

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

MINUTES

**PUBLIC BUSINESS MEETING
March 22, 2021
Zoom Meeting**

CALL TO ORDER BY THE PRESIDENT

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by, Board President, Ms. Colbath.

FLAG SALUTE

The Flag Salute was led by Mrs. Han Silver.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

The Public Announcement was read by Ms. Colbath.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mrs. Byers-Kang, Ms. Elisa Cho, Mrs. Esther Han Silver, Mrs. Holly Morell, Mrs. Kristen Richter, Mrs. Candace Romba, Mr. Michael Rubino, Ms. Julene Stassou, Ms. Paula K. Colbath

Also Present: Mr. Kenneth Rota, Ms. Haquisha Q. Taylor, Mrs. Diane Collazo-Baker, Rakiah Bonjour, Esq. of the Sciarillo, Cornell, Merlino, McKeever & Osborne, LLC

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mr. Rubino, at 6:35 p.m., to move into Executive Session.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

The Board reconvened into the Public Meeting at 7:37 p.m.

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Mr. Rota shared that there was one (1) HIB investigation and it was unfounded.

Mr. Rota shared that the Fire and Security Drills have been posted for the Board's review.

Mr. Rota shared that today was the first day of combined cohorts, and very happy to report it was a very successful day and we are moving in a positive direction.

Mr. Rota shared that Pomptonian, our food service vendor, has been providing meals to many families in the community to include weekends and is happy to report the Board has agreed to

continue the food service to the community through the summer months.

Mr. Rota introduced Ms. Nina Anderson, Lewis F. Cole Middle School Art teacher, to present #UsvsHate artwork.

Ms. Anderson shared her student's art presentation. The Board members commended Ms. Anderson for her commitment and how she inspires her students to demonstrate such amazing artwork.

Mr. Rota then shared the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Teacher of the Year award was presented to Ms. Anderson for her exceptional commitment to teaching Americanism and patriotism to her students by promoting civic responsibility.

Mr. Rota shared that the Fort Lee Central Office has moved their offices and are now located at 231 Main Street, 3rd Floor of the parking deck in the middle of town. Ms. Taylor then announced that a Public Hearing is being held tonight between the Fort Lee Board of Education and the Parking Authority in the Borough of Fort Lee to lease the offices on the third floor of the Gunzter Lining Building. Ms. Taylor inquired if the Board Members and/or the public had any questions on the lease and no questions were asked.

Ms. Colbath shared the relocation of the Central Office is the reason why the public meeting is virtual tonight but the Board is very committed to having in-person public meetings going forward.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mrs. Han Silver shared that the Negotiations Committee met Thursday, March 11th, Friday, March 12th, and Monday, March 15th to conduct interviews with legal firms and provide a recommendation of legal firms to represent the Board as evidenced in Resolutions 5B and 6B on tonight's Agenda.

PUBLIC WORK SESSION

Mrs. Byers-Kang thanked Mr. Rota and collaboration of the Board Members for combining the cohorts.

Mrs. Han Silver asked for clarification of the version of the 2021 – 2022 District Calendar the Board is voting on tonight. Mr. Rota shared that the District Calendar is item #2CUR on the agenda and shared updates to the calendar. Board conversation ensued including clarification of the version of the calendar to be voted on tonight.

Ms. Stassou asked what dictates why some coaches get paid vs. volunteer coaches. Mr. Rota shared the budget for each sport determines the coaches that are paid.

MOTION by Ms. Cho to postpone items #4B and #6B until the first Public Meeting in May 2021. The MOTION was never seconded; subsequently it failed.

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. Romba, seconded by Mrs. Morell, to open the floor to the public, 8:24 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

Mr. Sarnoff expressed gratitude and appreciation for the Board's services and the law firm of Sciarrillo, Cornell, Merlino, McKeever & Osborne, LLC, Board Attorneys and Labor Attorneys, for their invaluable services over the past eight years.

Ms. Kotang, representing the Asian-American community of Fort Lee, expressed the community's deep sadness and anger regarding the inexcusable assaults on the community. Ms. Kotang shared the contributions the Asian-Americans have made historically up through the present that remain unrecognized. Ms. Kotang asked that the curriculum be re-evaluated to include these valuable and notable contributions.

