

**CHATOM UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT  
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
Chatom Library with Applied Social Distancing and  
Zoom Platform  
December 28, 2020**

Monday, December 28, 2020

Closed Session: 6:00p.m.

Public Session: 7:00p.m.

*(Public can obtain access to the Zoom Meeting by contacting the District Office at 209-664-8505)*

**Any writings or documents that are public records** and are provided to the Governing Board regarding an open session item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection in the District Office located at 7201 Clayton Road, Turlock, CA, during normal business hours.

**The Chatom Union School Board of Trustees welcomes you** to its meetings which are regularly scheduled on the second Tuesday of each month. Your interest is encouraged and appreciated. There are two procedures for public comment. They are:

Commenting on Items Not on the Agenda

California law prohibits the Board from taking action on any matter which is not on the posted agenda unless it is determined to be an emergency by the Board of Trustees.

The audience may comment on items that are not on the agenda during the Public Comments section, only. Public comments are limited to three (3) minutes maximum.

Commenting on Agenda Items

Procedures

1. Prior to the meeting, fill out a 3x5 agenda comment card. Wait for the Item to be announced.
2. Item Announced
3. Board Motion/ Second
4. Public Comment (3 minute maximum)
5. Close of Public Comments
6. Board Discussion
7. Board Vote

**Consent Calendar**

Items listed under the Consent Calendar are considered to be routine and are acted on by the Board of Trustees in one motion. There is no discussion of these items before the vote unless a Board member, staff or public requests specific items be discussed and/or removed from the Consent Calendar. It is understood that the administration recommends approval on all Consent Items. Each item approved by the Board shall be deemed to have been considered in full and adopted as recommended.)

**The District welcomes Spanish and other language speakers** to Board meetings. Anyone planning to attend and needing an interpreter should call (209) 664-8505, 24 hours in advance of the meeting, so arrangements can be made for an interpreter. *El Distrito da la bienvenida a las personas que hablan español a las juntas de la Mesa Directiva. Si planea asistir y necesita interpretación llame al (209) 664-8505, 24 horas antes de la junta, para poder hacer arreglos de interpretación.*

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

**Time: 6:03p.m.**

- 1.1 Roll Call  
Steve Soderstrom \_X\_, Karen Macedo \_X\_,  
Anthony Avila \_X\_, Ryan Blount \_X\_, Rob Santos \_X\_
- 1.2 Public Comment on Closed Session Agenda Items

- 1.3 Adjourn to Closed Session  
APPROVED  
Motion: Rob Santos Second: Karen Macedo  
Vote: Ayes 5 Noes 0 Abstentions 0

## **2. CLOSED SESSION**

*Disclosure of Items Discussed in Closed Session (Gov. Code 54947.7)*

- 2.1. Consult with Legal Counsel-Potential Litigation Resulting from Expanding In-Person Classroom Instruction: Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(2)
- 2.2. Public Employees Discipline/Dismissal/Release/Non-re-election/Leaves of Absence/Resignation/Job Share (Gov. Code 44949 (e) and Gov. Code 44955)
- 2.3. Negotiations
- 2.4. Adjournment Back to Public Session

## **3. OPEN SESSION: CALL TO ORDER**

**Time: 7:04p.m.**

- 3.1 Roll Call  
Steve Soderstrom \_X\_, Karen Macedo \_X\_,  
Anthony Avila \_X\_, Ryan Blount \_X\_, Rob Santos \_X\_
- 3.2 Flag Salute  
The flag salute was led by Board President, Steve Soderstrom.
- 3.3 Report from Closed Session  
No report or action was taken during closed session.
- 3.4 Approval of Agenda  
APPROVED  
Motion: Rob Santos Second: Anthony Avila  
Vote: Ayes 5 Noes 0 Abstentions 0

## **4. INFORMATION**

## **5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Board President, Steve Soderstrom reviewed the procedures for public comments.

The CTA President read a letter on behalf of another teacher that felt safety protocols were not being followed. Some of the examples shared included inconsistent mask usage and visitor requirements. She also shared that she feels that leadership needs improvement and recommended that Administration walk campus at least once a week. Chatom

Elementary Principal, Sara Cruz responded to the comments by explaining school policy and the requirement of masks. She also reported that any issues concerning non faculty guests on campus has been addressed and safety guidelines are reviewed weekly.

Parents of the Chatom community spoke out in support of reopening regardless of the current Stay-at-Home Order. They reemphasized the urgency of wanting school to be open five full days to support the academic, mental and social needs of the children. A parent commented to the Board to share that her family does great at the District and the schools are doing good, but she would really like to see things move forward and things go back to normal.

Another parent took the opportunity to comment on a few items he had shared at the last Board Meeting. He mentioned that he had spoken with both Principals and the Superintendent and said he was incorrect on some information that he had shared at the prior Board Meeting. He and his family still feel that they will go elsewhere with a heavy heart if the Board does not vote to reopen campus. He expressed that he is disappointed in teachers because he would like to have seen them stand up and speak up in favor to have the students return fully to class.

