

MORTON UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709

July 12, 2022

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Morton Unit School District 709 held on July 12, 2022, at the Morton Education and Administration Center.

REGULAR MEETING

Call to Order and Roll Call –

President Tim Braker called the Regular Meeting to order at 5:34p.m.

Members Present at Roll Call: Mr. Tim Braker, Mr. Bart Rinkenberger, Dr. David Cross, Mrs. Amanda Leman, Mr. Tom Neeley and Mr. Jerry Rudd. Members Absent: Dr. Diane Krall,

Members Present: 6

Members Absent: 1

Administrative Reports:

Superintendent's Report— Dr. Smock

- Dr. Smock reported one Freedom of Information Act has been fulfilled. It is posted on the website.
- Dr. Smock returned that day from a two-day IASA conference for new Superintendents. It was valuable and offered learning in areas of Superintendent/ Board Relations, Board Self-Evaluation and how to set up effective board meetings. Work-life balance was addressed. A great deal of information to absorb, but the information was outstanding. He will be meeting with a retired IASA Superintendent through an IASA mentorship program. He will be attending some additional conferences and workshops including IWAS, which is the complicated state reporting system.
- Dr. Smock noted the smooth transition in leadership with thanks to Dr. Sander who hit the ground running and is already taking on responsibilities and doing a great job. He thanked Valerie Smith for her efforts that are already making a positive difference. Chris Carter, taking the helm at the Jr. High is going very well. He has managed to fill multiple teacher vacancies, including three special education and Project Lead the Way. Scott Hammond starts officially at MJHS on July 20, but is already putting forth efforts to make connections and working with some scheduling.
- We are involved in the Central Illinois Educators Cooperative for Health insurance (CIE). It includes about thirty other school districts and gives us large purchasing and negotiating power for health insurance. Ms Kowalski attended a meeting as our representative, as Dr. Smock was at the conference. Things went well. Three major health insurance companies are bidding including Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Health Alliance, and United Healthcare Kepple is doing an outstanding job, acting as our advocate. Everyone is concerned about the rising costs of health insurance. There are other players coming into the network. The CIE Cooperative is still working out the final rates and providers.

Assistant Superintendent's Report -- Dr. Sander

- He "loves it here" at Morton 709. Dr. Sander echoed Dr. Smock's comment that these past weeks have been like "drinking from the firehouse" with so much to do, learn and accomplish. 32 of the 36 needed teachers have been hired including 2 additional administrators. There are two openings to fill.
- August 1st begins new teacher orientation and August 2nd is the New Teacher Dinner in the Bertha Frank Lobby area from 5:30-7p.m..

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Chief Financial Officer- Ms. Kowalski

- Ms. Kowalski reviewed FY22 and presented the FY23 Tentative Budget. She shared a detailed financial plan and rationale. She reviewed some of the extra money that came in last year because of Covid Esser Funds. She noted that we applied for and received some additional money from FEMA. The funding was worth the time it took to get the grant together. She explained her numbers, revenue, and why 709 looks strong financially this year. She talked about strategies to keep strong financially. Corporate tax money brought in additional funds. We landed 2.4 million above budget. We can't expect those funds again this year. Ms. Stalter collaborated to help secure some additional funds of technology from E-Rate \$265,000. We received \$9,700 because Cook County Schools were overpaid. Putting together the FY23 Tentative Budget, Ms Kowalski built in some flexibility. 180 is our number of days set in reserve per policy. Our O&M looks inflated because of the additional funds. The FY23 has been created based on budgeted revenue. Property Tax provides 78.5% of our budget. Federal money provides 4%. School lunches will not be fully reimbursed this year for all students, so that money is not in the new budget. Expenses include 68.7% of the budget is salaries and benefits and 79.85 of the Education Fund budget. Health insurance budgeted cost is 2.5 million, a 19.7% increase is estimated. The real number is still unknown until bids are won, and real insurance and benefits costs are firmed up. She noted Morton Academy had a significant \$24,000 rental increase. Supplies, gas and electricity are increased. She noted her choices to be conservative in planning for FY23. The full presentation is available on the morton709.org website around 10:00. The FY23 Tentative Budget will be posted at the District Office for review for 30 Days with Board of Ed. approval on 8-2-22. She is preparing for the annual financial audit happening soon.
- Ms. Kowalski noted the need for a new bus lease for FY23 to replace buses.
- We have 302 days of combined reserves.
- Making long-term projections for FY24-FY26 is challenging in these economic times. No assumption of capital projects, so that would impact the budget. We will continue to act conservatively when budgeting. We have 2.7 million left in bonds with last payment on January 2024.
- Ms. Kowalski invited and answered questions. Dr. Smock thanked her. Mr. Braker and the Board noted her budget was well done.

President's Report - Mr. Braker

- Mr. Braker welcomed Dr. Sander.
- Policy Committee called upon the Policy Committee to meet. There are several policies that need to be reviewed and/or updated. The committee will meet, hopefully before the next meeting, if schedules allow. Dr. Smock noted there are about 3 or 4 to review including a review of community participation in board meetings, allergy policies and the teaching of controversial issues. Dr. Krall, Mr Rinkenberger, Mr. Braker and Dr. Smock will meet as soon as it can be scheduled.

