1. OPENING ITEMS

A. Call to Order

Board President Hector Camacho, Jr. called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. He announced the County Board was conducting the meeting as a webinar in light of the current health emergency and the Governor’s March 17, 2020, Executive Order N-29-20 suspending certain provisions of the Brown Act to allow governing boards to conduct meetings through remote access. Board President Camacho also noted in the effort to increase accessibility and opportunity for community engagement, simultaneous interpretation of the meeting was being implemented in Spanish using Zoom technology through the end of Public Comment, and would continue further into the meeting if people were utilizing the channel.

B. Approval of Agenda

After a motion by Ms. Gerard and a second by Mr. Lempert, the Board unanimously (Alvaro, Camacho, Cannon, Gerard, Hsiao, Lempert, and Ross), by roll call vote, approved the October 7, 2020, agenda as amended.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Superintendent Magee reported there were several submitted comments in relation to Item 7.B., “Receive Update and Housing Recommendation from YMCA Housing Subcommittee.” Board President Camacho stated the comments would be shared during that agenda item.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

   **A. September 16, 2020, Regular Board Meeting**

Ms. Alvaro suggested a correction to the September 16, 2020, Minutes, to indicate during her Board Member Comments, she had specifically indicated an individual name of a staff member who was greatly impacted by the wildfires. Superintendent Magee explained she had removed the name to ensure privacy. Ms. Alvaro indicated she was agreeable to leaving the minutes as presented. Board President Camacho requested that Superintendent Magee reach out directly to the staff to inform them of the Board’s care and concern. Superintendent Magee assured the Board she would follow up.

After a motion by Ms. Gerard, and a second by Mr. Lempert, the Board unanimously (Alvaro, Camacho, Cannon, Gerard, Hsiao, Lempert, and Ross), by roll call vote, approved the Minutes of the September 16, 2020, Regular Board Meeting as presented.

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

   **B. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 20-63 Recognizing October 11 through 17, 2020, as Week of the School Administrator**

   **C. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 20-64 Honoring Ruth Wallace on Her Retirement**

   **D. Adopt Resolution No. 20-65 Establishing the Actual 2019-2020 and the Estimated 2020-2021 Appropriations Limitation (Gann Limit)**

After a motion by Mr. Hsiao and a second by Ms. Gerard, the Board unanimously (Alvaro, Camacho, Cannon, Gerard, Hsiao, Lempert, and Ross), by roll call vote, approved the Consent Agenda.

5. **BUSINESS SERVICES DIVISION**

   **A. Receive 2019-2020 Unaudited Actuals Year-End Closing Report**

Denise Porte1field, Deputy Superintendent, Business Services Division, described how it has been a unique year for SMCOE with COVID-19, especially its impact on expenditures. At Second Interim, there was a projection to spend $1.4 million more than revenues and be in deficit spending, but instead SMCOE managed to end the year with a savings of $936,000, attributed to a decrease in necessary supplies and services once schools implemented distance learning.

Deputy Superintendent Porte1field pointed out a total revenue of $103.5 million, total expenditures of $102.2 million, a General Fund Ending Fund balance of $12.7 million, including a 7% reserve for economic uncertainties, and all other funds reflecting a positive ending fund balance. Deputy Superintendent Porte1field said the components of the Ending Fund Balance were provided in the report. She explained how under typical circumstances, ending with an unassigned negative amount is not allowed, but the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and Learning Loss Mitigation Funds were allocated as spending authorizations that were backdated before the funds were appropriated. Deputy Superintendent Porte1field summarized that SMCOE ended up better than anticipated.
Mr. Hsiao thanked Deputy Superintendent Porterfield. He asked if any of the severance package savings were reflected in the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Deputy Superintendent Porterfield replied that savings were not yet reflected as the expenses started July 1, 2020, and so, are not included in the 2020-2021 report.

Board President Camacho referred to CARES dollars, asking if there was a deadline for spending those funds. Deputy Superintendent Porterfield answered there are different deadlines, and the Corona Relief Fund (CRF), coming directly from the federal government, has a spending deadline of December 30, 2020, with SMCOE on target to meet that deadline. Board President Camacho stated he asked because a district colleague had requested the deadline be extended to the end of the school year for any districts unable to spend the dollars by December 31, 2020. Ms. Porterfield replied the federal government has not extended the deadline, but funds from the state were extended to June or September 2021, depending on the fund.

B. Receive Report on Employee Severance Incentive

Denise Porterfield, Deputy Superintendent, Business Services Division, stated over the past several years, SMCOE has experienced a decline in committed placements of students in Special Education and alternative education programs, and had reduced staff to match program needs. Additionally, COVID-19 further impacted the number of placements after the Education Code reduction in workforce opportunity (March 15 window). She said SMCOE projected there would be additional overstaffing. She explained that SMCOE has employed many loyal staff over the years and in respect for their service, Cabinet had reviewed options to provide employees with an incentive to retire or resign, including a Golden Handshake, an Annuity, and a Severance Package, which was the option ultimately chosen.

