

Mountain Home School District No. 193

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
 FEBRUARY 16, 2021
 SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION OFFICE

Courtesy Livestream Board Meetings: Livestreaming or recording board meetings is a courtesy to give the public an alternative means of participating in the school board meeting; the board meeting would continue even if there is a failure of technology (<https://www.mtnhomesd.org/calendar.html>).

Join Courtesy Zoom Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/92257134263?pwd=UWU3QVBuK3I2NkZ2RVlrdkp2b1hXOT09>

Meeting ID: 922 5713 4263

Passcode: 012238

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/a4kH6FXrR>

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER – Chairperson/Vice-chairperson.

Max Capacity: Governor Little's Social Distancing Directive leaves our boardroom at a maximum capacity of twelve (12) people including the Board of Trustees, Superintendent, Clerk, Treasurer, and Technology Director. More than ten people would require those persons to sit in the foyer or other overflow rooms.

Chairman Abrego convened the regular and livestream meeting of the Board of Trustees at 6:30 p.m.

Trustees Present: Chairman Abrego, Vice-Chair Binion, Trustee Donahue, Trustee Monasterio, Trustee Knox

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Chairman Abrego asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. GOOD NEWS – None this month.

Each month, the school board encourages students, teachers, administrators, and board members to recognize the notable activities, events, celebrations, student achievements & awards, etc., that have occurred in the school district or in the community.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA OR ADDENDUMS – Chairman/Vice-chairman. Prior to the consent agenda items, Chairman Abrego asked if there was an addendum to the agenda, or if there was anything to add or remove. Chairman Abrego called for a motion to approve or amend the agenda. Trustee Binion moved to approve the agenda as published, with a second from Trustee Knox. Agenda approved.

III. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS – Board of Trustees. Chairman Abrego called for a motion to approve the consent agenda items. Trustee Monasterio moved to approve the consent agenda, with a second from Trustee Donahue. Motion passed.

A. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF JANUARY 19, 2021 AND THE SPECIAL BOARD MEETING – DIRECTIVE ON SCHOOL DISTRICT SPECTATORS AT SCHOOL EVENTS OF JANUARY 25, 2021.

B. FINANCIAL REPORTS

C. CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

D. PERSONNEL

E. POLICY REVISION – 2nd Reading

1. School Safety & Discipline Policy

IV. DELEGATION – NONE

Any group wishing to be a delegation must submit a letter to the Superintendent Administrative Assistant/Clerk of the Board no later than the Tuesday prior to the next regular board meeting; the letter must include the reason for asking to be a delegation.

1. Brock Cherry/Marty Anderson – Director Community Development/Military Liaison Officer – reported on the projected growth in Mountain Home that could affect the school district infrastructure. He also explained that Mountain Home and Idaho in general wasn't as affected as other states and communities during the pandemic. The unemployment rate in Mountain Home is low when compared to other communities.

Mr. Cherry informed every one of the mass exoduses coming from cities especially from California, Washington, and Oregon, as well as eastern cities all moving to smaller cities and rural areas. The Treasure Valley is getting full of the exoduses and they are coming with a lot of money thus

increasing the cost of living and forcing native Idahoans to move to places such as Mountain Home. Treasure Valley residents can no longer afford to live in the Treasure Valley and look to Mountain Home as a viable place to live and an easy commute to and from the Treasure Valley to work.

Mr. Cherry discussed the need for desirable single-family homes, duplexes, apartments, etc., to accommodate the influx of people moving here; he discussed the city working with the airbase to discuss housing options in Mountain Home, especially in regards to the almost 500 airmen living in the Boise area and with them includes approximately \$5 million of impact that could be coming to Mountain Home.

The city has spoken with many developers, some from Mountain Home and others from elsewhere, to come to here contractors to build housing. The city is zoning the area north of town between 10th and 6th streets to build 232 homes on the 20-30 acres. Just this past year, there were only 65 building permits approved. There is another developer looking at 100 acres to produce 600 homes south of town.

