



# UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT AGENDA ACTION ITEM

**TOPIC:** Approval of Board Minutes for the Month of May 2021

**SUBMITTED BY:** Griselda Rodriguez **OF:** Secretary

**APPROVED FOR TRANSMITTAL TO SCHOOL BOARD:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE ASSIGNED FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION:** August 18, 2021

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the United ISD Board of Trustees approve the Board Minutes for the Month of May 2021.

Regular Board Meeting – May 18, 2021

Special Called Meeting – May 26, 2021

**RATIONALE:**

**BUDGETARY INFORMATION:**

**POLICY REFERENCE & COMPLIANCE:**

**A Regular Board Meeting  
Of United ISD  
The State of Texas  
County of Webb**

**May 18, 2021**

**In Attendance:**

Roberto J. Santos, Superintendent

**Board of Trustees:**

Ramiro Veliz, III, President – PRESENT (Via Videoconference)

Javier Montemayor, Jr. - Vice President – PRESENT

Ricardo “Rick” Rodriguez, Secretary – PRESENT (Via Videoconference)

Ricardo Molina, Sr., Parliamentarian – PRESENT (Via Videoconference)

Francisco “Frank” Castillo, Member – PRESENT

Juan Roberto Ramirez, Member – PRESENT (Via Videoconference)

Aliza Flores-Oliveros, Member – PRESENT (Via Videoconference)

A Regular Board Meeting of the Board of Trustees of United ISD will be held Tuesday, May 18, 2021, beginning at 6:00 PM in the UISD Boardroom, 201 Lindenwood Drive, Laredo, Texas 78045.

The subjects to be discussed or considered or upon which any formal action may be taken are as listed below. Items do not have to be taken in the order shown on this meeting notice.

Unless removed from the consent agenda, items identified within the consent agenda will be acted one at one time.

**BOARD MEMBERS MAY PARTICIPATE VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**  
Based on Governor Abbott’s Executive Order GA-23 and the City of Laredo Amended Covid-19 Public Health Emergency Health Orders, the District will ensure social distancing protocols are practiced to the greatest extent possible thus limiting the number of persons physically present in the UISD Boardroom. Therefore, in an effort to conduct public business in a transparent manner, the District will live stream this Board meeting.

If you would like to view a live-stream of the meeting, please click on the the following Youtube link:

<https://youtu.be/VTX2GisO5rE>

Two-way communication to the Board meeting may be accessed by clicking on the following zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87353912914?pwd=eU1qMm41dkFMMGNVaHIUdVNEbDZYZz0>

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Meeting ID: 873 5391 2914

Passcode: 927735

Public Comments may be submitted to Gloria Rendon at: [grendon@uisd.net](mailto:grendon@uisd.net) at any time prior to the Board Meeting. Public comments must pertain to agenda items only.

**I. Roll Call, Establish Quorum, Call to Order**

*Mr. Ramiro Veliz calls this meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Quorum is established.*

**II. Announcement by the Board President calling this meeting of the United Independent School District to Order. Let the record show that a quorum of board members is present, that this meeting has been dully called, and that notice of this meeting has been posted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code Chapter 551**

**III. Pledge of Allegiance**

**A. Honor the Texas Flag; I pledge allegiance to thee, Texas, one state under God, one and indivisible.**

**IV. Public Comments**

*Comments shall be limited to current Board agenda items, student recognitions, or charitable causes. Comments are limited to three minutes per speaker except that non-English speakers requiring a translator are limited to six minutes. The presiding Board officer may modify or waive these time limits as appropriate. Public Comments shall not be used for personal attacks by the speaker against District employees or students. Speakers who engage in personal attacks, or use insulting, profane, threatening, or abusive language during any Board meeting shall be ruled out of order by the presiding Board officer and may be escorted from the Board meeting room by District peace officers or security staff. Any concerns or complaints regarding individual District employees, students, or parents must be resolved via the appropriate complaint process, as stated in Board Policy BED (LOCAL). Pursuant to 551.042 of the Texas Government Code, no Board Member or Administrator may respond to a member of the public, unless such response is a recitation of District policy or a statement of specific factual information.*

**NO PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**V. Recognitions**

- A. JOHN B. ALEXANDER HIGH SCHOOL – Vase Art Competition Medalists**
  
- B. JOHN B. ALEXANDER HIGH SCHOOL – UIL Theatrical Design Team – State UIL Competition**

**VI. Items for Information Only**

**A. Finance Division Monthly Financial Report**

*Mr. Sam Flores presents to the board the District's Cash position as of April 30, 2021. This being \$210M. Roughly, half of this amount is coming from the General Fund at \$98M. The other significant cash is combining all the bond funds that remain (total of \$69M). The investment portfolio yield is at .21%. Outpacing the current fuel rates that are offered in the state of Texas at 0.13%. Administrative cost ratio is 8.9%.*

*On the financial revenues today are \$284M and expenditures are at \$285M. This is typical for this time of the year being a cycle two district. The tax office report, we are at 97% collection to date. Mr. Flores continues to elaborate on the remaining report such as information from the purchasing department and grants from the grants department.*

**Frank Castillo:** On the tax office report, April 2021. The liquid collection rate 58.9, I do not understand that. What is that?

**Sam Flores:** When we collect taxes in any given year, you are collecting taxes on the current levy, but you also keep on the books all the prior year levies that people have not paid. That tax collection rate is on people that may owe taxes for the past 3 or 4 years. It looks like it may be a little low, but we are typically hovering around 60% when it comes to those taxpayers that are behind in collecting their taxes. We are required by the County laws into the state where we separate our current year tax collections and then all the past years of tax collections that people have not paid yet.

**Frank Castillo:** And 58% means what.

**Sam Flores:** We have an allocation where we create our budget and we separate that out as well in our budget. We will do our current tax levy, which is our main budget revenue for local collections. And then we do a small budget allocation based off of the information we get from the tax office of all the delinquent taxes. Again, the prior year taxes that taxpayers have not paid.

**Frank Castillo:** Is there a particular reason they do not pay.

**Sam Flores:** There are many reasons why taxpayers do not pay.

**Javier Montemayor:** It is a long special list.

**Sam Flores:** Yes, yes.

**Javier Montemayor:** I collect for the County, so.

**Frank Castillo:** I was trying to understand that.

**Sam Flores:** That is just a separation, accounting wise and for proper coding in the tax code to separate out these two levies. We always go with this year's tax favor. Like when we start talking about next year's budget, we will not bring up any of the prior year levies or any of the debt that taxpayers owe the district. We will only talk about next year's property value and that will become the current year's tax collection. And this this year, next year will fall into that of delinquent tax collections. For those taxpayers that haven't paid yet.

**Javier Montemayor:** So, in February 1<sup>st</sup>, every year, they turn over, the tax office turns over to the delinquent attorney a certain amount of fund that have not been committed or accounts that have not been committed. And I guess that is the percentage of what is going to let those accounts.

**Sam Flores:** On those accounts (agreeing). And you will see that the fall signs from the law firm that handles our collections are going to do a presentation with your items.

**Frank Castillo:** Thank very much.

## **B. Budget 2022 Update**

*Ms. Laida Benavides presents on the budget from update regarding the legislative session. The session ends Monday, May 31<sup>st</sup>. After that the district should be able to see what is the more direct effect on district revenues. Mrs. Laida introduces ESSER III, grant that was passed on March 11, 2021, which included elementary and secondary school emergency relief funds. United ISD's allocation amount is over \$127M, to be spent through September 30, 2024. The district will be meeting with different departments such as Curriculum and Instruction to go over some of the allowable expenditures. The grant allows for 20% to be set aside for learning loss. The district is also looking at indoor air quality and also purchasing sanitizing supplies and things of this nature. The district should have more up to date information come June and have at the very least a draft of a plan.*

*On April 29, the preliminary values were received from the Webb County Appraisal district. The net taxable value is \$16.6B. This is the current levy (mentioned by Mr. Sam Flores). Mrs. Laida makes notice that these are the taxable values that the district will be looking at using to estimate next year's tax revenues, and mentions that there was a 10.17% decrease. And that main part was in the mineral values with an increase of 31%.*

**Javier Montemayor:** The Comptroller's office, what is the dollar amount for the 10.17% about 40M..

**Sam Flores:** I was going to say about 39.

**Laida Benavides:** Yes.

**Roberto J. Santos:** Really Mr. Montemayor, now state law if you lose values; you might want to share that with the board Laida.

