MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING – APRIL 16, 2026

The Board of Education of the Lake Mountain School District met in a board meeting on Thursday, April 16, 2026, at 6:00 PM. The board meeting took place in the boardroom of the Lake Mountain School District Office in Saratoga Springs, UT.

Board members present: President Julie King, Vice President Matt Isaacson, Charity Judkins, Joylin Lincoln, Julie Myers, Melissa Sauser, and Ilene Strong.

Also present: Superintendent Carter, Deputy Superintendent Bollinger, and members of the administrative staff. There were approximately 7 others in attendance.

President Julie King conducted the meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Amber McEntire, Harbor Point PTA President.

INSPIRATIONAL THOUGHT OR REFLECTION

An inspirational thought was given by Board member Lincoln.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

CONSENT AGENDA

Board president King recommended that the Board approve the consent agenda. Board member Lincoln made the motion to approve the consent agenda, and it was seconded by Board member Judkins. The Board voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

1. Rush Creek Contract
   President King requested that the item be moved to a future meeting agenda, noting that additional information and options have been presented and require further review and discussion.
   Board member Lincoln motioned to table the Rush Creek contract until the next board meeting, and it was seconded by Vice President Isaacson. The Board voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously.
1. Policy# 704: Media and Public Relations (2nd Reading)
   Board member Lincoln noted that the first reading took place at the end of January and that the policy committee has also reviewed the item. She highlighted updates to definitions, scope, and the clarification of media.
   Vice President Isaacson shared that, as someone still new to the process, he appreciates that amendments were made based on feedback from the previous meeting. He offered additional, more general feedback, suggesting that the definition under "Board" be simplified for clarity by removing extra descriptive language and including only the essential definition. He recommended applying the same approach to the Superintendent definition to ensure consistency and maintain more concise policies.
   Board member Lincoln emphasized the importance of getting the process right and taking the time to refine it, rather than approving items simply because they are presented. She noted the need to establish a strong foundation and continue improving the process.
   Vice President Isaacson agreed and expressed the need to develop a consistent rhythm for handling these items. In addition, he suggested removing the phrase "in a manner…" under the Scope section.
   Board member Sauser asked if there was a specific recommendation.
   Vice President Isaacson clarified that the phrase "in a manner…" should be struck. He also noted that the Policy and Provisions section reflects strong incorporation of feedback from the previous meeting.

Regarding Section 1, he pointed out that Board and Superintendent roles are already addressed in the governance policies currently under development and suggested considering removing the section entirely to avoid redundancy.

Board member Lincoln sought clarification, confirming that the goal is to keep policies brief and concise, avoid duplicating information across policies, and minimize redundancy.

Board member Sauser acknowledged the concern regarding redundancies but noted that Section 1 pertains to communication within the media context; therefore, some overlap may be appropriate if it directly supports the policy.

Vice President Isaacson agreed that limited overlap across policies can be acceptable; however, he pointed out that Section 2 already addresses the Superintendent's role, making it unnecessary to include that content in Section 1. He suggested refining Section 1 by removing subsection 1.1 and consolidating subsections 1.2 and 1.3 into a clear statement that the Board represents itself and communicates with the public. He also recommended specifying that Board leadership, or the Board President, serves as the primary spokesperson representing the Board's voice.

Board member Lincoln noted that, as policy development is still in progress, there is not yet a comprehensive set of policies to reference when determining appropriate placement of content. She emphasized the importance of being mindful of where provisions may ultimately belong as additional policies are developed.

Vice President Isaacson reflected on his experience as a new board member, noting that the process involves a significant learning curve. As he continues to develop his skills in reviewing and drafting policy, he emphasized the importance of keeping policies brief and concise to make them more accessible and easier for the community and staff to understand.

Board member Lincoln agreed, highlighting the importance of being intentional in developing the Board's policy voice and considering how it will shape and influence all policies. She expressed appreciation for the collaborative effort and the time being taken to ensure the work is done thoughtfully, noting that a clear voice will develop naturally over time.

