



## Electoral board likely to rule on District 15 petition next week

By Kimberly Pohl | Daily Herald Staff

Published: 5/24/2010 3:34 PM

It appears officials won't have to scrutinize hundreds of signatures when both sides of the Palatine Township Elementary District 15 bond issue dispute reconvene next week.

Objectors to a petition that forces the district's proposed \$27 million bond sale to referendum this fall now concede there are more than enough valid signatures for it to go forward.

"The bottom line is that it does appear, whatever the numbers are, that the petition is over the minimum number of required signatures," said James Nally, attorney for objectors Susan MacDonald and Theodore Grabbe of Palatine.

The electoral board, which consists of school board President Gerald Chapman, Secretary June Becker and board member Tim Millar, is expected to render a decision on the petitions when it meets at 7 p.m. June 3 at Sundling Junior High, 1100 N. Smith St., Palatine.

After 1,800 of the 7,500 signatures were called into question, both sides met at the Cook County Clerk's office earlier this month to compare petition signatures with the voter registration database.

Petition proponents collected affidavits verifying signatures from people who had printed or changed their name. Attorney Richard Means, who's representing petition organizer Mary Vanek, said he submitted about 100 affidavits to the board.

"We're close to 450 signatures over the minimum," Means said. "We stopped collecting affidavits when Nally essentially threw in the towel."

Nally now is attacking the petition's validity on two different fronts: the date it was filed and the wording on the form itself.

The petition's question, asking whether District 15 should issue the bonds for a working cash fund, should have broken into two separate yes or no questions, Nally said. He also will argue petition organizers filed the document two days late.

Means will counter that the petition wording was taken directly from the District 15 website and that form defects can't be argued when the district provides the form.

He'll also argue Illinois election code states a petition can be filed the following business day if a deadline falls on a holiday or weekend, as was the case with the petition. Vanek said she has e-mails from the board secretary saying organizers had a 5 p.m. Monday deadline, which they met.

Meanwhile, Vanek has set up the political action committee Citizens for Accountability to collect contributions from bond issue opponents. The Illinois State Board of Elections requires campaign disclosure reports if more than \$3,000 is spent either supporting or fighting a referendum.

"I've frankly been pleasantly surprised as to the number of donations," Vanek said. "I'm optimistic we'll survive this based upon my understanding of the law."