

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 November 18, 2020. The meeting was called to order by the Board President, Mrs. Kris Huegel, at 7:32 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 -7:32 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-Absent

Also present: Mrs. Michelle V. Gadaleta, Superintendent/Principal; Mr. Steven J. Lella, Business Administrator/Board Secretary; and 31 members of the public.

III. Flag Salute

- The Board President led the salute to the flag.

****Dr. LoCascio Arrived at 7:33 P.M**

IV. Public Comment on Agenda Items

- Mr. Dionisio asked about how to view the meeting support documents.

V. President’s Report

Good Evening Everyone-Thank you for joining us tonight. Today marks the 49th day of school for our students. We are so grateful to our administration; buildings and grounds staff; teachers; school support staff; our nurse, Mrs. Renz; the PTA; The Foundation; and all of our students and their families for their contributions to our success.

Thank you to all the families and staff members who keep the school informed of any cases, or suspected cases. While not easy to self-report, it is an important measure we must take for the safety of our entire community. We are grateful to have this level of open communication between our families and our school and know that we are all in this together. So far, because of this communication, there has been no school closure needed, as we have been able to mitigate the spread inside the buildings.

With the upcoming Thanksgiving and December holidays, we must remember to be careful, as Coronavirus cases are rising in New Jersey. We need you to contact Ms. Rivera in the main office, if you will be traveling over the holidays to any of the states on the NJ travel restriction list, internationally, or if you will have visitors from any of those locations who will not be able to quarantine for 14 days in advance. In either case, we will provide you with your student’s work for any school days missed during the 14-day quarantine period. We are not telling you not to travel, or have visitors, but we do have to enforce the mandatory quarantine period.

Please remember to keep wearing your masks, washing your hands, social distancing and avoiding large gatherings. We can keep your kids safe at school. We need you to do the same while they are not in school.

Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding as we continue to navigate this global pandemic. We are grateful that with the announcement of prospective vaccines there is light at the end of the tunnel. We need everyone to stay strong and vigilant of their health and safety until vaccines are available, for the sake of our healthcare workers, our most vulnerable population, and our community at large.

Thank you to all of our healthcare heroes and first responders for all that you do.

We send our well wishes to those suffering from this virus.

Have a happy and healthy Thanksgiving.

VI. Superintendent's Report

- Mrs. Gadaleta noted Educator's Week
- Mrs. Gadaleta reminded the public that as we prepare for Thanksgiving weekend, we should try to minimize the size of our gatherings and be aware of the travel restrictions that are in place so that we can continue to keep the school open for in person instruction for our children.
- Mr. Mehta asked about international travel over the Christmas break. Mrs. Gadaleta noted that following the guidelines that are provided a 14-day quarantine should still be followed.
- Mrs. Huegel noted the Board will continue to review and Dr. LoCascio agreed the Board will revisit and discuss further at the next meeting. The Board agrees that in order to keep school open for in person learning, we request that you quarantine if you travel.

VII. Superintendent's Resolutions

RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves Superintendent Resolutions # 01 – 7.

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): John Trogani
 Event: BER – Distance Learning Strengthening your Online General Music Program
 Location: Webinar
 Date: 11/2/20
 Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Tracie Wiezorek
 Event: Wilson Implentation Meeting 1
 Location: Online Zoom Meeting
 Date: 11/12/20
 Cost: \$0.00

Staff Member(s): Rebecca Santin
 Event: Caldwell University Annual Counseling Conference
 Location: Virtual
 Date: 11/15/20
 Cost: \$84.65

Staff Member(s): Kimberly Trafford
 Event: Making Best Use of Google Classroom to Strengthen Your Instruction
 Location: Essex Fells School

Date: 12/3/20
Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Rebecca Santin
Event: School Climate & Anti-Bullying Conference
Location: Virtual
Date: 12/9/20
Cost: \$79.00

Staff Member(s): Judi Reynolds
Event: Smart but Scattered Executive Dysfunction at Home and at School
Location: Webcast
Date: 12/14/20
Cost: \$219.00

Staff Member(s): Tracie Wieczorek
Event: Motivating the Unmotivated Teaching the Hard to Reach Student
Location: Virtual
Date: 1/15/21
Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Laurie Fischer
Event: Speech Pathology.com Yearly Membership
Location: Virtual
Date: One Year Membership
Cost: \$99.00

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio Seconded by: Mrs. Buccino
Ayes: 4 Nays: 0

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the Administrative Assistant Job Descriptions.