Deputy Superintendent Porterfield explained the Golden Handshake’s timeline was too long and required all employees who fell under the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) or the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) be offered the option, which would have severely impacted key members of other programs. She explained the Annuity option would not have given employees the flexibility to make decisions based on individual needs. Therefore, the final decision was to offer the Severance Package to the San Mateo County Educators Association (SMCEA) and the three represented California School Employees Association (CSEA) groups.

Deputy Superintendent Porterfield summarized that to be eligible for the incentive, employees had to be in SMCOE employment since August 15, 2015. The incentive offered 50% of base salary in either one lump sum or in six monthly installments, with the last date of employment no later than June 30, 2020. She reported that five members from SMCEA and 12 members from CSEA were required to participate. Both of these benchmarks were met, and in implementing the program, SMCOE had reduced the payroll by $1.4 million.

Board President Camacho thanked staff for the management of this process, acknowledging it was a tough decision, and thanked Deputy Superintendent Porterfield for her work and her leadership.
6. **OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

A. Superintendent’s Comments

Superintendent Magee began by sharing that the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA) recognized Deputy Superintendent Porterfield as the Business and Administration Steering Committee (BASC) STAR award recipient. Superintendent Magee explained the recognition was awarded to Deputy Superintendent Porterfield by her Chief Business Official peers. She added that Deputy Superintendent Porterfield had served multiple terms as the BASC Chair, oftentimes in moments when strong leadership was most needed. Superintendent Magee extended congratulations to Deputy Superintendent Porterfield, describing how she represents SMCOE as a model of excellence. Ms. Alvaro initiated a virtual round of applause to celebrate Ms. Porterfield’s accomplishments.

Superintendent Magee went on to say that Karen Stapf Walters had been named as the new Executive Director of CCSESA. She described Ms. Stapf Walters’ extensive background representing 25 years in education, including serving the past seven years as the Executive Director of the California State Board of Education, advising both Governor Brown and Governor Newsom on education policy issues. Additionally, as the Chief Executive Staff Member of the State Board of Education, she led the effort to implement the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and all of its accountability provisions.

Superintendent Magee reported that San Mateo County had just completed 14 consecutive days of being in the Red Tier of Governor Newsom’s Blueprint for a Safer Economy. She indicated that schools could now begin implementing plans to return students for in-person learning, while still implementing the Pandemic Recovery Framework and the Four Pillars. Superintendent Magee explained SMCOE would continue to provide technical assistance and support to all county schools, both public and private.

Superintendent Magee spoke of the strong leadership of Executive Director Love and her team, particularly Anne Ton, who have been reviewing waiver applications and providing technical assistance to schools. She could not say enough about the effectiveness of the support being provided by Executive Director Love, and personally thanked her for her hard work, follow through, and honest and clear guidance with all manner of stakeholders.

Superintendent Magee shared that she and Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham, have been working hard to secure a county contract with a testing agency that meets all practical needs of school districts. She announced that SMCOE had signed on with Curative. Superintendent Magee added that Counsel Cunningham had created a piggyback contract to enable school districts to also sign on with Curative.

Superintendent Magee added the Anne Campbell Center for Children and Families (ACC) had been supporting in-person learning for a couple of weeks. She said the target date for bringing back Court and Community students is October 19, and the target date for bringing back students in the Special Education Program is November 16. She stated with the contact tracing protocol secured with San Mateo County Health and a staff testing protocol in place, SMCOE is looking forward to seeing the incremental return of students to school under the Four Pillars.
Superintendent Magee referred to the resolution passed by the Board earlier in the meeting, “Recognizing October 11 through 17, 2020, as Week of the School Administrator,” and called out Principal Sibané Parcels, Principal Tammy Zigler, Assistant Principal Shelly Johnson, and Assistant Principal Christina Passmore for their amazing leadership with staff in the most unprecedented of times. She described how they are truly on the ground working with students, families, teachers, staff, community partners, and County Office support staff.

Superintendent Magee updated the Board about upcoming events, including the RESPECT! 24/7 Conference the following day and The Future of History Conference later in the month, which includes the One Book, One County activity. She said the Board would be receiving their George novels in the mail soon, if they hadn’t already been received.

Lastly, Superintendent Magee reminded the Board about the recognition of their service during School Board Recognition Month, which included preparing photo plaques of the Board to hang at each school site as an honor to the Board’s service and leadership for SMCOE’s students. She thanked Ms. Perna for her work getting this job done and thanked the Board again for all they do for the county.

7. BOARD MEMBERS

A. Review Investment Policy (BP 3430)

Denise Porterfield, Deputy Superintendent, Business Services Division, informed the Investment Policy (BP 3430) requires an annual review by the Board, and she had no recommendations for changes.

As there were no changes to the standing policy, the Board took no action on this item.