**Laida Benavides:** The last legislative session, prior to last legislative session they used to use our prior year value so, TEA (Texas Education Agency) would recognize our values from last year. So, if your values really went down they thought you were wealthier. So, the past session they required us to use our current year values. So, it kind of matches what you are going to tax your taxpayers.

**Roberto J. Santos:** Which is good. It is good for the district. In the past if you recall, when they used the previous year, we lost all the values. That is when we lost the millions of dollars of state revenues. Now that they changed the law. That helps us as far as revenues.

**Javier Montemayor:** The only thing on the ESSER III, if you could get for the board, maybe a preliminary plan of what you are targeting. In case the board has any questions or priorities that they would like to address.

**Roberto J. Santos:** Yes, I think at this point, board members and Mr. Gonzalez and his staff and obviously HR and Laida and her staff are starting to get that plan and we are actually hoping that over the next week or two weeks we should get it ready to present to the board and then obviously then present to the public.

**Laida Benavides:** These monies, they are really stressing transparency with the public. They are actually requiring us to have stakeholder input. So, for example yesterday there was a DEIC meeting with some teachers. One teacher from each school. We presented, maybe not necessarily the specific plan. But, we did present about these funds and what were the allowable expenses that we could use the money on, and then telling them about the 20% that has to be set aside for learning loss. We did have an informational

presentation to the cabinet at C & I. That is probably the heart as far as what we are going to do with these funds for our students and then there should be some money for technology, for indoor air quality or anything that has to do with providing health and safety protocols due to Covid.

**Roberto J. Santos:** The other item, I know we are looking at the possibility of trying to help the general fund somewhere. We are not sure whether we can or not. I think what is important is, all these federal monies have a lot of ties to it. What I mean by "ties", and maybe Mr. Flores can share. Last time we has some funds when we built the Cherish center. They really sent a lot of auditors with experience to check every single item that was on that building to meet all the requirements. There is no doubt that the same thing with this \$127M that we received. So, we have to make sure we follow the law we follow what is there to make sure that five or six years from now, they come back if we have to refund some funds.

### **C. Presentation of Nine Month Tax Collection Report**

**Sam Flores:** I think we have Paul Saenz ready to go virtually.

*Mr. Paul Saenz provide his presentation on the Nine Month Tax Collection Report which covered July 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021. Approximately 3.9M in delinquent taxes were turned over to them in July 2020, 76% of which was attributed to real property. A total of 702 lawsuits were filed by UISD (601 of those were filed by Alarcon and Saenz). Within three months says Mr. Saenz, they managed to collect 66.95%, without any need to seize any business or personal property. He goes on to provide the end-of-year history of collections starting since July 2012 through June 2020. The end of the reporting period was closed out as of March 31, 2021. The total adjusted amount of delinquent taxes was \$6.4M, and managed to collect \$4.7M, which gives us a collection rate of 73.95% for the nine month period being reported. Mr. Saenz continues his presentation by elaborating on collection numbers pre-pandemic and during.*

**Frank Castillo:** I want to know what attributed to the spike in August 2020 (referring to the pandemic numbers report). Do you have any idea or information.

**Paul Saenz:** You know, I know there were some business accounts that had large amounts that were delinquent to pay. Specifically in August, because there are so many accounts that are delinquent, it would be hard for us to go back and say, let us see what happened. Why did so many people pay in August. Some people were saying that perhaps it was the stimulus packages being sent out by the government. And I do not know. Generally, I can tell you that August has historically been a high collection month.

Because in July is when the taxes get transferred over to us, and so we start with the collection efforts. So, historically August is a high month, but that was a big spike.

*The board appreciates Mr. Saenz on his presentation/information provided.*

#### **D. Notice of Upcoming Grant Applications to be Submitted**

*Dr. Edith Landeck elaborates on grants being submitted by the district.*

\*2021-2022 Texas Education for Homeless Children and Youth (TEHCY) with Federal Programs requesting \$44,660 from TEA for a 1 year program.

\*Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program with CTE Department, requesting \$50,000 from the IRS for a 1-year program to provide income tax assistance

\*FEMA DR-4586 Winter Storm Damage (FEMA DR-4586) with Business Office, a reimbursement amount is pending finalization of the application including a reimbursement of \$35 thousand dollars of insurance deductible.

\*Bullet Proof Vest Program (BPV) with Police Department. The district will be seeking reimbursement with an amount to be determined for bullet-proof vests. To be paid by the U.S. Department of Justice, depending on our department replacement needs.

#### **E. Information on Distinction Designations**

*Cristina Casanova, director for Student Assessment. Ms. Casanova starts her presentation by providing history of distinction designations pre-pandemic as a base for comparison with current information. What distinction designations does is it compares each campus individually and then it compares that campus with 40 different campuses throughout the state, within its group, which include similar variables (such as same grade levels, percent of English learners, percent of economically disadvantage, enrollment, etc.).*

*Ms. Emma Leza provides the board a brief comparison with three of the district campuses included in the same feeder pattern with similar scores and distinctions, but making emphasis that each of those campuses have a different standard to meet. She continues to elaborate deeper into campus data and variables in order to explain more on how a campus earns distinction designations. "Any change in demographic data can impact the distinction designations" says Ms. Leza.*

*For more information, please see presentation attached.*



## F. Educational Results Partnership HONOR ROLL 2019-2020

**David H. Gonzalez:** First of all going back to Ms. Leza and Ms. Casanova; as a department we have seen presentations on the distinctions on border regions and other areas in the state, but I will let you know that our department does a phenomenal job. We started saying this two years ago to our principals. And that is what we are asking for and as Ms. Leza and Ms. Casanova point out, when it comes to the numerical grade for our campuses we look three accountable domains. The distinctions are seven variables, so this is difficult. If you got a little confused, it is okay. This is something that is difficult to explain but both of them for doing a good job.

At this time we would like to present to you all, what just came out. It is kind of the graduation rate and so forth. It is also year behind. What we have here, is great news for our district. Our district is one of 18 districts in the region that have made it to the "Honor Roll". And this is through a program called *Educational Results Partnership (ERP)*. It is a non profit organization, and they use data science to help improve student outcome, career readiness. This is the nation's largest database on student achievement. Now, this past year 2019-2020 honorable recognized schools that have demonstrated consistently high levels of student academic achievement and improvement in academic levels over time, and a reduction in achievement gaps among all student population.

Mr. Gonzalez recognizes the campuses:

Barbara Fasken, Charles Borchers, Clark Elementary, Colonel Santos Benavides, Malakoff Elementary, Dr. Henry Cuellar Elementary, Muller, Kazen, Kennedy-Zapata, Matias De Llano and Trautmann Elementary. The middle schools we have Washington, Trautmann and United Middle Schools.

It was a lot of work from our campuses but I would also like to recognize not only our administration but also our students and parents for their commitment to their education. At this time I want to applaud our campuses and our district for a work well done. Thank you to the board members for their support.

## G. 2021-2022 Instructional Plan Information

Mr. Gonzalez provides a brief presentation to the board and the community, stating that this plan will have to be revisited.

**David H. Gonzalez:** This report for instructional plan for the 2021-2022 school year for our district is to provide traditional face-to-face instruction for all students. And I say this very candidly to everybody, because that is what the state is telling us as of right now. As a district, we did apply or submitted an instructional plan that would allow our districts to

possibly enroll in a hybrid plan of instruction. Providing three days of on-campus learning and two days of asynchronous learning. Now, the state is only going to choose 50 districts across the state of Texas. We submitted our plan and are pending approval from TEA (Texas Education Agency) and we may get it by this week. If we do get it, I would like to make it very clear to everyone; as a district we will have specific guidelines, parameters if you wish or a criteria for any student to qualify and go this hybrid route. This is not something that every district will have. Again, the state will choose 50 districts across the state. And one thing to point out, the 2021 legislative session is scheduled to end this month on the 28<sup>th</sup>. They are reviewing House and Senate Bills that would allow school districts to establish policies, admission and virtual learning and controversial learning toward funding, which is important for all of us. So, upon the 2021 instructional plans will be presented as soon and again we will give you an update as we get the legislative Bills are finalized and signed by the governor.