NOTE: Job Descriptions Attached

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio Seconded by: Mrs. Buccino
Ayes: 4 Nays: 0

3. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the second reading and adoption 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 1648.05 Remote Learning Policy**
- 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 9205 Communication between Parents and Staff Members**

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio Seconded by: Mrs. Buccino

Ayes: 4 Nays: 0

****Tabled Policy 1648.05 & 9205****

4. RESOLVED that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the following addition to the 2020-2021 Field Trips List:

- Lenape Trail (Virtual)
- Mount Vernon, Washington’s Home (Virtual)
- San Diego Zoo (Virtual)
- NASA (Virtual)
- Arts Power Theater (Virtual)

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio Seconded by: Mrs. Buccino

Ayes: 4 Nays: 0

5. RESOLVED that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the appointment of Meg L. Lipper, BCBA, for the 2020-2021 school year, at the following hours and rates:

Up to 3 FBA evaluations per year at \$450 per evaluation **\$1,350.00**

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio Seconded by: Mrs. Buccino

Ayes: 4 Nays: 0

6. RESOLVED that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the appointment of Lisa Evangelista, Business Office Administrative Assistant, effective November 1, 2020, at the salary of \$55,000.00, which will be prorated for the 2020-21 school year.

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio Seconded by: Mrs. Buccino

Ayes: 4 Nays: 0

7. RESOLVED that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the submission of the *Online School Self-Assessment for Determining Grades under the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act*, July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020 to the NJ Department of Education.

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio Seconded by: Mrs. Buccino

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

VIII. Business Administrator’s Report

- Mr. Lella informed the Board of 2 fraudulent unemployment claims that he was aware of. This had happened back in 2018 as well. Mr. Lella has been in contact with the staff members and the Department of Labor. Other districts in the state have noticed fraudulent activity as well.

IX. Business Resolutions

RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves Business Resolutions #01–04.

1. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves an additional bills and claims for November in the amounts of **\$178,800.97** 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 \$371,759.96, including \$347,189.39 for the gross payroll, \$5,562.59 for the Board’s share of FICA/Medicare and \$19,007.98 for the State’s share of FICA/Medicare.

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio

Seconded by: Mrs. Buccino

Ayes: 4

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 September;

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: Dr. LoCascio

Seconded by: Mrs. Buccino

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

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

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio

Seconded by: Mrs. Buccino

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

4. **WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 5:39-1.4(h)** requires the Board to adopt by resolution standard procedures and requirements for public comment made during a remote public meeting as well as for public comments submitted in writing ahead of a remote public meeting; and

WHEREAS, the Board has considered the procedures and requirements it desires to establish for public comment and has chosen to adopt the procedures and requirements set forth below.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board hereby enacts the following procedures, standards, and requirements for public comment at Board meetings conducted with a remote meeting platform:

