

Mascot's future remains unknown

(KAIR)--No decision has been made pertaining to the future of the Atchison High School mascot.

That point was pushed by the members of the Board of Education for Atchison's USD 409 during the Board's Monday evening meeting.

That followed an update regarding the work of the committee tasked to explore all aspects of a possible mascot change, due to the [controversial nature](#) of the district's use of the Redmen mascot.

The update was presented by school board member Sean Crittendon, who served as a board member representative on the committee.

His presentation focused on two past meetings of the mascot committee, with one held [February 5](#) and another on [April 23](#).

The committee, Crittendon explained, formed two work-session groups, which examined both sides of the issue, including reasons why the mascot should be retired. "It was identified that the term "Redmen" is a racial slur, it's racially insensitive, and offensive to some. Misrepresents Native Americans, teaches all students that stereotyping of minority groups is acceptable. Institutionalizing is a dangerous lesson in an adverse society."

The second group, within the committee, outlined why the Redmen mascot should be kept, Crittendon told the School Board. "Demonstrates pride, tradition, culture, for the schools, alumni, and the Atchison community. It was discussed it is our history, it was discussed that it actually honors Native American culture, there's no intent of disrespect or offense."

Following Crittendon's presentation, Board members emphasized that no decision regarding the mascot is immediately made, despite public speculation to the contrary.

"I kept hearing from people they felt there was a lack of transparency, "Bill Shipley said. "Social media is terrible for this type of stuff because people read stuff and believe it's true, without doing any research for themselves."

Board member Rick Zumbrunn added, "Everything that I have heard is, everything negative. It's a done deal, no use wasting my time to go down to the meeting. I wish I had a dollar for every time that somebody told me that. I kept trying to tell them, there's no decision been made, there's a committee for it.

Nope, they've already decided, it's a done deal."

School Board President Herb Gwaltney said, "We heard a report, that's all. We've not made any decision in terms of the mascot."

No action was taken pertaining to the mascot during Monday's meeting, and the mascot committee is now disbanded.

It's unknown when the matter will be revisited.

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