

The Board of Education of the Borough of Essex Fells, in the County of Essex, New Jersey convened on a Reorganizational meeting held virtually on January 5, 2022. The meeting was called to order by the Board Secretary, Mr. Steven Lella at 7:43 P.M. Mr. Lella read the following Statement of Compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act “In compliance with Chapter 231 of the Laws of 1975, a notice for this meeting was posted at the respective offices of the Essex Fells School as of January 3, 2022. Agendas were mailed to the Clerk of the Borough of Essex Fells, the Progress, and the Star Ledger.

**I. Call to Order** – 7:43 P.M. – Board Secretary; Mr. Steven J. Lella

**II. Roll Call**

Mrs. Kris Huegel, President-Present  
Dr. Steven LoCascio, Vice-President-Present  
Mrs. Amanda Haber-Present  
Mr. Raj Mehta- Present  
Mr. Theodore Skopak-Present

Also present: Dr. Michelle V. Gadaleta, Superintendent/Principal; Mr. Steven J. Lella, Business Administrator/Board Secretary; and approximately 83 Members of the Public.

**III. Flag Salute**

- The Board Secretary led the salute to the flag.

**IV. Election Report**

The annual School Election was conducted on Tuesday, November 2, 2021, between the hours of 6:00 A.M. and 8:00 P.M.

The results of the election, as reported and certified by the Essex County Clerk, are as follows:

Members of the Board of Education:	John Toth = 575
	Amanda Haber = 460
	Steven LoCascio = 432

**V. Reorganization of the Board of Education**

- Mr. Lella administered the Oath of Office to elected members Mrs. Amanda Haber and Mr. John Toth.
- Mr. Lella conducted roll call.
- Election of President: Mrs. Huegel nominated Mrs. Haber.

Moved by: Mrs. Huegel

Seconded by: Mr. Toth

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

- Election of VP: Mrs. Huegel nominated Mr. Toth

Moved by: Mrs. Huegel

Seconded by: Mrs. Haber

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

- Mrs. Haber took over the meeting

#### VI. Board Comments/Presidents Report

- Mrs. Haber thanked Dr. LoCascio for all of his years of service on the EFS BOE.
- Dr. Gadaleta thanked Dr. LoCascio for his 13 years on the EFS BOE.
- Mrs. Huegel thanked Dr. LoCascio for his years of service.
- Dr. LoCascio thanked the current BOE members and noted his appreciation to the EF community. He noted it was a pleasure to serve on the BOE and enjoyed his time.

#### VII. Public Comment on Agenda Items Only

- Ms. Lisa Massaroni commented on Columbus Day and the ADL presentation.
- Mr. Ryan Galvin noted it was too cold for outside lunch.
- Ms. Felicia Ramos thought it was too cold for outside lunch.

#### VIII. Old Business / Board Discussion

- Dr. Gadaleta reported she had received zero interest for a crossing guard sub. Mr. Toth asked if we could follow up with the Board Attorney regarding our response to the lack of interest. Mrs. Haber agreed. Mr. Skopak noted we should pursue possible options. Mr. Mehta asked about an ordinance.
- Dr. Gadaleta shared the timeline for the roof referendum.
- Dr. Gadaleta provided a health update: She is continuing regular communication to the community; the CDC has not provided updated information for K-12; mask mandate to expire January 11<sup>th</sup>, but the Governor will ask for extension; we have applied for CLIA license for covid testing and are waiting on tests for children.
  - Dr. Nitti noted that we should revisit a screening program for unvaccinated staff as well as children.
  - 40 students were out sick or due to exposure as of today. 130 children of 250 are vaccinated, and 48 of 53 staff.
  - If the children do eat indoors, we are keeping doors open for ventilation. There will also be outdoor lunch and an indoor recess option. The Essex Fells Country Club has once again donated outdoor space heaters. Dr. Gadaleta noted we are obtaining quotes for outdoor tents (ESSER funding) with a form of heating and are continuing to do the best we can to keep every safe.
  - The BOE discussed the above items as well as criteria for outdoor lunch.
  - Mrs. Haber thanked everyone for all of their efforts to stay open and Mr. Skopak noted the weekly updates are fine.
  - Dr. Nitti explained the 2 types of testing. The screening would be done 2\* per week and the state would cover the cost. The state also introduced Test to Stay, which allows testing for unvaccinated or exposed to be tested and stay in school rather than wait at home. Dr. Nitti also noted that her hospital currently had 0 cases in the ICU that were vaccinated, and 12% of those on ventilators were vaccinated.

