

The Board of Education of the Borough of Essex Fells, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in a Regular Meeting held remotely on October 21, 2020. The meeting was called to order by the Board President, Mrs. Kris Huegel, at 7:33 P.M. Mrs. Huegel 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 7, 2020. Agendas were mailed to the Clerk of the Borough of Essex Fells, the Progress and the Star Ledger, and posted on the district’s web-site”.

**I. Call to Order – 7:33 P.M**

- The meeting was called to order by the Board President.

**II. Roll Call**

Mrs. Kris Huegel, President-Present  
 Mrs. Bethany Buccino-Vice President-Present  
 Dr. Steven LoCascio-Absent  
 Mr. Raj Mehta- Present  
 Mr. Theodore Skopak-Present

Also present : Mrs. Michelle V. Gadaleta, Superintendent/Principal; Mr. Steven J. Lella, Business Administrator/Board Secretary and 47 members of the Public.

**II. Flag Salute**

- The Board President led the salute to the flag.

**IV. Public Comment on Agenda Items**

- None

**V. President’s Report**

Good Evening Everyone-

Thank you for joining us tonight. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank Mrs. Gadaleta, Mayor Davis, and Dr. Nitti for their hard work and sense of calm in navigating the health of Essex Fells School and the community at large over the last couple of weeks. I would also like to thank our entire staff for everything they are doing day in and day out not only to educate our kids, but also to ensure the health and safety of our school. The way we get to keep the kids in school, is to do everything we can to reduce the spread of this virus.

We know this health crisis is causing a lot of stress and anxiety. The health and safety measures that are in place keep the children and staff safe at school, but it is still necessary to be careful when not at school. Remember to wash your hands, wear masks, social distance, be careful when attending social gatherings or playing sports, and pay attention to the current travel restrictions.

Please remember that public or social shaming of a positive case is hurtful and that this is a time for compassion and support for those in our community who are dealing with this virus. The rising community spread in New Jersey is a reminder to us all, that this can happen to any of us. We need to remain vigilant with our hygiene and mask wearing, and be kind to our friends and neighbors.

We are lucky to be in our 7th week of in-person classes. We have been able to do this because of the hard work of our administrators and staff members, and because everyone of you is working hard to keep our school environment healthy by keeping your kids home when they are sick, and being responsible when someone has been exposed to the

virus. Working with the Health Department and allowing contract tracing is a huge part of mitigation. We appreciate everyone being open and honest with the contract tracers if you are contacted by them. We encourage you to continue to do everything to stop the spread for the foreseeable future.

For those of you who are suffering, or have loved ones who are suffering, we are very sorry. We know these are difficult times, and that we will get through them if we work together.

**VI. Superintendent’s Report**

- Mrs. Gadaleta provided an update on the current reopening of EFS. The district continues to maintain our safety and health protocols, which is allowing us to stay open for in person learning. The children are wearing masks at all times except for lunch time when they are seated to eat or for outside mask break time with their teacher practicing social distancing. We understand that this is not normal education however it is allowing us to operate in person. Mrs. Gadaleta reported that per her discussions with the Health Department the district has not experienced any direct exposures per the current guidelines. Mrs. Gadaleta noted that it’s important to practice the same precautions outside of school as well in order to keep our quality in person instruction.
- Mrs. Gadaleta thanked the EFFD for their visit for Fire Prevention Week.
- Mrs. Gadaleta explained the staff professional development day event from October 12<sup>th</sup>.
- Mrs. Gadaleta explained the day’s activities for the Week of Respect, which the students have been enjoying so far.
- Mrs. Gadaleta noted that today was day 1 of remote Parent/Teacher conferences and that they will conclude tomorrow. Mrs. Gadaleta thanked the staff and the parents for their time and efforts.
- Mrs. Gadaleta reported that Halloween would be a minimum session day. The students will come in dressed in their costumes and we will celebrate with classroom events as best we can.
- Mrs. Gadaleta addressed Superintendent’s resolutions #2, 3 and 7, as well as policy and safety documents between EFS and the EFPD. Mrs. Gadaleta welcomed the appointment of Mrs. Rivera.

**VII. Superintendent’s Resolutions**

**RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves Superintendent Resolutions # 01 – 13.

1. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the submission of 1 of 2 attained Qualitative Superintendent Merit Goals for the 2020-2021 School Year to the Essex County Office of Education for approval and District payment pending approval of the County Superintendent.