Board member Strong, drawing on her experience as a former Alpine employee, shared that when referencing policy, she typically reviewed only a single document. She suggested that each policy should be sufficiently clear and self-contained, as staff, students, and parents are unlikely to search across multiple policies to find definitions or context.

Vice President Isaacson acknowledged the point and noted that the definitions section supports overall comprehension by clearly explaining unfamiliar terms. He emphasized that, even if terms appear in multiple policies, they should be defined each time. He recommended keeping the definitions section concise while still comprehensive enough to ensure clear understanding within each individual policy.

Board member Lincoln shared that this had been a challenge for her as well, particularly in considering whether a single, centralized definitions policy should be used. Referencing Board Member Strong's earlier concern, she noted that when individuals review a policy, they expect to find the necessary information within that document rather than searching across multiple policies. She suggested that including references or links to related policies could help ensure all relevant information is easily accessible.

President King questioned whether the policy adequately addresses the various ways Board members communicate, such as testifying before a legislative committee. She noted that a Board member may speak in opposition to a policy in that setting without representing the official position of the Board, even if a formal vote is required. She also raised concerns about statements made on social media being taken out of context and presented as an official Board position without consent. Additionally, President King expressed the importance of allowing individual Board members to explain their votes. She noted that if the Board adopts a position and she votes in opposition, she would like the ability to communicate her reasoning to constituents, while making clear that her perspective does not represent the official stance of the Board. She emphasized the need for the policy to provide space for this type of individual expression.

Board member Lincoln noted that this topic is addressed across two separate policies, which can create some complexity. She explained that when a Board member serves on a committee or in a leadership role, there are instances where they are expected to speak on certain matters. While this policy references being "authorized by the Board," she pointed out that such authorization may already be implied when a member is formally assigned by the Board, and that clarification is currently outlined in the Board Responsibility policy. She highlighted the challenge of determining whether this type of overlap should be defined within this policy or the related one. She also emphasized the importance of recognizing that Board members are not prohibited from speaking in their elected capacity. She noted the need to balance keeping policies concise and distinct while acknowledging that some concepts may need to be addressed in multiple places. The committee will continue refining this approach as it develops a consistent policy voice, with the understanding that assigned responsibilities are already covered.

President King asked whether the item was intended for discussion only or if a motion should be entertained, seeking clarification on the Board's next step.

Board member Lincoln indicated that a motion to refer the item back to the Policy Committee for continued work would be appropriate. She emphasized the importance of taking time to establish a clear and consistent policy tone and voice from the outset, noting that this requires input from the full Board. She added that this step is a normal part of the policy development process and not an indication of any shortcomings.

Board member Sauser added that, through the Policy Committee's work reviewing and developing policies, Vice President Isaacson's comments were valid. She noted a challenge in determining where definitions should be included and emphasized the need for consistency in how terms are defined across all policies. She then asked if she could make a motion.

Board member Sauser motioned to table Policy# 704: Media and Public Relations and bring back the recommendations to the committee, and it was seconded by Vice President Isaacson.

Board member Lincoln asked for clarification on whether the motion was to table the item or to refer it back to the committee.

Board member Sauser asked for confirmation of how her motion had been stated.

Vice President Isaacson clarified that the motion was to table the item and refer it back to the committee.

The Board voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

2. <u>Truth in Taxation – Alpine School District</u>

President King explained that this matter relates to an Alpine School District (ASD) issue and provided an overview. She noted that property values are assessed annually by the county assessor, and when assessed values increase, the certified tax rate decreases to keep overall revenue consistent with the prior year. She added that while this process is straightforward in general, it becomes more complex for school districts due to the hold harmless provision. Previously set at five years, the Legislature reduced it to one year last year and has since adjusted it to two years. President King indicated that rising housing assessments are expected to result in another decrease in the tax rate this year. As a result, ASD may need to adjust rates to maintain funding levels. She emphasized that whatever rate ASD adopts this year will be locked in for 2027, and once the new district takes over, the tax rate cannot be changed. She cautioned that continued increases in assessed values, paired with declining rates, could create significant financial challenges under the two-year hold harmless provision. She shared that ASD is willing to consider the Truth in Taxation (TNT) process only if all three new boards express support. The new boards must submit a letter indicating support for ASD pursuing TNT. She added that staff recommendations will depend on assessed values and the projected impact on the district.

