

Regents disclosure sought on Braille School

by **Jim Morrison**
News Editor

VINTON – Two Iowa state representatives on Wednesday requested the Iowa Board of Regents disclose e-mails and written communications involving the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School dating back to January of 2012.

The request comes after the Board of

Regents offered a couple of weeks ago to sell Vinton the Braille School property for one dollar.

State Rep. Dawn Pettengill, R-District 75, and State Rep. Bobby Kaufmann, R-District 73, made their request to Board of Regents Executive Director Bob Donley.

It seeks the public records e-mail or

correspondence between Jan. 1, 2012 and Sept. 9, 2016 regarding:

- services for the blind in Iowa and The Braille School;
- the feasibility study and planning committee;

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- the possible sale of the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School in Vinton;
- possible uses the Braille School and campus in Vinton;
- requests for renting or leasing portions of the Braille School;
- correspondence relating with 270.10 in the subject or body of correspondence;
- regional outreach to the blind and visually impaired in Iowa.

The 270.10 referred to in the letter is a feasibility study which must be completed by the Iowa Department of Management, according to Chris Ward, Vinton city administrator.

"I don't know if that has been done," said Ward. "If it has, I'd like to see a copy myself."

Ward said all items requested by Kaufmann and Pettengill fall under the

Open Records law. Obtaining information and learning who is doing what has been difficult.

"Because the Board of Regents have not had any discussions in their public meetings regarding IBSSS, we do not know what has transpired up to the time of their offer of selling the Braille School for \$1," said Pettengill.

"It is in the public interest, especially the blind community and the citizens of Vinton, to know what the communica-



Dawn Pettengill



Chris Ward

to know the intent of the actual members of the Iowa Board of Regents. The preliminary discussions undertaken up to now have been with staff members rather than the Regents board members.

"At first it was 'we'd like to sell you the whole thing'," said Ward. "And then

tions have been, what the intentions are and who was doing the talking.

"You can't just do this in a vacuum."

Ward said city officials would like

I mentioned 270.10 and later on it was 'We are interested in leasing you the facility with the city having the intent to buy.

"It is kind of like me. I can't sell any city property without permission from the council to do so. They would fall under the same kind of rule, I believe. The Board of Regents would have to vote on this."

Ward said it would be good to learn from the Board of Regents themselves what is happening.

"They are the ones that are really in charge," said Ward.

Ward agreed that it appears that Board of Regents staff members are willing to do whatever is necessary to rid themselves of being responsible for the Braille School.