FORT LEE BOARD OF EDUCATION FORT LEE, NEW JERSEY

MINUTES

PUBLIC BUSINESS MEETING March 8, 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 Mr. Rubino.

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. Haqquisha Q. Taylor, Mrs. Diane Collazo-Baker,

Dennis McKeever, Board Attorney, Rakiah Bonjour, Esq. of the Sciarrillo,

Cornell, Merlino, McKeever & Osborne, LLC

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Mr. Rubino, seconded by Mrs. Morell, at 6:34 p.m., to move into Executive Session.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

The Board reconvened into the Public Meeting at 7:36 p.m.

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Mr. Rota shared that there were three (3) HIB investigations; all three (3) were founded.

Mr. Rota shared that the schools continue operating as a hybrid model and the elimination of virtual Wednesdays has been successful. Mr. Rota further shared the administration is working diligently to open up more in-person instruction for K-12 grades and are moving to do this in the near future.

Mr. Rota shared that the Fort Lee Department of Health continues to report a slight steady decline in the daily COVID cases in the community, but still need to remain vigilant since we remain

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classified in the Orange status level.

Mr. Rota informed the Board Members that the State testing will still be required since the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) has not requested a waiver from the federal government. At this time it is uncertain how the testing will be conducted and we are waiting on guidance from the NJDOE how best to proceed in administering the testing.

Mr. Rota introduced the 2021-2022 Preliminary Budget Presentation. Ms. Taylor and Mr. Rota shared a comprehensive overview of the Preliminary Budget Presentation.

Mr. Rota publically commended Ms. Taylor's dedicated efforts preparing the budget, and Mrs. Collazo-Baker's committed efforts working with the grant funding that we received and will be receiving.

Ms. Colbath asked the public to hold their questions on the budget until the Public Comments Session.

Ms. Colbath recognized International Women's Day, and introduced Mrs. Richter who acknowledged and thanked all the influential woman in the Fort Lee Community and the female educators and staff members of the Fort Lee schools that play a large role in the lives of our students. Mrs. Richter encouraged all the female students to strive hard to achieve their inspirational goals.

Mr. Rubino thanked all the Fort Lee female Board Members, and shared that it is an honor serving with them.

Ms. Stassou shared her gratitude to be part of the Board, and commended Ms. Colbath for doing a great job in her new role as Board President, and thanked her for her mentorship.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mrs. Morell shared the following reports on committee meetings.

- The Policy Committee meeting was held on February 3, 2021 and discussed the epilepsy policy and the importance of finalizing the policy that can provide the necessary training for teachers to become certified.
- Ad Hoc Pandemic Learning Committee meeting was held on February 5, 2021 and the topics discussed included a stronger push for increasing in-person instruction, eliminating virtual Wednesdays, combining cohorts, extending school hours beyond 1:00 p.m., and safely providing lunches to the students. Ms. Jill Scarpa, Fort Lee Health Official, was in attendance and shared her opinion on these topics to safely bring the students back into the buildings providing the risk level doesn't trend upward.
- Equity Committee meeting was held on February 17, 2021 and discussed the goals and strategies of the committee.
- NJSBA Special Education Committee has been meeting weekly since February. The
 committee has been discussing a resolution regarding parent advocacy and how best to
 develop it. The Committee is targeting to introduce it at the May Delegate Assembly.

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Mrs. Morell shared that Senator Sweeney introduced a bill that addresses students who are aging out to add one more year to their IEPs due to the COVID-19 negative impact.

Mrs. Morell attended the Garden State Coalition meeting and shared that it was phenomenal, and consisted of many superintendents that shared a similar dialog of how and when schools can reopen safely. Mrs. Morell strongly encouraged all Board Members to attend any upcoming meetings.

PUBLIC WORK SESSION

Ms. Colbath shared there is a new policy being enacted; #2POL that amends the committee policy by adding the Personnel and Interview Committee that defines the scope of the committee.

Ms. Colbath shared that Resolution #11F notes a ten-year lease term that requires Board approval. If the resolution is approved tonight there is a possibility it may appear on the next Board Agenda for additional approval for unique requirements to establish a ten-year lease.

Ms. Colbath shared the Resolution regarding the legislature to recognize teachers as "front line" workers resulting in a high priority to receive the COVID-19 vaccine has passed which is excellent news. Mr. Rota is looking into establishing a vaccine site for the district teachers and staff.