A member of the public shared his comments regarding the 2021 – 2022 district calendar.

Mr. Rota and Ms. Colbath responded to the community members' comments.

MOTION by Mr. Rubino, seconded by Mrs. Richter, to close the floor to the public, 8:47 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	March 8, 2021
Private Executive Meeting Minutes	March 8, 2021

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 ("Board") is a municipal body properly organized and governed by N.J.S.A. 18A:1-1 et seq.; and

WHEREAS, the Board is subject to the New Jersey Public School Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-1 et seq. ("PSCL"); and

WHEREAS, the PSCL specifically **requires that the Board award construction contracts to the "lowest responsible bidder"** for those contracts that exceed the bid threshold. See N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5; and

WHEREAS, the requirement to utilize the "lowest responsible bidder" has caused Boards of Education in New Jersey to spend more than budgeted for certain Projects due to the filing of change orders, failure to timely complete the work and/or poor workmanship; and

WHEREAS, the problems identified herein cause Board's of Education to spend taxpayer dollars over and above the anticipated budgets for said Projects, and in some cases, forces the Board's to utilize funds from their regular operating budgets, thereby depriving students and staff of critical instructional resources, and

WHEREAS, the Board requests that the Legislature amend the PSCL in a way to save taxpayer dollars and to govern the selection of contractors for construction work in a more effective and cost efficient manner; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey School Boards Association ("NJSBA") is an entity formed for the purpose of representing and lobbying on behalf of local Boards of Education including the Fort Lee Board of Education; and

WHEREAS, the **Board seeks to have the NJSBA petition the New Jersey Legislature to amend the PSCL to address the problems that arise from the use of the "lowest responsible bidder"**; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Board hereby petitions the NJSBA to seek the amendment of these statutes prospectively; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board hereby authorizes the Board's Legislative Representative to present the within resolution to all persons vested with the authority to seek the desired result of a modification to the PSCL.

4B 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** from March 23, 2021 through March 31, 2021.

5B THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves the appointment of **Sciarrillo, Cornell, Merlino, McKeever & Osborne, LLC as Special Education Counsel** from April 1, 2021 through January 5, 2022 (next Reorganization of the Board).

6B THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves the appointment of **Cleary, Giacobbe, Alfieri, & Jacobs, LLC as Board Attorneys and Labor Counsel** from April 1, 2021 through January 5, 2022 (next Reorganization of the Board) *Attachment: [ATTORNEY FEE SCHEDULE](#)*

MOTION by Ms. Richter, seconded by Mr. Rubino, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1B through #6B.

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0 for Items #1B through 5B, with the exception of #6B with a vote of 6-3. Motion passed. Mrs. Romba, Mrs. Han Silver and Ms. Cho voted no on item #6B only.

CURRICULUM

1CUR THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves **class trips listed on the attached summary**. *Attachment: [CLASS TRIPS](#)*

2CUR THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the **2021-2022 District Calendar**, as per the attached. *Attachment: [DISTRICT CALENDAR 2021-2022](#)*

3CUR 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 2021-2022 school year** for submission to the Executive County Superintendent at the Bergen County Department of Education. *Attachment: [SEMI CAP 2021-2022](#)*

MOTION by Mrs. Romba, seconded by Mrs. Morell, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1CUR through #3CUR.

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 \$6,159,110.07 for March 2021 checks.** *Attachment:* [BILLS LIST](#)

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 \$59,991.74 for March 2021 checks.** *Attachment:* [CAFETERIA BILLS](#)

3F 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 Athletic bills list in the amount of \$2,244.00 for March 2021 checks.** *Attachment:* [ATHLETIC BILLS](#)

4F WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:26-10.11, a public hearing was advertised to be held at the meeting of the Fort Lee Board of Education on March 22, 2021 regarding a lease by and between the Borough of Fort Lee Board of Education and the Parking Authority of the Borough of Fort Lee to lease the third floor in the Guntzer Liner Building located at 231 Main Street, in the Borough of Fort Lee, New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, the cost of the lease will be \$150,000 per year for the first two years, \$160,000 for the third year, and for the fourth year and each year thereafter until the expiration of the lease, February 28, 2031, the annual cost shall increase 2% above the previous year's annual cost and will be funded from the general operating budget of the Borough of Fort Lee Board of Education.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves **a ten-year lease agreement with The Parking Authority of the Borough of Fort Lee, commencing on March 1, 2021 through February 28, 2031, for Board of Education District Offices located at the Third Floor Guntzer Liner Building, 231 Main Street, in the Borough of Fort Lee, New Jersey**, as per the attached agreement and authorizes the Board Secretary to execute said agreement. *Attachment:* [LEASE AGREEMENT - CO](#)