**NOTE:** Documentation Attached

Moved by: Mrs. Buccino

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

2. **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): Tracie Wiczorek  
 Event: 10/5/20  
 Location: Virtual  
 Date: Wilson Workshop  
 Cost: \$0

Staff Member(s): Lauren Brzostowski  
Event: Virtual  
Location: Distance Learning: Strengthen Online Instruction for Students with  
Special Needs Workshop  
Date: 10/27/20  
Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Danielle Butler  
Event: Virtual  
Location: Maximize Positive Outcomes for Your Students with Special  
Needs Workshop  
Date: 10/27/20  
Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Laurie Fischer  
Event: Virtual  
Location: Powerful Strategies to Accelerate Therapy Progress Workshop  
Date: 10/27/20  
Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Lauren Brzostowski  
Event: Virtual  
Location: Help Your Students Develop Self-Regulation Skills to Improve  
Behavior and Increase Learning Workshop  
Date: 11/3/20  
Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Katie MacKenzie  
Event: Virtual  
Location: Managing Frustration, Anxiety and Teaching Social Skills Workshop  
Date: 12/8/20  
Cost: \$150.00

Staff Member(s): Katherine Vetere  
Event: Virtual  
Location: Making Best Use of Google Classroom and Free Google Tools to  
Accelerate Student Learning (Grades K-6) Workshop  
Date: 12/11/20  
Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Laurie Fischer  
Event: Virtual  
Location: Helping Students with Reading and Language Deficits Workshop  
Date: 12/16&17/20  
Cost: \$595.00

Staff Member(s): Susan Hacker  
Event: Virtual  
Location: Distance Learning: Strengthen Online Math Instruction Workshop  
Date: 2/8/21  
Cost: \$279.00

Moved by: Mrs. Buccino

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

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

PTA/6<sup>th</sup> Grade Class Car Wash Fundraiser  
 10/3/20, 9:00am – 12:30pm  
 Blacktop

Moved by: Mrs. Buccino                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4    Nays: 0

4. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the first reading of the following Bylaws/Policies/Regulations:

- P 1620              Administrative Employment Contracts (M) (Revised)
- P 1648              Restart and Recovery Plan (M) (Revised)
- P 1648.03          Restart and Recovery Plan – Full-Time Remote Instruction (M) (New)
- P 2431              Athletic Competition (M) (Revised)
- R 2341.1           Emergency Procedures for Sports and Other Athletic Activity (M) (Revised)
- P 2451              Adult High School (M) (Revised)
- P 2464              Gifted and Talented Students (M) (Revised)
- P&R 5330.05      Seizure Action Plan (M) (New)
- P 6440              Cooperative Purchasing (M) (New)
- P&R 6470.01      Electronic Funds Transfer and Claimant Certification (M) (New)
- P&R 7440           School District Security (M) (Revised)
- P 7450              Property Inventory (M) (Revised)
- P&R 7510           Use of School Facilities (M) (Revised)
- P 8420              Emergency and Crisis Situations (M) (Revised)
- P 8561              Procurement Procedures for School Nutrition Programs (M) (Revised)

Moved by: Mrs. Buccino                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4    Nays: 0

5. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the submission of the *School Safety and Security Plan Annual Review – Statement of Assurance* for the 2020-2021 school year to the Essex County Office of Education.

Moved by: Mrs. Buccino                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4    Nays: 0

6. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the submission of the following to the Essex County Office of Education for the 2020-2021 school year:

- *Memorandum of Agreement Between Education & Law Enforcement Officials - 2019 Revisions*
- *MOA Attached Document – Designated officials, law enforcement jurisdiction and agencies list*
- *Essex County Addendum of Memorandum of Agreement between Education and Law Enforcement Officials – School Critical Incident Drills*
- *Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Live Streaming – Essex County*

Moved by: Mrs. Buccino                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4    Nays: 0

**7. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the appointment of Tina Russo-Rivera, School/Superintendent Administrative Assistant, effective October 26, 2020, at the salary of \$60,000.00, which will be prorated for the 2020-21 school year, pending the usual criminal history and background check for new hires.