Mrs. Colbath shared there are still some district calendar issues to be resolved before voting on the 2021 – 2022 District Calendar (Resolution #2CUR) and encouraged the Board Members to approve postponing #2CUR until the next board meeting.

MOTION by Ms. Colbath, seconded by Mr. Rubino, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves to postpone #2CUR.

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

Ms. Colbath requested to amend Resolution #6F to advance the Board Attorney date from April 12, 2021 to March 22, 2021.

Mrs. Romba inquired the necessity to change the date in Resolution #6F. Mrs. Han Silver asked Ms. Colbath her timeline for all the Board Members to review the RFPs and the Negotiations Committee to conduct interviews.

Ms. Colbath shared Ms. Taylor will be electronically distributing the RFPs to all the Board Members and the two (2) weeks between the March 8th and March 22nd Board meetings should provide enough time to decide on the appointment of a law firm.

MOTION by Ms. Colbath, seconded by Mr. Rubino, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves to amend the date in Resolution #6F to March 22, 2021.

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 7-2. Mrs. Romba and Mrs. Han Silver voted no.

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

MOTION by Mrs. Cho, seconded by Mr. Rubino, to open the floor to the public, 8:50 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

Ms. Colbath publically apologized to David Gereb for interfering during his public comment reducing his time to speak less than three minutes at the February 22, 2021 Board meeting

Councilman Peter Suh congratulated Ms. Taylor for doing a great job on the budget, and expressed concerns regarding the Fort Lee PILOT programs. Councilman Suh shared they are in discussions to establish a site solely designated for the teachers and staff to be vaccinated. He also shared that he is willing to help the Fort Lee Board of Education in any way he can.

Ms. Colbath shared that the Office of Emergency Management along with Mr. Rubino working with the County Commissioners are collaborating efforts to facilitate the teachers and staff getting vaccinated.

Public participants shared their concerns and comments to include gratitude towards the teachers for doing a fantastic job; Jill Scarpa's opinion to reopen the schools five (5) days a week; much frustration that schools are not open five (5) days a week and the Fort Lee Board of Education's plan and timeline to achieve this milestone; collapsing cohorts; the requirements of the teachers to return to school and their commitment to return; strategies to improve math education; sanitization; clarification of the twelve (12) individuals allowed in each classroom; academic/athletic summer programs; interaction with the students; and the displeasure of hearing the public recommending physical education teachers be furloughed.

Ms. Cho shared that Jim Tedesco, Bergen County Executive, posts COVID numbers on his Facebook page every Tuesday and Friday for all the towns and municipalities in Bergen County.

Mrs. Romba shared that she has been instructed to return to in-person teaching in two weeks with no definitive preparation details exemplifying each school district have different reopening plans.

Mrs. Han Silver reiterated there has been many discussions of the number of individuals safely permitted in each classroom and that when collapsing cohorts certain classrooms may exceed the allotted twelve (12) individuals.

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

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mrs. Han Silver, to close the floor to the public, 10:04 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

RESOLUTIONS

BOARD

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

Public Business Meeting Minutes February 22, 2021 Private Executive Meeting Minutes February 22, 2021

MOTION by Mrs. Romba, seconded by Ms. Stassou, 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 class trips listed on the attached summary. Attachment: CLASS TRIPS

2CUR Postponed

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: 2021-2022 DISTRICT CALENDAR**

MOTION by Mr. Rubino, seconded by Mrs. Romba, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves item #1CUR and to postpone #2CUR.

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

FINANCE

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 January 2021 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. Attachment: BOARD SECRETARY REPORT - JANUARY 2021; TREASURER'S REPORT - JANUARY 2021

- 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 January 2021. 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. Attachment: LINE ITEM TRANSFERS JANUARY 2021
- 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 bills list in the amount of \$5,465,189.14 for March 2021 checks. Attachment: BILLS LIST
- 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 \$64.85 for March 2021 checks. Attachment: CAFETERIA BILLS
- 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 \$11,797.00 for March 2021 checks. Attachment: ATHLETIC BILLS
- **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 through April 12, 2021.
- **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, accepts the following **donations**:

