

ALPHA BOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting Minutes – February 15, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.
Approved March 22, 2022

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

CALL TO ORDER:

Vice-President, Patrick Smith called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and asked everyone to please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and a subsequent moment of silence.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT:

Patrick Smith 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

Vice-President, Patrick Smith
Travis Conway
Louis Hardy
Christopher McGee
Loretta Reed
Linda Sutch

Absent

President, Jennifer Pettinelli

Others Present

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

Flag Salute – Pledge of Allegiance

Silent Meditation

Vice-President Patrick Smith 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

Seth Cohen presented the Honor Roll recipients.

Laura Newman introduced herself to the Board and explained the role she would fulfill for the district in 2022-23.

III. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

Motion made by Travis Conway, seconded by Christopher McGee, to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2022 regular meeting.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Motion made by Linda Sutch, seconded by Christopher McGee, to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2022 executive session.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Motion made by Travis Conway, seconded by Christopher McGee, to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2022 work session.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Motion made by Travis Conway, seconded by Christopher McGee, to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2022 executive session.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD

None

V. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Cohen said that the Governor's mask mandate will be lifted as of March 7th. He explained the rationale behind motion 1.1.

VI. MONTHLY REPORTS OF BOARD SECRETARY AND TREASURER

Motion made by Travis Conway, 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 2022** and further that, in compliance with NJAC 6A:23-2.11(c)4, the Board of Education certifies that as of **January 31, 2022**, 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:23-2.11(b) and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year.

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Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

VII. APPROVAL OF TRANSFERS/LIST OF BILLS

Motion made by Linda Sutch, seconded by Christopher McGee, to approve the January 19, 2022 through February 15, 2022 current expense bill list for check numbers 20106 to 20155 totaling \$532,627.58.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Motion made by Travis Conway, seconded by Christopher McGee, to approve budget transfers in the amount of \$10,737.83 as presented for the period January 19, 2022 through February 15, 2022 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:22-8.1.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

VIII. PUBLIC INPUT

Laura Moore how the child study team would be organized in the 2022-23 school year. Mr. Cohen explained how the team would be constructed.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion made by Travis Conway, seconded by Christopher McGee, to adopt the following resolution to enter into executive session at 7:20 p.m. This executive session is expected to last about 30 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

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.

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X. RECONVENE

Motion made by Loretta Reed, seconded by Christopher McGee, to reconvene the meeting to public session at 7:58 p.m.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote

XI. CHIEF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Cohen reviewed motion 1.1 and said that there was one unfounded HIB report.

Mr. Cohen stated that the vaccination clinic would be held Thursday.

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 Travis Conway, seconded by Linda Sutch, to approve the following board affairs agenda items **1.1** through **1.2**.

Motion carried by roll call vote. All members voted in the affirmative with Christopher McGee abstaining from motion 1.2.

1.1 To approve the following resolution:

“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, Governor Murphy has announced that the mask will no longer be mandated for schools after March 6th; and

“WHEREAS, school district is will still follow NJ Department of Health recommendations for the conduct of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic

“NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Alpha Board of Education will allow any student, staff or school visitor to choose whether or not they wish to wear a mask during school hours or at school activities. This is commonly termed a Mask Optional approach. We further resolve to continue to abide by Federal regulations and and NJ State health requirements until changed by the appropriate governing body.

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1.2 To approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the parents of a classified student filed three separate due process petitions covering multiple school years with the Department of Education regarding their child; and

WHEREAS, the parties have negotiated a settlement agreement resolving the due process petitions and other disputed issues, and

WHEREAS, the settlement agreement is in the best interest of the District and will avoid the costs and uncertainty of continued litigation in these matters; therefore

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED this 15th day of February 2022 that the Board approves the Settlement Agreement (attached hereto as Exhibit A, *confidential student information*) and authorizes the Board President or Vice President to execute the Agreement on behalf of the Alpha Board of Education; and it is

FUTHER RESOLVED, that with the approval of the Agreement, School District officials are hereby authorized to take all steps necessary to effectuate the terms of the Agreement.

Consent Agenda Motion: BUSINESS AFFAIRS

Motion made by Travis Conway, seconded by Christopher McGee, to approve the following business affairs agenda items **2.1** through **2.2**.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

2.1 To accept the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) and Auditor’s Management Report on Administrative Findings for the Year Ending June 30, 2021 and order that a copy be filed in the business office and with the New Jersey Department of Education.

2.2 To acknowledge that there were no audit recommendations under the following headings and to approve the corrective action plan.

Audit for Year Ending June 30, 2021

Schedule of findings of Non-Compliance None

Summary of Recommendations

1. Administrative Practices and Procedures	None
2. Financial Accounting and Reporting	None
3. School Purchasing Programs	None
4. School Food Service	None
5. Student Body Activities	None
6. Applications for State School Aid	None
7. Pupil Transportation	None
8. Facilities and Capital Assets	None
9. Miscellaneous	None
10. Follow-up on prior year findings	None

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Consent Agenda Motion: PERSONNEL AFFAIRS

Motion made by Travis Conway, seconded by Christopher McGee, to approve the following personnel affairs agenda items **3.1** through **3.3**.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

- 3.1** To approve Jessica Favoroso as a substitute teacher for the 2021-22 school year.
- 3.2** To approve Carol Gilbert as a substitute teacher for the 2021-22 school year.
- 3.3** To approve LearnWell to provide ten hours of educational services a week to the identified student, while a patient at Summit Oaks Hospital, beginning 2/9/22 at an hourly rate of \$58.

Consent Agenda Motion: SCHOOL AFFAIRS

Motion made by Travis Conway, seconded by Christopher McGee, to approve the following school affairs agenda items **4.1** through **4.3**.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

- 4.1** To approve a contact with the Phillipsburg Board of Education to provide a personal aide for each of the identified students for the 2021-22 school year at an annual cost of \$31,000 each.
- 4.2** To approve a homeless tuition contract, for the identified students, with the Phillipsburg School District for the 2020-21 school year at an annual tuition rate of \$13,857 per student to be paid to the Alpha School District.
- 4.3** To approve the following building use requests:
 - i. PTO on 3/2/22 from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm in the gym and cafeteria for Read Across America Storytime, Cat in the Hat visit and crafts.
 - ii. PTO on 2/23/22 at 6:00 pm in the library for a Playground Committee meeting.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

None

XIII. PUBLIC INPUT

John Schmidt asked what the outcome of motion 1.1 would be. Mr. Cohen explained that masks would become optional with the district having the ability to change if necessary.

Ellen Moore asked where would potential special education kindergarten students would attend school in 2022-23. Mr. Cohen said that placement would depend on what was best for the student in conjunction with available programs.

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XIV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m. on a motion by Christopher McGee, seconded by Loretta Reed.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Mantz
Business Administrator/ Board Secretary