

MORTON UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709

December 8, 2020

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Morton Unit School District 709 held December 8, 2020, at the Morton Education and Administration Center.

LEVY HEARING

Call to Order and Roll Call –

President Beaty called the Levy Hearing to order at 5:34 p.m.

Members present: Dr. Shad Beaty, Mr. Jeff Schmidgall, Mr. Kevin Austin,
Mr. Tim Braker, Dr. David Cross, Mr. Tom Neeley, Mr. Bart Rinkenberger

Dr. Beaty declared the Hearing open for the purpose of public comment and/or questions concerning the 2020 Levy.

There being no comments, Dr. Beaty declared the public hearing closed at 5:35 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING

Call to Order and Roll Call –

President Shad Beaty called the Regular Meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Members present: Dr. Shad Beaty, Mr. Jeff Schmidgall, Mr. Kevin Austin,
Mr. Tim Braker, Dr. David Cross, Mr. Tom Neeley, Mr. Bart Rinkenberger

Reports –

Administrative –

Freedom of Information Requests –

Dr. Hill reported there have been two freedom of information requests and when they are fulfilled, they will be posted on the District website.

MHS Potter Hour Update –

Principal Ripka gave the Board of Education an update on Potter Hour. She noted Potter Hour was started this school year and takes place daily from 2:32 – 3:00 p.m. Every teacher has a small group of 12-15 freshman, sophomore, or junior students assigned to them for the purpose of engagement and academic support. The groups and teachers remain the same throughout a student's high school career. Examples of activities include XELLO, A.L.I.C.E. training, student produced video announcements, and Kahoot! Especially this year, Potter Hour has become an important time of day for students and their cohort teacher to connect.

Ms. Ripka reported that a Connections survey was given to determine if students have positive support and connections at school and outside of school. Counselors are connecting with those answering no on the survey. There was strong agreement from students taking the 5Essentials survey that they feel safe and comfortable with their teachers at school and they are treated with respect by their teachers. Parents surveyed had strong agreement that the staff at MHS work hard to build trusting relationships with students and parents.

Dr. Hill added that Potter Hour is working well this year to foster student and staff connection since there have been no extra-curricular activities for students to participate in after school.

Superintendent's Report –

Dr. Hill reported that:

- standardized tests for high school students will be given over a 3-day period on April 13-15. SAT, PSAT 10, and PSAT 9 will be given on separate days. Those students in the district not being tested will have remote learning days.
- Graduation will be held outdoors on Saturday, May 15, at 10:00 a.m. More details to follow.
- current COVID numbers as of today – 1 staff positive out of approximately 400; 10 staff quarantined; 18 students positive out of 2,850. Currently quarantining 172 students. Quarantining of healthy, but possibly exposed staff and students has kept the spread of the virus under control.
- new CDC guidelines allows healthy quarantines to return after 10 days instead of 14 days. There is also a provision for testing negative and shortening the quarantine to as few as 7 days (without symptoms). The test cannot be taken prior to the 6th day of the quarantine, so timing is crucial. There are also several important questions still up in the air about this: 1) Which type of tests qualify (PCR? Rapid? Antigen? Antibody?) 2) Who verifies the test and the timing of it (TCHD? District?) 3) What if you test positive, but you suspect it might be from a previous exposure from weeks ago? This provision is concerning and with several details that need to be sorted out, the district may not exercise this provision right away, if ever.
- students currently in remote learning are being contacted; many are planning to return to in-person learning second semester.
- January 4, 2021, is the first day back from break and is scheduled to be a half day for students. It is being changed to a full day teacher inservice day and students will return to a full day on Tuesday, January 5.

President's Report –

Dr. Beaty noted he has been contacted recently by four school districts that are not doing in-person learning. They are seeking information as to how our district has been able to continue in-person learning the entire semester. Dr. Beaty credits the Leadership Team and the staff. The district is blessed with a staff who is willing to work at an increased risk. He cannot thank and express his appreciation enough for them. He has also heard from many in the community who are appreciative of the efforts of the administration and staff to have a successful year so far.