Board member Strong asked whether sending a letter of support would give ASD permission to proceed with the Truth in Taxation (TNT) process.

President King clarified that such a letter would provide ASD the flexibility to move forward with TNT, but would not necessarily result in a tax increase; rather, it keeps the option open. She noted that final tax rate information from the county is not available until June, but state code requires ASD to declare in May whether it is considering TNT. She added that if property values continue to rise, the district may be forced to raise taxes in 2028. She emphasized that the board would not be directing ASD to take action, but simply supporting consideration of the option. She also noted that the intended use of funds must be declared ahead of a vote in August.

Board member Strong asked whether the item would return to the Board for further approval. **President King** responded that it would not. **Board member Strong** clarified that the action was simply to allow the committee to continue reviewing the matter. **President King** confirmed.

Board member Lincoln asked which entities would go through the Truth in Taxation (TNT) process in 2027. **President King** responded that she was unsure regarding other taxing entities but the three new districts are prohibited during this time period. **Board member Lincoln** asked if Alpine School District would also be excluded. **President King** confirmed, explaining that it would not participate since it will no longer be a taxing entity. She added that the rate established this year will carry forward into the next year, and depending on changes in assessed property values and potential rate adjustments, there may be impacts in subsequent years. She acknowledged the complexity of the certified tax rate process, noting that it often takes several years to fully understand.

Vice President Isaacson asked for clarification on the purpose behind the Truth in Taxation (TNT) laws. **President King** responded that those laws are established by the legislature and offered to provide contact information for legislators for further inquiry.

Board member Lincoln expressed appreciation for the legislative change implementing a two-year hold harmless provision. **President King** agreed, noting that a one-year provision could have created challenges for the following year.

Vice President Isaacson noted that the county assessor has limitations on how much taxable property values can be adjusted each year. He explained that even if tax rates do not increase significantly in the next 12 months, there is a backlog of valuation updates and assessments that have not yet been fully processed, representing approximately a decade's worth of adjustments.

Board member Sauser asked for clarification on whether sending the letter would simply indicate that Alpine is being invited to consider the option. **President King** confirmed that this was correct, emphasizing that the Board is not suggesting any specific increase, as those decisions must be made by ASD and based on broader discussions with all relevant parties. She noted that ASD will determine its approach independently, which may or may not include pursuing increased increments. She also explained that there are additional procedural requirements this year, including a mandatory TNT-specific meeting in May that cannot be held as part of a regular Board meeting or study session. She added that TNT regulations have become increasingly strict, and in many cases, taxing entities that failed to meet every technical requirement were not granted approval by the State Tax Commission, even when errors were minor, resulting in required budget adjustments. **Board member Sauser** then asked whether the Board was being asked to vote on sending the letter or simply discuss it, and whether the decision would be made by the new boards or solely by ASD. **President King** responded that ASD, as the taxing authority, would ultimately make the decision. She clarified that the new Board does not yet hold taxing authority, and that staff would not recommend TNT consideration unless there is support from all three new Boards. She stated that the intent of the letter does not need to include detailed discussion, but simply express Board support for Alpine School District pursuing TNT, which she indicated would be the proposed language.

Board member Judkins emphasized the importance of clarity, noting that home values are expected to increase and that this outcome is not uncertain. She stated that decisions should be made with this anticipated increase in mind as a known factor.

