

MORTON UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709

October 17, 2023

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Morton Unit School District 709 held on October 17, 2023, at the Morton Education and Administration Center. **The meeting included the District Goals of Achievement, Communication, Climate, Facilities, and Finance.**

Call to Order and Roll Call –

President Tim Braker called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members present: Mr. Tim Braker, Dr. David Cross, Dr. Diane Krall, Mrs. Amanda Leman, Mr. Thomas Neeley, and Mr. Jerry Rudd. Member Absent: Mr. Andrew Roth

Audience Presentations: President Braker opened the podium for audience presentations. Five community members presented to the Board of Education. Tamara Woodmancy, Nathan Fay, Amy Petersen, Dr. Ashley Fischer, and Meghan Bohm addressed the Board of Education. Each community member was given five minutes to share his/her thoughts.

REGULAR MEETING

Administrative Reports:

Superintendent's Report— Dr. Smock

- Dr. Smock invited Dr. Joe Sander, Assistant Superintendent to share about the safety drills practiced at Lettie Brown and Morton Jr. High School. Lettie Brown finished in about an hour. MJHS finished in 90 minutes with 600 participants. Dr. Sander complimented Principal Waterfield and Principal Carter on how they prepared and ran the drill. The District expressed gratitude for the local churches who hosted our students and staff for safety and reunification. Sergeant Smith and Officer Rowe observed and offered feedback. The Transportation team was efficient. The staff at the churches were wonderful hosts. One church observed how well-behaved our student were for the drill. Board Member, Jerry Rudd, is military trained in crisis management along with Dr. Sander. Mr. Rudd emphasized that practice and simulating procedures is key to readiness. Dr. Smock thanked Dr. Sander for his passion, expertise and work to continually improve our crisis plan.
- Dr. Smock gave updates on the Superintendent's Committees who have met and those needing to meet again.
 - The Superintendent's Finance reviewed the tentative levy.
 - The next PressPlus Issue (#113) has not been released.
 - Dr. Smock would like the Board to review our Public Comments policy.
 - The Superintendent's Facilities Committee reviewed potential summer projects.
 - The Negotiations Committee team will need to be formed and dates on the calendar soon.
 - The Extra-Curricular Committee will meet again next week.
- The Board was able to see the completed wing at Jefferson School. The other wing is a summer project.
- Parent/Teacher Conference for the 7th thru 12th Grades happen this week (10/19-10/20) in response to teacher feedback last year. Elementary School will have Parent/Teacher Conferences on November 9th and 10th. It is the first year we have tried a split conference schedule.
- Veterans Day is on Saturday this year. Many of our schools will have different programs and assemblies to honor Veterans Day. He thanked those who serve in our community and around the Board table including, Mr. Rudd, Mr. Neeley, and Dr. Sander.

October 17, 2023

- The 95th Anniversary Celebration at Jefferson School. Mrs. Wyman and the staff did a great job with the anniversary and they hosted the Board of Education for a dinner meeting, too. He noted that in the past 15-17 years, the Board has chosen to invest in and restore that historic building. It reflects pride in our community and our history. More improvements are planned.

President's Report - Mr. Braker

- The Board enjoyed the dinner and meeting with faculty at Jefferson School. President Braker noted how neat and tidy the building is. It does not show its age.
- Mr. Tom Neeley, Mr. Jerry Rudd, Dr. Smock, and Dr. Sander recently attended the IASB Regional Meeting. Mr. Rudd noted he always learns something new. Mr. Neeley was a guest speaker. Mr. Neeley received a new assignment on the 2030 Committee. 13 School Board members and about 40 Superintendents will look at student safety, student achievement, funding, and some of the mandate issues. Mr. Neeley shared, "if we to comply on all of the state mandates on what we teach, it would take 15,000 hours of time and there are only 9,000 hours in the school year." We need to spend time talking about mandates. Mr. Rudd added that legislators have received about 5,500 bills and over 1,000 of those bills impact public education. Mr. Braker thanked him for his service.
- President Braker noted that the IASB Conference is coming in November.

Agenda Building -

- Mr. Rudd noted the importance of the crisis drills to help prepare to make "calm out of the chaos." He commended Dr. Sander for his work on school safety.

Discussion Item(s) –

2024-25 Proposed Budget & 2023 Tentative Levy --

Ms. Lisa Kowalski, CFO, presented the Proposed Budget & 2023 Tentative Levy. Her presentation included anticipated revenue, the variables, and projections for the coming year. She reviewed funding the budget options and possible projects. Salaries and health insurance are some of the biggest line items in the budget. The Board had the opportunity to ask question. She invited the Board to follow-up if they have any questions on the numbers and her calculations.

Board Policy Review

The Board continued their review of Board of Education Policies that include:

- **Employee Personal Use of Email-** Administration will be looking at the Employee Handbook for revisions related to the use of employee emails. We do want to remind staff that as public servants it is not a private email. Also, they need to use the school account for all school business, limiting private emails to the urgent and necessary.
- **Bullying and Harassment** – Policy continues to be updated with the law. Dr. Smock asked, "How are we really doing?" He asked the Administrative Team. They are not seeing a surge. He reminded the Board that the legal definition of bullying requires a power component. They will continue to investigate complaints. Mutual harassment does not qualify as bullying. We are investigating in 24 hours of a report and communicating with parents. Unstructured play is where students learn to work together. Dr. Krall noted within our Board goals, we would rather have more complaints with well-managed responses than to have cases go unreported. The Board does not want under-reporting.

