

**ALPHA BOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD OF  
EDUCATION**

**Regular Meeting Minutes – February 16, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.  
Approved March 16, 2021**

**I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

President, Jennifer Pettinelli called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and asked everyone to please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and a subsequent moment of silence.

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT:**

Jennifer Pettinelli read the following statement:

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is either discussed or acted upon. The Board has fully complied with the notice requirements by advertising in The Express Times and The Star-Ledger posting publicly and by notifying the Municipal Clerk of the date, time and place of the meeting.

**ROLL CALL**

Present

President, Jennifer Pettinelli  
Vice-President, Patrick Smith  
Travis Conway  
Christopher McGee  
Loretta Reed

Absent

Others Present

Seth Cohen, Chief School Administrator  
Tim Mantz, Business Administrator/Board Secretary  
Robert Merryman, Board Attorney

Flag Salute – Pledge of Allegiance

Silent Meditation

President Jennifer Pettinelli read the District Mission Statement:

The mission of the Alpha Public School is to provide every student with the opportunity to receive a high quality education, in a small, personal, caring, safe and positive environment in which all students at all grade levels achieve the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. In partnership with the parents and the community, a competent and dedicated staff guides students to develop confidence and become productive and contributing members of a constantly changing society.

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**II. PRESENTATION**

None

**III. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES**

Motion made by Patrick Smith, seconded by Christopher McGee, to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2021 regular meeting.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Motion made by Patrick Smith, seconded by Christopher McGee, to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2021 executive session.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote

Motion made by Patrick Smith, seconded by Christopher McGee, to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2021 work session.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Motion made by Travis Conway, seconded by Christopher McGee, to approve the minutes of the February 2, 2021 work session.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

**IV. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD**

None

**V. OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Cohen said that the administration had been in contact with another engineer regarding the fire alarm system and is currently awaiting for a proposal.

Jennifer Pettinelli said that the Pandemic Committee would meet the end of February.

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**VI. MONTHLY REPORTS OF BOARD SECRETARY AND TREASURER**

Motion made by Patrick Smith, seconded by Christopher McGee, to approve, on the recommendation of the Chief School Administrator, the acceptance of the monthly financial reports of the Board Secretary and the Treasurer for the month of **January 2021** and further that, in compliance with NJAC 6A:23A-16.10(c)4, the Board of Education certifies that as of **January 31, 2021**, after review of the secretary's monthly financial report and upon consultation with the appropriate district officials, to the best of our knowledge, no major account has been over expended in violation of NJAC 6A:23A-16.10(a)1 and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

**VII. APPROVAL OF TRANSFERS/LIST OF BILLS**

Motion made by Travis Conway, seconded by Christopher McGee, to approve the January 20, 2021 through February 16, 2021 current expense bill list for check numbers 19623 to 19663 totaling \$523,626.34.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Motion made by Patrick Smith, seconded by Loretta Reed, to approve budget transfers in the amount of \$20,000 as presented for the period January 20, 2021 through February 16, 2021 noting that Commissioner approval was not required as the year to date transfers on a cumulative basis do not exceed 10% pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:22-

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

**VIII. PUBLIC INPUT**

None

**IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motion made by Patrick Smith, seconded by Christopher McGee, to adopt the following resolution to enter into executive session at 7:08 p.m. This executive session is expected to last about 20 minutes. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is Personnel, Negotiations, Student Issues, and/or Legal Matters.

It is anticipated that action pursuant to this executive session will not be taken.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

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WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Alpha Borough Board of Education, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action upon the specified subject matter.
2. It is anticipated at this time that the above stated subject matter will be made public upon resolution of all information discussed.
3. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

**X. RECONVENE**

Motion made by Patrick Smith, seconded by Christopher McGee, to reconvene the meeting to public session at 7:26 p.m.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote

**XI. CHIEF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Cohen apologized for the remote day last week and gave the rationale for the decision.

Mr. Cohen told the Board that he recently attended a state wide committee meeting and reported that the State has yet to make a decision as to the best way to move forward regarding in-person instruction. At the moment, the start of standardized testing has been pushed back and could possibly be eliminated should New Jersey receive a federal waiver permitting it.

Mr. Cohen said that the Warren County Department of Health believes that, once vaccines become more readily available, COVID cases will drop significantly.

**ACTION ITEMS:** Chief School Administrator's Recommendations

CONSENT AGENDA: Matters listed within the consent agenda have been referred to members of the Board of Education and/or its standing committees, for reading and study, are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion.