Mr. Cherry explained the uses of property taxes for the city's infrastructure, sewer, roads, water, etc. There is also another feature called an Impact Fee that ensures the new development helps pay for itself without overburdening the taxpayer. Unfortunately, impact fees do not go towards schools.

Mr. Cherry informed the board that if certain key features are needed for the success of the development projects. The city understands that the city needs to work with the school district to best prepare for the substantial projects coming to town. He explained that the last thing anyone wants is to go out for a bond, raise taxes, etc., but the unfortunate truth is a lot of this is going to happen whether we like it or not and the city wanted the school district to have the best information so that the school district could make the best decisions regarding facilities and to be able to offer excellent education.

Mr. Cherry stated that the three focus areas the city along with MHAFB is housing, jobs, and education. This is what the military looks at when deciding to expand a mission. They look for desirable housing which the city is working on, desirable jobs in which military spouses could be employed and that allows for different certifications and licenses be acceptable from other states, and quality education.

Mr. Cherry said that the city is here to help and support the school district especially with the projected growth, but we need to be able to accommodate the new residents and we can only do that as partners.

Trustee Binion asked if the base was planning to increase their capacity and the response was no due to the agreement of only allowing 800-900 units, so MHAFB relies on the town to accommodate the military families; of the 500 families living in the Boise area, some are due to lack of housing and others choose to live in the Boise area. MHAFB looks at potential mission growth so more families can move here, but the decision depends on the availability of desirable housing, quality education, and desirable school facilities. MHAFB also looks at if there are plans for a new high school and what it would look like for the future; Stephensen Elementary school, located on the airbase, is getting improvements from the military installation.

Discussion continued on the new housing development north of town, annexing areas into the city, estimated completion dates, plans for additional housing development south of town, due diligence regarding zoning codes, etc. The city wants to make sure the school district is aware of the projects so that when the school board decides to build a new school south of town, they had the time to do the school district's due diligence to get the school built. Discussion about the lack of quality of houses currently being built, discussion on the less than desirable existing housing, discussion on the less than desirable residential areas, discussion on the city's requirements for new housing construction, discussion of including parks in the new residential areas, discussion of the over inflated housing prices in Mountain Home and the Treasure Valley, etc.

The board thanked Mr. Cherry and Mr. Anderson.

V. PUBLIC INPUT –

*Public input may be provided to the board either in person if signed up at the beginning of the meeting (public input sign-up sheet) or via zoom, if the [Public Input Form](#) has been submitted **by noon the day of the board meeting**. Individuals will be allowed a maximum*

of three minutes to present their views. Please do not include the names of students or staff due to FERPA Laws and privacy protection. There will be no action taken at this time, but action on a problem area could be scheduled for a subsequent meeting of the board. Face masks and social distancing must be followed, or the individual will be immediately escorted out of the building. There is limited seating in the boardroom so patrons might have to sit in the foyer or the overflow room. If you have a complaint against personnel or students by name, you need to schedule an appointment with the Superintendent.

Chairman Abrego explained that the board has received a lot of input online and the board appreciates it but understand that even though public input is public record, it is really for the board to receive input from parents and patrons and therefore will not be read aloud during a board meeting. With that being said, if one wants to give input, they may attend a board meeting in person and sign up to give input. The board has received all input and they have all read the input. Chairman Abrego then explained the rules to give public input.