<u>DONATIONS</u>						
Amount/Estimated Item Value Donor On Behalf Of						
18 Chromebook Carts (Used)	\$9,000	Clifton High School	Lewis F. Cole Middle School			

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon 8F Superintendent, approves recommendation renewing the of the the 2020-2021 agreements/contracts for school year the of following: Attachment: PARCHMENT AGREEMENT

AGREEMENTS 2020-2021

PARCHMENT LLC - Guidance Department K12 Multi-Credential Service

9F THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the inclusion in the Preliminary 2021-2022 School District Budget of a withdrawal from Capital Reserves in the amount of \$3,108,750 as follows:

CAPITAL RESERVE PROJECTS	
Fort Lee High School Retaining Wall Repair	\$ 562,500
Fort Lee High School HVAC Upgrade (1st Floor West Wing)	393,750
Fort Lee High School HVAC Upgrade (2nd Floor West Wing)	568,750
Fort Lee High School HVAC Upgrade (1st Floor East Wing)	175,000
Fort Lee High School Window Replacement (Weight Room)	315,000
School #3 A/C (VRF) Installation	437,500
School #1 A/C (VRF) Installation	656,250
Total Capital Reserve Projects	\$3,108,750

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves the Preliminary 2021-2022 School District Budget as follows:

	Budget	Local Tax Levy
General Fund	\$78,450,634	\$69,575,818
Special Revenue Fund	2,642,469	-0-
Debt Service Fund	4,214,365	3,804,061
Total Base Budget	\$85,307,468	\$73,379,879

10F WHEREAS, Policy No. 6471 "School District Travel" and N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3 provide that the Fort Lee Board of Education shall establish in the annual school budget a maximum expenditure amount that may be allotted for travel and expense reimbursement; and

WHEREAS, the Fort Lee Board of Education appropriated \$108,046 for travel during the 2020-2021 school year and has spent \$5,222 as of March 8, 2021. **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education hereby

establishes the school district travel maximum for the 2021-2022 school year at \$100,000.

WHEREAS, the Fort Lee Board of Education approved extending the term of the Lease Agreement for Central Office space at 2175 Lemoine Avenue, Fort Lee, New Jersey, for six (6) months from January 1, 2020 to June 30, 2020 including additional month-to-month extensions with Unlmtd Real Estate Group who was, subsequently, purchased by I Lemoine Property, LLC with the continuance of Fort Lee Board of Education Central Office space lease terms and conditions; and

WHEREAS, the Fort Lee Board of Education approved on July 27, 2016 its intent to lease space from the Parking Authority of the Borough of Fort Lee for Board of Education District Offices;

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

NOW, THEREFORE FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the **termination of the Lease Agreement with I Lemoine Property, LLC** effective on or about March 23, 2021.

MOTION by Mrs. Richter, seconded by Mrs. Romba, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1F through #11F.

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0, with exception Mrs. Romba and Mrs. Morell abstained on item #11F. Ms. Colbath expressed kudos for the donation of 18 Chromebook Carts.

- **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, accepts, with regret, the **retirement** of Rosemarie Milone, as a School Secretary at Lewis F. Cole Intermediate and Middle School, after dedicating 20.5 years of service to the district, effective July 1, 2021.
- **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 Da						
Andrea Mayes	Paraprofessional	S2	3-13-21			
Hannah Guitierrez	Paraprofessional	S2	2-28-21			

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:

	<u>APPOINTMENTS</u>								
First Name	Last Name	Position	Loc	Position Control #	Annual Salary Prorated	Effective Date			
Anashia	Jenkins	Health Care Assistants PT .72 (25 hours/week)	S2	02-3115- 02	\$20.00/hour	3-9-21			

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

	<u>TRANSFERS</u>										
Name	From Location	From Position	To Location	To Position	Salary Change	Effective Date					
Mona Yousef	FLHS	Personal Aide Grade 10 1:1 07-9101-58	S2	Personal Aide PK Spec Ed 2:1 02-9101- 93	N/A	2/26/2021					
Leonard Braun	LFCIS	Personal Aide Grade 5 2:1 05-9101-88	S2	Personal Aide BD 2:1 02-9101-03	N/A	3/2/2021					

