Suspension of GCHS senior upheld by school board

by Danny Chandler

The Grand County Board of Education decided Tuesday to uphold the suspension of a Grand County High School (GCHS) senior, preventing him from participating in the school's graduation ceremony that evening. Jack Osness was suspended from school but was posting a video on the website YouTube which documented the violent death of two school faculty members.

The video was seen as an implied threat to school personnel, which revolted a 'safe school' violation under Grand County School District policy, school officials said.

"Protocol is that we suspend the student for 10 days, pending investigation," said GCHS and Osness's parents agreed to the suspension from the school board, where the suspension was upheld.

"We were being asked to do something that was inconsistent with our policy and past deci- sions," said Grand County School District Superintendent Margaret Hopkins. "It makes it appear arbitrary or evil if we make an exception where we wouldn't make under other circumstances."

The school board met Tuesday, May 18, to hear Osness appeal.

"We deliberated for over three hours, and didn't take it lightly," said Grand County School Board President Byron Walker. "In the end, we followed policy.

During the hearing, students and parents from the school district office to show support for Osness also passed a petition asking that Osness be allowed to receive his diploma in the May 19 graduation ceremony, and many at the meeting held signs which read "Justice for Jack" or simply "J 4 J." A number of students also carried similar signs of support during Tuesday's graduation ceremony at GCHS.

Osness was not allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony because suspended stu-

"I was a bad video, but it shouldn't have been done," said Danette Crist, Osness's stepfather. "We just think the punishment was too severe." Although he could not walk in the graduation ceremony be-cause he was suspended, Osness will receive his diploma, school officials said.

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