- 5F **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 2021-2022 school year as follows:

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

- 6F **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves **Mindful Leadership Consulting, LLC for Substitute Administrator Consulting** at a per diem rate not to exceed \$350/day from March 23, 2021 through June 30, 2021.

7F **WHEREAS**, the South Bergen Jointure Commission (“SBJC”) and the Fort Lee Board of Education (“the Board”) are parties to a 2021-2022 agreement for SBJC, an approved Coordinated Transportation Service Agency, to coordinate transportation services for the Board’s students; and

WHEREAS, due to the current public health emergency, school districts may be required to close for health-related reasons; and

WHEREAS, under N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9, if a school district is subject to a health-related closure for a period longer than three consecutive school days, a jointure commission shall continue to make payments under the terms of a contract with a contracted service provider as if the school facilities remained open, and

WHEREAS, if there are health-related school closures, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9, the SBJC will be obligated to continue payments to its transportation service providers during the 2021-2022 school year; and

WHEREAS, SBJC’s commitment to continue payment to those contracted transportation service providers is contingent upon the Board’s continued payment to SBJC; and

WHEREAS, the SBJC is desirous of amending the terms of the Agreement to memorialize the Board’s responsibility to continue its payment obligations to the SBJC in the event of school closures due to health-related reasons to ensure full compliance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9.

NOW, WHEREFORE, THE PARTIES AGREE as follows:

1. For the term of the 2021-2022 school year, if schools are closed and/or operating under virtual or remote instruction as a result of the current public health emergency, thereby not requiring transportation services for the Board’s students, the Board shall continue to make payments under its Agreement with SBJC, as if the school facilities remained open, for SBJC to pay its contracted transportation service providers in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9.

2. All other terms and conditions of the Agreement not addressed herein shall remain in full force and effect. *Attachment: [SBJC AGREEMENT 2021-2022](#)*

MOTION by Mrs. Romba, seconded by Mr. Rubino, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1F through #7F.

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0 for Items #1F through 3F and 5F through 7F, with exception of #4F with a vote of 7-1-1. Motion passed. Mrs. Romba abstained on item #4F and Mrs. Morell voted no on item #4F only.

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. **Attachment: STAFF TRIPS**

2P 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:

APPOINTMENTS						
First Name	Last Name	Position	Loc	Position Control #	Annual Salary Prorated	Effective Date
Tiana	Korsgen	Instructional Aide Physical Education (.83)	LFCIS	05-9101-119	Step 1/ Degree \$21,976.00	04-06-21
Doraine	Francisco	Instructional Aide PK Spec Ed (.83) (Rehired from Leave Replacement Position)	School 2	02-9101-37	Step 4/Degree \$25,954.00	04-06-21

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

LEAVES OF ABSENCES									
Name	Position	Loc	Type	New or Amend	Paid Leave	Paid FFCRA Leave Full Salary up to \$511.00/day	Unpaid Leave with benefits	Unpaid Leave No Benefits	Return Date
Donald Picinich	Social Studies Teacher	MS	FMLA	New	4/6/21 to 4/11/21	N/A	4/12/21 to 6/30/21	N/A	9/1/22

4P **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, as outlined below:

LEAVE REPLACEMENTS					
Nam	Grade/ Subject	Loc	Salary	Effective Dates	Reason for opening
Deborah Famiglietti	Teacher Grade 1	S3	Continuous Assignment	9/8/20 to 4/9/21 Amended	Kerri-Lynn Mauer (FMLA/Medical)
Doraine Francisco	Teacher Preschool Special Education	S2	Sub pay for the first 60 days \$150 per day, day 61+ at the daily rate equal to a BA, Step 1; No Benefits.	10/18/20 to 4/5/21 Amended	Theresa Bustamante (Maternity)

5P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the **appointment of Spring Coaches for the 2020-2021 school year**, as follows. All appointments are subject to completion of all personnel documentation and fingerprinting process, prior to starting of said activities.

