

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

MINUTES

**PUBLIC BUSINESS MEETING
May 18, 2020
Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86051804796>
6:45 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER BY THE PRESIDENT

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Mrs. Han Silver.

FLAG SALUTE

The Flag Salute was led by Mrs. Richter.

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 (6:50 pm), 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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Mr. Rubino, seconded by Mrs. Romba, 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 7:28 p.m.

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Mr. Rota shared that there are no HIB investigations to report.

Mr. Rota shared there was no Fire, Security or Bus Drills to report.

Mr. Rota shared that various graduation options are still being discussed and cannot finalize a plan until Governor Murphy and the NJ Department of Education make a definitive directive of

how and when graduations can be conducted. Mr. Rota also shared if the schools receive clearance of conducting outdoor or inside graduation he is confident the graduation plans can be executed in five (5) school days.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mrs. Richter shared that there was a Sick Bank Committee meeting held on May 12th. The Committee consensus denied days to be taken out of the Sick Bank.

Mrs. Romba shared that there was a Finance Committee meeting held on May 12th. The Committee discussed the most recent legislation such as, 1) Cares Act (COVID-19 grant) allocating \$363,000.00; 2) Assembly Bill 3969 allowing municipalities to delay or alter the transmission of property tax revenue to school district during gubernatorial-declared emergencies; and 3) Discussed afterschool care, subscription bussing and PreSchool enrollment potentially declining, and how COVID-19 is impacting the FLBOE district revenues.

Mrs. Tuck shared that there was a NJASA Legislative Committee meeting held on May 9th. The Committee discussed; 1) Item #4B on tonight's Agenda, 2) Senator Sweeney recommendation for a flat-funded State budget in order to prepare for potential challenging financial times in August, and 3) Discussed re-opening schools throughout the State and formed a Government Relations Committee through NJSBA. The Governor and CDC has provided framework as to how to proceed in re-opening the schools. Ms. Colbath shared that Senator Sweeney attended the meeting and actively facilitated the entire meeting.

Ms. Colbath shared that there was a NJSBA Finance Committee meeting held, and largely mirrored the Legislative Committee discussions. She shared important dates; 1) Treasurers Report on State Aid to be issued May 22 to reveal extent of revenue loss that can potentially grow to \$10 million, due to the lack of State tax not being received at this time; and 2) Governor Murphy's budget report regarding State Aid to be presented in August.

Ms. Colbath shared that there was a Policy Committee meeting held on May 12th. Ms. Colbath recommended to the Committee that Policy 5111 requires clarification regarding district employees' preference for their child(ren) to enter PreSchool Program.

Mrs. Han Silver shared that the NJASBA October workshop will be conducted as a virtual event.

Mr. DiMeglio shared that the Negotiations Committee has been having conversations and is making progress and hopes to share good news in the coming weeks.

PUBLIC WORK SESSION

Mrs. Richter shared her preference to end the school year earlier. She believes it is more favorable than extending Memorial Day weekend to a (5) five-day weekend. Board discussion ensued regarding ending the school year earlier than planned.

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

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mrs. Romba, to open the floor to the public, 8:00 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

Ms. Erin Powers inquired if school is closed Friday, May 22nd how will the scheduled AP testing be conducted. Mr. Rota shared that there are only (9) nine students scheduled to take the exam. They will be given the option to take the test or take a make-up test.

Ms. Julene Stassou inquired if Governor Murphy lifted the ban and allowed graduations in June how will that be impacted if the school year ends earlier, and also inquired if grades can be provided if a student is receiving pass/fail.

Mr. George Porto inquired what are the plans if schools are not permitted to re-open in September. Mr. Rota shared that there have been ongoing discussions regarding this topic. Mr. Porto also shared that a drive by Memorial Day parade has been organized for Monday, May 25th.

Mr. Joseph Cappellini, a school custodian, said hello to all and sends his best wishes to Dr. Amato.

Ms. Alanda Urteaga inquired if remote learning is continuing will there be more FaceTime with teachers and students. Mr. Rota shared that the more the teachers conduct virtual learning the program continues to enhance and get better.

Ms. Tanya Byers shared her displeasure that Elementary students receive grades and Intermediate and Middle School receive pass/fail. Ms. Byers recommended that the Elementary students be introduced to pass/fail prior to attending Intermediate/Middle School. Mr. Rota shared he will look into her recommendation. She also shared that herself and other parents' preference is to end school early, and sincerely expressed her good wishes to Dr. Amato and how she will be deeply missed.

