

Atchison schools to keep Native American mascots

**(KAIR)--Atchison schools will keep their Native-American themed mascots.**

**After considerable – and at times emotional – remarks, the USD 409 board Monday night voted to keep the Redmen mascot for the high school and Braves mascot for the middle school.**

**Prior to the vote the board heard passionate comments from area residents, several of whom had ties to the Kickapoo Tribe. Those residents uniformly described the Redmen mascot as hurtful, derogatory, and degrading to Native Americans, and they strongly urged the board to stop using it.**

**The ultimate outcome came after Board member Sean Crittendon moved that the district “move away” from using those Native-American themed mascots. It was seconded by Diane Liebsch.**

**However, that ended up being the only support for the motion, as it failed by a vote of 2 to 5, with board members Bill Shipley, Rick Zumbrunn, Herb Gwaltney, Carrie Sowers, and John Eplee all voting against.**

**In explaining their vote, several board members cited informal discussion they had with district patrons on the issue. Board member Zumbrunn described those he spoke with as being “overwhelmingly” in favor of keeping the mascots.**

**The long-awaited vote followed a lengthy committee review of the issue, and a public forum last month that drew less than 50 people.**

**Of the 11 who spoke at that forum, 8 were in favor of keeping the mascots, while three voiced their opinions as to why the mascots should be removed.**

**A committee, comprised of USD 409 School Board Members, representatives of the public, and others, conducted a study outlining the pros and cons of continuing the use of the mascots.**

**A Facebook page established for discussion of the topic continues to draw comments from both perspectives.**

**The issue arose in 2016 after the school district received what Superintendent Dr. Susan Myers at the time called “written communications pertaining to the use of the Redmen mascot.”**

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