



426 N. Blackstone
Tulare, CA 93274

**Special Meeting of the Board of Education
Held via Zoom Video Meeting
June 17, 2020
Minutes**

MODIFIED MEETING PROCEDURES DURING COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) PANDEMIC:

As per Executive Order N-29-20 from Governor Newsom, the Tulare Joint Union High School Board of Education Special meeting, scheduled for June 17, 2020, was conducted via zoom video <https://url.tjuhsd.org/board-meeting>.

1.0 Opening Business

1.1 Call to Order

Board President Cathy Mederos called the special meeting of the Tulare Joint Union High School District Board of Education to order at 6:10 p.m. via Zoom video conference.

Members Present: Frank Fernandes, Laura Fonseca, Craig Hamilton, Cathy Mederos, Kelley Nicholson
Members Present via Zoom: None **Members Absent:** None

1.2 Adopt Agenda

On a motion by Laura Fonseca and second by Kelley Nicholson, the Board approved the agenda by the following 4-0 vote:

Ayes: Fonseca, Hamilton, Mederos, Nicholson

Noes: None **Absent:** None **Frank Fernandes arrived at 6:30 p.m.**

2.0 Adjourn to Closed Session

3.0 Regular Session at 6:51 p.m.

Members Present: Frank Fernandes, Laura Fonseca, Craig Hamilton, Cathy Mederos, Kelley Nicholson
Members Present via Zoom: None **Members Absent:** None

Administrators Present:

Tony Rodriguez, Superintendent
Barbara Orisio, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources and Business
Tammy Aldaco, Assistant Superintendent, Student Services
Lucy Van Scyoc, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum, Technology & Assessment

Others Present: Vivian Hamilton, Business Manager, Tracey Domingues, Board Stenographer

Others Present via Zoom: Donny Trimm, Director of Technology, Daniel Pierotte, Director of Facilities

3.1 Pledge of Allegiance

Board President, Cathy Mederos, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4.0 **Community Relations**

4.1 **Citizen Comments**

Board President Cathy Mederos requested those who wish to address a matter on the agenda to do so at this time.

Sebastian Pires, TWHS Student, Tulare, CA

- He spoke to the Board about how difficult distance learning was for students and how disconnected they felt from school. He asked the Board to reconsider their decision of reopening the schools with a modified schedule. He urged them to reopen schools with full return in the classroom. To him this is the only option because it would allow students opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities and build a positive culture on campus.

Cathy Mederos thanked Sebastian Pires for his comments. It was very well said.

5.0

Information Items

5.1 **Information on Budget Study Session**

Cathy Mederos informed everyone the purpose of this meeting is to meet one more time and review the budget before the final adoption at the Board meeting on June 25, 2020.

Vivian Hamilton stated at the past few Board meetings, the District has presented possible reductions to reduce the district's projected deficit due to the cuts to the revenue by the state. The District reviewed the budget information to get final direction from the Board on reductions and to do a final review of the multi-year budget projections. Mrs. Hamilton presented the Board with the updated Multi-Year Projections, a summary of proposed budget reductions for 2020-2021, and its potential impact on the district in the next three years.

A discussion was held and Vivian Hamilton responded to questions from the Board.

Frank Fernandes

- He hopes staff and the community is listening to the conversation tonight. He understands the Board approved a three-year contract that includes another 2% raise in 2020-2021, but he said we could not afford that. He still hopes the bargaining units would be willing to dialogue with the district and work jointly with them to come to an agreement about the 2% salary increase.
- In reference to the 4x4, he asked if we can, we afford it. He said certain people benefit but some students do not. He said the 4x4 model is a good idea but maybe we need to look at a model that can be successful and not drain the district.
- He said he supported the Dairy Enterprise for 12 years but it has been a challenge to operate. It could have been utilized better. He struggles with keeping it open when we are laying people off.
- He said he does not want to come across as a villain, but how can we make cuts without impacting students.
- He said the Board cares about everybody in this district.

Laura Fonseca

- She stated that since she has been a board member of the TJUHSD, they have always been a conservative Board and that is what is going to get us through this budget crisis.
- She supports Tony Rodriguez in his work and the people in positions working hard for students.
- She asked Tony Rodriguez what his recommendation was. He stated factor stipends in the budget at 70% as negotiated with CTA, with the caveat that some positions may not be filled.
- She recommends approving a budget that includes a 70% stipend. She appreciates the work that went into reviewing stipends and revising the previous budget.

