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Title: Bedford meeting ends in parking lot confrontation
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BEDFORD -- Last night's town council meeting ended in a parking lot confrontation between Council Chairman Michael Scanlon and School Board Vice Chairman Daniel Sullivan, with both men accusing each other of ruining the town.

Sullivan drove to the meeting around 10:20 p.m. after watching on television as the council vote 3-to-2 to ask its attorney, Barton Mayer, whether the council is obligated to sue the school board over the school district's current three-year tuition contract with Manchester.

"You're going to ruin this town," Sullivan yelled, confronting Scanlon in the parking lot.

"Take a long look in the mirror," Scanlon yelled back. "You tore this town apart."

As the argument grew heated, Town Manager Keith Hickey and Roy Stewart, president of the Bedford Taxpayers Association, stepped between Scanlon and Sullivan to separate them.

"Look up conflict of interest -- you ran on it," Sullivan yelled to Scanlon as he got into his sport-utility vehicle and drove off.

Scanlon said afterward that Sullivan's challenging members of the council was "certainly inappropriate."

"I don't believe he would appreciate members of the town council going to the school board meeting and confronting members of the school board," Scanlon said.

It was the second heated argument on the issue last night. Scanlon and Councilor David Danielson also argued over the matter, prompting Councilor William Van Anglen (acting as chairman for the night) to bang his gavel to break it up.

The issue of the council suing the school board stemmed from attorney Mark Stull, who appeared before the council two weeks ago in the lead-up to the invalidated June 1 special election on whether Bedford should approve a 20-year high school tuition contract with Manchester.

Stull told the council it should sue the school board because he felt the current three-year contract was improperly approved by the school board by signing it without taking it to the voters. Stull argued that if the contract is invalid, Bedford would not have to honor the \$10.6 million owed to Manchester under the terms of the contract for capital costs for Manchester schools.

While the council had a cool response to Stull initially, Scanlon made a motion at this meeting to have Mayer look over Stull's claim to decide whether it has merit.

"This is not our venue. This should not be here. We should let this go," Danielson said, arguing against Scanlon's motion. "We are not in the business of suing other political subdivisions. The intent and purpose of this was to drag us into a political situation that we should not be involved in."

Later in the discussion, Danielson asked Scanlon: "Is it the politics of it, you want to get involved in?"

The question prompted a brief, but heated exchange, which ended with Van Anglen's gavel.

Scanlon then answered, "Until I have Bart's (Barton Mayer's) opinion, I don't know what we are going to do."

Hickey said during the discussion that he already talked about the matter with Mayer.

"This is not our purview," Hickey said. "I had a conversation with him about it last week. He didn't think it is our issue."

Councilor Lori Radke argued for Stull's position.

"What if there is potential of getting the money (the \$10.6 million owed to Manchester) back? Isn't it our job to protect the taxpayers?" Radke asked.

Scanlon, Radke and Councilor Kevin Keyes voted to send Stull's claim to the attorney. Danielson and Van Anglen voted against it.

Councilor Christopher Bandazian recused himself from the vote because he has to testify in an upcoming court case on behalf of the zoning board of adjustment, which the school board has sued. Councilor William Greiner was absent.

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