B. Receive Update and Housing Recommendation from YMCA Housing Subcommittee

Superintendent Magee reminded the Board there were Public Comments on this item. Board President Camacho noted additional hands had been raised and suggested the public be given the opportunity to share their comments at that time.

The following persons addressed the Board:

- Neil Richardson, SMCOE employee at Camp Jones Gulch since 2013, spoke against the housing recommendation from the YMCA Housing Subcommittee
- Lauren Black, naturalist intern at Camp Jones Gulch between 2017-2018, spoke against the housing recommendation from the YMCA Housing Subcommittee
- Kathleen Riley, former resident and employee of Jones Gulch for 15 years, spoke against the housing recommendation from the YMCA Housing Subcommittee
- Steve Van Zandt, Site Director of Outdoor Education for 28 years and former naturalist, spoke against the housing recommendation from the YMCA Housing Subcommittee
BOARD MEMBERS (continued)

Board President Camacho stated the Board had received several emailed Public Comments, and he assumed the Board had read them. Board President Camacho asked Superintendent Magee to post the received Public Comments so the public has access. Superintendent Magee assured the comments would be posted on the website. Board President Camacho thanked Superintendent Magee.

Superintendent Magee first thanked all stakeholders, including the Board, staff, Director Nolan, Principal Van Zandt, all naturalists, and YMCA partners, explaining everyone has leaned in for the same reason and cares deeply about the Outdoor Education program. She recalled the recent 50-year anniversary celebration of Outdoor Education and expressed hopes to look ahead into the next 50 years. Superintendent Magee described how Director Nolan and Principal Van Zandt won’t be in their roles forever and the Board hopes to both protect the integrity of the program as well as grow, strengthen, and broaden the program, which requires attracting and recruiting a new Director and Principal to lead into the next 50 years.

She referred to Ms. Alvaro’s past comments indicating that housing in LaHonda and Pescadero is limited and stated the one strong way to attract fully committed leaders is to include housing. Superintendent Magee reminded the Board the housing being discussed is intended for the next Director and Principal so they are able to move into the space and become part of Camp Jones Gulch like their predecessors and carry the program forward.

An additional hope for the 2020-2021 school year is to get this housing in place without interrupting Outdoor Education programming. Superintendent Magee further elaborated during this pause, a larger stakeholder group at SMCOE would be assembled to imagine how to grow and expand the Outdoor Education vision along with environmental sustainability and literacy, initiatives to which SMCOE is deeply committed. She described plans to include a team of thinkers, including Director Nolan, Principal Van Zandt, Coordinator Yeghoian, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) team, and the Safe and Supportive Schools team, to imagine the future for Outdoor Education.

Superintendent Magee apologized for not providing more of a process timeline at the September 16, 2020, Board meeting, describing the process as thorough, intense, and comprised of many stakeholder meetings, which was also interrupted by COVID-19.

Superintendent Magee described in detail the Board Subcommittee recommendation timeline:

- **November 2019**
  - 11/6/19
    - First YMCA Housing Committee Meeting
  - 11/20/19
    - Board Subcommittee report to the Board
- **December 2019**
  - 12/13/19
    - Tour at Outdoor Education and debrief
- **February 2020**
  - 2/3/20
    - Meeting with Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, Outdoor Education Director
Board of Education Meeting
October 7, 2020

BOARD MEMBERS (continued)

- 2/5/20
  - Additional questions/answers submitted/received - YMCA
  - Meeting with Board Subcommittee
- 2/11/20
  - YMCA notified of Board Subcommittee recommendation for preliminary cost estimates

Deputy Superintendent Porterfield next discussed the 25-year agreement addressing the following points:

- Executed March of 2019
- Establishes Capital Improvement Working Group
- Year-round use of two houses for SMCOE staff, built or rehabilitated by SMCOE at its expense and subject to separate agreement

Deputy Superintendent Porterfield described the easement agreement between the YMCA and Sempervirens, elaborating on the following:

- Establishes boundary within the YMCA that defines where the YMCA can build or develop in the future
- SMCOE housing site locations offered for consideration by the YMCA all fall within the footprint of the Sempervirens Easement Agreement for development

Deputy Superintendent Porterfield outlined the three SMCOE staff housing sites offered by the YMCA:

- Hillside – near entrance, most expensive with slope (eliminated early on as an option)
- Cherokee – near camp village (existing building)
- Garden Area – near water tower

Deputy Superintendent Porterfield elaborated on the Cherokee House option, preferred by Director Nolan, highlighting the following pros and cons:

- Nestled under trees, not optimal for solar
- Close to center of camp, other housing, activity zones
- May reuse existing bones of building
- Current foundation is small – 900 SF
- May have to build up or extend out
- Potential to impact trees
- Long stretches of infrastructure necessary
- More expensive option

Deputy Superintendent Porterfield next discussed the Garden Area House option, preferred by the Subcommittee/YMCA, explaining the following pros and cons:

