

# ALPHA BOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting Minutes – November 19, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.  
Approved December 17, 2024

## I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

### CALL TO ORDER:

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

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

#### 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.

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**II. PRESENTATION**

Mr. Cohen and Lori Walker conducted the Honor Roll Award presentation.

**III. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES**

Motion made by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Loretta Reed, to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2024 regular meeting.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Motion made by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Loretta Reed, to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2024 executive session.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

**IV. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD**

None

**V. OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Cohen said that the official election results should be certified on November 22<sup>nd</sup>.

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

Motion made by Travis Conway, seconded by Christopher McGee, approve the acceptance of the monthly financial reports of the Board Secretary and the Treasurer for the month of **October 2024** and further that, in compliance with NJAC 6A:23A-16.10c3, the Board of Education certifies that as of **October 31, 2024**, after review of the secretary's monthly financial report and upon consultation with the appropriate district officials no major account has been over expended in violation of NJAC 6A:23A-16.10c4 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 Jennifer Pettinelli, to approve the October 16, 2024 through November 19, 2024 current expense bill list for check numbers 21657 to 21710 totaling \$731,271.32.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

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Motion made by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Travis Conway, to approve budget transfers in the amount of \$6,686.86 as presented for the period October 16, 2024 through November 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 Steve Noll is stepping down as the President of the Library Board and would like to remain on as a non-voting consultant. The BOE was ok with that.

Mr. Cohen said that the state had identified 33 Alpha students as being habitually absent. As a result, the school has to create a plan with the parents to remedy the situation.

Mr. Cohen said that HIB investigation 24-25-4 was unfounded and that an appeal was pending.

Mr. Cohen told the Board that the Star-Ledger is no longer publishing. The state is working on a solution for public notices for those districts that have historically used the Ledger.

Mr. Cohen stated that the play was this upcoming Thursday and reported that the current student count was 209.

**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: BOARD AFFAIRS**

Motion made by Loretta Reed, seconded by Christopher McGee, to approve the following board affairs agenda items **1.1** through **1.2**.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

**1.1** To approve the following resolution:

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Be it resolved, upon the recommendation of the superintendent of Schools in conjunction with the Business Administrator/ Board Secretary that the following action be Taken:

Resolved, upon the recommendation of the Superintended and Business Administrator/ Board Secretary, that the Alpha Borough Board of Education, in the County of Warren, New Jersey authorizes Parette Somjen Architects to submit all necessary plans and paperwork to the Department of Education concerning a major amendment to the District's Long Range Facility Plan."

**1.2** To approve the first reading of revised policy 2360 "Use of Technology".

**Consent Agenda Motion: BUSINESS AFFAIRS**

Motion made by Travis Conway, seconded by Loretta Reed, to approve the following business affairs agenda item **2.1** through **2.4**.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

- 2.1** To enter into a joint transportation agreement with the Pohatcong Township School District for the 2024-25 school year at a total annual cost of \$135,147.48
- 2.2** To approve the parental contract for student transportation with Ms. Amy Webb in the amount of \$1800 for the 2024-25 school year.
- 2.3** To accept the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) and Auditor's Management Report on Administrative Findings for the Year Ending June 30, 2024 and order that a copy be filed in the business office and with the New Jersey Department of Education.
- 2.4** 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, 2024**

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 Jennifer Pettinelli, to approve the following personnel affairs agenda item **3.1**.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

**3.1** To approve Robert Griffith as a part-time aide for the 2024-25 school year, beginning on November 11<sup>th</sup>, at an annual salary of \$16,000, prorated for time worked.

**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 **4.6**.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

**4.1** To approve the placement of the identified students in the Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf state facility for the 2024-25 school year at a tuition cost of \$63,393.

**4.2** To approve the school bus emergency evacuation drill that took place on 10/22/24.

**4.3** To approve the Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) Three-Year Plan for 2024-2027.

**4.4** To approve the following building use requests:

- i. PTO on 11/18/24 during the lunch periods in the gym lobby for the school store.
- ii. Music department on 12/10/24 during periods 1 and 2 and from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm in the gym, cafeteria and lobby for the K-4 Winter Concert.
- iii. Music department on 12/18/24 during periods 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> and from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm in the gym, cafeteria and lobby for the 5-8 band and choir Winter Concert.
- iv. Music department on 3/20/25 during periods 1 through 3 and 3/21/25 from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm in the gym, cafeteria and lobby for the K-4 Spring Concert.
- v. Music department on 5/1/25 during periods 1 through 3 and from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm in the gym, cafeteria and lobby for the band and choir Spring Concert.
- vi. PTO on 11/18/24 from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm in the lobby to hand out cheesecake orders.

**4.5** To approve the following fundraiser requests:

- Alpha PTO grade to have a coupon book sale from 10/24/24 to 11/15/24 October 21<sup>st</sup> year to raise money for general fund.
- Class of 2025 to sell holiday wreaths to raise money for 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation.

**4.6** To approve the following field trips:

- 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade choir to the Alpha Memorial Park in Alpha, NJ on 11/30/24.
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade to Camp Ladore in Waymart, PA in May/June 2025.

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**XI. NEW BUSINESS**

None

**XII. PUBLIC INPUT**

None

**XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motion made by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Loretta Reed, to adopt the following resolution to enter into executive session at 7:20 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

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 Travis Conway, seconded by Brian Williams, to reconvene the meeting to public session at 7:30 p.m.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote

Upon reconvening from executive session, the following motion was offered:

Motion made by Travis Conway, seconded by Christopher McGee, to approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Alpha Board of Education has scheduled a hearing with respect to an appeal of a report on Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) investigation number 24-25-4; and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined that there is no basis to disturb the recommendation of the Chief School Administrator with respect to the findings and conclusions made with regard to the HIB matter;

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

The Alpha Board of Education hereby affirms the recommendation of the Chief School Administrator and directs that the Chief School Administrator notify the parents in writing of the Board's decision.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

**XV. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m. on a motion by Christopher McGee, seconded by Brian Williams.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Mantz  
Business Administrator/ Board Secretary