Craig Hamilton

- He inquired about the actual expenditures (in 2019-2020) and what categories the revisions were made.

- The Dairy Enterprise is a capital investment. He has not seen a budget yet. He wants to see the year-end projection. He suggested removing the stipend, as he does not think it is necessary to include as part of the budget.

Cathy Mederos

- The information presented shows a difference in stipend amounts.
- Clubs and extra-curricular activities give students opportunities and connections to school. We want to fund.
- The Board values our classified staff. The hardest thing for the Board to do is make budget cuts that include personnel but personnel is a big part of the budget.
- Cathy Mederos said we rely on guidelines from the State, the CDE and the local health department when making our decisions about reopening schools.
- If we cannot open fully, we will be the best district we can be with either of the other models and we will work hard together to make it work.
- She thanked everyone for all their comments. The Board hears your passion.
- She said we have to put a budget together today, so we can approve next week. We have to finalize the cuts.
- She said if anyone has any other questions, they could approach a board member and they have their email address as well.

Kelley Nicholson

- She cannot look at a number below the minimum 3% and make a sound decision about the budget.

Superintendent Tony Rodriguez

- 70% of stipends were added back into the budget because of a meeting with CTA.
- He stated the district is budgeting the amount for stipends, because they know those positions are important to students.
- Stipends will only be paid if that particular program is active.
- We have a dilemma on our hands, with following guidelines from the state and CDC on maintaining social distancing and keeping students and staff safe when we return. He understands that a majority (50%) want to come back full time, regular schedule, full in classroom but we also have to follow direction from the Governor, the CDC, and TCOE.
- Because we receive new information daily about COVID-19 in our county and the state, the District is working to have multiple plans ready when we are allowed to reopen schools.
- He will discuss the Dairy Enterprise with Dan Dutto.
- If the Board agrees to continue Dairy operations, the Dairy Manager contract for 2020-2021, will be presented to the board on June 25, 2020 meeting.

Vivian Hamilton

- The updates for the 2019-2020 projections were made among all categories, but mostly classified salaries, books & supplies, and transportation.
- Monies the district should receive in June has been deferred to July.
- If the HEROES monies are not received by October 1, we most likely will not receive our cash until the 2021-2022 school year. If that happens, we would have to consider taking out a loan.

Lucy Van Scyoc

- She stated the majority of the cost in having a 4x4 schedule is in transportation.
- The district has spent \$700,000 in last two years (\$350,000/year) on the 4x4.
- She said staffing did not increase because of the 4x4. They only paid stipends to teacher for Homework labs.

Rosemary Casos (Parent, Tulare, CA)

- She recognizes the hard decisions the Board and District Administration have to make during these times.
- She inquired about the different schedule plans we are considering when schools reopen.
- She asked about costs relating to the blended learning model, use of CARES Act money, and if the administration is taking a cut in pay.

- She asked if the district is worried about liability if something happens and if we have checked on coverage with our insurance carrier.

Vanessa Cervantez (CSEA Labor Relations, Dinuba, CA)

- She informed the Board that CSEA has been transparent throughout this process and has met with district administration to offer alternative solutions to budget cuts.
- She asked the Board to evaluate what other cuts could be made in other areas instead of classified personnel.
- She stated classified staff are just as important but she feels they are not being treated fairly when it comes to budget cuts.
- She stated the District is top heavy and cuts should come from the top.

David Flores (CTA President, Tulare, CA)

- He thanked the Board for their contributions to the District. He said we are all in this crisis together.
- He said CTA has been painted as not willing to negotiate, but they have made concessions in that they are losing ten teachers next school year.
- He said, on the record, CTA has other alternative ideas to reduce budget deficit, but this is not the forum to address. CTA is willing to meet with the District to discuss how we can potentially save jobs.

Victoria Hinojosa (Community Family Liaison, Tulare, CA)

- She commented on behalf of her position.
- She referred back to what everyone else has said about classified staff and they are just as important.
- She said she picks up students daily, works with at risk students and homeless students and she has built relationships with these families.
- She asked the Board and Administration to revisit the spreadsheet, look at calculations, and cut evenly so that it is fair.
- She said the Board needs to cut back from the top and work down.