- Better solar exposure
- Removed from center of camp, accommodating privacy
BOARD MEMBERS (continued)

- Near garden and environmental center
- Can orient housing away from road and blend backyard into surroundings
- Can reroute and improve night hiking trails away from location
- Shorter infrastructure connections
- Least expensive option

Superintendent Magee addressed and discussed the concerns of the Garden Area related to the camp footprint:

- Site is within Existing Use Zone and approved by Sempervirens
- According to Sempervirens, site does not encroach on Conservation Zone and Valley of the Giants
- Only concern expressed by Sempervirens is if large trees would need to be cut
- Entrances to homes can be situated to face the hill
- Landscaping of the back yards could provide privacy and maintain the natural environment visible between the water towers and the hill

Superintendent Magee addressed and discussed the concerns of the Garden Area related to traffic:

- 2010 YMCA Master Plan reduces the number of vehicles driving through campus
- Traffic to the hill does not go through the middle of campus
- There are many trails for students and naturalists to use
- Traffic can be limited on scheduled nights

Superintendent Magee addressed and discussed the concerns of the Garden Area related to the Marbled Murrelets:

- Sempervirens staff does not have concerns about the Murrelets
- Valley of the Giants is located down a 40-50 foot ravine below proposed site
- Site will have minimal impacts on the conservation values
- Supported by biologist report

Lastly, Superintendent Magee addressed and discussed the concerns of the Garden Area related to slope, fire, and emergencies:

- Site has a 100-foot fire setback
- Architect reviewed topographical maps closely when suggesting locations.
- Neither the principal nor the director currently live onsite – lead naturalist and staff trained to respond to immediate emergencies

Board President Camacho thanked Superintendent Magee, commenting that the preparation materials were helpful in gaining a clearer understanding of what has happened over the last several months and past year. He opened up the discussion to questions from the Board related to the presentation from Superintendent Magee and Deputy Superintendent Porterfield or Public Comments.
Ms. Gerard referred to the biologist's report and the suggestion that before moving forward, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife be consulted regarding the Marbled Murrelet environment and concerns about disrupting their nesting process. She asked if there were any plans to follow through on this suggestion. Superintendent Magee deferred to Mr. McComic, who replied there were several consultants who need to be brought into the fold, particularly engineers who would be used regardless of what was to be done. He informed that Cal Fire had been consulted and assured that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife could be consulted for comment, as well. Ms. Gerard thanked Mr. McComic for the response.

Ms. Alvaro referred to the Public Comment from Emily Lansdale, who expressed disappointment with SMCOE for the lack of support helping current Outdoor Education staff keep their housing at Jones Gulch during this global pandemic and the refusal to negotiate with the YMCA to agree to let them stay in their homes until next year's program, which greatly decreased the likelihood she would return as an experienced naturalist. Ms. Alvaro stated this was puzzling news to her and she didn't understand the comment.

Superintendent Magee responded that in March, when the county went into shelter-in-place, there were no students at Camp Jones Gulch but the naturalists continued, under agreement between the YMCA and SMCOE, to keep their housing through the end of September. Superintendent Magee explained the decision to pause the entire program for the year included the naturalist residents at Camp Jones Gulch. Superintendent Magee asked Ms. Del Monte for her insights on how that impacted staff the YMCA was required to retain.

Ms. Del Monte stated the YMCA of San Francisco does not want to be in a relationship as landlord. She added under normal circumstances, staff would have moved out in May, so allowing them to stay through the summer in space which would have been used by summer camps, and through September 30, was considered enough lead time. Ms. Alvaro thanked Superintendent Magee and Ms. Del Monte for the explanation.

Ms. Alvaro referred to the Public Comment from Lennie Roberts, Legislative Analyst, Committee for Green Foothills, and discussed Ms. Roberts' strong advocacy for the environment, especially in San Mateo County. She spoke of Green Foothills' advocacy urging decision makers to avoid locating new residential development within fire-susceptible landscapes and Ms. Roberts' feeling that the San Mateo County General Plan and Resource Management Zoning District regulations might have something to say about the chosen site. Ms. Alvaro expressed her concerns over this feedback, as Ms. Roberts is knowledgeable about what is going on in California, especially in San Mateo County.

Superintendent Magee deferred to Ms. Del Monte, who assured the Board there is no concern from the County. She elaborated that the YMCA has done its due diligence to ensure the space around the existing camp is approved through the County and has a conditional use permit (CUP) which was finalized for an additional 10 years in 2017. Ms. Del Monte indicated the YMCA works closely with Cal Fire, who understands the YMCA's systems and processes, and what needs to be done to accomplish fire safety, and this issue was not of concern.

