



MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Socorro Independent School District
12440 Rojas Drive, El Paso, TX 79928
August 17, 2021 – 6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

David O. Morales, Board President; Ricardo O. Castellano, Board Vice President; Eduardo Mena, Board Secretary; Pablo Barrera; Paul Guerra; Cynthia A. Najera; Michael A. Najera; and Marta C. Carmona, M.Ed., Interim Superintendent

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Board President David O. Morales. All members were present and a quorum was established.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Mrs. Carmona reported on personnel and district initiatives/events.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

- The Americas High School Band Director was recognized for earning the Meritorious Achievement Award from the Texas Bandmasters Association.
- The SISD Financial Services Department was honored for earning the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Association of School Business Officials International.
- The SISD Public Relations Department was recognized for earning accolades in the National School Public Relations Association Awards Program.

OPEN FORUM

The following individuals addressed the Board of Trustees and Interim Superintendent:

- Angie Barrera regarding customer service and open-door policy in the District
- Dr. Katherine Kuykendall regarding attendance policy for quarantine period
- Rosie Perez from West Texas Alliance expressed her gratitude for the support and asked to reconsider a temporary mask mandate and review policy for compensation for employees during quarantine period
- Tommy Hill bus routes and ESSER II payout
- Marisol Moreno, Humberto Moreno, and Delia Ortiz regarding bus route and customer service
- Frank Guzman regarding tax rates
- Thomas A. Eyeington celebrated the memory of Ms. Gracie Tovar and announced that this year's SISD Foundation Golf Tournament will be celebrated in her memory: 2021 Gracie Tovar Memorial Golf Tournament. Several donations will be done in her honor

A motion was made by Ricardo Castellano, seconded by Pablo Barrera, to hear presentation from Dr. Hector L. Ocaranza on agenda items 9F and 9G. The motion carried unanimously.

PRESENTATION REGARDING DISTRICT WIDE FACE COVERING/MASK POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FROM CITY HEALTH AUTHORITIES

Dr. Hector L. Ocaranza provided a presentation regarding current health concerns related to COVID-19 cases, delta variant and health safety recommendations. Discussion followed concerning the effectiveness of face coverings/masks, quarantine period/isolation being from 10-14 days and time period for face covering mandate.

The following individuals signed up to speak to this agenda item:

- Paul Sunseri
- Amy Sunseri
- Elizabeth Lopez
- Jesus Ramirez
- Veronica Hernandez
- Orlando Ramirez
- Chris Mears
- Chris Yost
- Lonnie Graham
- Melanie Garcia
- Lisa Lopez
- Sammy Carrejo
- Geneva Rodriguez
- Joanna Ochoterena
- Briana Ordonez
- Dr. James Payne
- Dr. Steven Purdy

The meeting was closed at 8:05pm for discussion with legal counsel regarding the current status and litigation including law suits related to agenda items 9F and 9G under *Texas Government Code* Section 551.071.

The meeting reconvened at 8:40pm.

ITEMS 9F AND 9G – DISTRICT WIDE FACE COVERING/MASK POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AND LEGAL OPTIONS (INCLUDING POSSIBLE AND PENDING LITIGATION) TO ADDRESS LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY TO REQUIRE FACE COVERING/MASK POLICIES AND PROCEDURES UNDER EXECUTIVE ORDER GA-38 ISSUED BY TEXAS GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

Based on the information discussed in closed session, a motion was made by Pablo Barrera, seconded by Michael Najera, to allow the district to follow the local health authority mandates until ruled invalid by a court. The motion carried unanimously.

At this time, a motion was made by Paul Guerra, seconded by Pablo Barrera, to move agenda item 9H for presentation. The motion carried unanimously.

NOMINATION FOR ARMANDO RODRIGUEZ TO FILL THE VACANCY ON THE REGION 19, ON THE TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARD (TASB) BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sergio Coronado signed up to speak to this agenda item. Mr. Coronado provided a brief presentation in support of Mr. Armando Rodriguez.

A motion was made Michael Najera, seconded by Pablo Barrera, to approve the item as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

2021-2023 ESSER II FEDERAL GRANT PUBLIC HEARING

The District is required to hold a public hearing on the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER II) federal grant entitlement and planned expenditures for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 fiscal years. This public hearing is to be held prior to the District committing any grant funds and prior to submitting the ESSER II federal grant application to the Texas Education Agency. The deadline to submit the ESSER II application to TEA is September 2, 2021.

At this time, the public was invited to provide input.

