

**FORT LEE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
FORT LEE, NEW JERSEY**

**MINUTES**

**PUBLIC BUSINESS MEETING  
March 23, 2020  
Zoom Meeting  
<https://zoom.us/j/221001469>  
6:45 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER BY THE PRESIDENT**

The meeting was called to order at 6:48 p.m. by Mrs. Han Silver.

**FLAG SALUTE**

The Flag Salute was led by Ms. Colbath.

**PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Public Announcement was read by Mrs. Han Silver.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Ms. Elisa Cho, Ms. Paula K. Colbath, Mr. Ralph DiMeglio, Mrs. Holly Morell  
Mrs. Kristen Richter, Mrs. Candace Romba, Mr. Michael Rubino, Mrs.  
Lauran Tuck, Mrs. Esther Han Silver.

**Also Present:** Mr. Kenneth Rota, Ms. Haquisha Q. Taylor, Dr. Sharon Amato, Dennis  
McKeever, Board Attorney, Jeffrey L. Shanaberger, Esq.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

MOTION by Mrs. Romba, seconded by Mrs. Morell, at 6:51 p.m., to move into Executive Session.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

The Board reconvened into the Public Meeting at 7:14 p.m.

**REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

Mr. Rota shared that there were eight (8) HIB investigations. Three (3) were founded.

Mr. Rota shared that Joshwa Ford called today to ask to postpone indefinitely his resignation [#4P].

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

NJSBA Legislative Committee

Ms. Colbath shared that the NJSBA Legislative and Finance Committees met on March 7, 2020 in Trenton where various fascinating topics were discussed.

**PUBLIC WORK SESSION**

Mrs. Tuck thanked Mr. Rota for his leadership and broached the topic of our distance learning initiatives. Board conversation ensued discussing topics including duration of distance learning, content taught, changes in rigor, standardization of hours of academic work by grade, block scheduling, assignment due times, district data privacy concerns, paraprofessional work assignments, bus driver work assignments, independent learning vs. classroom instruction, feedback to Principals, vendor online instructional materials, and state testing changes. Furthermore, Mrs. Tuck commended community restaurants that have stepped up to help feed families of children in need.

Mr. Rota shared that administrators and teachers are adapting daily to this new environment. Mr. Rota further shared that he is in constant contact with administrators discussing necessary changes and in regular communication with town officials to learn when the schools might reopen. Mr. Rota also shared that the State Superintendents Association is actively expressing its opinions on behalf of the schools to the Governor regarding state testing.

Mrs. Han Silver shared that the administrators, teachers, and parents are all in uncharted waters. Furthermore, Mrs. Han Silver encourages patience and support of each other as we work together towards the same goal.

Ms. Colbath stressed the importance of constant contact with our legislators and offered to take the lead on writing a letter from the Board regarding testing and communicating school reopenings. Mrs. Han Silver suggested the Board adopt a formal resolution for the approved Board letter to be sent to legislators.

Ms. Taylor shared a summary of proposed legislation for sweeping changes to the School Employees' Health Benefit Plan (SEHBP) slated to take effect July 1, 2020.

**HEARING OF CITIZENS - QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON ITEMS LISTED ON TONIGHT'S AGENDA AND ANY OTHER TOPIC OF CONCERN**

MOTION by Mr. Rubino, seconded by Mrs. Romba, to open the floor to the public, 8:10 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

Ms. Julene Stassou applauds the teachers and staff for doing a great job during this very difficult time. Furthermore, Ms. Stassou made several instructional suggestions and is very happy to hear that video instruction has been established.

Ms. Mimi Lewis shared that the administrators, teachers, and staff are doing a great job. Furthermore, Ms. Lewis extended well wishes and support and for all to stay well.

MOTION by Mr. Rubino, seconded by Mrs. Romba, to close the floor to the public, 8:15 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

**RESOLUTIONS**

MOTION by Mrs. Romba, seconded by Mrs. Morell, that the Fort Lee Board of Education agrees to postpone indefinitely #4P for the resignation of Joshwa Ford.

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0.

**Board**

**1B THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, approves the following minutes:

Public Business Meeting Minutes	March 9, 2020
Private Executive Meeting Minutes	March 9, 2020

**2B WHEREAS**, the Fort Lee Board of Education has received the Superintendent's report of **incident(s) of Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying ("HIB")** within the District; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board has had the opportunity to review the Superintendent's recommendations with respect to the incident(s) of HIB.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board accepts the Superintendent's recommendations.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15(d), the Superintendent of Schools shall inform the applicable parents/guardians of the students involved in these incidents with the following information within five school (5) days of this Board meeting:

1. The nature of the investigation;
2. Whether the District found evidence of HIB;
3. Whether discipline was imposed;
4. Whether services were provided to address the incident of HIB.