Ms. Gerard referred to the same letter and Ms. Roberts specifically mentioning that particular area, and asked Ms. Del Monte whether Cal Fire has given permits and approved this area, knowing there
is hope to build structures, or whether their permits encompass the entire camp. Ms. Del Monte replied the YMCA has no permits yet, but Cal Fire is familiar with that area because the initial plan created a secondary egress to go up the hill past the straw bale house and into the county park. Having a secondary egress is required in the event of a fire emergency. She said that Cal Fire is also familiar with the area because the water towers were built in the last 10 years, and they have had no concerns with this area. Mr. McComic added his project manager met with Cal Fire this past Tuesday and no concerns were expressed.

Mr. Hsiao expressed the Board’s utmost respect for Ms. Del Monte and Mr. McComic, stating they have done everything expected in an excellent way and have been extremely responsive, especially since the last Board meeting. He apologized that the Board is keeping them there at the 11th hour with their decision. Mr. Hsiao remarked that this type of situation is unusual for the Board, who rarely has staff coming before the Board to advocate so vehemently to consider a decision in a different way, and he hopes Ms. Del Monte and Mr. McComic can tell that SMCOE prides itself on having excellent staff and decision-making. He indicated how important it is to make the best decision based on the best option. Mr. Hsiao stated that Ms. Del Monte and Mr. McComic have seen the letters, the emails, and the testimonies, and thanked Director Nolan and Principal Van Zandt for raising their voices. He discussed how Director Nolan and Principal Van Zandt would not be with SMCOE forever and could easily acquiesce and agree to building on the garden site because they will not be around, but the fact that they are standing up and voicing their opinions attests to the fact that they care deeply about the integrity of the Outdoor Education program and the experiences delivered to students. Mr. Hsiao conveyed that the YMCA also cares deeply about these values, referring to their reports on their commitment to Outdoor Education and helping students to connect and gain awareness about the environment.

Mr. Hsiao explained this is a different capital building project than what was done in the past, because it is Outdoor Education and by definition, when an outdoor environment is built, that is the experience and the educational value being imparted to students. This is why particular care is being taken on the impact of the site chosen for staff housing. He indicated that everyone cares about the decision, but Director Nolan and Principal Van Zandt have been living and breathing it for a few more decades than everyone else, and their opinions should be given a lot of weight.

Mr. Hsiao discussed that the garden site, as reflected in the Public Comments, is a prime teaching area. He shared a report from Director Nolan written in 2014, justifying the value for funding a conservation easement which undergirds why Sempervirens is offering so much money for the easement, and how Director Nolan described how the garden area contains “the most utilized trails for teaching on a regular basis, above and beyond all other trails.” Mr. Hsiao emphasized that this was written six years ago, so it is not a new idea.

He said it is also used by San Joaquin County’s Outdoor Education program, so other students will be impacted. Mr. Hsiao remarked on the Public Comment by Shea Nolan, discussing how this unique area provides access for students with disabilities to engage in clear stargazing because there is no light pollution. He stated he did not devalue that aspect, because students with disabilities and students from households with limited financial resources just don’t get the experience of going into the wilderness very often.
Mr. Hsiao referred to the health and safety issues described by Kathleen Riley and Vanessa Oliviera, and discussed the number of health and emergency calls, estimating there may be one real 911 emergency call every year or two, but indicating there was roughly one on-call case per week. He explained it was due to these not-so-unusual circumstances, that Principal Van Zandt had to sleep in the administrative building every Wednesday night for 28 years. Mr. Hsiao hypothesized if there had been a solution to this issue, they would have explored it because nobody wants to sleep in an office once a week for 28 years. He said this does not devalue Principal Van Zandt’s comments that housing is a necessity and the Board needs to listen.

Mr. Hsiao shared that he only participated in the November 6, 2019, meeting with the architects at the outset of the process and he appreciated how open and thorough Ms. Del Monte and Mr. McComic were in providing comprehensive information. Mr. Hsiao showed a report from the November 6, 2019, meeting indicating a side-by-side comparison of the two primary sites being considered, which he described as well done and easy to use to compare benefits and cost. He stated the report was done by the architect and includes qualitative comparisons, but does not address programmatic value and the impact on the programs being run throughout the last 50 years. Mr. Hsiao suggested as a Board member who needs to make a decision, he can’t weigh apples and oranges without seeing all the various facets. He hopes to analyze not just financial impacts, but also programmatic aspects related to the educational and ecological value.

Mr. Hsiao said everything is mixed up and the Board is trying to separate things out and systematically think through a decision. He summarized there are programmatic objections from staff, which is unusual, and there is something in this process for which SMCOE is responsible, not the YMCA, and did not complete very thoroughly, so at the 11th hour there is a difficult decision to be made. Mr. Hsiao spoke of safety and welfare concerns, which from a liability standpoint need to be considered, and said he takes the input from Ms. Del Monte and Mr. McComic at face value regarding permitting issues and that the planning commission would approve the use of the garden area. However, he suggested when the conditional use permit was issued, nobody had considered that the CZU fires would have been so enormous and the risk may be higher than imagined.