1. Veronica Hernandez from Socorro AFT, recognized Administration for the wise decisions made and the distribution of ESSER III funds; strongly supports the proposal in the use of ESSER II funds; thanked all members for their advocacy to ensure these funds would go to the schools; hiring additional staff, especially nurses; ventilation upgrades; restoration of sick days during quarantine period using ESSER funds.

PROPOSED 2020-2021 TAX RATE PUBLIC HEARING

The Board of Trustees is required to have conducted a public hearing for the purpose of discussing the proposed tax rate before the adoption of said item.

At this time, the public was invited to provide input. No one came forward.

FACILITIES REPORT

Tom Eyeington, Chief Operations Officer, provided a presentation of the 2017 Bond Program and other construction projects. Discussion followed regarding restroom upgrades for elementary schools in the valley, new SHS kitchen, transportation canopy, claims due to recent down forest
No action was taken on this agenda item.

NEW SCHOOL NAME RECOMMENDATIONS

The task force committee met four times to evaluate community nominations and develop its recommendations. As per policy, the name recommendations are being presented as information. Name recommendations for new middle school is Eastlake Middle School; top 2 ranking names for the new elementary school: first recommended name is Ben Narbuth Elementary School, and second recommended name is Officer Alberto M. Aragon Elementary School. No action was taken on this agenda item.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Michael Najera, seconded by Paul Guerra, to approve all items under the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

- Board Meeting Minutes of July 20, 2021 Regular Board Meeting and August 10, 2021 Special Board Meeting
- Employment of Personnel
- Request for the Use of School Facilities
 - Centro Cultural Mexicano Paso Del Norte, Inc. for the use of the Student Activities Complex (SAC)
- Budget Amendments
- Awarding of Bids
 - Health Clinic and Pharmacy Equipment and Supplies – RFP No. E2211
Solicitation to purchase equipment and supplies for the Socorro ISD Health Clinic and Pharmacy. (Maximum \$350,000)
 - Musical Instruments – RFP No. E2208
Solicitation to purchase musical instruments and services district wide. (Maximum \$450,000)

- Contracts

- Administration Agreement – Dealer Sponsored School Vocational Program, Peterbilt Motors Company

The purpose of this agreement is to provide certain secondary vocational schools and High Schools that have collaborated with a Sponsoring Dealer for Peterbilt's Dealer Sponsored School Vocational Program, authorized access to service repair information to perform service technician training at the School's own educational locations. Peterbilt would like to partner with SISD CTE's Diesel Technology program. They are working with SISD and El Paso Community College to support the pathway to a level one and associate degree programs.

- Agreements

- National Math and Science Initiative's Lone Star Computer Science Program

The purpose of this agreement is to implement the National Math and Science Initiative's Lone Star Computer Science Program at Socorro ISD's campuses: Pebble Hills High School and El Dorado High School to increase Advanced Placement (AP) computer science enrollment and qualifying scores on AP Computer Science Principles (CSP) exams. These schools agree to ensure program success, take actions necessary to implement, achieve and maintain the strategies and goals set forth in this agreement. (Maximum \$3,500 per participant)

- Pharr-San Juan Alamo Independent School District, AccElluminate Software

The purpose is to continue to provide access to the AccElluminate software to Socorro ISD in the area of Data Services via the internet to address the Language Professional Assessment Committee (LPAC) process at the campus level to host or provide elements to serve all ELL students effectively and in full compliance. PSJA ISD will also provide training, maintenance and support services. (Maximum \$114,609-3 year agreement plus travel expenses)

- Texas Workforce Commission Program Grant, Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) Fiscal Agent (Ysleta ISD), Amendment #17

The purpose of this renewal is for Socorro Independent School District's Community Education Department, as the lead organization for this grant proposal, continue using the Ysleta Independent School District's Division of Finance to act as the fiscal agent for the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) Grant. This document constitutes the contract for the services to be provided by Ysleta Independent School District with respect to fiscal responsibilities. This contract allocates funds to reimburse Socorro ISD's Adult Education Department for AEL services for a total of \$812,470.00.

- YWCA El Paso Del Norte Region Proposal (After School Program Partnership)

This is to renew the agreement for the existing partnership between SISD and YWCA El Paso del Norte Region. SISD currently serves over 700 children at campuses throughout the district. YWCA will continue to provide all necessary materials and equipment for site operations, and open and maintain operations at SISD sites that sustain a population of 15 children and assures State licensed daily After School programming to all elementary campuses on days in which school is in session from 2:30 p.m.-6:00 p.m. SISD gives permission to operate on SISD campuses at no cost to the YWCA for the duration of the proposal. SISD teachers and staff will be eligible for a discounted rate for weekly after school care of their children on any campus that YWCA operates after school programming.

