

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

**MINUTES**

**REORGANIZATION MEETING  
Wednesday, January 3, 2024  
Lewis F. Cole Intermediate School Cafetorium  
and Zoom Meeting**

**CALL TO ORDER BY THE BOARD SECRETARY**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mrs. Dina Messery, Board Secretary.

Dr. Kravitz led the public in the Flag Salute. Mrs. Messery read the Open Public Meetings announcement, read the results from the November 7, 2023 election and administered the Oath of Office to Mrs. Kimberly Curry, Mrs. Amy Ko-Tang, Mrs. Tanya Byers-Kang and Mr. Douglas Lopez. Newly elected officials were seated for roll call.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Mrs. Tanya Byers - Kang, Mrs. Kimberly Curry, Mr. Kacy Knight (Virtual), Mrs. Amy Ko-Tang, Mr. Douglas Lopez, Ms. Holly Morell, Mrs. Kristen Richter, Mr. Michael Rubino, Ms. Paula Colbath

**Also Present:** Dr. Robert Kravitz, Mrs. Dina Messery, Mrs. Diane Collazo-Baker, Mrs. Lindita Agastra

**NOMINATIONS FOR THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT**

Mrs. Messery announced that the floor was open for nominations for President of the Fort Lee Board of Education.

Motion by Mr. Rubino to nominate Ms. Paula Colbath for President.  
Motion by Ms. Morell to nominate Mrs. Kristen Richter for President

Roll call vote, 5-4, for Mrs. Kristen Richter for President.

Mrs. Messery congratulated Mrs. Richter and turned the meeting over to 2024 Board President, Kristen Richter.

**NOMINATIONS FOR THE OFFICE OF VICE PRESIDENT**

Mrs. Richter called for nominations for Vice President of the Fort Lee Board of Education.

Motion by Mr. Rubino to nominate Ms. Paula Colbath for Vice President.  
Motion by Mrs. Richter to nominate Ms. Holly Morell for Vice President.

Roll call vote resulted 4-4 tie, a second roll call vote was done.  
Second Roll call vote, 5-4, for Ms. Holly Morell for Vice President.

Mrs. Messery congratulated Vice President Holly Morell.

**PUBLIC WORK SESSION**

Dr. Kravitz stated that we will be going out for RFP's for the district's professional services, legal, banking, auditor, architect, once the board committees are established in order to align with our school fiscal year.

**HEARING OF CITIZENS**

MOTION by Ms. Morell, seconded by Mrs. Curry, to open the floor to the public, 6:18 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

Members of the public congratulated all of the newly elected board members. Several citizens expressed their desire for the board's priorities in 2024 to focus on diversity and inclusivity for all as well as academic performance.

MOTION by Mr. Rubino, seconded by Ms. Colbath, to close the floor to the public, 6:46 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

**REORGANIZATION RESOLUTIONS**

Mrs. Richter shared that the Board members will collectively read item E (*Code of Ethics for School Board Members*).

**A. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves The Record and The Star Ledger as the **designated newspapers for public notices**, for the 2024 Calendar Year.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education **designates the bulletin board located at the entrance of the Central Office at 231 Main Street, 3rd Floor, Fort Lee, New Jersey, as the official public place where all notices of meetings** of this Board together with all other notices which may be required by law or by designation of this Board be posted pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act.

**B. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education adopts the following **Schedule of Meetings for the 2024 Calendar Year**. Unless noted, the meeting day is a Monday and the location is the Lewis F. Cole Intermediate School Cafetorium, 467 Stillwell Avenue, Fort Lee, NJ. Check our district website at [www.flboe.com](http://www.flboe.com) for updates to the 2024 meeting schedule.