- The Board discussed dates on the 2022-23 calendar. Mr. Skopak, Mr. Mehta, Mr. Toth and Mrs. Haber were ok with removing the description of Indigenous People Day over concern with the description of Columbus Day. Mrs. Huegel was ok leaving as is.

**IX. New Business / Board Discussion**

- Dr. Gadaleta noted that January is School Board Recognition Month and welcomed the new BOE members and thanked all BOE members for their service.
- Dr. Gadaleta noted Reorganization resolution #2 regarding BOE meeting dates for 2022.
- Dr. Gadaleta informed the Board of an email that will be coming to them from the DOE regarding Financial Disclosure Statements.
- Dr. Gadaleta explained Gaggle, which addresses concerns from parents regarding use of technology. Dr. Gadaleta explained the safety mechanism/program.

**X. Reorganization Action Items**

**RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves Reorganization Action Items #01 - 2.

- 1. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education adopts the New Jersey School Board Member Code of Ethics.

**NOTES:** Code of Ethics Attached/Bylaws

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mrs. Huegel

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

- 2. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves the following dates for its meetings in the ensuing year (\*dates subject to change):

Wednesday	January 19, 2022	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday	February 2, 2022	Workshop Meeting
Wednesday	February 16, 2022	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday	March 2, 2022	Workshop Meeting
Wednesday	March 16, 2022	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday	April 6, 2022	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday	May 4, 2022	Workshop Meeting
Wednesday	May 18, 2022	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday,	June 1, 2022	Workshop Meeting
Wednesday	June 15, 2022	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday	August 17, 2022	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday	September 7, 2022	Workshop Meeting
Wednesday	September 21, 2022	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Thursday	October 6, 2022	Workshop Meeting
Wednesday	October 19, 2022	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday	November 2, 2022	Workshop Meeting
Wednesday	November 16, 2022	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday	December 7, 2022	Workshop Meeting
Wednesday	December 21, 2022	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday	January 4, 2023 (TBD)	Reorganizational/Workshop Meeting

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mrs. Huegel

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

**X. Superintendents Report**

- Dr. Gadaleta addressed the resolutions regarding staffing. She noted the resignation of Ms. Myers and wished her the best of luck as she took a position closer to her home. Ms. Pilato will be resigning as an EFS staff member and will work as a contracted service provide. And Mrs. Castellano, after all of her years of service and dedication to Essex Fells will be retiring.

**XII. Superintendents Resolutions**

**RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves Superintendent Resolutions #01 –09

**1. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the payment of the following travel related expenses in accordance with the travel policy 6471 for Professional Development:

Staff Member(s): Kelly Mitchell  
Event: Catch up Students Who've Fallen Behind in Reading (K-2)  
Location: Virtual  
Date: TBD  
Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Jaclyn Carroll  
Event: Enhancing Your Social Studies Instruction – Practical Strategies  
(6-12)  
Location: Virtual  
Date: 12/7/21  
Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Laura Quinn  
Event: Defusing Anger, Anxiety and Aggression – Improving Student  
Behavior  
Location: West Orange, NJ  
Date: 3/9/22  
Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Rosalie Takkel  
Event: Defusing Anger, Anxiety and Aggression – Improving Student  
Behavior  
Location: West Orange, NJ  
Date: 3/9/22  
Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Enrique Manlapid  
Event: Best Practices in CO-TEACHING: Effective Strategies and Solutions for Inclusive  
Classrooms (Grades 1-12)  
Location: Virtual  
Date: 1/18/22  
Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Danielle Butler  
Event: NJSLS Grade 4 – N&O Fractions Part 2

Location: Conquer Math

Date: TBD

Cost: \$160.00

Staff Member(s): Danielle Butler

Event: NJSLS Grade 4-Measurement & Data

Location: Conquer Math

Date: 2/15/22

Cost: \$160.00

Staff Member(s): Laurie Fischer

Event: Speech Language TX: Promoting Rapid Change for Children with Severe Phonological Disorders

Location: West Orange, NJ

Date: 2/15/22

Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Danielle Butler

Event: NJSLS Grade 4 - Geometry

Location: Conquer Math

Date: 3/22/22

Cost: \$160.00

Staff Member(s): Nicole Criscione

Event: What's New in Young Adult Literature and How to Use it in Your Program (Grades 6-12)

