

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

MINUTES

**PUBLIC BUSINESS MEETING
August 10, 2020
Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89990247402>
6:56 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER BY THE PRESIDENT

The meeting was called to order at 6:56 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 (6:54 pm), Mrs. Holly Morell, Mrs. Kristen Richter, Mrs. Candace Romba, Mr. Michael Rubino, Mrs. Luran Tuck, Mrs. Esther Han Silver (6:56 pm).

Also Present: Mr. Kenneth Rota, Ms. Haquisha Q. Taylor, Dr. Sharon Amato (6:54 pm), Dennis McKeever, Board Attorney

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mrs. Romba, at 6:56 p.m., to move into Executive Session.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

The Board reconvened into the Public Meeting at 7:47 p.m.

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Mrs. Han Silver and Mr. Rota had a lengthy discussion regarding resuming in-person Board meetings. For various reasons including restrictions of in-person gatherings and the safety of participating community members (150+), board meetings, for now, will continue to be conducted with the Zoom Platform.

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

Mr. Rota immensely thanked all who participated in establishing the schools reopening plan which has been in the planning stages since April.

Mr. Rota shared that the Distinguished Academy Status Award in the amount of \$5,000 from the National Academy of Finance (NAF) was awarded to the Academy of Finance at Fort Lee High School for the 2019-2020 school year.

Mr. Rota summarized how in-person/virtual instruction and 100% remote instruction will be conducted to maintain social distancing. Mr. Rota shared that all stakeholders were included in developing the Reopening Plan including PTOs, parents, board members, teachers, and school administrators.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mrs. Tuck shared that the Curriculum Committee met in late July to review the reopening plan, to review the results of the parent and staff surveys, to discuss how the racial justice resolution will be put into practice, to discuss the tracking the progress of students conducting 100% virtual learning vs. students conducting hybrid learning.

Mrs. Romba shared that the Finance Committee met in late July. Mrs. Romba was happy to report that the fiscal year 2019-2020 PILOT funding of \$471,000 was made by the town in July. Mrs. Romba also reported that the Fort Lee Board of Education will use additional unassigned general fund surplus of \$351,933 to maintain fiscal year 2020-2021 budgeted appropriations.

PUBLIC WORK SESSION

Mrs. Morell thanked Mr. Stephen Dominguez for his services and congratulated him on his appointment as Assistant Principal at the Lewis F. Cole Middle School.

Mrs. Romba inquired about the time frame parents can change their mind regarding instructional teaching. Mr. Rota shared that he would ask the parents to make any instructional changes prior to the end of the marking period and provide the principal ample notice of the change.

Ms. Colbath inquired about the term of the PILOT funding with the town, requested clarification of the reopening plan regarding in-person and remote instruction, and inquired how sanitization has improved since March. Ms. Taylor shared that the last year of the PILOT shared services agreement is fiscal year 2020-2021 and that no discussions have been conducted as yet for future agreements. Mr. Rota shared the details of how remote learning will be conducted and that the sanitization of the schools will be enhanced prior to and upon the return of the students.

Mrs. Morell inquired how social distancing will be enforced especially for the younger students (K-3). Mr. Rota shared it will be very challenging for the young students to embrace social distancing. Mr. Rota also shared that Mr. Bendul, Supervisor of Building & Grounds and Security, has been researching hands free soap dispensers for the bathrooms and has installed hands free hand dryers.

Mrs. Romba thanked and acknowledged all the hard work and dedication Mr. Rota and his team contributed toward the development of the reopening plan.

Ms. Cho expressed concern of the Fort Lee community having much higher COVID cases than other Bergen County communities. Mr. Rota shared that he will inquire with Mrs. Scarpa, Fort Lee Health Officer, about actual Fort Lee COVID case numbers if that information is public.

Ms. Colbath stressed the importance of providing students as much instruction time as was provided prior to the pandemic.

Ms. Taylor asked for a Motion to postpone the formal appointment of Gina Ruesga until additional compensation has been agreed upon and finalized.

MOTION by Ms. Colbath, seconded by Mrs. Morell, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves to postpone the appointment of Gina Ruela on item #6P.

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 8-1. Mrs. Cho voted no.

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

MOTION by Ms. Colbath, seconded by Mrs. Morell, to open the floor to the public, 8:23 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

Many public attendees expressed concerns including: dissatisfaction with the reopening plan and how it vaguely addresses remote learning, who will educate and watch children of full-time working parents since the in-class instruction is being conducted part time, wearing masks all day to include the special education students, if parents are dissatisfied with the level of education their children are receiving is there a policy in place to receive tuition reimbursement, the reopening plan, the potential of mental health concerns, sanitization issues, opinions that teachers are not being highly trained in technology in order to easily pivot to 100% remote learning if situation changes, students participating in an IEP plan.