1. Adam Kelley – parent – informed the board of the dire emotional state of one of his children and the potential of self-harm due to not being able to be in school, the lack of interpersonal relationships, sudden thoughts of worthlessness, etc. He added that parents weren't able to attend their children's basketball games causing a deeper depression. He asked the board to please reopen schools.
2. Kristopher Wallaert – HMS Teacher – He informed the board that as a teacher, the 5th and 6th grade levels met as a group and decided that completely changing the schedule of a student with only 40-days of school left would only create more issues and problems for the students. He asked the board to keep the hybrid schedule, but to bring back Fridays as in-person instruction. He added that there was a significant drop in activity on Fridays for the online instruction because there was no guarantee that the students would log into class. for the student. Mr. Wallaert also asked if the board was to reopen schools to consider keeping a morning and afternoon split for the remainder of the school year.
3. Sylvia Nixon – concerned community member – requested the board keep the schools closed and stay with the hybrid schedule. She said the schools did very well following the CDC requirements of wearing face masks and social distancing, but the city of Mountain Home has not followed the CDC guidelines and therefore the potential for the continued spread of COVID still exists. She told Superintendent Gilbert that he always said the hybrid was for the safety of the children and community and did he not think that doubling up classroom sizes would not double the chance of infections. She continued her discussion and then asked the board not to reopen schools.
4. Matt Chandler – father – as an Occupational Safety and Health professional, he claimed he had facts to back up reopening the schools. He then listed his claimed proofs including hospitals are not overloaded, the CDC calculations are not fair, zero deaths for anyone under the age of 18-years, etc. He referred the board to the CDC study regarding COVID and he gave what he claimed were exact quotes as reasons to reopen schools.

VI. REPORTS –

- A. **MOUNTAIN HOME AFB UPDATE** – MHAFB Liaison. Mr. Nicksich said there was nothing new to report. He did report to the board that some base parents, as working parents, would like the schools to reopen and the other half would like to remain in hybrid. The board thanked him in turn.
- B. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT/COVID19 UPDATE** – James Gilbert. Superintendent Gilbert reported that he would like to take the time to talk about what Mr. Cherry reported on the school district to go out for a bond for either a new high school building or renovate the high school. He informed the board that he would like to survey the community to get an idea of what the community would pass, a new high school or a renovated high school. Superintendent said he planned to reach out to the mayor to have the survey put on the city website to get as many people as possible to submit the survey. He briefly explained the school district's bonding capacity was at \$1.4 million. The cost of a new high school will be in the neighborhood of \$80 million and a new elementary school is in the neighborhood of \$20 million, so you can see the challenge we will have with long-term planning. A positive aspect is as the community grows, the bond capacity grows. He continued to discuss the possibility of bonding, the student current and projected student enrollment, the projected growth the south of town, etc. He also added that he would like the survey to go out in early March and leave it open for a month, knowing it's not scientific but it would give the board some direction on how to proceed forward. He then explained the processes and costs to the district involved prior to running a bond and the processes and costs involved if a bond is approved.

Trustee Binion asked if we could focus more on registered voters as they are the ones who vote, and we

have many military families who are not residents or registered voters of Mountain Home and their survey input would give us false numbers on the chances of a bond passing. Superintendent replied he could, but we would have to hire a company, and we don't have the time to get the survey out in March. If the board prefers to just have a survey of registered voters, it would take time to hire the company that would do the phone survey of just registered voters.

Chairman Abrego asked if the city would be willing to help us with the survey. Superintendent responded yes.

Discussion continued about the projected tremendous growth and the strain on our facilities, student enrollment, open enrollment, rezoning attendance areas, etc.

VII. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS – NONE**

VIII. **NEW BUSINESS –**

- A. OUT-OF-DISTRICT OPEN ENROLLMENT APPLICATIONS – 2021-2022** – James Gilbert. Superintendent Gilbert requested approval of the open enrollment application for the 2021-2022 school year. The parents will provide transportation to and from school.

1. Sha & Ashley Smalls for their elementary student, SES

Trustee Donahue motioned to approve the Out-of-District Open Enrollment Application as presented by Superintendent Gilbert, with a second from Trustee Binion. Motion granted.