So, at this time what I can tell the community is, the way the state is dictating to all the districts across the state of Texas is, it will be going face-to-face. Thank you.

## **VII. Consent Agenda Items**

### **A. Approval of Monthly Disbursements**

<b>Motion:</b>	<b>So Move</b>
<b>Moved By:</b>	<b>Francisco "Frank" Castillo</b>
<b>Seconded By:</b>	<b>Juan Robert Ramirez</b>

<b>Any Discussion:</b>	<b>None</b>
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<b>All In Favor:</b>	<b>Unanimous</b>
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**MOTION PASSES**

### **B. Approval of Budget Amendment**

<b>Motion:</b>	<b>So Move</b>
<b>Moved By:</b>	<b>Francisco "Frank" Castillo</b>
<b>Seconded By:</b>	<b>Juan Robert Ramirez</b>

<b>Any Discussion:</b>	<b>None</b>
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All In Favor: Unanimous

MOTION PASSES

- C. Approval of Property Tax Refunds for the Month of April 2021
- D. Annual Renewal of District Workers Compensation Insurance Program
- E. Approval of Awarding Bids, Proposals and Qualifications
- F. Approval of Pre-Kindergarten Systems, Pre-Kinder Instructional Materials
- G. Approval of Ratification of the Instructional Materials Allotment and TEKS Certification Form

*A motion is made to approve VII. C – G, as presented.*

Motion: So Move  
Moved By: Ricardo Molina  
Seconded By: Juan Robert Ramirez

Any Discussion: None

All In Favor: Unanimous

MOTION PASSES

**VIII. Items for Individual Consideration**

**A. Approval of Donations**

**Roberto J. Santos:** It is recommended that the board graciously approve the following donations and they will be attached to the minutes. We have two donations of over one thousand dollars.

- A donation was received by the Superintendent in the amount of \$5,000.00, for Mr. and Mrs. Robert Tijerina, and will go towards the scholarship account for graduating seniors.
- A second donation was received by Santos Elementary, by principal Mucia Flores, in the amount of \$2,000.00 donated by Roberto J. Santos and will be used towards shirts with school logos and mouse pads incentives for the faculty and staff.

For a **grand total of \$7,000.00** that we graciously accept.

**Motion:** So Move  
**Moved By:** Ricardo Molina  
**Seconded By:** Juan Roberto Ramirez

**Any Discussion:** None

**All In Favor:** Unanimous

**MOTION PASSES**

**B. Approval of Board Travel for the Months of May and June 2021 to attend the Region One ROSBA Conference in South Padre Island and Summer Leadership Institute in San Antonio, Texas**

**Motion:** So Move  
**Moved By:** Ricardo Molina  
**Seconded By:** Francisco "Frank" Castillo

**Any Discussion:** None

**All In Favor:** Unanimous

**MOTION PASSES**

**C. Approval of Board Minutes for the Months of March and April 2021**

**Motion:** So Move  
**Moved By:** Ricardo Molina  
**Seconded By:** Juan Robert Ramirez

**Any Discussion:** None

**All In Favor:** Unanimous

**MOTION PASSES**

*\*Mr. Ramiro Veliz is present for the record at 6:54 pm.*

**D. Discussion and Possible Action to Create and Establish the United Independent School District Management Fellows Program to Allow Masters of Public Administration Graduates the Opportunity to Learn Programs, Services, Regulations and Knowledge in Various UISD Programs and Services**

**Motion:** So Move  
**Moved By:** Juan Roberto Ramirez  
**Seconded By:** Ricardo Molina

**Any Discussion:** None

**All In Favor:** Unanimous

**MOTION PASSES**

**IX. Closed Session: Board will adjourn into closed session pursuant to the following sections of the Texas Open Meetings Act**

The board adjourns into Closed Session at 6:55 pm.

**A. TGC 551.071 Consultation with Board's Attorney; Closed Meeting  
TGC 551.074 Personnel Matters; Closed Meeting**

**1. Superintendent's Duties and Responsibilities**

**2. Consideration Regarding the Appointment of Director of Facilities Maintenance and Operations**

**B. TGC 551.071 Consultation with Board's Attorney; Closed Meeting  
TGC 551.072 Deliberation Regarding Real Property; Closed Meeting**

- 1. Status of negotiations regarding the acquisition of a Mandel Family Interest tract described as an approximately 62 acre tract of land and an approximately 20.17 acre tract of land out of a 638.7019 acre tract of land originally out of the Mandel Tract being a 1,486.2 acre tract, situated in Porcion 6, Blas and Maria Diaz, Abstract 38, Webb County, Texas as well as the consideration of all associated costs to develop the property**
- 2. Report on request from AEC Engineering, LLC for the consideration of an access easement from State Hwy 359 through Santa Monica Dr. as well as Santa Claudia Lane to facilitate access to the real property adjacent to the USD Activity Center**
- 3. Consultation with Legal Counsel Regarding Legal Issues Associated with Air Quality Report Affecting Muller Elementary School and Matters Related Thereto**

**X. Reconvened from Closed Session, the Board will take appropriate action on items, if necessary, as discussed in Closed Session**

*Mr. Ramiro Veliz: Reconvenes from closed session at 7:46 pm.*

**A. Appointment of Director of Facilities Maintenance and Operations**

**Roberto J. Santos:** Yes, Mr. Veliz and members of the board, my recommendation for Director of Facilities, Maintenance and Operations is Alfonso Peña.

<b>Motion:</b>	<b>So Move</b>
<b>Moved By:</b>	<b>Juan Roberto Ramirez</b>
<b>Seconded By:</b>	<b>Ricardo Molina</b>

**Any Discussion:**           **None**

**All In Favor:**               **Unanimous**

**MOTION PASSES**

*Mr. Veliz congratulates Mr. Peña and welcomes him to the UISD family.*

- B. Possible Action regarding the negotiation pertaining to a Mandel Family Interest tract described as an approximately 62 acre tract of land and an approximately 20.17 acre tract of land out of a 638.7019 acre tract of land Originally out of the Mandel Tract being a 1,486.2 acre tract, situated in Porcion 6, Blaz and Maria Diaz, Abstract 38, Webb County, Texas**

**Juan Cruz: The recommendation is to reject the new condition pertaining to a Mandel Family Interest tract described as an approximately 62 acres of tract of land and an approximately 20.17 acre tract of land out of a 638.7019 acre tract of land Originally out of the Mandel tract being a 1,486.2 acre tract, situated in Porcion 6, Blaz and Maria Diaz, Abstract 38, Webb County, Texas as discussed in closed session**

<b>Motion:</b>	<b>So Move</b>
<b>Moved By:</b>	<b>Ricardo Molina</b>
<b>Seconded By:</b>	<b>Juan Roberto Ramirez</b>
<b>Any Discussion:</b>	<b>NONE</b>

**All In Favor: Unanimous**

**MOTION PASSES**

- C. Possible Action on request from AEC Engineering, LLC for the consideration of an access easement from State Hwy 359 through Santa Monica Dr. as well as Santa Claudia Lane to facilitate access to the real property adjacent to the UISD Student Activity Center**

*No recommendation needed at this time.*

- D. Possible Action Regarding Authorization to Legal Counsel and District Administration to Proceed, as Legally Necessary, to Address Air Quality Issues Affecting Muller Elementary and Matters Related Thereto**

**The recommendation is to authorize legal counsel and District Administration to Proceed, as Legally Necessary, to Address Air Quality Issues Affecting Muller Elementary and Matters Related Thereto as discussed and presented in closed session**

**Motion:** So Move  
**Moved By:** Francisco "Frank" Castillo  
**Seconded By:** Juan Roberto Ramirez and Aliza Oliveros

**Any Discussion:** NONE

**All In Favor:** Unanimous

**MOTION PASSES**

## **XI. Adjournment**

**There being no further business before the United ISD Board of Trustees, this Regular Board Meeting of May 18, 2021 was Adjourned at 7:49 PM.**

**Motion:** So Move  
**Moved By:** Ricardo Molina  
**Seconded By:** Juan Roberto Ramirez  
**Any Discussion:** NONE

**All In Favor:** Unanimous

**MOTION PASSES**

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**Ramiro Veliz, III**  
**Board President**