SPRING COACHES 2020-2021						
Coach	Sport	Position	Season	Step	Days	Amount
Peter Kraljic Jr	Baseball	Head Coach	Spring	II	2	\$8,975
Ian Oates*	Baseball	Assistant Coach	Spring	II	2	\$6,524
Diego Lombardo	Baseball	Assistant Coach	Spring	II	2	\$6,524
Gerard Carroll*	Baseball	Assistant Coach	Spring	II	2	\$6,524
Crystal Vargas	Softball	Head Coach	Spring	II	2	\$8,975
Zachary Schlemm	Softball	Assistant Coach	Spring	II	2	\$6,524
Brianna Mattessich	Softball	Assistant Coach	Spring	II	2	\$6,524

Jennifer Cella	Softball	Assistant Coach	Spring	II	2	\$6,524
Daniel Cirone	Boys Track	Head Coach	Spring	II	2	\$8,975
Demba Mane	Boys Track	Assistant Coach	Spring	II	2	\$6,524
Nicole Pacciani	Boys Track	Assistant Coach	Spring	II	2	\$6,524
Charlie Salame	Girls Track	Head Coach	Spring	II	2	\$8,975
Nicole Piccinich	Girls Track	Assistant Coach	Spring	II	1	\$5,955
Sean Scully	Golf	Head Coach	Spring	III	2	\$5,349
Philip Zappel	Boys Tennis	Head Coach	Spring	III	2	\$5,349

*Non-Staff Member

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the **appointment of Volunteer Athletic Coaches for the 2020-2021 Spring Season**, with no compensation, as follows:

<u>VOLUNTEER ATHLETIC COACHES 2020-2021</u>						
Coach	Sport	Position	Season	Class	Step	Salary
William Straub	Baseball	Volunteer	Spring	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kellie Lane	Girls Track	Volunteer	Spring	N/A	N/A	N/A

6P **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:

<u>SUBSTITUTES</u>
Ivette Tardy

7P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the appointment of the following Detention Monitors for students for the 2020-2021 school year to be paid at the rate of \$50 per hour:

Debbie Brigida
Joseph Berlingo
Laura Gemignani
Brian Larcheveque
Alexandra Motola

8P **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:

<u>INTERNSHIPS/STUDENT TEACHERS/PRACTICUM CANDIDATES</u>							
Referring University	Student Name	Type of Placement	Subject Area	# Hours	Months From-To	School Placed	Cooperating Staff Member
Fairleigh Dickinson University	Megan Cooper	Fieldwork	Elementary Education	60 Hrs.	3/23/2021 - 5/30/2021	School No. 1	Karen Simone-Osso

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

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 **second reading and adoption of the following policy/regulation updates** listed below: [Attachment: 2021-03-22 POLICY UPDATES](#)

Policy/Reg No.	Topic
P0155	Board Committees

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mr. Rubino, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves Item #1POL.

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

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Rota shared that the National School Boards Association (NSBA)'s annual conference is April 8 – April 10, 2021 and will be held virtually. Mr. Rota strongly encouraged the Board Members to attend.

Mrs. Han Silver asked if we can only receive email notifications vs. voicemail reminders of the Board meetings. Board conversation ensued.

Ms. Stassou asked to implement a course of action to ensure no student goes hungry. Mr. Rota shared the district's system of how meals are freely provided to families with full anonymity.

Ms. Cho inquired about alternating Board Members on the Pandemic Learning Committee. Ms. Colbath shared as of April 1 the Committee will have new members but will revert back to the originally assigned members May 1, 2021.

Ms. Colbath shared that the next Garden State Coalition of Schools (GSCS) meeting will be virtual and held Wednesday, March 24, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.

Ms. Colbath announced there will be an Asian March on Saturday, March 27th commencing at Hudson Lights, and encouraged all to attend.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mr. Rubino, to adjourn, 9:06 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Haquisha Q. Taylor

HAQUISHA Q. TAYLOR
SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR/BOARD SECRETARY