Location: West Orange, NJ

Date: TBD

Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Jaclyn Carroll

Event: What's New in Young Adult Literature and How to Use it in Your Program (Grades 6-12)

Location: West Orange, NJ

Date: TBD

Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Nicole Criscione

Event: Make Best Use of Google Classroom Grades 6-12

Location: Fairfield, NJ

Date: 2/2/22

Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Jaclyn Carroll

Event: Make Best Use of Google Classroom Grades 6-12

Location: Fairfield, NJ

Date: 2/2/22

Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): EFS Staff

Event: Stephen R. Fogarty, Attorney - Law Update

Location: Essex Fells School

Date: 2/22/22

Cost: \$350.00

Staff Member(s): EFS Staff Grades 3-6  
Event: Dr. Tracey Severns, Student Assessments  
Location: Essex Fells School  
Date: 2/22/22  
Cost: \$350.00

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mrs. Huegel

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the services of Dr. Stuart M. Rothman for the 2021-2022 school year for the following evaluations:

Comprehensive Eye Examination	<b><u>\$250 each</u></b>
Vision Therapy Evaluation	<b><u>\$195 each</u></b>
Vision Processing Evaluation	<b><u>\$225 each</u></b>
Eye Movement Evaluation	<b><u>\$130 each</u></b>
Report of Findings	<b><u>\$ 50 each</u></b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>\$850 each</u></b>

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mrs. Huegel

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

3. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the Use of Facilities Request for the following:

EFFEE – Winter Enrichment Sessions  
1/11/22-3/17/22

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mrs. Huegel

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

4. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the Use of Facilities Request for the following:

1<sup>st</sup> Grade Cub Scouts  
1/21/22 – 2/25/22 – 3/25/22  
Gymnasium 3:05pm-4:15pm

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mrs. Huegel

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

5. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the revised 2022-2023 School Calendar.

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mrs. Huegel

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

6. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the resignation of Allison Myers, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade teacher, with February 4, 2022, as the last day of employment.

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mrs. Huegel

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

7. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the retirement of Jackie Castellano, Technology Coordinator, with June 30, 2022, as the last day of employment.

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mrs. Huegel

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

8. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the resignation of Erika Pilato, Part-Time School Counselor, as an EFTA staff member, with March 4, 2022, as the last day of employment.

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mrs. Huegel

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

9. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, contracting with Garden State Educational Alliance, LLC for School Counselor Services for the 2021-2022 school year at a rate of \$80.00 per hour for 17.5 hours per week beginning March 7, 2022.

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mrs. Huegel

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

### **XIII. Business Resolutions**

**RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves Business Resolutions #01-06.

1. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves bills and claims for December in the amount of \$149,613.51 as certified by the Business Administrator/Board Secretary; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education approves the payroll for November as certified by the Business Administrator and approved by the Superintendent and Board President in the total amount of \$350,487.80, including \$327,438.43 for the gross payroll, \$4,639.23 for the Board's share of FICA/Medicare and \$18,410.14 for the State's share of FICA/Medicare.

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mrs. Huegel

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

2. **WHEREAS**, the Board of Education has received the Reports of the Board Secretary (Secretary) and the Custodian of School Monies (Treasurer) for the Month of October & November;

**WHEREAS**, in compliance with N.J.A.C.6A:23-2.11(c)3, the Secretary has certified that as of the date of the reports, no budgetary line-item account, in accordance with the minimum chart of accounts as established by the New Jersey Department of Education, has obligations and payments which in total exceed the amount appropriated by the Board of Education;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that in compliance with N.J.A.C.6A:23-2.11(c)4, the Board of Education certifies that, after review of the Secretary's monthly financial report, and upon consultation with the appropriate district officials, to the best of its knowledge, no major account or fund has been over expended in violation of N.J.A.C.6A:23-2.11(c)4, and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the year; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that pursuant to P.L. 2004 C73, the Board certifies that after review of the Secretary's monthly financial report and certification, that there are no budgetary transfers that cumulatively exceed 10% that would require the approval of the Commissioner of Education; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the financial reports for the months be accepted and shall become a part of the official minutes of this meeting.

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mrs. Huegel

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

3. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves the transfer of funds for the month of November as certified by the Business Administrator and authorized by the Superintendent of Schools.