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**Ricardo "Rick" Rodriguez**  
**Board Secretary**

*Minutes completed by Griselda Rodriguez, Secretary.  
Submitted for Approval at the August 2021, Regular Board Meeting*



**Special Called Meeting  
The State of Texas  
United Independent School District  
The County of Webb**

**May 26, 2021**

**In Attendance**

Roberto J. Santos, Superintendent of Schools

**Board of Trustees**

Ramiro Veliz III, President, - PRESENT (Via Video Conference)

Javier Montemayor, Jr., Vice-President – PRESENT

Ricardo Rodriguez, Secretary – PRESENT (Via Video Conference)

Ricardo Molina Sr., Parliamentarian – PRESENT (Via Video Conference)

Juan Roberto Ramirez, Member – PRESENT (Via Vide Conference)

Aliza Flores- Oliveros, Member – PRESENT

Francisco "Frank" Castillo, Member – PRESENT (Via Video Conference)

A Special Called Meeting of the Board of Trustees of United ISD will be held Wednesday, May 26, 2021, beginning at 12:00 PM in the UISD Boardroom, 201 Lindenwood Drive, Laredo, Texas 78045.

BOARD MEMBERS MAY PARTICIPATE VIA TELEPHONE CONFERENCE DUE TO THE COVID-19

Based on Governor Abbott's Executive Order GA-23 and the City of Laredo Amended Covid-19 Public Health Emergency Health Orders, the District will ensure social distancing protocols are practiced to the greatest extent possible thus limiting the number of persons physically present in the UISD Boardroom. Therefore, in an effort to conduct public business in a transparent manner, the District will live stream this Board meeting.

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Meeting ID: 867 5187 4894

Passcode: 360927

If you would like to view a live-stream of the meeting, please click on the following Youtube link:  
<https://youtu.be/0BmKpk17VAg>

Public Comments may be submitted to: Gloria Rendon at [grendon@uisd.net](mailto:grendon@uisd.net) prior to the Board Meeting. Public comments must pertain to agenda items only.

**I. Roll Call, Establish Quorum, Call to Order**

**II. Announcement by the Board President calling this meeting of the United Independent School District to Order. Let the record show that a quorum of Board Members is present, that this meeting has been duly called, and that notice of this meeting has been posted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code Chapter 551**

**III. Pledge of Allegiance**

**A. Honor the Texas Flag; I pledge allegiance to thee, Texas, one state under God, one and indivisible.**

*Mr. Ramiro Veliz, calls this meeting to order and establishes quorum at 12:01 PM.*

**IV. Public Comments**

***Comments shall be limited to current Board agenda items, student recognitions, or charitable causes. Comments are limited to three minutes per speaker, except Non-English speakers who require a translator are limited to six (6) minutes. The presiding officer may waive or modify these time limits as appropriated. The speaker will be informed when he or she has one (1) minute remaining. Public comment shall not be used for personal attacks by the speaker against District employees, or students. Speakers who engage in personal attacks, or use insulting, profane, threatening, or abusive language during any Board meeting shall be ruled out of order by the presiding officer and may be escorted from the Board meeting room by District peace officers or security staff. Any concerns or complaints regarding employees, public officials, students, or parents must be resolved via the appropriate complaint process, as stated in BED (LOCAL). Pursuant to 551.042 of the Texas Government Code, no Board Member or Administrator may respond to a member of the public, unless such response is a recitation of District policy or a statement of specific factual information.***

**Ernest Davila**, organizer for the Texas State Teachers Association: (Re: Agenda Item VI.A and VI.B). The district froze everyone's pay salaries last year. As you know not only have your employees have gone way beyond the call of duty. Learning new methods of instruction, technology and assessment, but prices for everything have gone up as a direct result of the pandemic. These employees not only put their lives on the line literally, but the lives of their loves ones as well. It is incomprehensible that four of our seven UISD board members are sponsoring these action items. Here is why; Let us look at the budgets for 2017-2018, 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. Let us focus on expenditure items of instruction, transportation and facilities, maintenance and operations all were over budgeted by millions of dollars. Instruction for fiscal year ending August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018, was \$5,538,000.00. August 31, 2019, \$2,410,681.00, for fiscal year ending August 31, 2020, \$6,637,723.00 Transportation for fiscal year ending on August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018, a little over \$2M. For fiscal year ending August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019, \$354,915.00. For fiscal year ending August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, (approximately) \$143,053,000.00. Facilities maintenance and operations for fiscal year ending August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018, \$1,111,182.00. Fiscal Year ending August 31, 2019, \$2,111,282.00 For fiscal year ending August 31, 2020, \$3,370,978.00. Food services for fiscal year ending on August 31, 2020 was over budgeted by more than \$5.8M. The ending fund balance for fiscal year 2018, 2019 and 2020 are \$85,080,556.00, \$80,250,380.00 and \$71,584,824.00, respectively. It is easy to see that the district is in good financial shape. You can use these monies to get pay raises to your employees. Your human capital is your most valued asset. On the contrary, now is the time to hire more counselors, nurses, special education staff and other personnel to address the social emotional and academic impacts covid-19 continues to have on our students and staff, not less. United ISD needs a comprehensive, evidence-based social emotional program across the district to address those student's needs. The allocation of \$85,025,088.00 from the American rescue plan, the ESSER funds are designed to do just that. United ISD is still pending an additional allocation of \$42,512,144.00. Please do the right thing. Don't freeze hiring your personnel. Now is not the time, thank you.

**Javier Montemayor**: Who was this? (Addressing Mrs. Gloria Rendon)

**Gloria Rendon**: This was Mr. Ernest Davila, organizer of the Texas State Teachers Association.

**Aliza Oliveros**: For the record can you please state who sponsored those agenda items.

**Gloria Rendon**: I do not have that record but I think it was Mr. Rick Rodriguez, Ricardo Molina and Ramiro Veliz..

**Aliza Oliveros**: Because you said four people. I was curious as to who the other person was but it was only three.

**Ramiro Veliz**: We thank Mr. Davila for his comments that were submitted and they have been noted.

**Jaime Garcia:** Just for clarification the board agenda does say; "The imposition of a hiring freeze on non-instructional hires", that was submitted by Mr. Rodriguez, Mr. Molina and Mr. Veliz.

*Mr. Ramiro Veliz moves on to informational items.*

## **V. Items for Information Only**

### **A. Presentation by District Administration on Delinquent Tax Law Firm Performance**

*Mrs. Laida Benavides presents on the delinquent tax history; This is a 20 year picture of our collections. Providing annual reports on the delinquent tax collection. Mrs. Benavides points out that some of the numbers may have been impacted by the recession of 2008 for instance.*

**Aliza Oliveros:** If you go back (regarding the presentation), I do understand about the recession and home values and all, but there are numbers that pop out to me. And I know you mentioned 2008 so I will not pick that year for being in a recession. But if you look at 2007, you looking at an \$8M, tax roll. And these are delinquent tax roll correct?

**Laida Benavides:** These are the delinquent tax roll that we turn over to our delinquent tax attorney on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Aliza Oliveros:** And I do not know if after your presentation we can call up the tax firm to answer some of these questions. But it does look to me like they were given a \$7M delinquent tax roll and they were able to reduce it to \$4M. Which is significant when you compare it to all those years. No other tax firm ever brought it even close to \$4M. So I would say that is a good indicator that the current tax firm is doing not just a good job but an excellent job. And that is just a comment from me.

*Mrs. Laid Benavides proceeds with her presentation going on to explain how the some tax law firms are allowed to file lawsuits or interventions on behalf of the district. The importance of the lawsuits says Mrs. Benavides, is that although the community is really good about paying their taxes we do know that the delinquent tax attorneys then have to make calls to some of these individuals or actually go out there and file lawsuits.*

**Laida Benavides:** I know that as a district we do have our state in bankruptcy. We have our cost protected. Therefore, you do want your attorneys to be on top of this. They are given our roll. They are given (inaudible) our current tax firma and the tax firm before ours, they actually shared the software with us. They invested in our tax software so that they may see real-time balances and share with our staff notes about collections. We thought that was key. And again, the last two firms did that for us and invested in our software. So we think that is key, because it's millions of dollars that are being turned over to them. And they are collecting on

our behalf at their offices. So things like that. Working with a delinquent tax firm, who is able to study the roll and find out who is still collectable, finding out from our community what is going on, why have they not been able to pay. And then the situation with the pandemic. Did our shopping center suffer, did our mall suffer, just kind of keeping tabs of all those accounts.