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	Туре	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
Darrell DeLuise	Custodian	S1	Medical	Amend	1/15/21 to 3/21/21	N/A	N/A	N/A	3/22/21
Elisa Karam	Teacher Grade 3	S2	Maternity	Amend	2/19/21 to 5/4/21	N/A	5/5/21 to 11/28/21	N/A	11/29/21
Karli Raffo	LDT-C	S2	Maternity	New	N/A	N/A	9/1/21 to 11/30/21	N/A	12/1/21
Debra Colosimo	Paraprofessional	S2	Medical	New	3/12/21 to 4/5/21	N/A	N/A	N/A	4/6/21

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							
Name	Grade/ Subject	Loc	Salary	Effective Dates	Reason for opening		
Arleen Artinian	Teacher Kindergarten	S4	Continuous Assignment	3/16/21 to 6/30/21	Melanie Markarian (Maternity)		
Maria Faia	Guidance Counselor	S4	Continuous Assignment	1/4/21 to 4/30/21 Amended	Andria Fusco (Medical)		

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

Yarenmy Rojas Hajnalka Veszelovszk **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves **amending the appointment of Cheerleader Co-Curricular Advisors for the 2020-2021 school year**. This resolution supersedes Resolution No. 30319 dated July 13, 2020.

CO-CURRICULAR 2020-2021							
20-2021 Co- Advisor	Co-Curricular Activity	Class	Stipend				
Brittany Butler	Cheerleader Co-Advisor (Plus \$1,000 bonus for chaperoning JV and V basketball games) (Winter & Spring Season @ 75% of stipend)	B & D+ \$1000 =	\$7,866				
Melanie Catalano	Cheerleader Co-Advisor (Plus \$1,000 bonus for chaperoning JV and V basketball games) (Winter Season Only @ 25% of stipend)	\$10,488	\$2,622				

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves **the appointment of additional Curriculum Writers for 2020-2021,** for services to be performed outside the contractual day, to be paid a stipend at an hourly rate of \$45.00 per hour, for an aggregate total not to exceed \$39,000, to be charged against account # 11-000-221-104-30-000, for the teaching staff members listed below:

CURRICULUM WRITERS					
CONTENT AREA CERTIFICATED STAFF MEMBERS					
Math	Alexandra Pena, Chris Turtoro				
Science	Brittany West, Julieth Colorado				

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the **Substitute Administrators** daily rate of pay of \$350.00 per diem for the 2020-2021 school year.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the **2021 Summer Employment of School Nurses** for the following staff members (up to 10 hours each at \$45.00 per hour = \$450.00) not to exceed an aggregate total of \$3,150.00 to be charged against Account # 11-000-213-100-00-000.

SUMMER 2021 SCHOOL NURSE STAFFING

Nateka Brewton-Ritter
Holly Alasio
Dominique Kondreck
Arianna Egloff
Alyssa Marasciulo
Kim Bancroft
Theresa Vallone

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mrs. Romba, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1P through #11P.

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0. Ms. Colbath congratulated Rosemarie Milone on her retirement.

POLICY

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: 2021-03-08 #1POL**

Policy/Reg No.	Topic
P0151	Organization Meeting

2POL 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: **Attachment:** 2021-03-08 #2POL

Policy/Reg No.	Topic
P0155	Board Committees

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mr. Rubino, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1POL and #2POL.

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0; with exception Mrs. Han Silver abstained from #2POL only.

OLD BUSINESS

Mrs. Cho inquired about the Ad Hoc Pandemic Learning Committee rotating members, and if there will be a meeting before the next Board meeting. Ms. Cho asked that we update our website to reflect the New Jersey Department of Health's (NJDOH) most recent COVID-19 information. Ms. Cho then inquired if we received the results from the surveys distributed to the parents. Mr. Rota shared that the principals have been compiling the survey results and applying the responses to their respective buildings.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Colbath shared the High School Dracula Radio Play will premier virtually on March 25th at 7:00 p.m.

Ms. Colbath shared that the resolution Mrs. Morell and Mrs. Romba drafted regarding the requirements of accepting the lowest possible bidder on projects will be recirculated to the Board Members for review and the resolution will be added to the March 22nd Board meeting for discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Rubino, seconded by Mrs. Richter, to adjourn, 10:24 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Haqquísha Q. Taylor

HAQQUISHA Q. TAYLOR

SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR/BOARD SECRETARY

HQT/toc 03/12/2021