Discussion Items:

- The Cropper Study was completed and sent. Mr. Braker noted the study was "unremarkable" and the board members concurred there was no reason for a \$2000 presentation of the study. Dr. Smock agreed.
- Facilities discussion stated that with no anticipation of huge growth, so facilities should suffice for the time. Mr. Neeley would like to know what other districts similar to us are doing to manage classroom size. Mr. Rudd noted we are a little above what is considered ideal. We run about 24-26 students, 22 is ideal. We are a little above. Lincoln did indicate some potential growth of 44 per the study. 9 for Jefferson. 26 for Brown. Grundy projected for 15. Dr. Smock noted we want to know how we compare to other districts. We do balance students across the district. Mr. Rinkenberger noted some errors in the Cropper Report that were concerning. He ran the numbers and found some errors. The numbers were right, but the percentages were wrong. It is not a crisis with the more accurate percentages, but the new

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apartments being built have 3-4 bedrooms. Mrs. Leman shared the number of houses closed in the area and those in contract. We are seven years into the 15 year plan. The new entrance to the high school is the big item left in that plan. The Facilities Committee will meet in the near future to discuss it further. We would rather let the bonds expire and figure out the exact need, then go to the public with a possible solution. Mr. Rudd asked about the 20 rooms needed. Dr. Smock noted that the current solutions are not all ideal, but there is a plan to house classes. Mr. Neeley noted how funds have been used in the past and how project may be accomplished in the future. He would like to see the Facilities Committee meet to discuss and keep a plan in front of us as a working document. He would like to see the Finance Committee make a recommendation as to how we might proceed. Dr. Cross noted we are going to live with what we have right now. We need to optimize our living right now, not perfect but doable. What do our building principals need. Dr. Smock stated Grundy, in particular, is tight with ECE classes. Other classes, may be movable to the benefit of all. Nothing is "on fire" but what improvements can we make now. Mr. Neeley wanted to reiterate the role of a Committee is for discussion no decisions. Decisions are made as a whole board. The Facilities Committee is Mr. Braker, Mr. Rudd, and Dr. Smock.

Action Items-

Approve Non-Resident Student Per Board Policy 7:60

Dr. Cross moved that the Non-Resident Student be accepted for the 22-23 School year. Mr. Rinkenberger seconded.

Roll Call: Yea 6 Nay 0 Absent 1

Motion carried.

Morton 709 Position on Parents' Rights/Teachers Roles as New Board Policy 6:85

Mr. Rudd moved to approve Morton 709 Position Statement on Parents' Rights/Teachers Roles as new Board Policy 6:85. Seconded by Mr. Rinkenberger.

Mr. Neeley thanked the Administration and Board for their efforts on this important piece of policy. Dr. Smock thanked the board for making it a policy, giving it some formality, authority, and transparency. Mr. Braker noted it will be featured in the next Communicator. Mr. Braker reiterated schools should teach children how to think and not what to think. A child's worldview should be shaped by their parents and not the public school.

Roll Call: Yea 6 Nay 0 Absent 1

Motion carried.

Consent Agenda –

Mr. Braker asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Dr. Cross made the motion to accept the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded by Mr. Rudd.

- A. Approve Personnel Report
- B. Approve Minutes of the June 7, 2022, Regular Meeting; the June 7, 2022, Closed Session Meeting.
- C. Approve Bills and Payroll

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| | Bills 6-9-22 | Bills 6-17-22 | Bills 6-30-22 | Bills 7-1-22 7-5-22 | Payroll 6-10-22 | Payroll 6-24-22 | Payroll 7-8-22 |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Ed. Fund | 31,981.83 | \$341,281.68 | \$163,369.72 | \$381,036.84 | \$825,083.99 | \$793,645.77 | \$695,524.33 |
| Bldg. Fund | 1,179.13 | 55,808.02 | 147,072.54 | 1,702.00 | 49,924.55 | 62,037.62 | 67,649.62 |
| Trans. Fund | 343.36 | 35,308.72 | 5,347.68 | 106,159.58 | 20,083.08 | 9,245.45 | 14,201.30 |
| TORT Fund | | | 3,692.00 | 420,606.00 | | | |
| IMRF Fund | | | | | 39,249.45 | 28,976.52 | 30,265.15 |

Roll Call: Yea 6 Nay 0 Absent 1

Motion carried.

Closed Session

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

Roll Call: Yea 6 Nay 0 Absent 1

Motion carried. The board entered closed session at 6:40 p.m.

Motion by Mr. Rudd that the board return to regular session. Seconded by Dr. Cross.

Roll Call Vote: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried.

The board returned to regular session at 8:02 p.m.

Dr. Smock noted Covid policy will be reviewed. There is consensus on keeping kids in school for wellness and learning.

Adjournment –

Motion by Mr. Rudd to adjourn the meeting.

Voice Vote: Yea 6 Nay 0 Absent 1

Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

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Recorded by,

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Smith, Board of Education Secretary

Bart Rinkenberger, Secretary

Tim Braker, President