Mr. Hsiao asked to learn more about other potential site options, particularly in the usable area further down the hill. He indicated that developing creative solutions, not necessarily stacking everything at the Cherokee site, and looking at options in which the infrastructure costs are not so astronomical, would obviate the need to mitigate the program objections, the safety and welfare objections, and the potential planning commission objectives. Mr. Hsiao suggested gathering additional information in order to flesh out options for the Board to fully see and weigh the best options for the Outdoor Education program for the next 50 years.

Mr. Cannon referred to the many comments from naturalists and those who worked at the camps about how houses at the garden site would be too far away. He asked for confirmation that the housing was for the program Director and Principal, which Superintendent Magee confirmed was accurate. Mr. Cannon indicated that if Principal Van Zandt and Director Nolan were in their positions when the new housing was built, they would live in the houses, and the housing was not for other staff members working on safety and so forth. He addressed the safety concerns raised and said they are worthwhile to consider and deal with moving forward. Mr. Cannon emphasized that
programs change all the time and adjustments need to be made, and if anything has been seen in education in the last 20 or 30 years, it is yearly changes which require adaptation.

Mr. Cannon spoke of the current and future trails, and feeling there will be disruption of current trails, but he didn’t hear anything during deliberations that were impediments to developing future trails. He said he was unsure if they would be as adequate, but he assumed there would be efforts to do an outstanding job providing that experience, because nobody wants that experience to go away. Mr. Cannon expressed hopes to hear more about whether there could be future trails as good as the current ones which provide the same experiences. Ms. Del Monte responded that the YMCA is committed to ensuring trails are made, and although there may not be a flat space up on the hill, they have 900 acres and many walking trails and it is a limiting belief to think there is only one place for students to get a particular experience.

Ms. Del Monte emphasized the YMCA has no preference for the location of the SMCOE housing, but the location must meet their long-term goals as the property owner, and that is why the three sites were identified. Ms. Del Monte stated if there are hopes to go back to square one and discuss the hillside or Cherokee sites, that is a possibility, and she does not want an adversarial relationship with SMCOE, however it feels like two organizations are being pitted against each other. She feels everyone is in this for the right reason – to expose children to nature and make sure they have life-changing experiences. Ms. Del Monte expressed her frustration over the year’s worth of work which has been done. She stated she appreciates Superintendent Magee’s comments regarding reimbursing the YMCA for the work put forth and reiterated the YMCA will do what needs to be done for the betterment of the partnership. Mr. Cannon thanked Ms. Del Monte for her response.

Mr. Cannon stated that costs had not been considered that evening but his recollection over the past year’s deliberations was that cost was a big factor. Mr. McComic agreed his understanding from the beginning was that cost was a mitigating factor for SMCOE, and the YMCA tried to work on the most economical site and process. He shared he had spent two and a half hours earlier in the day researching premanufactured homes and trying to negotiate the best possible prices for the houses. He remarked he was under the impression back in January that a decision had been made and his staff spent countless hours moving forward, which he finds frustrating. Mr. McComic firmly requested that a plan be put in place if a change is going to be made in choosing the correct site. He indicated that the costs, including for infrastructure, for any other site will be more expensive than the garden site under current consideration.

Deputy Superintendent Porterfield interjected, adding that the funds from the Loma Mar property and the carryover from the sales tax when Loma Mar was purchased have been committed to the 25-year agreement. She added what has been committed to building these homes is the savings from the general fund and there is no funding source beyond that, which is a consideration for a flat-funded organization which will not experience any increases in funding. Deputy Superintendent Porterfield explained there is tension as to what to choose for Outdoor Education and options may not be feasible if the cost doubles or triples, which the Board must consider in their final decision.

Mr. Cannon spoke of the intention to attract a new Director and Principal, and how some feel it would be better for these roles to be housed at the camp site, but shared that he personally disagreed with that viewpoint. He stated to attract a professional and potential families, individuals need to get away
from work and have a separate life. Additionally, there will be staff hired to be at the camp site, and for all these years, the Director and Principal have not been at the camp site and staff have been in charge. Mr. Cannon emphasized that if housing is built on the considered site, the Director and Principal will be nearby and closer than they have been in past years. He explained as a former Principal, he enjoyed being around his staff and students all day, but he needed, and he anticipates the Outdoor Education Director and Principal will need, to get away and have a life outside of work. The Director and Principal will be close enough when needed, and although they could be closer for emergencies, there are staff hired to handle those situations.

Ms. Gerard stated that these decisions were made in January and although she may be wrong, her understanding was that the YMCA Housing Subcommittee would be making recommendations to the Board, not making final decisions. She explained that the Board did not receive updates in January, unless she completely missed something, and it was not until the September 16, 2020, meeting that information was relayed to her, including Director Nolan’s objections. Ms. Gerard stated that many Board members did not have all the information, and had they been more aware, they could have reacted earlier, instead of reacting at the “last minute.”