- A. DISCUSSION OF THE POSSIBILITY OF RETURNING TO FULLTIME STATUS (POSSIBLE ACTION)** – Board of Trustees/James Gilbert. James began the discussion by saying like every school district in Idaho this conversation is happening with school boards. This is a very passionate topic with two sides of a community, parents, and staff in difference with each other on whether to reopen schools or stay in hybrid instruction. This is a very difficult decision for the board to make. James informed the board that whatever the decision is that they approve, the school district will make it work, our teachers will make it work.

James stated that everyone who is listening and hearing the board's discussion needs to understand that there is no perfect decision, and that there is one half of the community that will not be happy with the decision; just know that the board will be taking every possible variable, CDC recommendations, along with parent, community, and staff input into consideration when making their decision, and their decision will be based on what is in the best interest for students, as well as knowing that half of the community will not be happy; again, there is no perfect decision except for a decision based on what is best for the children.

The board and Superintendent Gilbert's extensive discussion included:

- Updated COVID information in regard to the school district and community; the community and district fit the low transmission rate.
- Discussed that no matter the decision of the board, the five CDC mitigating strategies are required; discussed the new CDC guidelines that states social distancing of 6'ft or to the greatest extent possible; discussed that currently the district has six active COVID cases and that four of the cases are from one event.
- Discussed the conversations of the Region III and Region IV superintendents and the options they are considering; West Ada is returning to fulltime on March 29; Eastern Idaho has never really followed the CDC guidelines and their COVID rates reflected such; other Treasure Valley school districts are in different scenarios such as fulltime, hybrid, certain grade levels fulltime, etc.
- Discussed being flexible and that the possibility exists that should the transmission rates increase, the district would have to go back to remote learning; discussed being flexible among the buildings should one building have above normal transmissions rates, that one building would have to return to remote learning and that includes what used to be snow days are now remote learning days, etc.
- Discussed vaccination levels among staff; approximately 70% of staff have started the vaccination process, but we have staff that cannot take the vaccination for health or pregnancy reasons; the majority of our staff will be fully vaccinated (two shots) sometime in March.

- Discussed the possibility of adding additional plexiglass separators, purchase additional face masks, include students in the disinfecting of their workstations and desks; passing in the hallway is not considered contact because contact requires a minimum of 15-minutes and within 6'ft.
- Discussed the new guidance of quarantining is that after 5-days of coming into contact with a positive COVID person, the student or staff may then take a rapid COVID test and if the test is negative, they may immediately return to school or work; staff who have been fully vaccinated do not need to quarantine
- Discussed how the kids are really struggling academically and emotionally; A and B students are either failing or receiving low scores not only here but also nationwide.
- Discussed the anxiety from teachers of returning fulltime; discussed that should the board decide to return to fulltime instruction, the board would need to make things less stressful for teachers and one of those is that the board would need to eliminate any expectation of remote learning; hybrid learning would be eliminated; teachers should not be expected to have lesson plans for live instruction and lesson plans for remote instruction.
- Discussed the board's expectations if returning to fulltime instruction; the district is not designed to operate two different systems, so if the board decides to go to fulltime, there is not an option for students to stay hybrid or remote learning; discussed that the district does not have the staffing and we cannot expect our teachers to try to keep up two different systems; Canvas is a learning management system that will be used moving forward and it will continue to be utilized.
- Discussion about the input from staff, parents, and community; staff input reflected that the many wanted to stay in the hybrid learning; teachers' anxieties of returning fulltime with a classroom of students; teachers' concerns about cleaning classrooms; teachers' concerns that kids won't adapt to a new schedule, teachers concerns that parents would have to adjust their schedules again; teachers claiming that there isn't enough time for students to improve their grades, etc.; the parent and community input reflected an that an overwhelming amount of parents and community want their kids back in school fulltime as soon as possible, reopen the schools; there is no perfect decision and no matter the decision, someone is going to be disappointed.
- Discussed the possibility of having the kids clean their own workstations and desks; discussed the resilience and adaptability of kids; discussed that the majority of parents' welcome going back to a normal schedule; discussed there is plenty of time for kids to improve their grades, etc.; the board discussed other pros and cons and challenges of changing the schedule at this time.
- Extensive discussion continued including reopening schools, the timing of how to best proceed with a reopening; schools have been discussing reopening for about a month; revisited how resilient kids are; how to address sports, activities, prom, graduation, etc., and still follow the CDC mitigation requirements; discussed the mental and emotional wellbeing of the kids.

