

ALPHA BOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting Minutes – March 19, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
Approved April 16, 2024

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

CALL TO ORDER:

Vice-President, Christopher McGee called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and asked everyone to please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and a subsequent moment of silence.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT:

Christopher McGee 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, Christopher McGee
Travis Conway
Louis Hardy
Jennifer Pettinelli

Absent

President, Patrick Smith
Loretta Reed

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, Christopher McGee 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.

II. PRESENTATION

None

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III. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

Motion made by Louis Hardy, seconded by Travis Conway, to approve the minutes of the February 20, 2024 regular meeting.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Motion made by Louis Hardy, seconded by Travis Conway, to approve the minutes of the February 20, 2024 executive session.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Motion made by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Travis Conway, to approve the minutes of the March 5, 2024 work session.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Motion made by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Travis Conway, to approve the minutes of the March 5, 2024 executive session.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD

None

V. OLD BUSINESS

None

VI. MONTHLY REPORTS OF BOARD SECRETARY AND TREASURER

Motion made by Louis Hardy, seconded by Travis Conway, 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 **February 2024** and further that, in compliance with NJAC 6A:23-16.10(c)3, the Board of Education certifies that as of **February 29, 2024**, 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-(c)4 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.

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VII. APPROVAL OF TRANSFERS/LIST OF BILLS

Motion made by Travis Conway, seconded by Jennifer Pettinelli, to approve the February 21, 2024 through March 19, 2024 current expense bill list for check numbers 21264 to 21303 totaling \$629,902.00.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Motion made by Travis Conway, seconded by Jennifer Pettinelli, to approve budget transfers in the amount of \$23,434.28 as presented for the period February 21, 2024 through March 19, 2024 noting that Commissioner approval was not required as the year to date transfers on a cumulative basis do exceed 10% pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:22-8.1.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

VIII. PUBLIC INPUT

None

IX. CHIEF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Cohen said that he would be sending out Parent/Grandparent Day information detailing the date of April 12th and what activities will be taking place.

Mr. Cohen reported that there was a physical altercation between two 6th grade students and that both were given out of school suspensions.

Mr. Cohen told the Board that lack of staffing and available substitutes directly contributed to the unexpected early dismissal the previous Friday.

X. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

None

ACTION ITEMS: Upon the recommendation of the Chief School Administrator

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: BUSINESS AFFAIRS

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

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

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2.1 To adopt the following resolution to approve the tentative 2024-25 school district budget;

BE IT RESOLVED that the tentative budget be approved for the 2024-2025 School Year using the 2024-2025 state aid figures and the Secretary to the Board of Education be authorized to submit the following tentative budget to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools for approval in accordance with the statutory deadline:

	Budget	Local Tax Levy
General Fund	\$7,479,327	\$4,243,118
Special Revenue Fund	127,763	
Total Base Budget	\$7,607,090	\$4,243,118

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a public hearing be held on May 7, 2024 at the Alpha School for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the budget for the 2024-2025 School Year.

WHEREAS, the Alpha Board of Education recognizes school staff and Board members will incur travel expenses related to and within the scope of their current responsibilities and for travel that promotes the delivery of instruction or furthers the efficient operation of the school district; and

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.1 et seq. requires Board members to receive approval of these expenses by a majority of the full voting membership of the Board and staff members to receive prior approval of these expenses by the Superintendent of Schools and a majority of the full voting membership of the Board; and

WHEREAS, a Board of Education may establish, for regular district business travel only, an annual school year threshold of \$1,500 per staff member where prior Board approval shall not be required unless this annual threshold for a staff member is exceeded in a given school year (July 1 through June 30); and

WHEREAS, travel and related expenses not in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.1 et seq., but deemed by the Board of Education to be necessary and unavoidable as noted on the approved Board of Education Out of District Travel and Reimbursement Forms; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education approves all travel not in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.1 et seq. as being necessary and unavoidable as noted on the approved Board of Education Out of District Travel and Reimbursement Forms; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board of Education approves travel and related expense reimbursements in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.2(b), to a maximum expenditure of \$15,000 for all staff and board members.