Many public attendees had questions including: how the aftercare program will be conducted, the numbers of students in a class, contact tracing plan, filtration systems in the classrooms, outdoor learning, will students have the opportunity to complete a survey, parent surveys should be translated to multiple languages, administration feel confident they will receive 100% survey feedback and can all the parents' survey be shared, develop virtual tours of each of the schools in the District, quarantine policy if a student and/or staff member contract the virus, and lastly provide students with physical textbooks.

Mr. Lipoff requested clarification of utilizing unassigned funds for the shortfall in state aid.

Mr. Rota addressed community members' questions and concerns.

MOTION by Ms. Tuck, seconded by Mrs. Morell, to close the floor to the public, 9:47 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

RESOLUTIONS

BOARD

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

Public Business Meeting Minutes	July 13, 2020
Private Executive Meeting Minutes	July 13, 2020

MOTION by Mrs. Tuck, seconded by Mrs. Morell, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves item #1B.

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 **School Reopening Plan for 2020-2021**. The Board reserves the right to amend this plan if deemed necessary based upon the status of COVID-19. [See Appendix Page 11](#)

MOTION by Mrs. Romba, seconded by Mrs. Tuck, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves item #1CUR.

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 6-2-1, with exception Mrs. Richter abstained on item #1CUR.

Ms. Colbath agreed with the understanding that it is a work in progress and must take into account all the thoughtful comments.

FINANCE

- 1F** **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, has received and accepts the **financial reports of the Secretary and Treasurer of School Monies for the month ending June 2020 (Preliminary)** and certifies that the reports indicate that no major account or fund is over expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6:20-2.13 and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the school year. [See Appendix Page TBD](#)
- 2F** **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, confirms the **line item transfers for the month of June 2020**. In order to accomplish the aforesaid purpose, the Business Administrator was authorized to transfer the amount of money into and out of the line items set forth on the attached schedule. [See Appendix Page TBD](#)
- 3F** **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the payment of the additional **claims on the current bills list in the amount of \$10,688,862.98 for June 2020 checks**. [See Appendix Page 36](#)

4F **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the payment of the additional **claims on the current Cafeteria bills list in the amount of \$33,270.09 for June 2020 checks.** *See Appendix Page 65*

5F **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the **implementation of a mandatory direct deposit program** in accordance with N.J.S.A. 52:14-15h and as stipulated under Board Policy No. 6511 through the designated school district's banking institution, TD Bank. No employee group or category will be exempt from the Board's direct deposit program, unless the Board grants an exemption from the mandatory requirements on such terms and conditions as the Board deems necessary.

6F **WHEREAS**, on Friday, July 10, 2020, the New Jersey Department of Education ("NJDOE") posted revised state aid notices for School Districts; and

WHEREAS, Fort Lee Board of Education's 2020-2021 State Aid was revised downward from \$3,547,736 to \$3,195,803, a reduction of \$351,933; and

WHEREAS, the NJDOE has offered the following options for districts experiencing a reduction in state aid:

1. Use unassigned general fund surplus to maintain budgeted appropriations; or
2. Request Commissioner approval to withdraw from emergency reserve; or
3. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-14.2(d), withdraw from maintenance reserve to cover budgeted required maintenance costs; or
4. Reduce appropriations for 2020-21; or
5. A combination of 1, 2, 3, and 4 above.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, adopts the **use of unassigned general fund surplus to maintain budgeted appropriations.**

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves for the **2020-2021 School Year Budget, the increase in unassigned general fund surplus/fund balance from \$912,000 to \$1,263,933.**

7F **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves **renewing the agreements/contracts** of the following for the Fort Lee School District's 2020-2021 school year. *See Appendix Page 66*

<u>AGREEMENTS 2020-2021</u>
CBIZ Insurance Services, Inc.

8F **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, authorizes the Board President and School

Business Administrator to execute **Non-Resident Tuition Student Agreements for non-resident students** whose parent(s) are employed by the district for the 2020-2021 school year. Tuition rates to be determined by the Business Office and according to Board policy.