- YWCA El Paso Del Norte Region, Inc. After School Learning Centers and 21st Century Grant Coordination

- YWCA desires to continue providing appropriate staffing for specific after school learning centers to be administrated by SISD campus locations for students enrolled and participating in specific 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant funded programs and to make available better educational opportunities for SISD students. SISD shall provide a Project Director and Management point of contact for the program and provide teachers, as it deems appropriate for tutoring after school during the duration of the program. (Maximum \$957,000-21st Century Grant Funds)
- Ground Facilities Lease – Region 19 Education Service Center (ESC19)
This is for the purpose of leasing the property located at Hilley Elementary School, 693 N. Rio Vista, Socorro TX 79927 - Socorro Head Start Center (Land) and Options High School 12380 Pine Springs Dr., El Paso, TX 79928 - Options Head Start Center (Facilities) to provide the Socorro Head Start program.
- Utilization of the BuyBoard #630-20 Purchasing Cooperative, Longhorn Bus Sales
For the acquisition of ten (10) Special Education School Buses, buses are standard 54 passenger. (Maximum \$1,091,560-includes \$800 processing fee)
- Advanced Academy: Innovative Courses
The Department of Secondary Education is requesting for board approval to use the Texas Education Agency approved listing of innovative course offerings. These courses would be used in support of instruction by linking to identical EPCC college courses, and for transcription of like courses for those students who enroll in SISD from out of state or out of country.
- New Job Description – Adult Education and Literacy Part-Time Instructor
The primary duties of this employee are to provide instruction in English as a Second Language (ESL), Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), and/or workforce training in compliance with federal, state, local regulations, and policies.

2021-2022 MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS TAX RATE

A motion was made by Cynthia Najera, seconded by Eduardo Mena, to approve the 2021-22 Maintenance and Operations tax rate of **\$0.876500** per \$100 of valuation as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

2021-2022 INTEREST AND SINKING FUND TAX RATE

A motion was made by Michael Najera, seconded by Eduardo Mena, to approve the 2021-22 Interest and Sinking fund tax rate of **\$0.398954** per \$100 of valuation as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION WHICH OFFICIALLY LEVIES THE TAX RATE FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

A motion was made by Michael Najera, seconded by Pablo Barrera, to approve the item as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

2021-2022 DISTRICT AND CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT PLANS

A motion was made by Cynthia Najera, seconded by Eduardo Mena, to approve the item as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

REDISTRICTING OF SISD MEMBER DISTRICTS

A motion was made by Michael Najera, seconded by Pablo Barrera, to reach out to other firms for comparison. The motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The meeting was closed at 9:53 p.m. for consultation with legal counsel regarding Interlocal Agreement for the Purpose of Participation and Intervention in Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) Proceeding PUC Docket No. 52195, SOAH Docket No. 473-21-2606, Application of El Paso Electric Company to Change Rates; to discuss personnel and real estate matters; for discussion regarding board operating procedures; and to consider administrative recommendations Director of Special Education and for Assistant Principal position at Pebble Hills High School under *Texas Government Code* Sections 551.071, 551.072 and 551.074.

The meeting reconvened at 10:25 p.m.

ENTERING INTO AN INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT FOR THE PURPOSE OF PARTICIPATION AND INTERVENTION IN PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF TEXAS (PUC) PROCEEDING PUC DOCKET NO. 52195, SOAH DOCKET NO. 473-21-2606, APPLICATION OF EL PASO ELECTRIC COMPANY TO CHANGE RATES

A motion was made by Michael Najera, seconded by Paul Guerra, to authorize the Interim Superintendent to enter into an Interlocal Agreement with other El Paso County school districts and light entities to participate and intervene in Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) proceeding PUC Docket No. 52195, SOAH Docket No. 473-21-2606, Application of El Paso Electric Company to change rates; authorize the hiring of special counsel at the Law Firm of Husch Blackwell LLP to represent the District in the matter and to commit an amount to pay for legal fees, extra fees and expenses in that matter not to exceed the District corresponding portion proportion it to the correct usage. The motion carried unanimously.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Mrs. Carmona recommended Dr. Analia Jansen to assume all roles and responsibilities as Director of Special Education. A motion was made by Eduardo Mena, seconded by Cynthia Najera, to approve the item as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Carmona recommended Christopher Nwhim to assume all roles and responsibilities as Assistant Principal at Pebble Hills High School. A motion was made by Eduardo Mena, seconded by Michael Najera, to approve the item as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 10:33 p.m.

THESE MINUTES WERE APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES ON AUGUST 17, 2021.