Action Item -

Approve 2020 Levy Resolution -

The Tentative Levy utilizing the 2.3 CPI approved at the November 17, 2020, meeting should allow the district to access all of the taxes available. The approval of the transfer of funds from working cash to the Bond & Interest fund allows the district to abate a portion (\$700,000) of the Bond & Interest levy, resulting in an overall reduction of the 2020 levy.

Motion by Mr. Neeley, second by Dr. Cross, that the Board of Education approve the 2020 Levy Resolution as presented.

Roll Call: Yea 5 Nay 2 (Braker, Schmidgall)

Motion carried.

Approve Revised List of 2021 Maintenance Projects –

In light of the board’s decision to abate a portion of the bond levy, the administration is recommending the scope of work previously presented at the November 3rd Board meeting. The scope of work as a whole remains the same, but includes some adjustments for timing and prioritization of the High School roof. The work being recommended represents a reduction for the original discussion at the October 20th board meeting.

Board members discussed if new bleachers in the MHS west gym scheduled to be installed in 2021 should be put off until a plan can be made for an expansion on the east gym. All agreed safety is an issue with the current west gym bleachers and will always be needed regardless of what would be planned in the future in the east gym.

Motion by Dr. Cross, second by Mr. Austin, that the Board of Education approve the recommended scope of work to go out for bid for summer 2021 facilities work.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried.

Mr. Neeley expressed his appreciation to all involved on the Facilities Committee for their work and planning.

Consent Agenda –

Motion by Mr. Schmidgall, second by Mr. Austin, that the Consent Agenda be approved as presented:

- Approve Personnel Report
- Approve October Treasurer’s Report

Approve Minutes of the November 17, 2020, Regular Meeting, and the November 17, 2020, Regular Meeting Closed Session.
 Approve Bills and Payroll

	Bills 11-20-20	Bills 12-04-20	Payroll 10-16-20	Payroll 10-30-20	Payroll 11-13-20	Payroll 11-27-20
Ed. Fund	\$529,573.22	\$243,502.94	\$859,766.20	\$820,780.43	\$819,911.66	\$852,709.23
Bldg. Fund	116,397.87	466,392.01	46,452.83	48,893.22	47,348.23	48,262.39
Trans. Fund	12,664.24	3,003.32	22,070.27	17,528.82	19,237.86	21,269.72
IMRF Fund	--	--	49,029.11	41,008.31	43,357.56	46,559.39

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried.

Closed Session -

Motion by Dr. Cross, second by Mr. Schmidgall, that the Board of Education enter into closed session for discussion of Personnel, Purchase/Sale of Property, and Negotiations. **(5ILCS 120/2 115 ILCS 5/18)**

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried. The board entered closed session at 6:46 p.m.

Motion by Dr. Cross, second by Mr. Austin, that the Board of Education return to regular session.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0

Motion carried. The board returned to regular session at 7:30 p.m.

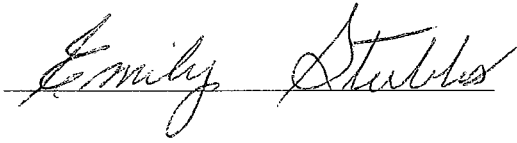
Adjournment -

Motion by Mr. Rinkenberger, second by Mr. Austin, that the meeting be adjourned.

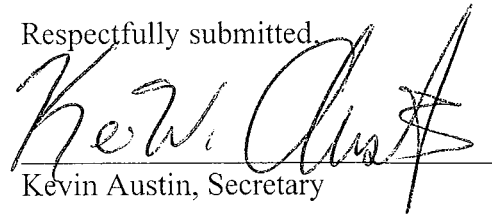
Voice Vote: Yea 7 Nay 0

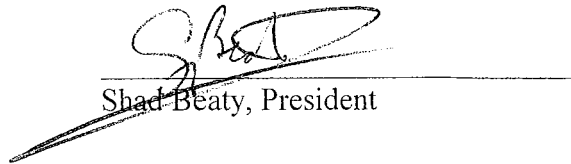
Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Recorded by,


Emily Stubbs

Respectfully submitted,


Kevin Austin, Secretary


Shad Beaty, President