Moved by: Mrs. Buccino                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4    Nays: 0

**8. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the following substitute(s) for the 2020-2021 school year, pending the usual criminal history and background check for new hires\*:

Amy Isabel\*      Teacher (\$95/day)

Moved by: Mrs. Buccino                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4    Nays: 0

**9. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the transportation costs for Sussex Regional Services Commission (Student #260256) following amount:

Transportation                      \$270.00 \* 180 days = \$48,600

**NOTE:** Contracts with BA

Moved by: Mrs. Buccino                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4    Nays: 0

**10. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the following stipend positions for the 2020-2021 school year at the contractual rate:

Danielle Butler                      Lunch/Recess \$40 per session

Moved by: Mrs. Buccino

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

11. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the generous donation by the Davis Family of a memorial tree to be planted on the campus of Essex Fells School.

Moved by: Mrs. Buccino

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

12. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the generous donation from Dr. Lou Barretti in the amount of \$250 to Essex Fell School.

Moved by: Mrs. Buccino

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

13. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the Preschool Tuition Rate for the 2021-2022 school year in the amount of \$3,500.

Moved by: Mrs. Buccino

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

### **VIII. Business Administrator's Report**

- Mr. Lella noted that the 2019-20 Audit began yesterday with emailing of documents to the auditors.
- Mr. Lella noted that October 15<sup>th</sup> was the ASSA snap shot date, which is used to calculate State Aid for the 2021-22 school year.
- Mr. Lella informed the Board that November 16<sup>th</sup> is the DRTRS report date, which captures the students that receive transportation services.
- Mr. Lella informed the Board that the M1\_CMP plan was part of their financials package. This information shows that the district budgets for and spends money to maintain our buildings and grounds.
- Mr. Lella reported to the Board that the district would be receiving \$44,763 in 2019-20 Extraordinary Aid which is to be allocated in the 2020-21 school year.
- Mr. Lella also reported that the district would be receiving \$5,625 in Coronavirus Relief Fund Aid to assist with PPE and the reopening of school.
- Mr. Lella noted that along with assistance from the district attorney, the district would be settling the balance of the 2019-20 Transportation billing with the ERESA for 85% as part of the CARES ACT A3904.

### **IX. Business Resolutions**

**RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves Business Resolutions #01–08.

1. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts the minutes of the following meeting(s):

Special Meeting Minutes	8/4/20
Regular Meeting Minutes	8/19/20
Workshop Meeting Minutes	9/9/20
Executive Session Minutes	9/9/20

Moved by: Mrs. Buccino                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4    Nays: 0

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves an additional bills and claims for October in the amounts of \$153,834.58 as certified by the Business Administrator/ Board Secretary; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education approves the payroll for September as certified by the Business Administrator and approved by the Superintendent and Board President in the total amount of \$368,329.57, including \$343,380.12 for the gross payroll, \$4,788.28 for the Board’s share of FICA/Medicare and \$20,161.17 for the State’s share of FICA/Medicare.

Moved by: Mrs. Buccino                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4    Nays: 0

3. **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 July & August;

**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: Mrs. Buccino                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

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

Moved by: Mrs. Buccino

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

5. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves the M1 & Comprehensive Maintenance Plan for the period FY '20 through FY '22, and authorizes the Business Administrator/Board Secretary to submit the Plan to the Essex County Executive Superintendent of Schools.

Moved by: Mrs. Buccino

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

6. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approve appropriating additional fiscal year 2020 Extraordinary Aid funding to the 2020-21 school budget in the amount of \$44,673 to line account 11-120-100-101-01; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Essex Fells Board of Education acknowledges that it did not include an estimated Extraordinary Aid payment in the 2019-20 school budget and received an award of Extraordinary Aid in the amount of \$44,673; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that NJAC 6A:23A2.13(d)6 provides that a district Board of Education may, at any time without commissioner approval, appropriate surplus generated from state revenue such as Extraordinary Aid, that has been excluded from the excess surplus calculation in the prior year.

Moved by: Mrs. Buccino

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

7. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves the tuition reimbursement for Michelle V. Gadaleta in the amount of \$730.50.