NON-TUITION STUDENT AGREEMENTS 2020-2021		
STUDENT ID	GRADE	SCHOOL ATTENDING
SID#29090305 (CS)	Grade 4	School No. 4
SID#23050351 (PS)	Grade 10	Fort Lee High School

9F THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, accepts the following **donations**:

DONATIONS			
Item	Amount/ Estimated Value	Donor	On Behalf Of
KN-95 Masks	\$750.00	Danny Jiao and Family 1629 John Street Fort Lee, NJ 07024	District use
Check	\$19.25	Pledgeling Foundation 2100 Abbot Kinney Blvd., Suite E Venice, CA 90291-7003	Fort Lee High School Student Activities

10F THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, accepts the **Distinguished Academy Status Award in the amount of \$5,000.00 from the National Academy of Finance (NAF)** presented to the Academy of Finance at Fort Lee High School for the 2019-2020 school year.

11F THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the **disposal/recycling of computer equipment** as per the attached list. *See Appendix Page 74*

12F WHEREAS, after a competitive solicitation and selection process by Lead Agency, Maywood Public Schools, in compliance with its own policies, procedures, rules and regulations, a number of vendors have entered into agreements to provide a variety of goods, products and services based on volumes ("products"); and

WHEREAS, agreements are made available by the Lead Agency to other Boards of Education and provide that participating Public Schools may purchase products on the same terms, conditions and pricing as the Lead Agency, subject to any applicable local purchasing ordinances and the laws of the State of purchase.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves **participation in Elite Spiders, a Purchasing Cooperative through Lead Agency Maywood Public Schools.**

- 13F** **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the submission of the **2020-2021 Digital Divide Preliminary Grant application in the amount of \$211,600** to the New Jersey Department of Education.

MOTION by Mrs. Romba, seconded by Mrs. Richter, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1F through #13F.

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 76*
- 2P** **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves, with regret, the **amended retirement date for Dr. Sharon Amato**, as Assistant Superintendent, in Central Office, after dedicating 36 years of service to the district, **effective October 1, 2020**. This resolution supersedes Resolution No. 30186 dated April 20, 2020.
- 3P** **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, accepts, with regret, the **retirement of Maura Fox Collier as a Gifted and Talented Teacher at School Nos. 3 and 4**, after dedicating 5 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**:

<u>RESIGNATIONS</u>			
Employee	Position	Location	Effective Date
Daniella Molinaro	PT Paraprofessional	IS	8-1-2020
Alyssa D'Ercole	PT Paraprofessional	S1	8-1-2020
Lina Giraldo	PT Paraprofessional	IS	8-1-2020
Jessica Molinaro	PT Paraprofessional	S4	8-1-2020

5P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following **staff transfer** during the 2020-2021 school year.

TRANSFERS						
Name	From Location	From Position	To Location	To Position	Salary Change	Effective Date
Joseph Finizio	LFCMS	Assistant Principal 06-0222-01	HS	Assistant Principal 07-0202-02	N/A	8/12/2020

6P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following **appointments** for the 2020-2021 school year, pending verification of employment: **[As Amended]**

APPOINTMENTS						
First Name	Last Name	Position	Loc	Position Control #	Annual Salary Prorated	Effective Date
Sandra	Tarabokija	Teacher Special Education Resource	S1	01-2412-03	Step 2-3/MA \$60,975.00 (Pending review of transcripts)	9/1/2020
Anthony	Medaglia	PT Paraprofessional - PE (.83)	S1	01-9101-41	Step 1/ Degree \$21,975.00	9/1/2020
Gina	Ruesga	Interim Principal	LFCIS/L LFCMS	N/A	-	7/15/2020
Stephen	Dominguez	Assistant Principal	LFCMS	06-0222-01	\$105,000.00	8/12/2020

7P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following **leaves**:

LEAVES								
Name	Position	Loc	Type	New or Amended	Paid Leave	Unpaid Leave with benefits	Unpaid Leave No Benefits	Return Date
Raul Sanchez	Maintenance	CO	Medical	Amended	4/6/20 to 6/9/20	6/10/20 to 6/30/20	N/A	TBD
Raul Sanchez	Maintenance	CO	Medical	New	7/1/20 to 8/24/20	N/A	N/A	TBD

- 8P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the **appointment of leave replacements** during the 2020-2021 school year:

LEAVE REPLACEMENTS					
Name	Grade/Subject	Loc	Salary	Effective Dates	Reason for opening
Kristine Gaffney	Speech Language Specialist	S1/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 plus 3 days NTO	Lauren Carney and Amanda Schroeder (Maternity Leaves)

- 9P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the appointment of the following **Substitutes** for the 2020-2021 school year:

SUBSTITUTES
Anthony Medaglia

- 10P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the **2020 Summer Employment for the Guidance Department** for the following staff members:

Summer 2020 Guidance Department Staff			
Counselors	# of Days	Per Diem Rate	Total
Debra Brigida	15 (6 HS/9 MS) (Amended)	\$585.76	\$8,786.40

- 11P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the appointment of additional **Certificated Home Instructors** for the 2020-2021 school year, at the hourly rate of \$45.00 per hour for teaching staff and \$30.00 per hour for certified paraprofessionals.

