

OPINION

FIRST AMENDMENT “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press or the right of people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

OUR VIEW

Sooner than later

Government has often been accused of making changes that impact the people they represent without allowing a discussion of the changes before hand. That’s certainly not the case with International Falls school officials as they consider how to whittle expenditures to meet anticipated revenues. We urge the people- parents and community members and leaders — who will be impacted by these proposed changes to get educated first, and then get involved — sooner than later. The Falls School Board will meet in special session 5 p.m. Monday to continue the process of considering what and who to cut from its offerings. The cost adjustments are being prompted by an anticipated loss of about \$500,000 due to a decline of about 70 students since last spring. While the agenda for whom will speak Monday has already been set, members of the public ought to be paying attention to what is being discussed so they will be able to make an informed comment or

suggestion when the time is right. Clearly, waiting until the decisions have been made and then attending a meeting to complain about those decisions makes no sense. Now is the time to make an attempt to understand why administration believes these cuts are necessary and how any proposed cuts may change the current situation. Schools play such an important role in our lives and future, we, like Falls Superintendent Nordy Nelson, are concerned few members of this community have attended the two previous sessions during which cost adjustments have been discussed. But it’s not too late to get informed. The board plans to host a series of meetings on the issue with final decisions expected to be made during the last Monday in April. Don’t wait to find out how our students and our schools have been changed after the fact. Get involved by listening to the discussion and making informed comments — sooner than later.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Paper, council are at fault

To the editor,
The article in the Dec. 28, 2013, Journal, “Discussion on director position ends meeting,” was troubling. I thought, here we go again; the Economic Development Authority is up to more games again. I had not finished a letter I was getting ready for print when your editorial came in the Jan. 8 edition. Here we have a director of economic development (Shawn Mason) that hasn’t done anything since she was given this newly created position which should of never happened if you, Ms. Editor, and the city council had read the city charter Sec. 17. A month after she got her first paycheck she and Councilor (Gail) Rognerud hold a groundbreaking with the governor on County 155 telling everyone they were bringing 50 new jobs here. I have not seen a building yet or the 50 jobs. Then the taxpayer bought

(Jim) Oberstar a \$900 plane ticket because he has a list of the Canadian National Railway customers that use the Ranier port of entry so we can call on their customers for potential business. Where is the list; who are the customers? I consider that: Big show, no jobs and tax money spent. And now, 18 months and several automatic pay raises later, Mason wants, receives a 19-percent budget increase. And the EDA puts money at risk by approving to take the budget money from the lease monies coming from the federal government to pay the bonds and maintenance of the city-owned park buildings. The mayor is in charge of the city. Remember the director — when mayor — and the former, and some of the present council members sued the state of Minnesota, commissioner of Transportation, Koochiching County and city of Ranier

multiple times, losing each time, costing the taxpayers money with nothing to show for it. The citizens are tired of a council that gives each other jobs, accepting gifts of land and paying for it in brokerage fees, raising sewer and water rates automatically and spending taxpayer money with ease. Instead of pointing the finger at the mayor, you should point it at yourself. While I value your reporting, has your newspaper ever investigated the actions and spending of the EDA and its director? Maybe if you did the mayor would not have to stand alone with a council that has done anything it wanted to in the past and your paper has never said a word. This town continues to slide backwards and is not going to move forward until the change in city council is complete with the November 2014 election. **Dick Koeneman**
International Falls, MN

How to contact your lawmakers

- FEDERAL OFFICES**

President Barack Obama
Democrat
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20500
202-456-1111
Website:
www.whitehouse.gov
E-mail:
president@whitehouse.gov

U.S. Rep. Rick Nolan
2447 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515
202-225-6211
Website: www.nolan.house.gov
Facebook: US Rep Rick Nolan
Twitter: @USRepRickNolan

Duluth Office of Congressman Rick Nolan
11 East Superior Street
Suite 125
Duluth, MN 55802
Phone: 218-464-5095
Fax: 218-464-5098

Brainerd Office of Congressman Rick Nolan
Brainerd City Hall
501 Laurel Street
Brainerd, MN 56401
218-454-4078

U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar
Democrat
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
202-224-3244

Minnesota Office:
1200 Washington Avenue
- South, Suite 250
Minneapolis, MN 55415
612-727-5220
Website:
www.klobuchar.senate.gov

U.S. Sen. Al Franken
Democrat
Senate Hart Building 320
Washington DC 20510
202-224-5641
Website:
www.alfranken.com
E-Mail:
info@franken.senate.gov

STATE OFFICES

Gov. Mark Dayton
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN, 55155
800-657-3717
E-mail:
Mark.Dayton@state.mn.us

Rep. David Dill
571 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-2190
800-339-0466
rep.david.dill@house.mn
Assistant: Joan Harrison

Sen. Tom Bakk
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Capitol, Room 226
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
Capitol Office phone:
(651) 296-8881
Email:
www.senate.mn/
senatorbakkemail

Share your point of view

Make a difference by writing a letter to the editor or contributing to our online discussions. The Journal’s Opinion page is where meaningful community discussions take place.

The Journal welcomes letters from readers

Letters should be limited to 500 words or less. Longer letters may be edited. Letters must be signed and include the telephone number and address of the letter writer. Only the author’s city address will be published. Mail letters to The Journal, 1602 Highway 71, International Falls 56649. Letters can also be sent by e-mail to laurel@ifallsjournal.com.