Month	Day
JANUARY	3 <sup>rd</sup> (Wednesday - Reorganization Meeting)
	16 <sup>th</sup> (Tuesday)
FEBRUARY	5 <sup>th</sup>
	21 <sup>st</sup> (Wednesday)
MARCH	4 <sup>th</sup>
	18 <sup>th</sup>
APRIL	8 <sup>th</sup>
	29 <sup>th</sup>

MAY	6 <sup>th</sup>
	20 <sup>th</sup>
JUNE	3 <sup>rd</sup>
	17 <sup>th</sup>
JULY	15 <sup>th</sup>
AUGUST	5 <sup>th</sup>
	19 <sup>th</sup>
SEPTEMBER	3 <sup>rd</sup> (Tuesday)
	16 <sup>th</sup>
OCTOBER	7 <sup>th</sup>
	21 <sup>st</sup>
NOVEMBER	4 <sup>th</sup>
	18 <sup>th</sup>
DECEMBER	16 <sup>th</sup>

All meetings will be held at 6:30 p.m. and immediately go into Executive Session. We will reconvene into the Public Business Meeting at approximately 7:30 p.m. The Fort Lee Board of Education reserves the right to change locations of meetings by posting notices at the entrance of the Central Office at 231 Main Street, 3rd Floor, Fort Lee, New Jersey, the affected schools, and on our District website ([www.flboe.com](http://www.flboe.com)). Official action will be taken at public meeting(s).

Any revisions of this schedule will be publicized in accordance with the notice requirements of the "Open Public Meetings Act," Chapter 231, P.L. 1975.

1. The Secretary of this Board is hereby authorized and directed to (a) post and maintain posted throughout the year on the Board's officially designated public bulletin board the schedule of the regular meetings of this Board as described in paragraphs nos. 1, 2, and 3; (b) submit a copy of said schedule of meetings to The Record and The Star Ledger; (c) file a copy of said schedule of meetings with the Clerk of the Borough of Fort Lee; (d) post on the Fort Lee Board of Education website; and (e) do all that is necessary to comply with the Open Public Meetings Act (Chapter 231, Laws of 1975) to the end that adequate notice of such public meetings, pursuant to such statute, be given according to law.
2. In addition to the aforesaid meetings, the Fort Lee Board of Education will hold such other meetings as the public business may require, but pursuant to and with such additional notice as is required by the said Open Public Meetings Act.
3. Please note all Regular Business Meetings will be recorded and televised on Spectrum Cable and the district website.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves the next Reorganization Meeting to be held on **Monday, January 6, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the Lewis F. Cole Intermediate School Cafetorium, 467 Stillwell Avenue, Fort Lee, NJ**. Official action will be taken.

**C. WHEREAS**, all warrants, checks or other instruments providing the **payment of money hereafter issued by the Fort Lee Board of Education through the following TD bank accounts:**

<b>Bank Account</b>	<b>Signatory 1</b>	<b>Signatory 2</b>	<b>Signatory 3</b>
Custodian	President or Vice President	Business Administrator/Board Secretary or Asst. Business Administrator	Treasurer of School Monies
Payroll/Salary and Agency	Treasurer of School Monies, only		
Athletic	Athletic Director	Business Administrator/Board Secretary or Asst. Business Administrator	
Cafeteria	Business Administrator/Board Secretary or Asst. Business Administrator		
Unemployment Compensation Trust	Treasurer of School Monies	Business Administrator/Board Secretary or Asst. Business Administrator	
Scholarship	Business Administrator/Board Secretary	Principal	
General Organization	Principal	Business Administrator/Board Secretary or Asst. Business Administrator	

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves the following named **banks be designated as depositories** for the Fort Lee Fort Lee Board of Education:

**TD BANK  
New Jersey Asset and Rebate Management**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Fort Lee Board of Education authorizes the **Business Administrator/Board Secretary to utilize wire transfers.**

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

1. That the **Current Bylaws and Policies** of the Fort Lee Board of Education of the Borough of Fort Lee in the County of Bergen adopted and amended as needed, are hereby **confirmed, ratified and approved and supersede any prior policy, bylaw, and regulation.**
  
2. That the said **Bylaws, Policies, and Regulations** as described in paragraph 1 above, shall **remain in full force and effect through June, 30 2024**, except as may be amended from time to time.

- E. **WHEREAS**, each **School Board Member is responsible to read and become familiar with the Code of Ethics** for School Board Members; the Code of Ethics became part of the School Ethics Act on July 26, 2001.