October 17, 2023

- **Non-School Use of Buildings and Dissemination of Materials** – PTO's, Scouts, Morton Park District and their affiliates like HEAT, use our facilities. We have a mutual agreement with the Park District.
 - We rent our facilities for parties, dance studios, and non-District sports teams. Administration does not recommend closing down the community access.
 - By law, students can use classrooms to meet, and they do. For example, we have a Diversity Club and a Fellowship of Christian Athletes at MHS. Both clubs are student-led, not school-sponsored. A faculty member is present to supervise, but they are not part of the club or leading the group.
- **Dissemination of Materials** – We reserve our District emails, our websites, and our electronic signs for school sponsored events and information. Community and government related events occasionally will go on an electronic sign. The Virtual Backpack is where parents can find various links to the school information they seek. General distribution of materials must be approved by Administration. Some things are not approved. Some items are not distributed but provided for pick up for someone seeking the information. We look at the audience and discern what is helpful for the children.
- The Board concluded the policies are good. Implementation is key. Dr. Smock noted that humans occasionally fail, but we will continue to work at it.

Teacher Evaluation Plan Updates –

Dr. Joe Sander, Assistant Superintendent, presented the Board of Education with the proposed updates to the teacher evaluation plan after meeting with the Evaluation Committee on October 10, 2023. Changes in the law required a response, including Tenure Changes Public Act 103-0500 (SB1872) and Public Act 103-0085.

Extra Duty Position Additions –

Dr. Joe Sander, Assistant Superintendent, presented the Board of Education with requests from the Extra Duty Committee meeting on October 3, 2023. The Extra Duty Committee met on October 3, 2023, to review and make recommendations regarding extracurricular duties including but not limited to compensation, addition of positions, and number of positions filled. Dr. Sander shared their requests with the Board of Education. The Board asked questions. Dr. Sander answered. Dr. Sander included further information on the requested positions and changes in compensation based on the review. He gave examples of the impact of certain extra duty positions, like SkillsUSA. The Board will review the requests and reserves the right to add extracurricular positions and to delete positions at the end of any school year. The Administration recommends filling the positions as requested.

Action Item(s) –

Approve Resolution Declaring Intent to Issue Working Cash Fund Bonds not to exceed \$6M

The Board of Education discussed the possibility of issuing Working Cash Fund Bonds for capital facility projects at the October 3, 2023, Board of Education meeting. Ms. Kowalski, CFO, answered questions that night and was available for questions before the vote was taken.

The Administration recommends that the Board approve the Resolution declaring an intent to issue working cash fund bonds not to exceed, \$6,000,000 for the purpose of increasing the Working Cash Fund of the District, and directing that notice of such intent be published in the manner provided by law.

A motion was made by Mr. Neeley to approve the resolution of intent. The motion was supported by Dr. Cross.

Roll Call: Yea 6 Nay 0 Absent 1

Motion carried. The Board approved the Resolution to declare intent to issue Working Cash Fund Bonds for the District in an amount not to exceed \$6,000,000 for said purpose.

October 17, 2023

Approve IASB Delegate and Alternate

The Board of Education approved Mr. Jerry Rudd as the IASB Delegate to the IASB Annual Conference per Board Policy 2:120. Mr. Andrew Roth is the Alternate.

A motion was made by Mr. Neeley to approve Mr. Rudd as the Delegate to the Assembly. The motion was supported by Mrs. Leman.

Roll Call: Yea 6 Nay 0 Absent 1

Motion carried.

Consent Agenda –

A motion was made by Mr. Rudd to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, correcting the date of the minutes to be approved. It was seconded by Dr. Krall.

- Approved Personnel Report
- Approved Treasurers Report – July 2023
- Approved Minutes of the October 3, 2023, Regular Meeting; the October 3, 2023, Closed Session Meeting
- Approved Bills

	Bills 10-06-23 10-10-23
Ed. Fund (10)	\$189,550.88
Bldg. Fund (20)	\$53,179.27
Trans. Fund (40)	\$10,051.46
TORT (80)	\$710.54

Roll Call: Yea 6 Nay 0 Absent 1

Motion carried.

Closed Session –

A motion was made by Dr. Cross, seconded by Mr. Rudd that the Board of Education entered closed session for the discussion of **Negotiations and Personnel. (5ILCS 120/2 115 ILCS 5/18)**

Roll Call: Yea 6 Nay 0 Absent 1

Motion carried. The Board entered closed session at 9:01 p.m.

October 17, 2023

A motion was made by Dr. Cross to re-enter open session. Mr. Lemman seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 6 Nay 0 Absent 1

Motion carried. The Board re-entered open session at 9:48 p.m.

Adjournment –

A motion was made by Dr. Krall to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Rudd.

Voice Vote: Yea 6 Nay 0 Absent 1

Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:49 p.m. with a voice vote.

Recorded by,

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Smith, Recording Secretary

Jerry Rudd, Secretary

Tim Braker, President