**Javier Montemayor:** During what period of time, did UISD have the highest collection, delinquent collection rates in your tenure as..

**Laida Benavides:** I have been here a long time. I would have to say Mr. Montemayor, that focused on the current levy, been able to historically and in our budget process actually with all the confidence that our taxpayers are going to pay. Our collection rate has been pretty steady at a high 90. You know 97, 98%. The delinquent tax, you can see the variation of different %'s (referring to the slide presentation). We tend to budget conservatively just in case that we do budget a certain percentage. It ranges from 53 to 55% that we expect the roll to be collected.

**Javier Montemayor:** If you go back to 2017, 2018, what number was that as far as percentage?

**Laida Benavides:** The percentages you can see in the 3<sup>rd</sup> column.

**Javier Montemayor:** What number is that?

**Laida Benavides:** The one for 2017 is 58.4% and the one for 2018 is 84.41%.

**Javier Montemayor:** And 2019 is 69% but during the pandemic 73.95%. Im looking at 2012-2013 it is 70.89%. I'll ask you again; what firm collected the highest percentages of what you turned over to them, out of the three that you listed there. What firm was collecting the highest?

**Laida Benavides:** Those specific collection rates that you pointed out Mr. Montemayor, were collected by our current tax law firm, Alarcon and Saenz.

**Javier Montemayor:** Now grade them for me, since you are the financial expert of this district. If "A" is being the highest grade, give to the Alarcon and Saenz or "D" being the lowest, what grade would you give the Alarcon and Saenz firm?

**Laida Benavides:** Well, in a school report card ...

**Javier Montemayor:** And that affects your financial report card as well right? If they were doing poorly then this district would probably reflect poor as well. Is that not true?

**Laida Benavides:** It would in a sense where we do count a certain percentage in our budget cycle and I think that is where we said that we kind of, just kind of budget about 55% to be on the safe side. Because of the economic issues of our community. Border closures, pandemic..

**Javier Montemayor:** Even when your budgeting conservatively at 55%, looking at what the pandemic brought in in 2019-2020. Based on your numbers, I see you are at 73.95%. Now if you look back at the prior firms, is it not an outstanding performance by the current firm?

**Laida Benavides:** Percentage wise, yes. I mean that is a good amount.

**Javier Montemayor:** If you go to the prior presentation.

**Laida Benavides:** The one before this (pointing to the presentation)? On the lawsuits..

**Javier Montemayor:** How many lawsuits did the prior firm, in eight years file?

**Laida Benavides:** Our records indicate that in the eight year period it was over one thousand lawsuits. One thousand, one hundred and nineteen.

**Javier Montemayor:** We are talking about our community, we are talking about funds that come in to the general fund for our students and with what we are able to operate on, teacher pay raises. We are talking about operational expenses, facilities, employees, bus drivers, complete operations. So, would you say that the collection of taxes is an important function for the district?

**Laida Benavides:** For our district because of the way we are funded, and the wealth of value per student, any taxes collected is very important because we do have our debt to pay back. I mean we are kind of like a 50/50 district.

**Javier Montemayor:** So the state pays us. But if we have a poor tax collection, not only for poor tax collection. The state will penalize the district and maybe not fund us as much because our collection is not as high or it is not functioning properly. Is that, fair to say?

**Laida Benavides:** It's fair to say that part of the revenue is probably not generated by our students, that they allow us to maybe put a couple of more pennies could bring in more state revenues if we collect them.

**Javier Montemayor:** So, strong delinquent tax collection firm is important.

**Laida Benavides:** In the eyes of the state yes because they expect our local tax effort. That is what we have always hear whenever we study our state revenue template. Is that it is important to have a local tax office.

**Aliza Oliveros:** I have a question for Alarcon and Saenz.

**Alberto Alarcon:** I am one of the members of Alarcon and Saenz tax firm. We are the current delinquent tax firm for the district.

**Aliza Oliveros:** Mr. Alarcon, based on the information that Ms. Benavides just presented, it would seem to that if I was an attorney and I had a tax firm, I would want to do what the previous tax firm did which was Mario Castillo and Associates. I would file very few lawsuits, because that would mean that I would make more money off interest that is owed by delinquent taxpayers, is that correct.

**Alberto Alarcon:** Yes, let me explain that. Ms. Oliveros, if you were to ask me, what is the goal of a delinquent tax firm for a school district, and everybody would say "well, the more money you collect, the better". But that is not a very accurate answer. The more accurate answer is, our role is to reduce the delinquent tax roll over the years, as much as possible. Not only means the inverse, it means that the current tax rate was higher if we can do that. So, if you were to ask me, the real measure of performance is looking at the delinquent tax roll the years. The higher the tax roll... there is a correlation between effort and the delinquent tax roll. The higher tax roll, you can say there was less effort, but more money to collect for the firm. And the inverse is true. The lower the tax roll, the more effort. If you look, the administration apparently prepared a table that has the number of lawsuits. You would see the correlation of the eight prior years, before we had the contract. One thousand, one hundred and nineteen lawsuits were filed. When we got the contract, in the same eight-year period, we filed five thousand, one hundred and sixty-one. Which is 500% more. There is another chart that administration prepared, that will show you what happened in those eight years. When there was very little effort as compared to ours. The delinquent tax roll skyrocketing. You have years of \$8M. You had years of \$9.6M. I do not know if that was a record high, but it was very high.

**Aliza Oliveros:** That was prior to you...

**Alberto Alarcon:** If you go to the table that shows the amounts. You can see there, the second column is the delinquent tax roll, and you can see the prior eight years starting at \$7.8M, \$8M, \$8.2M, \$8.1, \$8.9, \$9.6 and \$7.4. You compare that to the years we have had it. Our highest was the first one \$7.5M then it went to \$6.5M, \$6M, \$4.8M, \$4.8M and \$6M. There is I believe a direct correlation between the effort and the size of the delinquent tax rate now. Why is that important? If that impacts the state revenue as Ms. Benavides just said. School financial formulas are very complicated, but one component of those financial formulas is the tax collection effort both regular and delinquent. The better the tax collection effort the more state funding you get. The less, the less you get. As I understand it, UISD has the highest collection rate, both current and delinquent in the city and possibly one of the highest in

the state. The current tax collection rate at this time, is above 98%. And that correlates to the lower delinquent tax world number.

**Aliza Oliveros:** Are those like, if I am not mistaken was not the previous Ms. Farabough was she once awarded something for that. For having great elections.

**Alberto Alarcon:** Yes, it was in 2015 or 2016. Ms. Farabough was given an award for reaching 98.7%. So, it is my understanding that my current tax collection rate is higher than that. I think we are close to 99%.

**Aliza Oliveros:** So the district stands to receive another award for your efforts and for the districts.

**Alberto Alarcon:** So, if the smaller use the tax, the delinquent tax collection roll you see obviously the higher the current tax collection was and that benefits the district because the state wants the district to put every effort to collect taxes. The more effort they put, the more we get rewarded with matching funds from the state. We believe that our roll could be very easy for us and not have to do anything and that would skyrocket and we will make more money, but it is not about but it is not about us, it is about the district. We are very proud of the work we have done for the district in the last few years. And we are very proud that we are an integral part in the current rate that the board has taxpayers.

**Aliza Oliveros:** I guess what you are trying to say is the harder you work as a tax attorney, you are kind of working yourself out of job. If it did not work, you would be making more money. But if you file less lawsuits like the previous tax firm. You are making more money and the district is not.

**Alberto Alarcon:** We lawyers have an obligation to zealously represent our clients above our wages and that is what we have done. We are making less money because we are doing our work. One of the few jobs that one can say the less you do the more you make.