Board President Camacho indicated that it looked like the Board had shared all comments and should take action, or at least make a decision on how to move forward. He asked if it was the intent of the YMCA Housing Subcommittee that the properties be built on the considered site. Ms. Alvaro clarified that the YMCA Housing Subcommittee did not meet in January, but met in February, which is a small point. She thanked Mr. McComic and expressed the Board’s appreciation for all the work his team has done. Ms. Alvaro continued that the subcommittee asked for some budget costs to be brought back to the Board with a presentation from the YMCA on why the chosen site seemed to be the best site because of the cost options. She clarified that the decision was not made by the subcommittee, rather a request was made to gather additional information to bring back to the Board.

Mr. Ross stated he was confused about the action being asked of the Board, and any requested action may lead to further discussion. Board President Camacho clarified the next action item was to discuss and act on the recommendation from the YMCA Housing Subcommittee regarding staff housing at Camp Jones Gulch. He informed that process-wise, next steps would be to entertain a motion, a second, and a roll-call vote. Ms. Alvaro, with hopes all Board members would weigh in, suggested that all previous hard work, especially that of Mr. McComic, not be discarded and perhaps the Board could schedule a full Board Study Session to bring in Ms. Roberts, Director Nolan, Principal Van Zandt, the Director of the San Joaquin County Outdoor Education program, and additional stakeholders. At the Board Study Session, everyone would hear all information and Mr. Hsiao could share the architect’s document on comparative costs to which he earlier referred. Additionally, Cal Fire could weigh in on whether the fire road is practical as a possible exit plan. She shared she is a little hesitant talking about forest fires, admittedly more nervous than she normally would be. Ms. Alvaro suggested the Board Study Session would allow the entire Board to hear all information and perhaps circle back to the chosen site. But the entire Board needs and deserves to hear all information and ask questions, with additional stakeholders providing input.
Mr. Ross asked if the Board Study Session would provide the opportunity to hear about alternative sites in greater detail, or if only the chosen site would be discussed. Ms. Alvaro referred back to Mr. Hsiao’s document, which included information on the other sites and was part of the decision-making process, confirming other sites could be discussed. She spoke of the Hillside site, which she favored at the beginning of the process, but costs were near astronomical. Ms. Alvaro expressed hopes that the entire Board could review all costs and documents, and ask questions about the different sites.

Mr. Hsiao clarified that his document did not include the Cherokee site or other potential options. He thanked Mr. McComic for indicating that the YMCA was operating under the constraint that SMCOE wanted to minimize costs and only considered certain options. Mr. Hsiao stated perhaps there are other creative solutions or additional sites which may work. He spoke of the importance of financial considerations, but also the need to consider other values in the decision-making process.

Mr. Ross discussed how the Board Study Session would provide a sense of the alternatives and an opportunity to consider what it would take to investigate alternatives. He agreed with Mr. Hsiao that time and costs have been spent, but other factors need to be weighed. Mr. Ross shared appreciation for everyone involved in the process, and addressed Mr. McComic’s frustration that sometimes government doesn’t have its act together and processes are inefficient, which is frustrating to everyone. He apologized for those issues, and emphasized that the Board is trying to do the right thing and has obligations to everyone in the county to try and do the right thing. Mr. Ross suggested that care be taken with this decision. He motioned to table the question and asked Board President Camacho and Superintendent Magee to schedule a Board Study Session, as suggested by Ms. Alvaro.

Mr. Hsiao shared appreciation that Ms. Del Monte and the YMCA have no preference for the site chosen and stated he does not see the YMCA as an adversary. He suggested asking Ms. Del Monte and Mr. McComic, based on comments from Principal Van Zandt, for additional potential sites. Mr. Hsiao discussed not knowing the YMCA’s long term strategic plan, but perhaps there is a chance to expand the range of possible sites in the usable site area, which could be fleshed out in a comparison table. Ms. Del Monte replied that the YMCA collaborated closely with their architects who have worked at the site for roughly 15 years, and while it would be feasible to consider the original three sites proposed, she would not want to entertain a full additional, expensive study. She clarified the three sites did not include the Cherokee site, but did include the Hillside site, the Garden site, and one other she could not recall. Mr. Hsiao referred to Deputy Superintendent Porterfield’s comments that the Hillside site had been ruled out, but said other options could be considered to expand the range of options to determine if there is a site which meets the needs of the program and is also within a manageable cost range.