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mrs. Huegel

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

4. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education per the 2020-21 FY Audit approves the following account transfers for June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, as certified by the Business Administrator and authorized by the Superintendent of Schools:

- \$2,723 from account 20-477-200-600 to 12-XXX-XXX-XXX
- \$2,606.95 from account 11-000-261-420 to 12-000-400-450
- \$4,443 from account 11-000-21X-610 to 12-000-213-730
- \$2,064.99 from account 11-000-219-610-050 to 12-000-21-730

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mrs. Huegel

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

5. **WHEREAS**, the Essex Fells Board of Education requested proposals for the position of Bond Counsel for the District for the 2021-2022 School Year;



**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Education appoint Wilentz, Goldman & Spitzer the Bond Counsel for the 2021-2022 school year.

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mrs. Huegel

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

- 6. WHEREAS**, The Board of Education of the Borough of Essex Fells in the County of Essex, New Jersey (the “Board” when referring to the governing body and the “School District” when referring to the territorial boundaries governed thereby), seeks to submit to the voters a school facilities project consisting of a roof replacement at the Essex Fells School (the “Projects”);

**WHEREAS**, the School District will seek Debt Service Aid with respect to the Projects; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board now seeks to take the initial steps in order to proceed with the planning and authorization of: (i) the Projects; and (ii) a School District special election at which time a bond referendum authorizing the Projects shall be presented to the voters of the School District.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE BOROUGH OF ESSEX FELLS IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, NEW JERSEY**, as follows:

Section 1. In accordance with the requirements of Section 6A:26-5.1 through 6A:26-5.3 of the New Jersey Administrative Code, the Board hereby authorizes and/or ratifies the preparation of Schematic Plans and Educational Specifications, if required, by EI Associates (“EI”) in connection with the Projects and the Board further authorizes/ratifies and directs EI submit the same to the New Jersey Department of Education and to the Essex County Superintendent of Schools for review and approval. The Board further authorizes and directs the submission of the Schematic Plans to the planning board for its review, to the extent required by law.

Section 2. In accordance with the requirements of Section 6A:26-2.3 of the New Jersey Administrative Code, the Board hereby ratifies any amendments to the Long Range Facilities Plan, as necessary, to reflect the Projects and approves the submission of any such amendment to the New Jersey Department of Education.

Section 3. In accordance with the requirements of Section 6A:26-3.2 of the New Jersey Administrative Code, the Board hereby authorizes and/or ratifies the submission of the Projects Applications and its decision seeking debt service aid for the Projects.

Section 4. With respect to the Projects, the Board hereby authorizes and directs the Board President, the Superintendent and the Business Administrator/Board Secretary, as applicable, to execute the schematic plans and educational specifications, the amendment to the Long Range Facilities Plan, the Projects cost estimate sheets and all related Projects documents allowing submission of same to the New Jersey Department of Education.

Section 5. The Board hereby authorizes and directs the Board President, the Superintendent, the Business Administrator/Board Secretary, EI, and Wilentz, Goldman & Spitzer, P.A., as Bond Counsel, as applicable, to take all action required to preserve the opportunity to present the Projects to the voters via a bond referendum at School District special election to be held on March 8, 2022 or such other date as may be available to the Board.

Section 6. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mrs. Huegel

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

**XIV. Public Comment**

- Dr. J. Davis commented on the vaccine.
- Ms. D Pinto thanked for the indoor/outdoor option with the cold. She also thanked all the staff and administration for all the options to help keep the school open.
- Dr. Orsini commented on the testing methods. He noted that about 85% of the cases in NJ are the omicron variant, which is contagious however not as severe. We should continue to look at data regarding decisions.
- Dr. Nitti noted her opinions differ with Dr. Orsini but that's ok. She discussed the data and testing.
- Mrs. Mehta asked about the gaggle software.

**XV. Resolution to Enter Executive Session**

At 9:07 P.M. the Board made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters and the Superintendent's contract. The items discussed in Executive Session will be disclosed to the public when the need to maintain their confidentiality no longer exists.

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mrs. Huegel

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

**XVI. Adjournment**

At 9:32 P.M. the Board of Education made a motion to adjourn. The next **Regular Meeting** of The Board of Education will be held on **Wednesday, January 19, 2022, at 7:30 P.M.** in the gymnasium.

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mrs. Huegel

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Respectfully Submitted,

Mr. Steven J. Lella  
Business Administrator/  
Board Secretary