Ms. Cean Spahn congratulated Dr. Amato on her retirement and expressed how much she will be missed by so many people in the district. She expressed her concerns regarding Standard-based grading and recommended to provide students narrative assessments of their performance in lieu of assigning a number for the target topics of the subject.

Ms. Michelle Avella commented on the school calendar. Assignments and IEP meetings have been scheduled unknowingly that school potentially might be closed Friday, May 22 and Tuesday, May 26 which could be problematic.

MOTION by Mrs. Richter, seconded by Mrs. Morell, to close the floor to the public, 8:21 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

Ms. Colbath inquired if provided clearance to have graduation after June has the administration researched if the district would have the appropriate liability insurance coverage. Mr. Rota shared that he will look into insurance coverage in the event there is a June graduation.

Mrs. Tuck inquired if there is any preparation for a fourth grade graduation. Mr. Rota shared that the fourth graders “move up” and the principals are working on options how best to recognize the students’ accomplishments.

RESOLUTIONS

BOARD

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

Public Business Meeting Minutes	May 4, 2020
Private Executive Meeting Minutes	May 4, 2020

- 2B** **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, approves the Required Updates to the **District Public Health-Related School Closure Plan** for submission to the New Jersey Department of Education. [Appendix Page 8](#)

- 3B** **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves the appointment of the **law firm of Sciarrillo, Cornell, Merlino, McKeever & Osborne, LLC as Board Attorneys** for the period July 1, 2020 through September 30, 2020.

- 4B** **RESOLUTION OPPOSING SENATE BILL 2392/ASSEMBLY BILL 3969
LEGISLATION AFFECTING TRANSMISSION OF PROPERTY TAX REVENUE TO
SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 2392 and Assembly Bill 3969, currently pending in the state Legislature, would authorize the Department of Community Affairs to permit municipalities to delay or alter the transmission of property tax revenue to school districts during gubernatorial-declared emergencies; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's public schools are highly dependent on property tax revenue to support education programs; and

WHEREAS, on average, local property taxes constitute close to 60% of public school revenue, with the percentage even greater in a significant number of districts; and

WHEREAS, delaying or altering the transmission of property tax revenue from municipalities would result in a financial crisis for school districts, seriously disrupting the educational process; and

WHEREAS, although public school buildings are closed during the current health emergency, the education of our students is taking place through remote instruction and, therefore, continued timely transmission of all property tax revenue due to the school district is critical for the educational process to continue without interruption; and

WHEREAS, under our state's current structure, municipalities are designated as the authorities to collect property taxes, but those taxes are levied for specific purposes—

e.g., municipal, school, county, fire district—and these obligations must continue to be met; and

WHEREAS, municipal governing bodies are empowered under current law to borrow in order to ensure that full payments to school districts are made;

WHEREAS, the Fort Lee Board of Education recognizes the impact of the current public health emergency on the state and local governments, as well as local school districts, but believes that this legislation would only worsen the situation for our communities; and

WHEREAS, while S-2392/A-3969 would require a municipality to pay a percentage of the revenue due to a school district based on consultation between the state Departments of Community Affairs and Education, the amount of taxes collected at the time and the financial condition of the municipality and school district, it does not address subsequent payment to the school district to make up the full shortfall amount; and

WHEREAS, as currently written, S-2392/A-3969, which is designed to ease a financial burden on municipalities, would place a severe strain on school districts and the students and families that they serve.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Fort Lee Board of Education urges the State Legislature and Governor to oppose S-2392/A-3969; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this resolution be delivered to Governor Philip D. Murphy, State Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney, Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin, and the New Jersey Legislative District's representatives in the state Senate and General Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the New Jersey School Boards Association.

MOTION by Mrs. Romba, seconded by Mrs. Morell, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1B through #4B.

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

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

1B&G **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education authorizes the continued use of **Temporary Instructional Space** at the following elementary schools, for the 2020-2021 school year.

School No. 1 Rooms 100 and 105

2B&G **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education authorizes the continued use of **alternate method of compliance of Toilet Room facilities** at the following elementary schools, **for the 2020-2021 school year**.

School No. 2	Room 212
School No. 2	Room 213
School No. 3	Rooms 111 and 119
School No. 4	Rooms 4, 6 and 10

MOTION by Mrs. Richter, seconded by Mrs. Morell, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1B&G through #2B&G.