2.2 To approve J&B Therapy to provide professional services for the 2024-25 school year on an as needed basis per the indicated rate schedule.

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Consent Agenda Motion: PERSONNEL AFFAIRS

Motion made by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Travis Conway, to approve the following personnel affairs agenda item **3.1**.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

3.1 To approve Amy Jo Trimmer as a substitute teacher for the 2023-24 school year.

Consent Agenda Motion: SCHOOL AFFAIRS

Motion made by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Louis Hardy, to approve the following school affairs agenda items **4.1** through **4.4**.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

4.1 To approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Safety and Security of the students, staff and visitors of the Alpha Public School is a primary concern; and

WHEREAS, the staff and faculty of the Alpha Public School' Administration must communicate certain information to law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, law enforcement agencies require certain information to maintain the public safety; and

WHEREAS, the Alpha Board of Education must comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"); and

WHEREAS, to comply with FERPA while working with law enforcement, and in accordance with Section 2.4 of the Uniform State Memorandum of Agreement Between Education and Law Enforcement Officials, the Superintendent of Schools established a Law Enforcement Unit within the District.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Alpha Board of Education confirms the revised Law Enforcement Unit List, consisting of the following members for the 2023-2024 school year:

- Superintendent of Schools – Seth Cohen
- Head of Buildings & Grounds – Ed Sorge
- Assistant Principal/Supervisor of Instruction – Lori Walker
- School Resource Officer – John Erickson
- School Resource Officer – Ryan Sokoloski

4.2 To approve the following fundraiser requests:

- 8th grade to sell Alpha drawstring bags 3/8/24 through 3/27/24 to raise money for the 8th grade.

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- PTO to collect coins to name the Alpha Eagle Mascot from 3/11/24 through 3/15/24 to raise money for the Alpha School mascot costume.
- 5th – 8th grade band and chorus to sell a one year subscription to the entertainment coupon app from 3/18/24 through 4/2/24 to raise money for the “Music in the Parks” trip.

4.3 To approve the following building use requests:

- i. Girl Scouts on 4/11/24 from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm in the cafeteria for a meeting.
- ii. PTO on 2/27/24 beginning at 6:00 pm in the art room for a meeting.
- iii. PTO on 3/22/24 from 2:45 pm to 4:30 pm in the gym and cafeteria to set up for the craft fair.
- iv. PTO on 4/12/24 from 5:30 pm to 10:00 pm in the gym, cafeteria and four classrooms for the Eagle Escapades.
- v. Alpha School on 5/1/24 through 5/3/24 from 8:15 am to 2:15 pm and 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm on 5/2/24 in room 5 for the Spring Book Fair.

4.4 To approve the following field trips:

- 7th grade choir to Camp Ladore in Waymart, PA on 5/23/24.
- Kindergarten to Barnyard Days in Phillipsburg, NJ on 4/10/24.
- 1st grade to the Crayola Experience in Easton, PA on 4/22/24.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Cohen told the Board that he would like present a Memorial Day assembly but it has been difficult to get community volunteers to help organize the event. He asked the Board for input and assistance.

XII. PUBLIC INPUT

Lindsey Culcasi asked a question regarding motion 2.2. Mr. Cohen clarified the need for the contract.

Ms. Culcasi asked about the professional development offered to the teaching staff throughout the year. Mr. Cohen responded that a professional development plan is approved at the beginning of each school year and reviewed what that entailed.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion made by Louis Hardy, seconded by Travis Conway, to adopt the following resolution to enter into executive session at 7:26 p.m. This executive session is expected to last about 15 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.

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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.

XIV. RECONVENE

Motion made by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Travis Conway, to reconvene the meeting to public session at 7:33 p.m.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote

XV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m. on a motion by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Travis Conway.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Mantz
Business Administrator/ Board Secretary