Theresa Kellogg (Tulare, CA)

- She spoke from the standpoint of a former parent. She said children are being cheated because a majority of students cannot learn from distance learning. She said the district would fail the students if they do not get their education with returning to full classroom instruction.
- She said not to give the teachers their 2% salary increase.

Tonya Marquez (Tulare, CA)

- She agrees that classified staff have important jobs. Nevertheless, stated that the district is not rehiring teachers so they are losing jobs too. She said teachers are working outside of their contract hours getting the work done because we are here for your students. Teachers are not complaining. She said a lot is being asked of teachers during this very unusual time. She asked that the Board honor the contract the district approved three years ago.
- She said that stipends that are cut, they will still look for ways to plan for your seniors keeping in mind social distance, safety. We are doing our best to give your students an experience.

Maria Medina (Parent, Tulare, CA)

- She stated she appreciates teachers, but the Family Community Liaisons are just as important. They are the bridge between families and schools and organizations in the community who provide services to them.

Frank Mello (Teacher, Parent, Community member, Tulare, CA)

- He watches the board meetings via zoom and appreciates that everyone has been working together because we are all in this together. He has noticed that the budget presented changes at every board meeting.
- He asked the Board if they have evaluated and considered every possible cut, for example, the 4x4 schedule.
- He said if we went back to a 3x3 schedule, the district could save money. He stated everything needs to be on the table, raises or not. It is not too late to consider everything.
- He said if you ask CTA, they would eliminate 4x4 to save jobs.

Brett Miller (Parent, Tulare, CA)

- He asked over the last six years, what have raises been for teachers? Vivian Hamilton responded, in the last five years, CSEA has had a salary increase of 21.3%, and CTA 21%.
- He agrees with Frank Fernandes about the teachers negotiating their 2% raise with the district because we are living in unprecedented times and so many people in our community have lost their jobs and/or had to close their businesses.
- He asked what the district's plan is for re-opening schools and if they are planning for return to full classroom instruction because he heard Kern County is reopening fully.

Mike Powell (Athletic Director, TWHS)

- He said Rosemary Casos asked a question about the salary increase for administration he did not believe the Board answered.
- Cathy Mederos responded that item will be on the agenda at the June 25, 2020 Board meeting next week.

Filomena Rocha (CSEA President)

- She asked what a stipend is. Vivian Hamilton responded a stipend is payment for a service that is not part of a base salary.
- She stated that a stipend is extra and last week the Board approved a Resolution that eliminated employee's actual jobs. She said that does not compare to a stipend.
- CSEA has worked with the district and attempted to offer solutions to budget cuts. They are frustrated because classified staff does not feel they are valued.

Ross Rodriguez (Did not state city he resides in)

- He said as a taxpayer, we expect tax dollars to be used on all student services. He said the district is being selective on which programs we keep and the students we serve. He said all students should be offered the same opportunities, and the district should be fair.
- He asked why teachers need stipends.
- He asked why the positions that are being eliminated are the ones that help students.

Vanessa Wright (CSEA member, Tulare, CA)

- She echoes Filomena Rocha and Vanessa Cervantez
- She informed the Board she is a Bus Driver but she does not consider herself just a bus driver, she is so much more. She cares about each student that rides her bus and she is proud to be a role model. She is just as important as a teacher is.

Kelly Collins asked the Board to adopt a budget that will best serve students and one that the district remains solvent.

TWHS Student

- She spoke to the Board about reopening school. She said for those students who want distance learning, they can transfer to SV Charter.
- She talked about suicide rates and child abuse rates are up because students cannot go to school.
- She urged the District email the Google form to survey the students, so their voice can be heard.

6.0 Any Other Business

Reconvene for Closed Session at 9:09 p.m.

Disclosure of Action Take in Closed Session

Cathy Mederos reported no action was taken in Closed Session

7.0 Adjournment

The regular meeting adjourned at 10:12 p.m.

Next Meeting

Regular Board Meeting, June 25, 2020, Staff Development Room, TJUHSD District Office, with Closed Session starting at 6:30 p.m. The regular meeting will start at 7:30 p.m. (unless otherwise posted).

Board Stenographer

Secretary to the Board of Trustees