**3B WHEREAS**, the Fort Lee Board of Education was named as a defendant in a lawsuit brought by former student A.G.T. by guardian ad litem, T.G. alleging A.G.T to have been subjected to discrimination, harassment, intimidation and bullying while a student at the Fort Lee High School;

**WHEREAS**, the lawsuit was duly tendered to the insurance carriers for the Board of Education for coverage and legal defense;

**WHEREAS**, the lawsuit was defended by the insurance carriers for the Board of Education which appointed counsel to represent the Board of Education;

**WHEREAS**, the parties agreed to refer the lawsuit mediation to retired Appellate Division Judge Jack Lintner;

**WHEREAS**, the matter was the subject of a mediation hearing on March 10, 2020 at which time the insurance carriers for the Board of Education agreed to settle the pending litigation for \$80,000.00 without any admission of liability and upon the condition that the lawsuit be dismissed, with prejudice;

**WHEREAS**, the entire consideration for the settlement shall be paid by the insurance carriers for the Board of Education;

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Fort Lee Board of Education that the settlement of the aforementioned lawsuit is hereby approved.

MOTION by Ms. Cho, seconded by Mrs. Tuck, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1B through #3B.

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0, with exception Mrs. Morell abstained on item #1B only.

**BUILDINGS & GROUNDS**

**1B&G WHEREAS**, a recommendation was made by the Superintendent of Schools to the Fort Lee Board of Education to seek a contract for Construction Services for the Roof Replacement and Installation of roof hatch railing and safety post at Fort Lee Elementary School No. 2; and

**WHEREAS**, Construction Services for the Roof Replacement and Installation of roof hatch railing and safety post at Fort Lee Elementary School No. 2 was properly advertised to prospective bidders in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-4; and

**WHEREAS**, on Wednesday, March 5, 2020, the following bids were received from potential bidders in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-1, et seq.; and

<b>Bidder</b>	<b>Base Bid</b>	<b>Alternate #1</b>	<b>Total</b>
Barrett Roofs, Inc.	\$488,000	\$124,000	\$612,000
D. A. Nolt, Inc.	\$650,781	\$151,626	\$802,407
G. C. Dynatech Construction, LLC	\$560,000	\$160,000	\$720,000
Mak Group, LLC	\$589,758	\$144,437	\$734,195
Northeast Roof Maintenance, Inc.	\$592,000	\$144,000	\$736,000
Roof Management, Inc.	\$720,000	\$190,000	\$910,000
USA General Contractor's Corp.	\$442,000	\$116,000	\$558,000

**WHEREAS**, the bid submitted by USA General Contractor's Corp. has been reviewed by Board Architects and deemed compliant with the bid specifications and New Jersey Public Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-1 et seq.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Board Architects, Environetics Group Architects, hereby awards Construction Services for Roof Replacement and Installation of Roof Hatch Railing and Safety Post at Fort Lee Elementary School No. 2 to USA General Contractor's Corp. as the lowest

responsible bidder at the total amount of \$558,000.00, which includes the base bid of \$442,000 and Alternate #1 of \$116,000.

MOTION by Ms. Cho, seconded by Mrs. Morell, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves item #1B&G.

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0.

### **CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION**

**1CUR** **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the amending of the school calendar to reflect a **Delayed Opening for 12th grade students only to arrive at 9:45 a.m. from April 23-28, 2020**, due to NJSLA Testing.

**2CUR** **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the attached **Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) Corrective Action Plan** for the 2020-2021 school year for submission to the Executive County Superintendent at the Bergen County Department of Education. [See Appendix Page 9](#)

MOTION by Mrs. Romba, seconded by Ms. Colbath, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1CUR through #2CUR.

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0.

### **FINANCE**

**1F** **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the payment of the claims on the current **bills list in the amount of \$599,072.59 for March 2020 checks**. [See Appendix Page 10](#)

**2F** **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the payment of the claims on the current **Cafeteria bills list in the amount of \$140,220.15 for March 2020 checks**. [See Appendix Page 31](#)

**3F** **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, authorizes the Board Secretary to **advertise the General Education Preschool Lottery Program** in all designated newspapers.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves the **tuition rates for the General Education Preschool Program for the 2020-2021 school year** as follows:

**\$900.00 per month per student for full-day program**

4F **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, accepts the following donations:

Item	Amount/ Estimated Value	Donor	On Behalf Of
Check	\$500.00	Petroleum Marketing Group, Inc. 2359 Research Court Woodbridge, VA 22192	FLHS Science Dept. Research
Check	\$100.00	AXA Foundation Inc. 100 Madison Street Syracuse, NY 13202	FLHS Student Activities

5F **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the revised **2020-2021 Budget Development Calendar** as per the attached. [See Appendix Page 33](#)

6F **WHEREAS**, the Fort Lee Board of Education (“Board”) has established a Capital Reserve Account pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:21-2 and N.J.S.A. 18A:7G-31 in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, which is subject to an annual audit.