Chairman Abrego moved to reopen all schools of MHSD five days a week effective March 8, 2021. Trustee Donahue asked for the motion to be amended to include the elimination of remote learning. Chairman Abrego amended his motion to include the elimination of remote learning. Trustee Donahue seconded the motion. Trustee Monasterio asked that another amendment be made to include subject to revision based on the COVID situation. Trustee Knox also asked for the motion to be amended to replace the current 6'ft social distancing requirement with social distancing of 6'ft or to the greatest extent possible. Trustee Binion asked for the amendment to read following the CDC safety requirements instead of only referencing the 6'ft or to the greatest extent possible. Chairman Abrego amended his motion to reopen all schools of MHSD for in-person instruction five days a week including the elimination of hybrid learning, effective March 8, 2021, while following the CDC safety measures including wearing face masks and following the 6'ft social distancing or to the greatest extent possible, subject to change based on COVID transmission numbers in the community. Trustee Donahue seconded the motion. Trustees Donahue, Monasterio, and Knox voted aye; Trustee Binion voted nay. Motion passed.

- B. APPROVAL OF THE EDUCATION PROGRAM – 2020-21 (ACTION)** – James Gilbert. Superintendent Gilbert submitted the Education Plan for the 2020-2021 school year, which includes all offered courses, course length, pre-requisites, required courses, and electives, and hybrid instruction to the Board for approval. The SDE asks that the board approve the Education Plan this time every year. Trustee Donahue motioned to approve the Education Program - 2020-21, as presented by Superintendent Gilbert, received a second from Trustee Knox. Motion carried.

- C. **DRIVERS EDUCATION BUDGET (ACTION)** – Levi Vick. Mr. Vick presented the Driver’s Education Budget for FY22 to the Board for approval. He stated that this is a self-sustaining fund; all expenses come from student fees and the small reimbursement from the state. Mr. Vick informed the board that he uses data from previous years to build the budget, there was no drivers education last spring or this past summer, so the budget will mirror FY21 budget. He added that the district estimates approximately 270 students enrolling in Drivers Education anticipates that revenue over expenses to be zero dollars. Chairman Abrego asked if the IDLA student drivers is paid from our budget. Mr. Vick replied yes, it did, but students pay \$150 for the driving portion that comes from the budget. Trustee Binion motioned for the approval of the Drivers Education Budget for 2021-2022, as presented. Trustee Donahue seconded the motion. Motion approved.

- D. **APPROVAL OF AUDITOR (ACTION)** – Levi Vick. Mr. Vick asked for approval of independent auditing firm of Harris & Company again this year as the auditors for the FY20-21 District audit. He recommended the District use Harris & Company for the audit. Trustee Knox motioned for approval of Harris & Company, as the auditors for the FY20-21 District audit. Trustee Binion seconded it. Motion carried.

- E. **SCHEDULE BUDGET WORKSHOP (ACTION)** – Levi Vick. Mr. Vick requested the budget workshop be held on Tuesday, May 4, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. He added that the legislature should be finished by then, this gives the district enough time to make changes as needed before the budget hearing. Discussion occurred. Trustee Binion moved to hold the budget workshop on Monday, May 3, 2021, at 6:00 p.m., at the district office, on the caveat that the SDE has released the funding amount numbers. Trustee Donahue seconded the motion. Motion granted.

- F. **SCHEDULE BUDGET HEARING (ACTION)** – Levi Vick. Mr. Vick requested that the District Budget Hearing date be set for June 15, 2021, at 6:00 p.m., preceding the regular board meeting. Trustee Monasterio motioned to hold the budget hearing for June 15, 2021, at 6:00 p.m., at the district office. Trustee Knox seconded the motion. Motion approved.