**WHEREAS**, the following **Code of Ethics** (Policy No. 0142) for Board Members is set forth as a **guide to conflict-of-interest situations and unethical activity for Board Members**.

***18A:12-24.1 Code of Ethics for School Board Members***

*A school board member shall abide by the following Code of Ethics for School Board Members:*

- a. I will uphold and enforce all laws, rules and regulations of the State Fort Lee Board of Education, and court orders pertaining to schools. Desired changes shall be brought about only through legal and ethical procedures.*
  - b. I will make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of children and will seek to develop and maintain public schools that meet the individual needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex, or social standing.*
  - c. I will confine my board action to policy making, planning, and appraisal, and I will help to frame policies and plans only after the board has consulted those who will be affected by them.*
  - d. I will carry out my responsibility, not to administer the schools, but, together with my fellow board members, to see that they are well run.*
  - e. I will recognize that authority rests with the Fort Lee Board of Education and will make no personal promises nor take any private action that may compromise the board.*
  - f. I will refuse to surrender my independent judgment to special interest or partisan political groups or to use the schools for personal gain or for the gain of friends.*
  - g. I will hold confidential all matters pertaining to the schools which, if disclosed, would needlessly injure individuals or the schools. In all other matters, I will provide accurate information and, in concert with my fellow board members, interpret to the staff the aspirations of the community for its school.*
  - h. I will vote to appoint the best qualified personnel available after consideration of the recommendation of the chief administrative officer.*
  - i. I will support and protect school personnel in proper performance of their duties.*
  - j. I will refer all complaints to the chief administrative officer and will act on the complaints at public meetings only after failure of an administrative solution.*
- L.2001,c.178,s.5.*

- F. **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education **adopts the School Code of Ethics for the 2024 Calendar Year**, and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that each **Board Member shall abide by the Code of Ethics and has signed an Acknowledgment of Receipt** to confirm that they have received a copy of the Code of Ethics for School Board Members contained within the School Ethics Act, C.178, P.L. 2001. Failure to sign this Acknowledgment does not relieve a Board Member of the responsibility to understand and adhere to the Code of Ethics.

- G. **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves **utilizing “Robert’s Rules of Order”** as the parliamentary procedure for deliberation and debate in order to conduct meetings in a fair and orderly manner for the 2024 Calendar Year.
- H. **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves the **use of the Uniform Minimum Chart of Accounts** as per N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.2 through June 30, 2024.
- I. **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education authorizes the School Business Administrator to **enter into a contract with Phoenix Advisors, LLC as the Continuing Disclosure Agent and Registered Municipal Advisor** in connection with bond issuances to provide certain financial and other information and notices, within specified timeframes, for the contract period through June 30, 2024 in the annual amount of \$1,350.
- J. **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves the following **tax-sheltered annuity providers through June 30, 2024.**

VALIC Financial Advisors, Inc.  
AXA Equitable  
Financial Resources  
Lincoln Investment Planning  
MetLife  
Security Benefit Life  
Teachers Pension

- K. **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves **ADMIN Partners, LLC as the Third Party Administrator of Tax Shelter Annuities through June 30, 2024.**
- L. **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education **authorizes the School Business Administrator to make Line Item Transfers of Funds**, at the State chart of accounts level, to be made prior to the account being in deficit and, therefore, subject to ratification at the next Regular Meeting of the Board.
- M. **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education **authorizes the School Business Administrator to approve payment of bills through June 30, 2024, between scheduled Public Board Meetings**, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:19-4.1.

**N. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education **approves the enrollment of Fort Lee High School as a Member of the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) through June 30, 2024.**

**O. WHEREAS**, N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-10 provides that a Board of Education, **without advertising for bids or after having rejected all bids obtained pursuant to advertising therefore by resolution, may purchase any goods or services pursuant to a contract or contracts for such goods or services entered into on behalf of the State by the Division of Purchase and Property; and**

**WHEREAS**, the Fort Lee Board of Education has the **need, on a timely basis, to procure goods and services utilizing State contracts; and**

**WHEREAS**, the Fort Lee Board of Education desires to **authorize its purchasing agent through June 30, 2024, to make any and all purchases necessary to meet the needs of the School District.**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education **authorizes the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary to utilize State Contracts for the procurement of Goods and Services through State Agencies for the 2024 Calendar Year; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education does hereby **authorize the District purchasing agent to make purchases of goods and services entered into on behalf of the State by the Division of Purchase and Property**, including but not limited to the Federal General Services Administration and cooperative purchasing programs in other states and those contained on the Division's website.