**WHEREAS**, the Board may use the capital reserve account to implement a capital project in the District’s Long-Range Facility Plan (hereinafter referred to as “LRFP”) as required pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7G-4(a) and N.J.A.C. 6A:26-2; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-14.1, the Board may, by resolution, transfer funds from the capital reserve account to the line items in the capital outlay fund to fund the total costs, less any excess costs, of another capital project, which would otherwise be eligible for State support, as determined in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:26-3; and

**WHEREAS**, the demolition of the Child Study Team trailer at School No. 1 is an “other” capital project within the scope of the District’s LRFP, which would otherwise be eligible for State support.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that:

1. The Board of Education hereby authorizes the use of capital reserve to fund the demolition of the Child Study Team trailer at School No. 1.
2. The Board hereby approves the total transfer of \$20,000 for the demolition of the Child Study Team trailer at School No. 1.
3. The Board hereby awards the contract to demolish the Child Study Team trailer at School No. 1 to Gotthold Paving LLC for \$15,250.
4. The Board hereby awards ENV (Architect of Record) for professional services in connection with the demolition for \$3,400 (includes state plan submission).
5. The Board hereby grants an allowance of \$1,350 for exterminating and asbestos services which is required by the borough building department (code) in order to issue the necessary permits.

MOTION by Mrs. Romba, seconded by Mrs. Morell, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1F through #6F.

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0.

**PERSONNEL**

- 1P THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the attendance of staff members at the **staff trips/conferences** listed on the attached summary. *See Appendix Page 35*
- 2P THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, accepts, with regret, the **retirement of Janet Graziano, as a Paraprofessional at School No. 2**, after dedicating 4 years of service to the district, effective July 1, 2020.
- 3P THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, accepts, with regret, the **retirement of Roberto Yan, as a Custodian at School No. 2**, after dedicating 13 years of service to the district, effective September 1, 2020.
- 4P THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following **resignations: [Postponed Indefinitely]**

<b><u>RESIGNATIONS</u></b>			
Employee	Position	Location	Effective Date
Joshwa Ford	PT Paraprofessional	FLHS	3/28/20

- 5P THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following **leaves:**

<b><u>LEAVES</u></b>								
Name	Position	Loc	Type	New or Amended	Paid Leave	Unpaid Leave with benefits	Unpaid Leave No Benefits	Return Date
Claribel Kwon	Personal Aide	MS	FMLA	Amended	N/A	N/A	1/22/20 to 2/19/20	2/20/20
Cortney Teitell	Grade 5 LAL/SS	IS	Maternity	Amended	3/11/20 to 4/6/20	4/7/20 to 6/30/20	NA	9/1/20
Sally Macaluso	PK Spec Ed	S2	Maternity	Amended	3/5/20 to 5/12/20	5/13/20 to 1/31/21	2/1/21 to 6/30/21	9/1/21
Lauren Carney	Speech Language Specialist	S1	Maternity	New	5/1/20 to 5/31/20	N/A	6/1/20 to 6/30/20	9/1/20
Gabrielle Brown	Guidance Counselor	HS	Maternity	New	6/22/20 to 6/30/20	9/1/20 to 11/22/20	N/A	11/23/20

Jung Im Ha	PT Para	S2	Maternity	New	5/17/20 to 5/24/20	N/A	5/25/20 to 6/30/20	9/1/20
Sandy Kim-Namkung	Teacher Grade 4	S4	Maternity	New	9/1/20 to 9/16/20	9/17/20 to 4/5/21	N/A	4/6/21
Anastasia Findanis	Teacher Grade 2	S1	Maternity	New	6/1/20 to 6/30/20	9/1/20 to 1/31/21	N/A	2/1/21
Ada Cheherian Acosta	Teacher World Language	HS	Maternity	Amended	9/20/19 to 11/21/19	11/22/19 to 3/29/20	N/A	3/30/20

6P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the appointment of **leave replacements** during the 2019-2020 school year, as outlined below:

<b>LEAVE REPLACEMENTS</b>					
Name	Grade/Subject	Loc	Salary	Effective Dates	Reason for opening
Lucy Moulton	Teacher Math	HS	Sub pay for the first 10 days \$100 per day, day 11-60 \$110 per day, day 61+ at the daily rate equal to a BA, Step 1; No Benefits	3/10/20 to 5/5/20 Amended	Yvette Longobardi (Medical)

7P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the **amending of the appointment of the following Building Technology Assistant** at a non-pensionable stipend of \$2,000 for the 2019-2020 school year:

Location	Name	
Lewis F. Cole Intermediate School	Eleni Despotakis	Prorated 9/1/19 to 2/28/20

8P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the to **create Position Control # 07-9101-124Part-Time 1:1 Personal Aide (.83)** at Fort Lee High School to be charged to Account # 11-000-217-100-00-000 for the 2019-2020 school year.

MOTION by Ms. Morell, seconded by Mrs. Romba, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1P through #3P and #5P through #8P.

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0, with exception of postponing #4P indefinitely.

**POLICY**

1POL **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the **second reading and adoption of the following policy/regulation updates** listed below: [Click here for 2020-03-23 #1POL Back-up](#)



Policy/Reg No.	Topic
P 0155	BOARD COMMITTEES

MOTION by Ms. Colbath, seconded by Mrs. Morell, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves item #1POL

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Mrs. Morell expressed her concerns of the possibility of prom and graduation being postponed and the status on the production of the yearbook.

**ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Ms. Cho, to adjourn, 8:24 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

*Haquisha Q. Taylor*

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**HAQUISHA Q. TAYLOR**  
SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR/BOARD SECRETARY

HQT/toc  
03/25/2020