

Board member draws fire

Remarks about gay-straight group criticized in Greece school district

VICTORIA E. FREILE

STAFF WRITER

GREECE — Within the past week, the clerk for the Greece Central School District's school board has received five letters asking for board member Charlie Hubbard to apologize or resign.

The letters stemmed



Hubbard

Hubbard had asked for

from Hubbard's comments during the board's Nov. 15 meeting.

clarification on funding stipends for advisers of extra-curricular activities and told fellow board members that he didn't think Greece taxpayers would support the Gay-Straight Alliance at Odyssey Academy.

He then voted against the motion to fund sti-

pends for all extra-curricular clubs in Greece. The other seven board members at the meeting approved \$341,691 to pay stipends to advisers of district clubs. The \$350 stipend for the Gay-Straight Alliance was part of that list. Hubbard said he asked about the club because he

was surprised to see such a club in line for a stipend, and he wanted to know more about it.

"District residents have a right to know what they are supporting," he said. "I don't think taxpayers will like supporting that."

Hubbard's words and actions have upset some

Greece residents and have generated complaints to the district office and the board, district officials said.

All who drafted letters called Hubbard's actions improper and asked Hubbard to issue a public

HUBBARD, PAGE 4B

Hubbard

FROM PAGE 3B

apology or resign.

Only two of the letters submitted to the board were not signed anonymously. One letter was from Diane Hammar, interim principal at Longridge Elementary. The other was from a student group — Sexual Orientations United for Liberation — at State University College at Brockport.

"Since when does apprecia-

tion for diversity exclude gays?" Hammar asked. "This is a civil rights issue and I suggest we tread most cautiously before we tell some of our children that they are less worthy of our support than others and before we further offend the gay community within our district."

Greece parent Chris Savino said many parents are upset and can't believe a board member would stand up and make a remark like Hubbard's while the district is investigating complaints of discrimination against Greece teachers.

What's next

Some Greece residents are upset by comments made by Charlie Hubbard during a board meeting last month. Although the topic is not listed on the agenda of the upcoming board meeting Tuesday, board members said they suspect it will be discussed. The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. at Greece Apollo Middle School, 750 Maiden Lane.

Board President Ken Walsh said he did not agree with Hubbard's comments and described his colleague's actions as insensitive and inflammatory. Nevertheless, he said, Hubbard should not be removed from the board.

"But he needs to do something on his behalf to defend or explain his comments," Walsh said.

Hubbard said he was just doing his job as a board member.

He said he knows people are upset by his words, which he never meant to be taken the wrong way.

"When you are a public official, you will be criticized," he said. "We have better things to do than this. Let's focus on academics and cost (in the district)."

Hubbard was elected to the board in May, but this is his second time on Greece's Board of Education. He was also elected to the board in 1998 and quit his post midway through a board meeting in 1999.

VFREILE@DemocratandChronicle.com