- G. **SCHEDULE A SCHOOL MEALS FEE INCREASE HEARING – 2021-2022 School Year (ACTION)** – Levi Vick. Mr. Vick requested that the public hearing be held prior to the regular board meeting on June 15, 2021, at 5:45 p.m. Trustee Donahue motioned to hold a public hearing on June 15, 2021, at 5:45 p.m., to receive public input, with a second from Trustee Binion. Motion passed.

IX. **EXECUTIVE SESSION – Personnel Matters**

Executive Session – Section 74-206(1)(b) – To consider the evaluation, dismissal, or disciplining of a public-school employee, Idaho Code.

Chairman Abrego called for a motion for the purpose of allowing the board to enter into executive session. Trustee Binion motioned to enter into executive session in accordance with Idaho Code to discuss personnel matters, received a second from Trustee Donahue, the following resolution was presented:

RESOLUTION TO ADJOURN INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

BE IT SO RESOLVED That the Board of Trustees of School District No. 193 recess from an open meeting into the following executive session(s) pursuant to Idaho Code, Title 74, Chapter 2, Sections 74-202(4)(c)(6)(a) – Open Meeting (Regular Meeting), 74-204(3) – Open Meeting (Executive Session), 74-206(1)(b) – To consider the evaluation, dismissal, or disciplining of a public school employee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That following the executive session, the Board of Trustees will convene into public session for further business or adjournment of the meeting.

Chairman Abrego called upon Clerk Whitman to do a roll call vote. Vote being had on the above and foregoing resolution, and the same having been counted and found to be as follows:

NAME OF TRUSTEES

Trustee Knox Aye
 Trustee Monasterio Aye
 Trustee Binion Aye
 Trustee Donahue Aye

Chairman Abrego..... Aye

And no less than two-thirds (2/3) of the membership in favor thereof, the Chairman declared said resolution adopted and the board recessed into executive session at 9:00 p.m.

ACTION ITEM(S):

- A. Consider the evaluation, disciplining, dismissal of an Employee – Employee A

Others present: The attending board members, Superintendent Gilbert, and Clerk Whitman.

Following a full and complete discussion of personnel matters the Board reconvened into open session at 9:30 p.m. No motion made.

NON-ACTION ITEM(S):

- A. None

- X. **ADJOURNMENT** – All business of the Board having been completed, Chairman Abrego called for a motion to adjourn. A motion from Trustee Donahue to adjourn was seconded by Trustee Binion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

ATTACHMENT

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS – 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

Gilbert, James G. – Superintendent, Appointment through June 30, 2024, MHSD193
 Longhurst, Albert J., Director of Educational Services, Appointment through June 30, 2022, MHSD193
 Johnson, Jeff M., Director of Instruction and Federal Programs, Appointment through June 30, 2022, MHSD193

APPOINTMENTS

Brum, JaDene; 7th Grade “B” Boys Basketball Coach, MHJH
 DeRoos, Megan; Paraeducator, Stephensen Elementary

RESIGNATIONS

Filipovich, John; Assistant Jr. High Track Coach, MHJH; effective: February 4, 2021
 Guillen, Tomas; “B” Custodian, East Elementary and North Elementary; effective: February 16, 2021
 Hughes, Audra; Pre-School Paraeducator, West Elementary; effective: January 28, 2021
 Morrison, Sharon; Assistant Jr. High Track Coach, MHJH; effective: January 21, 2021
 Sjostrom, Andi; Paraeducator, Stephensen Elementary; effective: February 11, 2021
 Whitaker, George; 7th Grade “A” Boys Basketball Coach, MHJH; effective: January 20, 2021

RETIREMENTS

Scheff, Trudie Gayle; Cook Manager, HMS; effective: May 31, 2021

Chairman Abrego

Clerk Whitman