**P. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education does hereby **authorize the District purchasing agent to make purchases of goods and services entered into on behalf of the following cooperative purchasing agencies through June 30, 2024.**

- Bergen County Registered Cooperative Pricing System
- Bergen County Special Services School District (BCSSSD)
- Educational Data Services
- Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission (HCESC)
- Educational Services Commission of New Jersey A.K.A. Middlesex County Cooperative
- Region V Council for Special Education
- South Bergen Jointure Commission
- The Cooperative Purchasing Network
- Keystone Purchasing Network
- National Joint Powers Alliance
- Fort Lee Municipality/Public Works
- U.S. Communities Cooperative Purchasing
- Elite Spiders, a Purchasing Cooperative through Lead Agency Maywood Public Schools

- Union County Cooperative Pricing System #8-UCCP
- Kelly Service Cooperative Pricing System
- NJ State of the Art Requisition Technology (NJ START)
- Purchasing Cooperative of America (PCA)
- OMNIA Partners as Cooperative Purchasing Participants
- Sourcwell as Cooperative Purchasing Participants
- The Interlocal Purchasing System (TIPS)

**Q. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-3(a), the Fort Lee Board of Education designates **Dina Messery, Board Secretary/Business Administrator as the Qualified Purchasing Agent** pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:34-5.1 for the Fort Lee Board of Education and authorizes her to award contracts that do not exceed in the aggregate in a contract year the total sum of \$44,000 as provided in N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-3 and 18A:18A-4.3 without public advertising for bids. Furthermore, the Purchasing Agent is authorized to solicit competitive quotations for purchases in excess of \$6,600, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-37(a) and to award contracts pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-37(c).

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-2(b), the **Purchasing Agent is designated to have the power to prepare advertisements, to advertise for and receive bids.**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that all purchases made by the Fort Lee Board of Education be made using purchase orders issued by the Purchasing Agent authorizing a purchase transaction with a vendor to provide goods or to perform services pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18a:18a-2(v).

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that any Fort Lee Board of Education employee who orders and/or receives any goods and services without going through the approved purchase order process has made an unauthorized purchase, a violated State Law N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-2(v) and 18A:18A-3(a), and is subject to disciplinary action.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that pursuant to 18A:18A-44, all goods and services provided or performed under any contract with the Fort Lee Board of Education shall be inspected and reviewed by the appropriate officer (Administrator, Supervisor) or Purchasing Agent of the Fort Lee School District who initially requested said goods and/or services.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Purchasing Agent pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-45(g) may include the sale of district property no longer needed for school purposes as part of the specifications to offset the price of a new purchase; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Business Administrator/Board Secretary or her designee, are hereby authorized and directed to execute warrants without further action on the part of the Board for payment, when due, including the salaries and health benefits of all Fort Lee Board of Education personnel heretofore authorized and approved by the Fort Lee Board of Education as well as other payments necessary to conduct district business and the payroll operation; and



**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the **Business Administrator/Board Secretary** is hereby authorized and directed to make principal and interest payments on school bonds for the **2024 Calendar year**.

- R. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the **School Business Administrator/Board Secretary** shall be responsible to initiate a claim for payment using an **Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) method** that has been approved in accordance with the N.J.S.A. 18A:19-1 et seq. and Policy and Regulation 6470.01 and to make the payment once authorization is granted.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Superintendent of Schools or the Superintendent’s designee, **not under the direct supervision of the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary**, shall be responsible to review and authorize, in writing, the EFT payment of claim using an EFT technology that was initiated and presented by the **School Business Administrator/Board Secretary**.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that an employee, **Board President**, or other individual who is not under the direct supervision of the **School Business Administrator/Board Secretary** shall be responsible to review all EFT weekly Activity Reports on all EFT-based transactions.