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

CURRICULUM

1CUR **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the **amended 2019-2020 District Calendar**, as per the attached. [See Appendix Page 37 \(As Amended\)](#)

MOTION by Mrs. Richter, seconded by Ms. Cho, that the Fort Lee Board of Education amend item #1CUR for the 2019-2020 District Calendar to reflect June 24, 2020 being the last day of classes and June 25, 2020 being the last day for teachers. (Appendix Page 37).

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

MOTION by Mrs. Richter, seconded by Mrs. Morell, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves item #1CUR as amended.

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 \$417,407.04 for May 2020 checks**. [See Appendix Page 38](#)

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 \$22,921.58 for May 2020 checks**. [See Appendix Page 50](#)

3F THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the **Schedule of Local Tax Levy** for the **2020-2021 school year in the amount of \$72,075,317.00**. *See Appendix Page 52*

4F THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the **disposal/recycling of the following:**

Quantity	Description	Location	FLBOE ID#s	Reason
1	Business Class Laser Fax Machine	Central Office	20515	Obsolete

MOTION by Mrs. Romba, seconded by Mrs. Richter, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1F through #4F.

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 following **resignations:**

<u>RESIGNATIONS</u>			
Employee	Position	Location	Effective Date
Denise Mahanian	PT Paraprofessional	S1	7/1/2020

3P THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following **leaves:**

<u>LEAVES</u>								
Name	Position	Loc	Type	New or Amended	Paid Leave	Unpaid Leave with benefits	Unpaid Leave No Benefits	Return Date
Cecilia Kim	School Nurse	S4	Maternity	New	9/1/20 to 10/6/20	10/7/20 to 1/31/21	2/1/21 to 6/30/21	9/1/21
Stephanie Chevalier	Teacher Grade 1	S1	Maternity	New	9/1/20 to 9/16/20	9/17/20 to 1/3/21	N/A	1/4/21

Theresa Bustamante	Teacher Spec Ed Preschool	S2	Maternity	New	10/19/20 to 12/8/20	12/9/20 to 3/21/21	N/A	3/22/21
Gabrielle Brown	Guidance Counselor	HS	Maternity	Amended	N/A	9/1/20 to 11/22/20	N/A	11/23/20

4P THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the appointment of **leave replacements**, as outlined below:

<u>LEAVE REPLACEMENTS</u>					
Name	Grade/Subject	Loc	Salary	Effective Dates	Reason for opening
Andrew Park	Teacher Physical Education	S2	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	9/1/20 to 6/30/21	Allison Evangelista (Personal)

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mrs. Romba, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1P through #4P.

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

POLICY

1POL THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the **first reading of the following policy/regulation updates** listed below: [Click here for 2020-05-18 #1POL Back-up](#)

Policy/Reg No.	Topic
P5111	Eligibility of Resident/Nonresident Students (M) (Revised)

2POL 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 2020-05-18 #2POL Back-up](#)

Policy/ Reg No.	Topic
P1581	Domestic Violence (M) (Revised)
R1581	Domestic Violence (M) (New)
P2422	Health and Physical Education (M) (Revised)
P3421.13	Postnatal Accommodations (New)
P4421.13	Postnatal Accommodations (New)
P5330	Administration of Medication (M) (Revised)
R5330	Administration of Medication(M) (Revised)
P7243	Supervision of Construction (M) (Revised)
P8210	School Year (Revised)
P8220	School Day (M) (Revised)
R8220	School Closings (Revised)
P8462	Reporting Potentially Missing or Abused Children (M) (Revised)

MOTION by Ms. Colbath, seconded by Mrs. Morell, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves item #1POL through #2POL.

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

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Romba asked Mr. Rota if there will be any narrative noted district wide discussing the quarantine due to COVID-19. Mr. Rota shared that there has been discussion regarding this topic but nothing has been finalized.

Ms. Taylor congratulated Bella Polanco, Assistant Business Administrator, on her son graduating from Fairleigh Dickinson today.

Mrs. Tuck participated in an Equity Talk and it was discussed how students' talents will be identified. Mr. Rota shared that they have a vast majority of the criteria to recognize these students because three-quarters of the year of in-school instructional teaching was completed.

Mrs. Tuck complimented all the PTAs that prepared Teacher Appreciation videos and kudos to parents organizing Zoom meetings for the students during these very stressful and fatiguing times.

EXECUTIVE SESSION #2

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mr. DiMeglio, at 8:29 p.m., to move into Executive Session.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mrs. Tuck, seconded by Mrs. Morell, to adjourn, 9:08 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Haquisha Q. Taylor

HAQUISHA Q. TAYLOR
SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR/BOARD SECRETARY

HQT/toc 05/22/2020