

ALPHA BOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting Minutes – May 7, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
Approved May 21, 2024

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

CALL TO ORDER:

President, Patrick Smith 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:

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

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

Absent

Louis Hardy

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, 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.

II. PRESENTATION

Mr. Cohen presented the 2024-25 budget.

ALPHA BOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Meeting Minutes-May 7, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
Approved May 21, 2024

III. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

Motion made by Loretta Reed, seconded by Travis Conway, to approve the minutes of the April 16, 2024 regular meeting.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Motion made by Travis Conway, seconded by Loretta Reed, to approve the minutes of the April 16, 2024 executive session.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD

Patrick Smith said that the Board received a letter of interest from Brian Williams to fill the vacant Board seat. The Board interviewed Mr. Williams. Upon concluding the interview, the following motion was brought forth:

Motion made by Christopher McGee, seconded by Loretta Reed, to appoint Brian Williams to the vacant Board seat.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

V. OLD BUSINESS

Loretta Reed asked if all of the Board minutes were up to date on the school's website. Patrick Smith said they would be done within the week.

Jennifer Pettinelli asked about improving the sound system in the gym for plays and concerts. Mr. Cohen said that upgrades would be made over the summer.

VI. MONTHLY REPORTS OF BOARD SECRETARY AND TREASURER

None

VII. APPROVAL OF TRANSFERS/LIST OF BILLS

Motion made by Travis Conway, seconded by Christopher McGee, to approve the April 17, 2024 through May 7, 2024 current expense bill list for check numbers 21343 to 21372 totaling \$375,704.47.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Motion made by Travis Conway, seconded by Loretta Reed, to approve budget transfers in the amount of \$4,665 as presented for the period April 17, 2024 through May 7, 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.

ALPHA BOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Meeting Minutes-May 7, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
Approved May 21, 2024

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

VIII. PUBLIC INPUT

Alyssa Boyle said that she contacted the Board regarding her daughter being harassed in the cafeteria with the school's SRO witnessing the harassment. She had also reached out to Mr. Cohen and said that, to date, no repercussions have been handed out. She said that the school didn't not inform of her of the harassment and that she learned of it via a phone call from the SRO. She said that an HIB investigation eventually took place but too late in her opinion. She claimed that her daughter has missed the last two weeks of school and won't return until she feels emotionally and physically safe attending school. She feels that the harassment is not being addressed by the administration or the Board and it's not right and creates an unstable learning environment. She asked when the HIB investigation would be concluded.

Lindsey Culcasi asked about the grade level class splits. Mr. Cohen answered her inquiry. She also asked if the full time guidance counselor next year would be the same person that is currently part time. Mr. Cohen said it was. Mrs. Culcasi asked when the budget would be available online and she was told the day after the meeting.

Ann Nicolosi said that she was appalled at the board members lack of reaction to the harassment allegations.

Patricia Hubert said that this year has been tough for her daughter due to multiple incidents of harassment that she has experienced. She is concerned that these issues are never addressed nor discipline handed out.

IX. CHIEF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Cohen said that there were two HIB investigations to be discussed in executive session.

Mr. Cohen stated that May 24th would be the Memorial Day Presentation at the school and that on May 28th the traveling 9/11 Memorial will be at the school.

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.

ALPHA BOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Meeting Minutes-May 7, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
Approved May 21, 2024

Consent Agenda Motion: BUSINESS AFFAIRS

Motion made by Loretta Reed, seconded by Travis Conway, to approve the following business affairs agenda items **2.1** through **2.3**.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

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

BE IT RESOLVED to approve the 2024-25 school district budget as follows:

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

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 a Shared Services Agreement with the Greenwich Township Board of Education for the purposes of sharing a Speech Therapist for the 2024-2025 school year whereas the Alpha Board of Education will reimburse the Greenwich Township Board of Education an amount not to exceed \$32,163 of the total cost of the overall pay and benefit package of the Speech Therapist provided.

ALPHA BOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Meeting Minutes-May 7, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
Approved May 21, 2024

2.3 To approve SennSysCo LLC to provide IT services for the 2024-25 school year at an hourly rate of \$70.

Consent Agenda Motion: PERSONNEL AFFAIRS

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

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

3.1 To approve a guide move for Laura Griffiths from Step E, BA+15 to Step E, BA+30 as she has completed the necessary coursework to prompt the horizontal move on the salary guide.

Consent Agenda Motion: SCHOOL AFFAIRS

Motion made by Loretta Reed, seconded by Travis Conway, to approve the following school affairs agenda items **4.1** through **4.6**.

Motion carried by roll call vote. All members voting in the affirmative with Christopher McGee voting in the negative for motion 4.1

4.1 To approve the 2024-25 school year calendar as presented.

4.2 To approve Ed Sorge to attend the Atra Spring Seminar on 4/26/24 in Kenilworth, NJ. Cost is mileage reimbursement.

4.3 To approve the placement of the identified student in the Greenwich Township School District's special education program for the 2024-25 school year at an annual tuition rate of \$40,000 and a personal aide cost of \$35,000.

4.4 To approve a contract with LearnWell to provide educational services to the identified student while placed at the Summit Oaks Hospital for the 2023-24 school year, beginning on 4/29/24, at an hourly rate of \$55.

4.5 To approve Seth Cohen to attend the NJASA Conference in Atlantic City, NJ from 5/15/24 through 5/17/24. Costs will be lodging, M&IE and mileage.

4.6 To approve the following building use requests:

- i. PTO on 5/2/24 from 5:30 to 8:00 pm in the cafeteria to distribute popcorn orders.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

Jennifer Pettinelli expressed her concerns with the class grading system and suggested that it be reviewed to ensure a uniform grading system throughout the school.

Jennifer Pettinelli asked when the Superintendent evaluation would be available. Mr. Cohen said it would be available shortly.

ALPHA BOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Meeting Minutes-May 7, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
Approved May 21, 2024

XII. PUBLIC INPUT

Melissa Simms asked if the district offered presentations for 6th through 8th grade students regarding physical changes, acceptance of others and anti-bullying. Mr. Cohen said that was a planned part of the SEL program next year.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion made by Travis Conway, seconded by Loretta Reed, to adopt the following resolution to enter into executive session at 7:55 p.m. This executive session is expected to last about 60 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.

XIV. RECONVENE

Motion made by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Loretta Reed, to reconvene the meeting to public session at 9:00 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 9:01 p.m. on a motion by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Loretta Reed.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Mantz
Business Administrator/ Board Secretary