- S. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves the **appointment of District Compliance Officers for the 2024 Calendar Year**:

<b>Compliance Position</b>	<b>Employee</b>	<b>Title</b>
504 Committee Coordinator	Kathryn Drumgoole	Director of School Counseling Services
ADA Officer	Diana Davis	Director of Special Services
Affirmative Action Officer	Kathryn Drumgoole	Director of School Counseling Services
Anti-Bullying Coordinator	David Cuzzo	SAC/Guidance Counselor
Bloodborne Pathogen Compliance Officer and Liaison	Ernie Szabo	Supervisor of Building & Grounds
Chemical Hygiene Officer	Ernie Szabo	Supervisor of Building & Grounds
Custodian of School Records	Dina Messery	Business Administrator
District Educational Stability/ Homeless Liaison	Kathryn Drumgoole	Director of School Counseling Services
District Liaison to State’s Child Welfare Authorities	Celeste Williams	Director of Human Resources
District Testing Coordinator	Kathryn Drumgoole	Director of School Counseling Services
Environmental Compliance Officer: (Including, but not limited to, AHERA Coordinator, Asbestos Management and PEOSHA Officer/Coordinator, Indoor Air Quality Designee, Safety & Health Designee)	Ernie Szabo	Supervisor of Building & Grounds
Integrated Pest Management Officer	Ernie Szabo	Supervisor of Building & Grounds
Issuing Officer for Working Papers	Lauren Glynn	Principal – High School
Public Affairs Compliance Officer (PACO)	Dina Messery	Business Administrator

Right-To-Know Officer	Ernie Szabo	Supervisor of Building & Grounds
School Safety Specialist	Robert Kravitz and Tim Ford	Superintendent of Schools and Coordinator of District Security
Substance Awareness Coordinator	David Cuzzo	SAC/Guidance Counselor
Title IX Officer	Celeste Williams	Director of Human Resources

- T. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves the appointment of **Taylor Law Group, LLC. as Board Attorneys and Labor Counsel through June 30, 2024.**
- U. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves the appointment of **Cornell, Merlino, McKeever & Osborne, LLC as Special Education Counsel through June 30, 2024.**
- V. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves the appointment of **Wielkotz and Company, LLC. for School Auditing Services through June 30, 2024.**
- W. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves the following **Insurance Brokers through June 30, 2024:**

Medical, Vision and Dental	Brown & Brown Benefit Advisors
Flexible Spending & Cobra Administration	Brown & Brown Benefit Advisors
Student Accident	CBIZ Insurance Services, Inc.
Fiduciary Liability	CBIZ Insurance Services, Inc.
Property & Casualty	CBIZ Insurance Services, Inc.
General Liability & Automobile	CBIZ Insurance Services, Inc.
Public Official Bonds	CBIZ Insurance Services, Inc.
Boiler & Machinery	CBIZ Insurance Services, Inc.
Errors and Omissions	CBIZ Insurance Services, Inc.
Accidental Death & Dismemberment	CBIZ Insurance Services, Inc.

- X. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves the **Emergency Operations Plan, Crisis Intervention Procedures Manual, and Emergency Management Plan for the 2024 through June 30, 2024.**
- Y. BE IT RESOLVED** that **N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-6.5** requires school districts to evaluate business processes annually to ensure that a strong control environment exists in which sound segregation of duties are in place and allocated amongst available resources appropriately.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-6.6 requires school districts to establish standard operating procedures for each task or function of the business operations of the district and that district employees are aware of such procedures.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves a **Standard Operating Procedures and internal controls manual for the period July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024** and such manual will be updated and modified as needed, as recommended by the **Business Administrator**.

MOTION by Ms. Morell, seconded by Mr. Rubino, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items A - Y.

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

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by Mr. Rubino, seconded by Ms. Colbath to adjourn 6:50 p.m.

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,**

*Dina Messery*

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**Dina Messery**  
**SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR/BOARD SECRETARY**

DM/toc  
01-04-2024