**Consent Agenda Motion: BOARD AFFAIRS**

Motion made by Patrick Smith, seconded by Christopher McGee, to approve the following board affairs agenda item **1.1**.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

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**1.1** To approve the following resolution:

**A RESOLUTION REQUESTING GOVERNOR MURPHY TO INCLUDE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT PERSONNEL IN THE OFFICIAL EXPERT VACCINE ALLOTMENT PANEL'S DEFINITION OF FRONTLINE WORKERS**

**WHEREAS**, the Alpha Board of Education recognizes that the United States, the State of New Jersey and local health authorities, as well as the World Health Organization, have declared a public health emergency regarding the Coronavirus or COVID-19 pandemic; and

**WHEREAS**, the federal and state authorities have put in place guidance detailing the precautionary measures schools must implement to stop its spread of this disease; and

**WHEREAS**, public schools have a profound impact on millions of students, families and staff and are charged with the care, education, nourishment of their students and are an integral part of the health and safety of our communities; and

**WHEREAS**, our district has responded to the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, providing students and staff members with the technology and resources necessary to ensure the efficient delivery of instruction, virtually and in-person; and

**WHEREAS**, the board has a substantial public interest in protecting the health and safety of its students, staff, and community and ensuring that the district can provide staff and students with a safe and effective educational environment that supports student achievement; and

**WHEREAS**, the board recognizes that this health emergency made it necessary to close schools and reinvent the educational programs in a virtual setting and that this may have an adverse impact on student achievement and the emotional and social wellbeing of students; and

**WHEREAS**, the COVID-19 Vaccination Plan published by the State of New Jersey Department of Health (December 15, 2020, pgs. 36-37) prioritizes the availability of vaccines to "essential workers" in Phase 1B of the vaccine protocol; and

**WHEREAS**, school district staff at all levels are essential to the day-to-day operations of this district, responsible for the thorough and efficient education of all students and their social and emotional wellbeing, are critical for virtual and in-class instruction and are "essential workers;"

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** the Alpha Board of Education finds a substantial public purpose exists to request that Governor Murphy give appropriate priority in the statewide administration of the COVID-19 vaccine to all public school district personnel.

COVID-19 Vaccination Plan published by the State of New Jersey Department of Health, see: <https://nj.gov/health/legal/covid19/NJ%20Interim%20COVID-19%20Vaccination%20Plan%20-%20Revised%2012-15-20.pdf>

**RESOLVED**, that a copy of this resolution shall be forwarded to the member of the insert legislative district number legislative district delegation, Assembly Speaker Craig J. Coughlin, Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney, Governor Phil Murphy, and to the New Jersey School Boards Association.

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**Consent Agenda Motion: BUSINESS AFFAIRS**

Motion made by Patrick Smith, seconded by Travis Conway, to approve the following business affairs agenda item **2.1**.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

**2.1** To approve a joint transportation agreement with the Warren County Special Services School District for the 2021-2022 school year with an Administrative Fee of 4%.

**Consent Agenda Motion: PERSONNEL AFFAIRS**

Motion made by Loretta Reed, seconded by Travis Conway, to approve the following personnel affairs agenda items **3.1** through **3.2**.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

**3.1** To accept Zachary Vegh's letter of resignation effective February 19, 2021.

**3.2** To approve Rosemarie Spencer as a substitute teacher for the 2020-21 school year.

**Consent Agenda Motion: SCHOOL AFFAIRS**

Motion made by Christopher McGee, seconded by Loretta Reed, to approve the following school affairs agenda item **4.1**.

Motion carried by roll call vote. All members voting in the affirmative with Travis Conway abstaining.

**4.1** To approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS, The District is operating under state restrictions for COVID-19 and;

WHEREAS, the students and teachers have returned to the school building for instruction

WHEREAS, has authority under District Policy 7510 to set limits on the building's use and;

WHEREAS, the School Cafeteria can hold 30 people seated 6ft apart.

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic represents an extraordinary circumstance; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Alpha Borough Board of Education will hold in-person Board of Education meetings for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year.

RESOLVED; The Alpha Board of Education will hold the numbers of people in attendance in accordance with the Governor's Current Executive order. The numbers of allowable attendees will be advertised and a remote option will be provided.

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**XII. NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Mantz discussed the FY22 budget with the Board.

**XIII. PUBLIC INPUT**

None

**XIV. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m. on a motion by Patrick Smith, seconded by Christopher McGee.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Mantz  
Business Administrator/ Board Secretary