

Ed Board Votes To Fire Miller

By EDITH ENLOW
Of the Star-Herald

Gamby, former school librarian; Bridgeport Police Chief Daryll Brown; and Jim Conrad, board member.

BRIDGEPORT — The Bridgeport Board of Education voted unanimously late Wednesday night to terminate the contract of Supt. Duane Miller for reasons of unprofessional conduct, causing turmoil in the system and misrepresenting his past to the board at the time he was employed. The termination was effective immediately.

David Nuttleman of Gering, Miller's attorney, said Thursday morning that Miller intends to take some legal action but has not yet decided the type of action he wants to take.

There are two legal avenues open to Miller, Nuttleman said. He may take his case into a state court, which would be in the form of an appeal through a district court, or action under the Civil Rights Act may be filed in a Federal District Court.

MILLER WAS HIRED by the board, effective Jan. 1, and given a 2½-year contract. He was notified by a letter from the board of his suspension May 12. A list of 17 complaints against him was attached to the letter and a public hearing to consider his dismissal was scheduled.

The hearing opened at 4 p.m. Wednesday and concluded about 11 p.m., immediately after the board's approval of the motion to terminate his contract.

Witnesses called by the board's attorney, Robert Bulger of Bridgeport, included Calvin Henne, elementary principal for 11 years; Joe Wells, acting superintendent, in the school system for eight years and high school principal for the last six years; Mrs. Ann Smith, vice president of the Bridgeport Education Assn. (BEA), and physical education and health instructor and girls' coach; Mrs. Carol Juelfs, BEA president and business education instructor; Linda

A TRANSCRIPT OF a conversation between two board members and Janice Tensvold was admitted for the record but it was not read during the proceedings.

School personnel contended that Miller warned them that if any one of them went to the board with a complaint he would suspend that person. Miller responded that he told the board before he was hired and the teachers after he assumed his duties that if a teacher went to a board member with a complaint he would recommend the board suspend the teacher.

A complaint, Miller explained, should not be taken to an individual board member because one member does not have the authority to take action; that board members may act only as a board. He said he told teachers to submit complaints through the proper channels in writing to the board, as prescribed by board policy.

IN OTHER TESTIMONY, Joe Wells told the board that Miller exceeded his authority by suspending him (Wells) from his duties Feb. 7.

Miller denied suspending Wells. Miller said he told Wells initially that he did not have the authority to either fire or suspend him but had only asked Wells to remain in his office until a board member or the school attorney could be contacted.

However, Wells said, he collected his personal things from his office and went home.

According to other testimony, the incident involving Wells led to a brief student demonstration, and that thereafter students appeared to be encouraged to defy authority and teachers

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