**Aliza Oliveros:** That is right. Thank you Mr. Alarcon. Can I ask for the record who sponsored this item?

**Jaime Garcia:** Are you talking about item VI. C; it is listed as Mr. Veliz, Mr. Molina and Mr. Rodriguez.

**Aliza Oliveros:** Okay so I have a question for them. Based on the presentation that we all listened to, it seems to me like this is not only a good performing tax firm but it is probably the best one we have ever had. So my question to those three board members is, what is your reason you are putting it on the agenda? Were there numbers you did not like? And their names for the record.



**Jaime Garcia:** Mr. Veliz, Mr. Molina and Mr. Rodriguez

**Francisco Castillo:** I have a couple of questions.

**Aliza Oliveros:** Do they not have a comment.

**Francisco Castillo:** This is Mr. Castillo

**Aliza Oliveros:** Well Mr. Castillo, I am asking a question to the three who..

**Francisco Castillo:** Oh, I just had a question on the... (inaudible, background noise).

**Aliza Oliveros:** Just to make sure they do not have a comment and we can move on to your question.

**Ramiro Veliz:** Mr. Molina do you have a comment or Mr. Rodriguez?

*Mr. Veliz repeats the question stated by Ms. Oliveros, addressing Mr. Molina and Rodriguez.*

**Ricardo Molina:** I do not have a comment.

**Ricardo Rodriguez:** Yes, I am looking at the variables and I saw the numbers. Aliza I am responding to your question. And I saw the numbers and I saw what you all are doing and it is good. But I mean all of the firms and I congratulate every firm that has been there. We have always had collections but all the collections are good. Maybe some of the numbers can be altered on some of the ways they have been collecting but I did some of the figures also and the numbers are misleading on some way or another. But I think all firms have been doing a great job. And it was just our decision that we want to do and we just decided to put it on the agenda.

**Aliza Oliveros:** I think performance wise, first of all, I take offense to you saying that district personnel may have skewed numbers. That is highly offensive and I disagree with you for the record. Secondly, I trust district employees and I trust the numbers they presented. I do not think the state would agree with you Mr. Rodriguez. And I find that placing this item on the agenda is strictly political. Performance wise there is nothing there.

**Ricardo Rodriguez:** It is not political. It's like, it is your opinion, it is my deal but yeah you know. And I just think let us put it up through a vote and we are ready.

**Aliza Oliveros:** If you want to put it up for a vote and do right by your constituency is allow for bids, not just name a firm but again.

**Ricardo Rodriguez:** No, no, I think what we want to do is and I'll tell you; Mr. President, can I make a motion to put it for a vote.

**Aliza Oliveros:** Oh no, we are in the report right now.

**Ramiro Veliz:** No, we still finish that presentation or that item.

**Ricardo Rodriguez:** Because here, what we are discussing is, they want to know what we want to do. And, if that's what they want then let us just finish this agenda the presentation and let us go straight to the vote.

**Javier Montemayor:** I am hoping that counsel will tell us to be careful with the word "we" because "we" is certain people here. That is a little dangerous.

**Jaime Garcia:** Yes, I think Mr. Rodriguez was probably mentioning the two additional sponsors.

**Javier Montemayor:** Unless you all have voted already and I was not aware of it.

**Ramiro Veliz:** There has not ....

**Ricardo Rodriguez:** No Javi, no one has put a vote yet.

**Ramiro Veliz:** What we will do is, we will finish this presentation which is the item for information only, which is the presentation. And I think we will go back. Mr. Castillo I think you had a comment based on the presentation or question?

**Francisco Castillo:** Yes, it was just a reflection of why we did not have the numbers on lawsuits, filed by the DeAnda law firm? I do not know of those numbers were available. But still, you can see things both sides. Too many lawsuits, is that necessarily mean that they did a great job or too few lawsuits as, I mean they are doing a better job, I am not sure. That is why, the presentation is by the school district. It is really, not for comment by anybody else. But it is really by the school district telling us that and so, the school district tells me. One of the things that I saw was that there was no numbers on lawsuits. And I do not know what their particular view is, I am talking about the school district. When you have too many lawsuits versus not enough. I think it is a grey area, in my opinion. And I kind of agree with Mr. Rodriguez. You can navigate numbers, I'll use a more diplomatic word. To try and prove your point and that is all I want to say. Thank you.

**Aliza Oliveros:** And I can respond to that Mr. Castillo. I think Ms. Benavides clearly stated that lawsuits were important.

**Francisco Castillo:** Ok

**Aliza Oliveros:** And I think that it is clearly stated that if you do not do lawsuits, the tax attorney earns more money. It's self-interest there. It's kind of like he said at the end, like Mr. Alarcon said at the end. The less you do the more money you make. The less you are taking from the taxpayer Mr. Castillo, the less money you are taking from the people in your constituency who pays taxes. And if that is what you agree with, then that's what you agree with. I do not.

**Francisco Castillo:** I wanted to see, a mediation perhaps, on how many were actually mediated to settle. Or perhaps; the last thing we want to do, at least me as a board member is to kick anybody out of their home. Quite honestly, that is all. That is how I see this picture. And so, take it as it may. That is my particular point of view.

**Ramiro Veliz:** Ok, thank you. Any other comments on the presentation that was done by the district? If not so we can move on into the individual items for consideration. All right so, we move to items for individual consideration, item "A" would be..

**Ricardo Rodriguez:** Mr. President, if you mind; can I make a motion?

**Ramiro Veliz:** Let us go through the items, it is a short list. Does it pertain to one of the items, or?

**Ricardo Rodriguez:** No, actually I want to make a motion to all the items. I want to make a motion to approve all the items, A thru E.

*Mr. Veliz addresses legal counsel to inquire if this request is allowed/legal.*

**Jaime Garcia:** Yes, it can.

**Ramiro Veliz:** Do we make a motion for A through E then and if that does not pass then go individually then? Or

**Juan Cruz:** Yes, you could do that.

**Ramiro Veliz:** We have a motion by Mr. Rodriguez. It would be item A through E for approval?

<b>Motion:</b>	<b>So Move</b>
<b>Moved By:</b>	<b>Ricardo Rodriguez</b>
<b>Seconded By:</b>	<b>Ricardo Molina</b>

<b>Any Discussion:</b>	<b>Frank Castillo: I do have discussion. I would like to</b>
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see it individually. I think we need to address each individually.  
Mr. Veliz, Juan Roberto Ramirez, Aliza Oliveros and Frank Castillo requested to vote for each item individually.

All In Favor: Ricardo Rodriguez, Ricardo Molina

***MOTION DENIED***

**VI. Items for Individual Consideration**

**A. Discussion and Possible Action for the Imposition of a Hiring Freeze on all Directors / Principals and Positions**

*A motion is made to table this item.*

Motion: So Move  
Moved By: Frank Castillo  
Seconded By: Aliza Oliveros  
Any Discussion: Countermotion by Mr. Javier Montemayor to deny this item.

All In Favor: No Vote Taken

***Countermotion by Javier Montemayor to reject/deny the Imposition of a Hiring Freeze on all Directors Principals and Positions***

Motion: So Move  
Moved By: Javier Montemayor  
Seconded By: Aliza Oliveros

Any Discussion: Ramiro Veliz verifies with Legal Counsel allowing Ms. Oliveros to second both motions.

Juan Cruz: Yes. You go with the second motion first. Javier Montemayor's motion.

Ricardo Rodriguez: I think the reason why it was there, we were waiting for.. and I think it was worded wrong. I think the way they should have put, is this should have been just a temporary freeze because it is just until the new superintendent

came in and then he made his own changes. That was the only reason but it was worded wrong. I think with that, I would agree with Mr. Castillo, to table it. Until it gets worded right. But that was not the wording it was supposed to be all.

**Aliza Olivers:** I do not think this is in the district's best interest at this point and having discussed this with administration there are some very important positions that need to be filled immediately. So, for that reason, for the interest of the students that we serve. I support Mr. Montemayor's motion.

**Roberto J. Santos:** As superintendent I would like to comment. When you look at the different positions that we currently have in our district which includes classroom teachers, counselors, librarians, nurses. It is important that we move forward. Simple fact I mean, we are a large district with a lot of vacancies. That I know all the positions, Mr. Gonzalez and I have been working with HR (human resources) on interviews and staffing and my recommendation would be obviously not to freeze the positions.

