

MORTON UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709

April 9, 2024

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Morton Unit School District 709 held on April 9, 2024, at the Morton Education and Administration Center. **The meeting included the District Goals of Achievement, Communication, Climate, Facilities, and Finance.**

REGULAR MEETING

Call to Order and Roll Call – President Braker called the Regular Meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

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

Roll Call: Yea 5 Nay 0 Absent 2 (Cross & Neeley)

Dr. Cross arrived at 5:35 p.m. and Mr. Neeley arrived at 5:45 p.m.

Audience Presentations:

Ms. Elaine Hopkins addressed the Board of Education on agenda related items. She spoke for five minutes.

Administrative Reports

Superintendent's Report— Dr. Smock

- Dr. Craig Smock and the Board of Education welcomed Morton Junior High athletes to congratulate them on their recent success at the IESA State Finals. 8th Grade Volleyball (1st), 7th Grade Volleyball (3rd), and Wrestler Brody Watson (1st) place and first time in school history. Scott Hammond, MJHS Assistant Principal/A.D. reflected on the seasons. Coach Emma Owdom, Coach Jordan Williams, and Coach Dan Gashaw shared about the character of the students, leadership examples, community feedback on character and behaviors on and off the field for all of the teams. Community support and improved facilities at MJHS made a big difference.
- The Neurosequential Model in MHS Sports – Mrs. Stephanie Brown, Asst. Dir. of SSS/Wellness, Mrs. Deidre Ripka, MHS Principal, and Mr. Scott Jones, MHS Athletic Director shared how they are teaching Brain Based vs. Non-Brain Based coaching. Since January 2023, 25-35 coaching staff have been involved in training and they want more. The Board recognized Dr. Smock's leadership in this area. The coach's response is exciting. The board asked some questions about what they need to continue. Helping students learn to manage stress with success in sports is good for their brains.
- Food Services Report – Ms. Lisa Kowalski, CFO, presented the Food Services Report to the Board. Ms. Kowalski reflected on the first year of feeding students with an in-house food services program. She shared the numbers from the first year, and it has been a great success. She credited Crystal Lohnes, Food Service Director, and Cortney Ball, Asst. Food Service Director, for their teamwork and hard work through the first year. We have 30 food service workers and a budget of about \$1 million dollars. They are sourcing local food when it is available for savings and better food. The goal is not to make money, but at the end of March, they were almost \$148,000 positive. The goal was to feed students better food so more students would take advantage of the school lunch. She shared numbers showing the success. Ms. Kowalski thanked the Board for being willing to take the risk. The Board and Administration thanked her and the Food Services team for their hard work.

- Personnel Update - Dr. Joe Sander updated the Board on staffing needs. Summer APEX for credit recovery will be at MJHS this summer to give students what they need for success. He shared about PE Partners coming to MJHS. The program has had great success at MHS. Dr. Sander reviewed some staffing needs in Student Support Services and ways they hope to meet the needs with Board support. Special Education continues to grow in all areas. Multi-language learners are on the rise. The Board asked questions. Dr. Sander and Ms. Lindsay Franklin responded.
- Dr. Smock reported to the Board on the Solar Eclipse fun and excitement.
- Dr. Smock congratulated Mrs. Deidre Ripka on her new position at McLean County Unit 5. She is the new Director of Secondary Education. We are happy for her promotion. We will miss her. She will do a fantastic job.

President's Report - Mr. Braker

- Mr. Braker congratulated MJHS on their success and noted the renovated MJHS space had great reviews.
- He noted it is great to see the work on the MHS project coming along well.
- The Board will elect officers in May.
- He recognized the excellent work by the Food Services team in their first year.

Agenda Building -

- The Board is curious about the increase in Mult-Language Learners (MLL). Is that trending?
- The Board greatly appreciates all of the presentations, surveys, assessments, and information presented to the Board at meetings. It is very helpful when making decisions. The Board appreciates the presentations that continue to show the district seeks and values parental input. Schools, family, and community working together for positive outcomes for students is important.

Action Item(s) –

Approve Student Fees and Lunch Fees for 2024-25

Mr. Neeley motioned for the Board to approve the Student Fees and Lunch Fees for 2024-25. Dr. Krall supported the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried.

Approve Commencement of Architectural Design for Building

Dr. Smock clarified that agenda item grants approval to seek out architectural designs for building additions for needed Pre-K and Morton Academy space. We need to know what is architecturally feasible. We would like to see this project move forward, but first we need to know the options and costs.

Dr. Cross motioned for the Commencement of Architectural Designs. Mr. Rudd supported the motion

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried.

Approve Bid for Summer 2024 Maintenance Projects

Dr. Smock shared details on the summer projects. Mr. Rudd motioned for the Board to approve the Bid for Summer 2024 Maintenance Projects. Mrs. Leman supported the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried.

Consent Agenda – Before approving the Consent Agenda, President Braker reminded the Board Packet available before each meeting. Board Members can request any item be removed from the Consent Agenda prior to the vote, if a member of the Board feels more information is needed prior to approval.

Dr. Cross motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Mr. Rudd supported the motion.

- Approve Personnel Report
- Approve Auditor for 2023-24 School Year
- Approve Resolution to Authorize Preparation of the FY25 Budget
- Approve Donation and Acceptance Report
- Approve MHS Boys Basketball Overnight Trip (June 2024) per Board Policy 6:240
- Approve Resolution for Re-Employment of Professional Staff
- Approve Policy PRESS Policy Updates Reflecting Legal, Language, and Cross-Reference Updates
- Approve Minutes of the March 19, 2024, Regular Meeting; the March 19, 2024, Closed Session Meeting
- Approve Bills and Payroll

	Bills 3-22-24 3-25-24	Bills 4-5-24 4-8-24	Payroll 3-1-24	Payroll 3-15-24	Payroll 3-29-24
Ed. Fund (10)	\$623,702.47	138,964.09	972,327.82	981,605.83	1,023,855.51
Bldg. Fund (20)	\$90,860.31	\$126,213.61	48,688.41	47,615.58	51,843.84
Trans. Fund (40)	\$26,779.91	\$8,310.58	29,069.31	30,895.37	33,684.65
IMRF (50)			48,583.16	50,176.10	20,949.49

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

Motion carried.

Non-Audience Presentations:

Ms. Heather McMeekan requested time to address the Board of Education on Non-Agenda related items. She spoke for five minutes.

Closed Session – President Braker called for a motion to enter into closed session for the matters of **Negotiations** and **Personnel**. Mr. Rudd motioned for the Board to enter into closed session. Dr. Cross seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

The Board entered into Closed Session at 7:22 p.m.

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

Roll Call: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

The Board re-entered open session at 9:27 p.m.

Adjournment –

Mr. Neeley made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Voice Vote: Yea 7 Nay 0 Absent 0

The motion carried with a voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

Recorded by,

Valerie Smith, Recording Secretary

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Rudd, Secretary

Tim Braker, President