Moved by: Mrs. Buccino

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0



8. **RESOLVED** the Essex Fells Board of Education, in the County of Essex approve the appropriation of Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) Aid released on September 23, 2020 in the amount of \$5,625 to the 2020/2021 school district budget. This additional Aid will be utilized to address health and safety measures (PPE/Supplies) necessary to support reopening for in-person instruction, to account 20-479-200-600.

Moved by: Mrs. Buccino

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

#### X. Old Business / Board Discussion

- Mrs. Gadaleta noted that she is working with Straus Esmay on Communication and Virtual Learning Policies.

#### XI. New Business / Board Discussion

- Mrs. Gadaleta discussed the possibility of random staff and student covid surveillance testing. Mrs. Gadaleta noted that this would be costly and require consent.

#### XII. Meeting Open for Public Comment

- Mrs. Haber introduced herself as one of the individuals running for the BOE. Mrs. Haber wanted to share that she agrees with Mrs. Gadaleta that it is important for the members of the community to be vigilant when outside of school, which in turn allows for in person learning at EFS. Mrs. Haber noted that she was so happy with the current school year being in person to date and she hopes we can keep it going, as she noted her school is currently all remote. Thank you for everyone's efforts.
- Mrs. Casey introduced herself as one of the candidates running for the BOE. Mrs. Casey noted she was seeing the impact on her children being in person at EFS and remote at West Essex and how much happier her child that was attending in person instruction was. Mrs. Casey appreciates all the efforts in place and noted we are seeing the results of our hard work. Mrs. Casey asked for clarification on what would close the school. Mrs. Gadaleta noted that 2 unrelated cases are considered an outbreak and would cause the school to close per the Health Department (HD). The HD notes that as long as we can follow our protocols we can remain open with 1 reported case. The HD will contract trace out of district exposures and will provide their findings to us. Mrs. Gadaleta also noted that it is acceptable to close 1 class if we feel the need. Mrs. Gadaleta reiterated that according to the HD a direct exposure is within 6 feet with no mask for a period of 10 minutes. It was 15 minutes and the criteria is subject to change. Mrs. Gadaleta noted that a direct exposure would close a classroom, and that is why we are having the students stay at their desks as much as possible with masks and desk shields.
- Mrs. Freudenberger-Nelson thanked everyone for their efforts and asked for further clarification regarding direct exposure criteria.
- Dr. Orsini commented on the random testing and explained some of the testing methods. He also noted these tests are expensive. Dr. Orsini asked if once someone was tested would they have to go home to wait for the results.
- Mrs. Steiner thanked everyone for their efforts and agreed parents need to be conscious of activities outside of school. Mrs. Steiner asked about lunch. Mrs. Gadaleta noted the children are seated spaced apart at 6 feet.
- Mrs. Vega asked how parents will be notified if a class needs to be closed down. Mrs. Gadaleta explained it would be based on time and situation and would be via phone calls and/or email.
- Mrs. Huegel noted for siblings and direct exposure the difference between isolating and quarantining.

- Mrs. Hidalgo asked about social distancing during recess. Mrs. Gadaleta explained masks are worn and small groups are broken up.
- Mr. Dionisio asked about remote instruction if the district moved to full remote. Mrs. Gadaleta explained what the schedule could look like.
- Mrs. Steiner asked if the district did go remote how long would it be for. Mrs. Gadaleta explained that it would depend on the scenario, figuring it would be for a period of 2 weeks.
- Mrs. Vega asked who decides on if the school should close. Mrs. Gadaleta stated she receives her guidance from the Health Department.
- Mrs. Bobroff asked about the new CDC guidelines and new exposure criteria of 10 minutes in 24 hours. Mrs. Gadaleta noted we are still following the guidelines of the Health Department.

### **XIII. Resolution to Enter Executive Session**

The Board convened into Executive Session at 8:26 P.M. to discuss personal and legal matters. The items discussed in Executive Session will be disclosed to the public when the need to maintain their confidentiality no longer exists.

Moved by: Mrs. Buccino

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

### **XIII. Adjournment**

At 8:54 P.M. the Board of Education made a motion to adjourn. The next **Workshop Meeting** is scheduled remotely for **Wednesday, November 4, 2020 at 7:30 P.M.** and the next **Regular Meeting** is scheduled remotely for **Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 7:30 P.M.**

Moved by: Mrs. Buccino

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Respectfully Submitted,

Mr. Steven J. Lella  
Business Administrator/  
Board Secretary