**Ramiro Veliz:** Thank you Mr. Santos.

**Frank Castillo:** I concur with Mr. Montemayor. But I was just, tabling the item would allow us not to consider it. I'm not too sure what he is asking for. To remove it, I mean we can always bring it back in a month anyway. Not too sure why the wording is difficult or maybe you do not understand.

**Javier Montemayor:** It is just my semantics Mr. Castillo, that is all it is. I do not think that the district should be freezing any directors or principals. Or any positions even para-professionals or anything like that. Mr. Gonzalez is already involved in the day-to-day operations. He is transitioning now. I think that would basically you know cut his feet from under him and tying his hands. There are vacancies all over the place that need to be filled in preparation for the fall now. I think to give Mr. Gonzalez, I think, you freeze them now and it is going to handicap the school district and I just do not think it is in the best interest if United that we do that.

**Ricardo Rodriguez:** Let me rebuttal you on that. I know that the district had done freezes before and it has never affected the district. And you know what....

**Javier Montemayor:** That was when we were in economic recessions, that is when we got (inaudible)

**Ricardo Rodriguez:** Yes, but it still did not affect the district. And I just feel that Mr. Gonzalez does deserve the right to get his own people to do his own hiring. He

is going to be our new superintendent and within 30 some days. You know and if they can work hand-in-hand, I am ok with it.

**Javier Montemayor:** Mr. Gonzalez is here now. I would like to hear from him.

**David H. Gonzalez:** Mr. Rodriguez and members of the board. At this point I am transitioning with Mr. Santos. And I will say Mr. Rodriguez, I think you are right, that maybe the wording was done incorrectly, but as a district for us to freeze all non-instructional hires I think that would hinder the daily operations of a district our size. Especially when we have a Job Fair coming up on June 10<sup>th</sup>. We have other areas that we need to, I am sorry the hiring freeze for all directors and principals. Excuse me I am looking at letter "C". I will be working as I have been with Mr. Santos. I know that recently we did a hiring in the construction site and Enrique Rangel and the recommendations were done collaboratively Mr. Santos, myself, Gloria Rendon and other members (Laida Benavides also involved). Again maybe the wording was not done correctly. I see your objective Mr. Rodriguez, but I can tell you confidently that we are working as one United district at this time.

**Ricardo Rodriguez:** With that said, I think I am good. Mr. Castillo, I also agree with you and Javier I guess without saying all in all I mean I agree with both of you so, I am good with whatever you all decide.

**Frank Castillo:** A question to Mr. Cruz, is what is the difference between my motion and Mr. Montemayor's motion? Can you explain the...

**Juan Cruz:** That is a good question. Tabling (an item) basically means <r. Castillo that it would come back in the future. To deny it basically does not (inaudible) actually put it on the agenda. So it is just like Mr. Montemayor stated. But kind of what I am hearing is probably Ramiro that you can take both Items "A" and "B" as motions to deny if maybe Mr. Montemayor wants to make that as a moment to the motion that way you can dispense of agenda items, the first two.

**Ramiro Veliz:** I have no issue. Mr. Montemayor would you be open to amending, rejecting both items "A" and "B" for your motion.

**Javier Montemayor:** I will amend my motion to include both "A" and "B".

<b>Motion:</b>	<b>So Move</b>
<b>Moved By:</b>	<b>Javier Montemayor</b>
<b>Seconded By:</b>	<b>Aliza Oliveros</b>
<b>Any Discussion:</b>	<b>NONE</b>

**All In Favor:** Montemayor, Oliveros, Rodriguez, Castillo, Ramirez,  
and Veliz

**Against:** Ricardo Molina

***MOTION PASSES***

***Mr. Frank Castillo's motion to table this item has been withdrawn.***

**B. Discussion and Possible Action for the Imposition of a Hiring Freeze on Non-Instructional Hires**

**Motion made with Item A.**

**C. Discussion / Action to Approve, by Resolution, Not to Renew the Delinquent Tax Contract with the Law Firm of Alarcon & Saenz, P.L.L.C. Beyond the Current Contract Term, Which Expires on August 31, 2021, Provide Notice to Said Law Firm and Negotiate a New Delinquent Tax Collection Contract With a Law Firm of the Board's Choosing**

**Motion:** So Move  
**Moved By:** Ricardo Rodriguez  
**Seconded By:** Frank Castillo

**Any Discussion:** Ricardo Rodriguez: And Mr. Cruz the law firm of my picking would be the law firm of Mario Castillo Jr.

**Juan Cruz:** Before the discussion the motion would be to, it would have to come back to the board in terms of the contract, if it passes the contract right. It has to be negotiated and then come back to the board for approval.

**Ramiro Veliz:** This is just not to renew, or not renew the current one. That is the only thing that we are discussing.

**Juan Cruz:** Right now Mr. Rodriguez's motion is actually to non-renew the current law firm which you know we require to take action according to the contract terms. And secondly, is to name the boards choosing would be the Mario Castillo Jr. law firm as well.

**Ramiro Veliz:** Do we include that even though it is not in as an agenda item? The only way it is worded is to negotiate a new collection contract.

**Juan Cruz:** Yes. No, but they ...

**Ramiro Veliz:** We can include this..

**Juan Cruz:** We can include "negotiate with Mario Castillo's law firm", yes.

**Aliza Oliveros:** ...On any law firm so I do not know why the name Mario Castillo is being said but, first of all; I want discussion and what I want to say to the public is, this is very unfair to you taxpayers. Any board member that votes for this item, is not only discrediting administration based on the numbers that they presented on their report. But they are disrespecting you as a taxpayer. They are not allowing you the opportunity to have other law firms come and bid their services to the district. They are bypassing a procedure and they are politically naming a firm and you can do your research on that. So, for that reason based on the numbers that prove that the current law firm is out performed any previous law firm. I do not see any valid reason not even law suits because you are required by law to file law suits if you do not do that it is a personal gain for the tax attorneys. And because the public I believe you deserve for us to have to listen to other law firms and give them an opportunity. For that reason I am voting against it.

**Ricardo Molina:** Well, that is your opinion and I respect your opinion.

**Aliza Oliveros:** I am going to make a sub-motion to deny "C". To get it off the agenda.

<b>Motion:</b>	<b>So Move</b>
<b>Moved By:</b>	<b>Aliza Oliveros</b>
<b>Seconded By:</b>	<b>Juan Roberto Ramirez</b>
<b>Any Discussion:</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>All In Favor:</b>	<b>Aliza Oliveros, Juan R. Ramirez, Javier Montemayor</b>
<b>Against:</b>	<b>Ricardo Rodriguez, Frank Castillo, Ricardo Molina and Ramiro Veliz</b>

***SUB MOTION IS DENIED***



**Mr. Veliz states the original motion to not renew the Delinquent Tax contract and to negotiate with Mario Castillo, as far as the new Tax Collection Contract.**

**Mr. Javier Montemayor makes a sub-motion that if the board chooses not to renew the delinquent tax contract, that the board go forward with request for qualifications. Not only to include Mr. Rodriguez's firm but any other firm that would be interested in collecting for this district.**

**Motion: So Move**  
**Moved By: Javier Montemayor**  
**Seconded By: Aliza Oliveros**

**Any Discussion: Aliza Oliveros:** I second in all fairness to the public and other attorneys that are out there and to your constituents, I'll do it for you.

**Javier Montemayor:** Let me amend my motion. Aliza's motion was to reject. My motion would be to renew the delinquent tax contract and if that is not granted then, my motion would be that we go out for request for qualifications.

**Mr. Veliz restates the motion. To renew and if not renewed go out for qualifications.**

**Motion: So Move**  
**Moved By: Javier Montemayor**  
**Seconded By: Aliza Oliveros**

**Any Discussion: Aliza Oliveros:** I am appalled with whoever does not vote for this. Again, I remind your constituency, blatant personal gain on your part.

**All In Favor: Aliza Oliveros, Javier Montemayor and Juan Roberto Ramirez**

**Against: Frank Castillo, Ricardo Rodriguez, Ricardo Molina and Ramiro Veliz**

***SUB MOTION IS DENIED***

**A motion is now made on the original motion to not renew the delinquent tax contract and start negotiations with Mario Castillo's law firm.**

**Motion:** So Move  
**Moved By:** Ricardo Rodriguez  
**Seconded By:** Ricardo Molina

**Any Discussion:** **Aliza Oliveros:** I just want to remind your constituency that you are playing with the students financial gain for the district. And that you are doing this without any request for qualifications allowing an opportunity for any other firm to come and bid for this contract. Again, I will remind your constituency that you are doing this. Without going through proper procedure. Which is very, very wrong in my opinion.