President King motioned that LMSD approve a letter as previously stated, that we as a Board are supportive of ASD pursuing TNT, and it was seconded by Board member Lincoln. **The Board voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

SUPERINTENDENT AND BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Superintendent Carter expressed enthusiasm about recent hiring efforts, highlighting several key appointments: Jaclyn Knapp as Director of Special Education, Carol Guest as Director of Business Operations, and Gary Robinson as Principal of Horizon. She described these as three outstanding additions and noted that their photos are available on the district website. She also shared that a Director of CTE and a Director of Teaching and Learning (7–12) have been selected and have accepted their positions, with formal announcements planned for Wednesday. Superintendent Carter reported that additional positions will be posted on Friday, including principals for two middle schools (Lake Mountain and Vista Heights). She noted that the current eligible hiring list has been exhausted and encouraged interested candidates to apply. Upcoming postings will also include two Technology positions, an engineer and a support manager, and an Assistant Director of Special Education role. She further shared that the district recently held a productive meeting with the City of Saratoga Springs, including the mayor, city manager, and staff. She expressed appreciation for the strong level of support shown for the district and highlighted discussions around potential collaboration, including a transportation center, county land for facilities, and the Walker property. She also presented the new LMSD logo, describing it as a clean and versatile design intended for use across various platforms such as apparel and letterhead. The concept reflects "making waves and moving mountains," symbolizing creativity, progress, accountability, and strength. She noted that the district has established colors, fonts, and branding elements, including a dark blue, cream, and white color palette, with multiple variations. A soft rollout is planned, and board members are invited to begin using the logo in their email signatures. Additional materials, including letterhead and badges, will be developed as the district moves forward.

Board member Lincoln noted that the lack of updates from the Board reflects the team's diligent work across all areas and the challenge of knowing where to begin their reports to the public. She expressed appreciation for the team and their continued hard work.

Vice President Isaacson referenced a presentation from a recent meeting regarding a potential ATEC West facility, which explored the feasibility of locating it on the Thunder Ridge or Horizon property. He noted that while the proposal was viable, a new opportunity has since emerged and is currently being explored. He acknowledged there are still many questions and indicated that an additional site is now under consideration, with more information to be provided as it becomes available.

President King noted, as referenced by Dr. Carter, that recent hiring efforts have been extensive and highly demanding. She expressed appreciation for Dr. Carter, Dr. Bollinger, and other Cabinet members for the significant time spent interviewing candidates and working to ensure strong organizational fit. She welcomed Jaclyn and expressed enthusiasm about working with her, noting the positive energy, enthusiasm, and ideas emerging as the team comes together. She humorously remarked that the district may owe apologies to other districts for recruiting their personnel. She described the hiring and selection process as extremely time-intensive, involving thorough screening and collaboration. She also acknowledged Dr. Carter's highly collaborative approach in engaging team members in interviews and decision-making to identify the right candidates. President King emphasized the importance of balancing staffing decisions with discussions about team structure, desired growth, and resource allocation, including how to best support both district offices and school sites to ensure success at all levels. She highlighted the strong synergy within the process, attributing much of it to Dr. Carter's collaborative leadership style. She further expressed gratitude to Dr. Carter, Dr. Bollinger, and the Cabinet for their commitment to building the team and supporting recruitment efforts. President King shared excitement about upcoming opportunities, noting that a significant portion of Board work occurs outside of public meetings through ongoing planning and coordination efforts, similar to city or developer meetings. She stated that the district is preparing to move forward quickly on several initiatives, including four concept plans for different projects, and emphasized the substantial work underway to ensure thoughtful execution. She concluded by expressing appreciation for staff, Cabinet, and Board members for their engagement and participation, stating that she could not be prouder to be part of the district.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Board member Strong and seconded by Board member Judkins, the meeting adjourned at 6:47 PM. The Board members who voted in favor were President Julie King, Vice President Matt Isaacson, Charity Judkins, Joylin Lincoln, Julie Myers, Melissa Sauser, and Ilene Strong. The motion passed unanimously.