A few parents spoke on their personal experience with the closure and the effects they have had and support they expected from their teachers.

A fourth-grade student shared that the current hybrid model does not work for her and half the time zoom does not work when she participates in her at home distance learning. It was her request to have school be open five days a week.

A parent suggested more surveys be done to ask each individual and family if they would want to return.

A couple of teachers shared that they agree that students should return for 5 full days of in-person instruction. However, staff and administrators are limited to the requirements placed on them at the county and state level.

A Mt. View teacher shared that she has not heard any of her colleague's state that they do not want to have children back. She also shared that she along with other staff had spent about 40 hours working on multiple plans to reopen the school.

A parent shared that she would like for her kids to come back full time but would rather them stay at two days then have to leave the District. She wanted administration oversight and for teachers to be vigilant.

Another Mountain View teacher spoke to clarify comments that were made at the prior Board Meeting. She felt as if her comments were taken out of context. She would love to have her students back five days a week but wanted to do it as safe as possible.

Mt. View Principal, Steve Lewis, spoke on the safety protocols that are in place at Mt. View for all staff and the expectations for students. He informed the Board on the growth that has transpired since the start of the school closure and where we are currently. He appreciates his staff for all of their work and knows that they would all like to return in a normal capacity. COVID has not been easy on any single individual. He appreciates some parents taking the time to call him and ask questions. He encourages other parents who have questions or concerns to reach out as well.

Chatom Elementary Principal, Sara Cruz agreed with what Steve shared and affirmed that the decision to not reopen is not because of staff members not wanting to return. She said they want what is in the best interest of Chatom students.

Mrs. Olvera communicated that Chatom is special because they are a great community. She emphasized how we need to work together to support the needs of the students and school. She stated that she recognizes that students need to be back at school to support their academic and social-emotional needs. She appreciated all of the comments from staff and parents that can be used to make improvements. She also stated an additional survey would be distributed as requested.

## **6. ACTION**

### **6.1 Vote to Reaffirm Board Action Taken on November 10, 2020 to Specify Reopening Chatom Elementary on January 4, 2021 and Mountain View on January 19, 2021**

Board President, Steve Soderstrom introduced Susan Adams the Executive Director of the Central Region School Insurance Group (CRSIG). Susan was present to inform the Board on what it would mean for the District if they moved forward with reopening the school during the State Order without Local Health Officer approval. She stated that the District would be willfully violating County Health

Department and State Government Orders therefore our liability coverage would not be available to pay for any COVID-19 related third party claims., nor would there be coverage for Public Officials errors and Omission coverage that is afforded to the Board Members. Chatom would be self-insured for any claims related to COVID-19. She explained that liability coverage specifically excludes intentional acts which is common in most policies. The District would be considered self-insured should a lawsuit or occurrence regarding COVID-19 arise. She also stated that Worker's Compensation coverage, employees contracting COVID-19 while on the job, would be covered claims.

Board Member, Rob Santos commented that he feels that students, staff and families want to come back. The District needs to reopen TK-5<sup>th</sup> grade January 4, 2021 and 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade January 19, 2021. He felt that it was a scare tactic. Rob Santos motioned to affirm Board action taken on November 10, 2020 to reopen Chatom Elementary on January 4, 2021 and Mountain View on January 19, 2021.

Board Member Anthony Avila, seconded the motion. Mr. Avila stated he became a Board Member to support the kids. He felt rights are being taken away and students are falling behind. He expressed concern that students are suffering mentally, emotionally and socially.

Board President, Steve Soderstrom articulated that having no insurance liability is a huge risk for the District. The overall wellness of the District needs to be considered.

Karen Macedo expressed that the District needs to remain solvent. Going against the State Governor Order opens the District to possible lawsuits. Mrs. Macedo emphasized that she wishes the District to open as soon as the state and local officials approve the schools to reopen fully.

The action item was put in motion by Rob Santos and seconded by Anthony Avila-

Vote:

Steve Soderstrom- No

Karen Macedo- No

Anthony Avila-Yes/Aye

Ryan Blount-No

Rob Santos-Yes/Aye

Ayes 2 Noes 3 Abstentions 0

Due to a lack of majority vote, the District will remain at status quo.

*(Connection with Board member, Rob Santos was lost)*

A motion was made to give the Superintendent the authority to open the schools upon the approval of the Local Health Officer.

Motion: Anthony Avila Second: Karen Macedo  
Ayes 4 Noes 0 Absent 1

Vote:  
Steve Soderstrom- Aye  
Karen Macedo- Aye  
Anthony Avila-Aye  
Ryan Blount-Aye  
Rob Santos-Absent

## **7. ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION**

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

**Time: 7:48p.m.**

APPROVED

Motion: Ryan Blount Second: Karen Macedo

Vote:

Ayes 4 Noes 0 Abstentions 0