HOME INSTRUCTORS	
Name	Content Areas
Solanlly Ortega	K-12 Spanish
Barrie Kulak	K-8 General Education

- 12P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following list of certificated staff members as **English Language Learners (ELL) Tutors**, for virtual learning during

Summer 2020 to be paid a stipend of \$45.00 per hour, to be funded by the CARES Act grant.

Summer 2020 ELL Tutors Funded by CARES Act Grant			
Teacher	Weeks	# of Hours @ \$45 per Hour	Total Not to Exceed
Marielle Bakian	3	50 hours	\$2,250.00
Ada Acosta	3	45 hours	\$2,025.00
Elizabeth Inomata	3	50 hours	\$2,250.00
Lisette Vallejos	2	30 hours	\$1,350.00
Josephine Giandomenico	1	15 hours	\$675.00
TOTAL			\$8,550.00

- 13P** **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following additional **District translators** for 2020-2021 school year, at the rate of \$30.00 per hour, on an as needed basis:

<u>DISTRICT TRANSLATORS 2020-2021</u>	
Name	Language
Suzanne Elkhechen	Spanish
Denise Morales	Spanish
Solanly Ortega	Spanish
Veronica Marin-Fuentes	Spanish
Ayako Katayama	Japanese
Silvia Alfaro	Spanish

- 14P** **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the amended appointment of the following **Faculty Coordinator** for the 2020-2021 school year:

<u>2020-2021 FACULTY COORDINATORS/PROGRAM COORDINATORS</u>			
Name	Department	Class	Stipend
Stephen Dominguez	Title I Coordinator	N/A	\$6,000 (Amended)

15P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the **employment contract for Ms. Haquisha Q. Taylor, School Business Administrator**, as approved by the Executive County Superintendent, **for the 2020-2021 school year**. *See Appendix Page 77*

16P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the **appointment of additional Fall Coaches for the 2020-2021 school year**, pending certification and verification of employment. Out-of-District Coaches will be charged to Account #11-402-100-390-08. All appointments are subject to completion of all personnel documentation and fingerprinting process, prior to starting of said activities.

FALL COACHES						
Coach	Sport	Position	Season	Class	Step	Stipend
DELETE: Matthew Hernandez **	Boys Soccer	Assistant Coach	Fall	II	1	\$5,955
APPOINT: Robert Gehres	Boys Soccer	Assistant Coach	Fall	II	2	\$6,524

**Non-Staff Member & pending certification and verification of employment

17P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves **additional hours for Carlos Salazar for Bus Maintenance and Courier responsibilities during Summer 2020** at the hourly rate of \$23.18.

18P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the **placement of the following Internships, Student Teachers or Practicum Candidates** during the 2020-2021 school year:

INTERNSHIPS/STUDENT TEACHERS/PRACTICUM CANDIDATES							
Referring University	Student Name	Type of Placement	Subject Area	# Hours	Months From-To	School Placed	Cooperating Staff Member
Seton Hall University	Natalie Rodriguez	Clinical Experience I	Elementary Education	60 Hrs.	9/14/20 – 12/9/20	S1	Annamaria Pillari
William Paterson University	Donovan Figueroa	Clinical Experience	Athletic Training	200 Hrs.	8/2020 – 12/2020	HS	Thomas Hur
Grand Canyon University	Yanill Beato	Student Teaching	Elementary Education	15 Weeks	9/3/2020 – 12/13/2020	S2	Jane Lee

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mrs. Romba, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1P through #18P, with item #6P as amended

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0 for items #1P through #5P and #7P through #18P. Item #6P was voted on as amended upon roll call vote 6-2-1. Mrs. Richter and Mr. Rubino voted no and Ms. Colbath abstained from one name (Stephen Dominguez).

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 2020-08-10 #1POL Backup](#)

Policy/Reg No.	Topic
Policy 5440	Honoring Student Achievement

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

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

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Colbath reiterated the importance of the amount of quality instruction time provided to students.

Mrs. Tuck recommended scheduling a Curriculum committee meeting.

Ms. Cho expressed concern about the nurses' offices spaces and ventilation.

NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Morell wished Mr. Stephen Dominguez the best of luck in his new appointment. Mrs. Morell also congratulated the Academy of Finance at Fort Lee High School for winning the \$5,000 Award.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mrs. Romba, to adjourn, 9:57 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 08/18/2020