**Javier Montemayor:** May you re-state the motion please. Do not want the board members to be confused. Make sure we are on the same page.

**Ricardo Rodriguez:** I make a motion to approve item C, with law firm of Mario Castillo to be our next tax law firm.

**Ricardo Molina:** Calls for a vote.

**Aliza Oliveros:** I have a question for Counsel. Should a board member abstain from this if they have a relationship not by blood but otherwise with the law firm that they are recommending?

**(Inaudible)**

**Juan Cruz:** No. You have nepotism you have the conflict of interest under 176 that basically would require a disclosure an extension and then you also have like if you are selling land, or if you have some type of financial interest. If a board member owns part of the Castillo law firm and receives 10% or more of his or her income from that law firm, then that would require a recusal from the vote or abstention. So, unless that is out there, that...

**Aliza Oliveros:** (Inaudible) that is somebodies child, then that is not considered a relationship.

**Juan Cruz:** Right, correct.

**Aliza Oliveros:** Ok

**Ricardo Molina:** Calls for a vote.

**Motion:** So Move  
**Moved By:** Ricardo Rodriguez  
**Seconded By:** Ricardo Molina

**Any Discussion:** NONE

**All In Favor:** Ricardo Rodriguez, Ricardo Molina, Frank Castillo  
and Ramiro Veliz

**Against:** Aliza Oliveros, Javier Montemayor and Juan Roberto  
Ramirez

***MOTION PASSES***

**D. Discussion and Possible Action on the Creation of an Ombudsman Office Under the  
Auspices of the School District's Auditor's Office, and to Answer to the School Board**

**A motion is made to deny.**

**Motion:** So Move  
**Moved By:** Aliza Oliveros  
**Seconded By:** Ricardo Molina

**Any Discussion:** Aliza Oliveros: The reason that I am doing this is because I believe it is duplication of services with the current auditors office and we are talking about saving the district money. I do not think it is a necessary position.

**Francisco Castillo:** Well, this is something that I am bringing myself before, perhaps not at this juncture. I think it is something that I had mentioned before to the rest of the board members, our colleagues, my colleagues. That, I felt that the auditor's office needed expanding. I think it needed to have additional officers perhaps. That allow people a venue to file either a complaint that is not a teacher. I am talking about parents. I am talking about the public perhaps. It would act like a clearinghouse. Not necessarily an active, let me make a final decision type of an entity. So, an Ombudsman's office if you research it are all over the country. They bring in the information that we as board members need to have. We might not know the details, but at least we will have numbers. And you can break it down to

schools, departments and areas that we do not have that information right now. As much as we would like to think that we have that with the auditors. I do not think we do. And so it is something that, I believe that we need to expand. It would not fall under the auditor's office, because they would have a direct link to the board. That is my comment.

**Javier Montemayor:** There already... the education code provides for an avenue in which to file grievances and that includes parents, it includes third parties of teachers, employees and any way, this board has been very active in resolving grievances. We have several levels of hearings that administration has and that the board listens to. We have certain limitations in what we can and cannot do. While I appreciate the idea at this point Mr. Castillo, I think the ombudsman office needs a little more development. We need to talk about what parameters. Because, our internal auditor has certain functions and to include that ombudsman without a description of what their duties and responsibilities were, I think... I know you have it in your head. I can see that. I think it is certainly a good idea to resolve grievances as quickly, as efficiently as possible. I think it is a great idea. This one I think we would agree that we could probably table for further development. And that way we could bring it up. So, I make a motion to table this one. Sub-motion to Mrs. Oliveros's motion.

***A sub-motion is made to table this item.***

<b>Motion:</b>	<b>So Move</b>
<b>Moved By:</b>	<b>Javier Montemayor</b>
<b>Seconded By:</b>	<b>Aliza Oliveros</b>

**Any Discussion:** **Aliza Oliveros:** I will second that and I will just say that if we are going to have duplication of services I would rather have it in the classroom. That is just my opinion.

**Ramiro Veliz:** I will agree with you guys on that one. I do think that we already have some avenues as far as, not for any employees but public in general or parents to come forward and submit obviously complaints or issues with the district or any particular employee. We might even have the ability to just reclassify somebody at HR department and change the description of the duties to include anything that you are thinking on this one Mr. Castillo.

**Francisco Castillo:** Thank you. I am very much flexible to hear all the opinions. But I do know that in our last meeting we just brought up a topic about how certain employees could be surveyed about how to address some of the things that are going on. And so, I do not want to be specific, I think we all know what was being

discussed in closed session. But at the same time, that would be the avenue. This is what an ombudsman office does. It is kind of like the office of public information. They do this. And that is all I am trying to do. I can wait and I can wait for another meeting and maybe have more time to explore it to your satisfaction but in my mind is necessary.

**All In Favor:** Javier Montemayor, Aliza Oliveros, Ramiro Veliz and Juan Roberto Ramirez, Ricardo Molina

**Abstain:** Francisco Castillo

### **MOTION PASSES**

#### **E. Discussion and Possible Action for the Creation of a New Position within the United Independent School District Police Department, to wit, Assistant Chief of Police**

**Motion:** So Move  
**Moved By:** Aliza Oliveros  
**Seconded By:** Ricardo Rodriguez, Ricardo Molina

**Any Discussion:** Frank Castillo: I know that we created a new position, here we go again, it happens. That is what the challenges before us. We create a new position, we have to find funding, we have to find out what they will be doing or not doing. Not sure if I understands every body's logic but for me, I think it is too early to do that. But if that is the majority will, I will go with the majority.

**Aliza Oliveros:** To your comment Mr. Castillo I agree with you on the previous item C. I cannot make logic of you all's decisions. So, welcome to my world.

**Frank Castillo:** We are in the same world (chuckling).

**Javier Montemayor:** I do not know if this is a reclassification or a new position.

**Ramiro Veliz:** I think it is. I am not sure if it is worded correctly here but as far as my understanding in speaking to Chief Garner, the idea here is to a current position to reclassify to an assistant Chief of Police and not to create a brand new one. Is that correct. I am not sure if Mr. Santos can answer to that one.

**Roberto J. Santos:** Well, I know the Chief came and approached me earlier. Obviously the board were able to freeze I guess we want a reclassification, so if that is the route that the board wants to go. We will visit with Chief and obviously with David Gonzalez and we will look at a possible reclassification.

**Javier Montemayor:** I mean, with the board, I think, my understanding is that it is a reclassification and my motion would be at this point, reclassify a position of the captain to assistant chief.

**A motion is made to reclassify the position of captain to assistant chief of police.**

**Motion:** So Move  
**Moved By:** Javier Montemayor  
**Seconded By:** Ricardo Rodriguez, Juan Roberto Ramirez

**Discussion:** That (inaudible) without us having to come back to the board.

**Javier Montemayor:** I think that is the intent. If I am not mistaken.

**Ramiro Veliz:** I think we can do that and avoid bringing it up in a further meeting. Mr. Cruz, can we amend what we see here as an item and specifically mention that it will be a reclassification of the current captain position, not a new creation there within the police department.

**Juan Cruz:** Basically to reclassify the captain position to the assistant chief position.

**All In Favor:** Javier Montemayor, Juan R. Ramirez, Ramiro Veliz, Ricardo Rodriguez, Ricardo Molina

***MOTION PASSES***

**VII. Adjournment**

**Motion:** So Move  
**Moved By:** Javier Montemayor  
**Seconded By:** Aliza Oliveros  
**Any Discussion:** NONE

All In Favor: Unanimous

**MOTION PASSES**

*There being no further business of the UISD Board of Trustees, this Special Called meeting of May 26, 2021 is adjourned at 1:04 PM.*

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Ramiro Veliz, III, President

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Ricardo Rodriguez, Secretary

*These Minutes were completed by Griselda Rodriguez, and submitted for approval by the UISD Board of Trustees at the August 2021 Regular Board Meeting.*