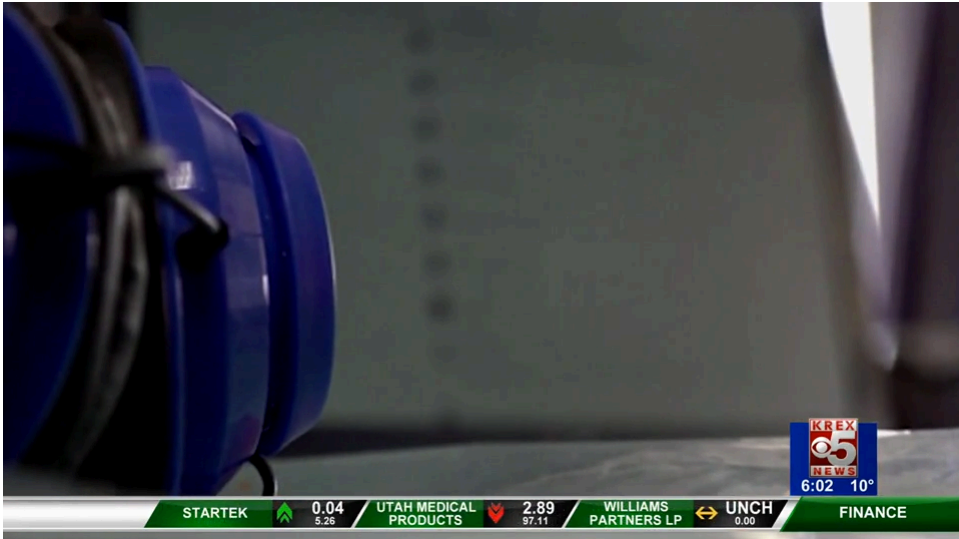


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LOCAL NEWS

School District 51 board members move forward to hire new outside legal firm

by: [Chance Sticklen](#)

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GRAND JUNCTION, Colo ([KREX](#)) — Emails between D51 School Board members and the Miller Farmer Law Firm started back in early December. Conversations included drafting a new contract in order to represent the school board.

The catch? It all started as an added item to the first business meeting, a conversation that left out two board members, parents, and the community.

Jeffrey Roberts, with Colorado Freedom of Information Coalition, says, “when you suddenly have a request for proposal for new legal counsel. Where did that come from? That is something that a board should take up as a board and have a meeting about that the public is entitled to observe.”

Public input is protected under the open meetings law through the Colorado Freedom of Information Act Coalition. Spokesperson Jeffrey Roberts says, “public policy, the formation of public policy in Colorado is the public’s business and shall not be conducted in secret, that’s the first thing that the law says.”

There are a few exceptions to the law, but it must be business that is authorized.

While Superintendent Diana Sirko agreed to the proposal, the morning of the meeting, she also shared serious concerns.

The question many are asking is why this front range firm should oust the district’s current in-house legal counsel, John Williams?

Contract approval was pending, but new board members recently changed course and said they would accept local contract bids, possibly to fend off a court challenge.

Roberts also says, “the way to challenge a possible violation of the open meetings law would be for someone take it to court.”

Something Roberts says would be left to community members.

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