOUNT VERNON, OH 43050**

February 3, 2010

Dr. Margie Bennett, President
Mount Vernon School Board
300 Newark Road
Mount Vernon, OH 43050

Dear Dr. Bennett,

Last week I sought the counsel of officials at the Ohio School Boards Association and the Ohio Ethics Commission, as well as that of school board attorney David Millstone, to determine if my eventual participation in the John Freshwater dismissal hearing would constitute a conflict of interest.

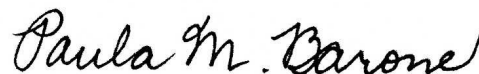
My inquiry was predicated upon the following events, all of which occurred in 2008: I was one of several John Freshwater colleagues interviewed by H. R. on Call regarding his activities at the middle school; my son was called by Mr. Millstone to testify in the administrative hearing about certain worksheets he had retained from Mr. Freshwater's science class; and my husband and I assisted the Dennises in establishing www.protectingstudents.org, which advocated a change in state law to protect students' identities when forced to testify in administrative hearings.

Though all three experts assured me no legal conflict of interest was created by any of these three events, I was advised Mr. Freshwater's legal team could possibly use my eventual deliberation, and/or voting, on his dismissal as a pretext for further litigation against our school system.

I am unwilling to subject the Mount Vernon School Board, and our community, to the additional expense and delay such litigation would inevitably entail. Therefore, I will, at this time, recuse myself from school board executive sessions and votes involving the ongoing John Freshwater dismissal action.

I share the desire of all my board colleagues to conclude this process as soon as possible, and to refocus our full attention on the quest for academic excellence in the Mount Vernon City Schools.

Yours truly,



Paula M. Barone, Member
Mount Vernon Board of Education

cc: Superintendent Short

Date: February 24, 2010

To: Dr. Margie Bennett, President, Mount Vernon Board of Education
Jody Goetzman, Vice President, Mount Vernon Board of Education
Sharon Slane Fair, Member, Mount Vernon Board of Education
Paula Barone, Member, Mount Vernon Board of Education

Dear Board Members:

I am seeking permission from the Board of Education to remove myself from discussing and voting on existing litigation regarding the Freshwater matter. At this time, I am not recusing myself from administrative proceedings relative to Mr. Freshwater's contract termination. I will remain fully engaged, as a member of the board, in all other matters.

Thank you, in advance, for your understanding regarding this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Steve Thompson".

Steve Thompson, Member
Mount Vernon Board of Education

Copies: Steve Short, Superintendent, Mount Vernon City Schools
Barbara Donohue, Treasurer, Mount Vernon City Schools