Mr. Cannon indicated that the balance of the Board prefers a Board Study Session, he appreciates and understands that decision, and he doesn’t feel the Board should move forward having so many doubts. However, he emphasized that there are no other potential sites which haven’t been considered. He stated the YMCA and the subcommittee analyzed all feasible sites, although he could be surprised and it would be nice to find out there are other potential sites. Mr. Cannon explained this issue has been investigated to a great extent, but the failure came with reassuring everyone that this work has been done. He confirmed the Board Study Session should be undertaken to ensure the Board makes the best decision.
C. Discuss/Act on Housing Recommendations from YMCA Housing Subcommittee

After a motion by Mr. Ross and a second by Ms. Gerard, the Board unanimously (Alvaro, Camacho, Cannon, Gerard, Hsiao, Lempert, and Ross), by roll call vote, approved tabling a decision at this time and conducting a Board Study Session to further explore this issue.

Board President Camacho thanked Ms. Del Monte and Mr. McComic for their time and indicated he and Superintendent Magee would be in contact with them on next steps. Several other Board members also chimed in to thank Ms. Del Monte and Mr. McComic.

D. Board Member Comments

Mr. Cannon
Mr. Cannon stated he was involved in the night’s discussion and preferred to pass on making comments.

Mr. Hsiao
Mr. Hsiao thanked staff and Superintendent Magee for obtaining the Curative contract and allowing districts to piggyback, a critical accomplishment and necessity for any strategy in reopening schools. He thanked everyone for their flexibility and nimbleness as the ground has been shifting over the last six months and noted SMCOE is still delivering value to districts and directly to its students.

Ms. Alvaro
Ms. Alvaro congratulated Deputy Superintendent Porterfield on her well-deserved STAR award honor, stating she appreciates having her on the team to watch over SMCOE’s money. She also congratulated Superintendent Magee and her team on the Curative contract, expressing that districts will be grateful.

Ms. Alvaro shared that the previous day at the Big Lift Coastside Collaborative Meeting, the Cabrillo Unified School District (CUSD) debated about reopening plans, with CUSD considering re-opening mid-January for blended learning. A parent discussed how many families travel for the holidays and the idea to return to school after winter vacation may be unwise. The parent suggested that coming back to school after two weeks of quarantine after winter vacation may be a better choice. Ms. Alvaro updated the CUSD Board will make a decision the following night and having the Curative contract in place will help them feel comfortable about plans. Lastly, Ms. Alvaro thanked the Board and all naturalists, staff, and community members who weighed in for the robust discussion that evening.

Ms. Gerard
Ms. Gerard congratulated Deputy Superintendent Porterfield on her STAR award and Superintendent Magee for the Curative contract. She described hearing many positive comments on that accomplishment. Ms. Gerard stated she had been outspoken that evening, but that was because the housing decision is incredibly huge for the Outdoor Education program. She referred to the input received and indicated the decision isn’t just about houses, it is about the future education of students. She thanked the Board for the opportunity to engage in further discussion and thanked the YMCA.
Mr. Ross
Mr. Ross echoed all previous comments congratulating Superintendent Magee and Deputy Superintendent Porterfield. He reflected on the importance of the YMCA housing decision-making process and shared he had not made a motion to lay a decision on the table since he was in high school debate. Mr. Ross stated the Board Study Session would be helpful and thanked everyone.

Mr. Lempert
Mr. Lempert congratulated Deputy Superintendent Porterfield on her well-deserved honor. He reflected how in today’s climate, it is wonderful to be on a Board that is deliberative and asks great questions. He expressed appreciation for Ms. Gerard’s comments and indicated in today’s standard of political discourse, she was fine. Mr. Lempert emphasized it is an honor to serve on the Board with the other members. Lastly, he applauded Superintendent Magee and her team on the important milestone of the Curative contract, as well as their perseverance through continued hard work.

Board President Camacho
Board President Camacho indicated he received his Interdistrict Attendance Appeal packet on Monday of that week, commenting on the problem of mail delays. He suggested important documents be picked up or hand-delivered. Board President Camacho stated he was happy to hear that Deputy Superintendent Porterfield was recognized by her peers. He discussed being a fan of Deputy Superintendent Porterfield and her ability to engage with numbers and constituency groups.

Board President Camacho remarked that obtaining the Curative contract was a huge accomplishment, and he thanked Superintendent Magee for her hard work to ensure districts have a pathway forward. He reflected on the evening’s conversation and shared what struck him the most was the passion in the comments and conversation from Outdoor Education staff, as well as community members. Board President Camacho highlighted how the staff comes with 50 years of student experiences and makes him feel he is paying back what was taught to him at Outdoor Education. Board President Camacho shared he is glad the Board is continuing the conversation, and he is eternally grateful for his experiences as an Outdoor Education student and counselor.

Board President Camacho explained the decision was not in opposition to the YMCA, as they are stewards of the land, as well, but reflects the years of work and effort which contributed to creating such a magical program for the county. He thanked his Board colleagues for the robust discussion and both Superintendent Magee and Deputy Superintendent Porterfield for leading conversations and being flexible when there are more questions.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m. Board President Camacho announced the next regular meeting would take place on Wednesday, October 21, 2020, at 6:00 p.m.

Nancy Magee, Secretary

Nancy Magee, Secretary