

## **MORTON UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709**

**MAY 17, 2011**

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Morton Unit School District 709 held May 17, 2011, at Brown Elementary School.

### **REGULAR MEETING –**

President Thomas Neeley called the regular meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Members present: Mr. Thomas Neeley, Mrs. Joyce Kaiser, Mr. Clint Heinold,  
Mr. John Appen, Mrs. Michelle Bernier, Mr. Noah Menold,  
Mr. Tim Taylor

The Board and audience members recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Audience Presentations –**

Mr. David King, 1984 E. Jefferson St., Morton, IL, introduced Mr. Jess Smithers and noted that others would be speaking in favor of a sequential course Agriculture Education program and FFA at Morton High School.

Mr. Jess Smithers is a Program Advisor for Facilitating Coordination in Agricultural Education (FCAE). FCAE is a state project administered through the Illinois State Board of Education in cooperation with and advisement by the Illinois Committee for Agricultural Education (ICAE). Mr. Smithers explained the requirements of school districts for FFA. In order to be recognized by the Illinois State Board of Education, school districts must offer a 2-course sequence of Agriculture Education courses. Mr. Smithers offered to meet with administrators to discuss the matter further.

Miss Morgan Ott currently holds the office of FFA Reporter for the state of Illinois FFA and spoke in favor of school districts meeting the requirements to offer FFA to students. She explained that she gained many leadership skills from her involvement in FFA during high school.

Dr. Rob Rhykerd, a professor in the Agriculture Department at Illinois State University, spoke in favor of Agriculture programs in high schools. He noted there is a serious shortage of college graduates in the agricultural fields to fill employment opportunities.

Ms. Meghan Grebner, Ag Director for WMBD Radio, distributed a letter from John Block, former Secretary of Agriculture under President Ronald Regan. He stated in his letter his support for Ag. education and participation in FFA. Ms. Grebner also noted her participation in FFA and how it strengthened her skills.

Mr. John Croft, 804 Karin Dr., Normal, IL, former staff member of the Tazewell County Farm Bureau, stressed the importance of communicating to students and parents the aspects of

Agriculture Education and FFA. He pointed out the need for a certified agriculture teacher for a successful program.

Dr. Kilpatrick pointed out that our district is struggling, as are many area school districts, to get and retain student interest in the Ag. program. He reported that our high school will be offering 2 sections of Business Science with Agricultural Applications classes next year. He explained that when we have offered sequential programs in the past, there has been a significant drop in enrollment after the first year courses are completed. He suggested the requirements for sequential courses for FFA participation be changed. He is looking for options and offered to meet with Mr. Smithers to discuss this matter.

Mr. Neeley pointed out that though it is not the Board's practice to respond to audience presentations, but he is making an exception tonight. Mr. Neeley noted that the Board of Education and administrators have worked hard to re-establish the Ag. program. With the ever-changing State graduation requirements, it is difficult for students to take exploratory courses. It has not only affected the Ag. program, but other courses in the high school curriculum as well. In recent years there has not been enough student participation in the Ag. courses to justify maintaining a full time program.

## **Reports –**

### **Administrative –**

#### **Annual Life Safety Survey Report –**

Dr. Kilpatrick reported that he has received the report from the Regional Office concerning the annual life safety survey of our buildings. Though the report was good, there are a few issues needing attention. He has responded back to the Regional Superintendent as to how these issues are being addressed.

#### **Building Rental Rates –**

Dr. Kilpatrick reported that over the last few years, the rental rates for the Bertha Frank Performing Arts Center have been adjusted to bring them closer to our actual costs in categories 4 and 5. The adjustments this year will be 85% of our cost in category 5 with the goal of being 100% in 3 to 4 years.

The recommended building rental rates for all buildings, including the Performing Arts Center will be brought to the Board for approval in June.

#### **SB7/SB630 Summary –**

Dr. Kilpatrick explained that Senate Bill 7 and 630 are education bills currently being considered by the Illinois Senate that could significantly impact our school district. Issues included in the bills include required board member professional development,

teacher strikes, teacher seniority, teacher tenure, and 45 day R.I.F. notices. This is being called landmark legislation and will need to be closely analyzed if passed and signed by the governor.

**Freedom of Information Requests –**

Dr. Kilpatrick reported that there were no Freedom of Information requests.

**President’s Report –**

Mr. Neeley reported that he and Dr. Kilpatrick recognized Sodexo manager, Robyn Ekstam, for receiving the Food Excellence Award from the Tazewell County Health Department for all six of our buildings.

Mr. Neeley reported that he and Dr. Kilpatrick recognized Dennis Johnson and Chris Carter recently for being named Principal of the Year and Assistant Principal of the Year respectively by the Illinois Principal’s Association, Central Illinois Valley Region.

Mr. Neeley noted that he attended a meeting recently of the state board of directors for IASB. Discussion included professional development for school board members. As he receives information, he will continue to update board members on this issue.

Mr. Neeley reported that the Board of Education met earlier this evening with the staff from Brown School. It was an excellent meeting with the staff sharing current events from each grade level and department. There was also good discussion concerning the future of the elementary buildings with the current space issues.

**Action Items -**

**Approve 2011-2012 Student Fees -**

Dr. Kilpatrick reviewed the recommendations for student fee adjustments for the 2011-2012 school year that were presented at the May 3, 2011, board meeting.

Motion by Mr. Menold, second by Mr. Heinold, that the Board of Education approve the recommended student fees for the 2011-2012 school year.

Roll Call Vote:                      Yea 7                      Nay 0

Motion carried.



**Approve Personnel Report –**

Motion by Mrs. Bernier, second by Mr. Taylor, that the Board of Education approve the personnel report as presented.

Roll Call Vote:                      Yea 7                      Nay 0

Motion carried.

**Approve Closed Session Minutes –**

Motion by Mr. Heinold, second by Mr. Menold, that the Board of Education approve the closed session minutes from the April 26, 2011, and the May 3, 2011, regular meeting.

Roll Call Vote:                      Yea 7                      Nay 0

Motion carried.

**Administrative Reports –**

Dr. Kilpatrick explained the Superintendent Committees and assignments to the board members. He assigned Mr. Heinold and Mrs. Bernier to the Finance Committee; Mrs. Kaiser and Mr. Taylor to the Communication Committee; and Mr. Applen to the Transportation Committee. The Facilities Committee meetings will be held as a Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Neeley reported that the annual Board of Education planning meeting will be held on Saturday, June 25, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**Re-Enter Closed Session –**

Motion by Mrs. Bernier, second by Mrs. Kaiser, that the Board of Education enter into closed session for consideration of appointment, employment, compensation, performance, or dismissal of employees, student discipline, purchase of property, litigation and/or negotiations.

Motion carried. The board entered closed session at 8:50 p.m.

Motion by Mr. Applen, second by Mr. Heinold, that the Board of Education return to regular session.

Roll Call Vote:                      Yea 7                      Nay 0

Motion carried. The board returned to regular session at 9:16 p.m.

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**Adjournment -**

Motion by Mr. Menold, second by Mrs. Kaiser, that the meeting be adjourned.

Roll Call Vote:                      Yea 7                      Nay 0

Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Clint Heinold, Secretary

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Thomas Neeley, President