1. **Written comments.** The Board publishes its agenda to the extent known by approximately 4:00 p.m. on a Tuesday preceding a Wednesday Board meeting. Individuals who wish to submit written comments regarding any government or school district issue that a member of the public feels may be of concern to the residents of the school district must do so by sending an email with the written comments to sllella@efsk-6.org or by written letter addressed to the Board Secretary, 102 Hawthorne Road, Essex Fells, New Jersey 0021. Comments submitted in writing or by email must include the commenter's name and address. Written comments must be received no later than 10:00 a.m. on the day of the meeting. Written comments will be read aloud and addressed during the meeting in a manner audible to all meeting participants and the public. When reading written comments during a meeting, the person reading the comment will stop reading after three minutes, no matter how long the comment is. The Board may summarize duplicative comments as permitted by law, and duplicative comments shall be noted for the record.
2. **In-Person or Remote Comments.** Individuals in person or participating via Zoom may make public comment at the appropriate public comment period by signifying their intent to comment. Those participating via Zoom shall use the "Raise Hand" feature. Participants shall be limited to a three-minute time limit and shall identify themselves before speaking. There will be a time limit of 30 minutes for each public comment period.
3. **Standards of Conduct.** Participants wishing to make public comment shall abide by Bylaw 0167, the contents of which are incorporated by reference in this resolution. Additionally, the Board hereby adopts the following procedures:
 - a. The Board shall facilitate a dialogue with the commenter to the extent permitted by the electronic communications technology, which shall include ascertaining the individual's name, confirmation of their Essex Fells residency, topic, and areas of concern. The Board may or may not respond to inquiries made by the commenter, depending upon whether or not the issue has been raised at the appropriate level beforehand, whether or not the Superintendent has had the opportunity to address the issue, and whether or not the inquiry requires further investigation before a response. Generally, when giving a response, the Superintendent or Board President shall do so at the close of public comment. Any dialogue that takes place during the individual's public comment shall count toward the speaker's three-minute time limit.

b. If a member of the public becomes disruptive during a remote public meeting, including during any period for public comment, the Board President or individual in charge of the remote meeting platform shall mute or continue muting the disruptive member of the public and warn that continued disruption may result in their being prevented from speaking during the remote public meeting or removed from the remote public meeting. Disruptive conduct includes sustained inappropriate behaviors such as, but not necessarily limited to, shouting, interruption, and use of profanity.

c. A member of the public who continues to act in a disruptive manner after receiving an initial warning shall be muted while other members of the public are allowed to proceed with their questions or comments. If time permits, the disruptive individual shall be allowed to speak after all other members of the public have been given the opportunity to make comment. Should the person remain disruptive, the Board President or individual in charge of the remote meeting shall mute, or keep muted, the disruptive member for the remainder of the remote public meeting, or remove him or her from the remote public meeting.

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio

Seconded by: Mrs. Buccino

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

X. Old Business / Board Discussion

- None

XI. New Business / Board Discussion

- Mrs. Gadaleta noted that as we prepare the 2021-22 budget, she will now begin preparing the 2021-22 school calendar start and end dates and vacations. The first draft will be prepared to align with West Essex and will be discussed further.
- Mrs. Gadaleta reported that during the drop off and pick up, the EFPD will be enforcing traffic laws such as idling and blocking driveways. There has also been an issue with people cutting the lines with a right turn from Hilltop. If a traffic ordinance is in place, the EFPD can enforce no right turn from Hilltop from 2:45 – 3:15 pm. The Board agrees to suggest an ordinance.

XII. Meeting Open for Public Comment

- Mrs. Haber thanked Mrs. Gadaleta and the BOE for all of their hard work. Mrs. Haber agrees with the travel quarantine that is in place in order to keep everyone safe and allowing the children to attend school. The community needs to be aware of the protocols in place. Mrs. Haber appreciates Mrs. Gadaleta's stance and wishes everyone a happy Thanksgiving.
- Mrs. Dionisio asked how the remote students are doing. Mrs. Gadaleta explained the EFS remote procedure and noted the children are receiving the same materials. There are currently 8 remote families.

XIII. Resolution to Enter Executive Session

The Board convened into Executive Session at 8:10 P.M. to discuss negotiations 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: Dr. LoCascio

Seconded by: Mrs. Buccino

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

XIV. Adjournment

At 8:52 P.M. the Board of Education made a motion to adjourn. The next **Workshop Meeting** is scheduled remotely for **Wednesday, December 2, 2020 at 7:30 P.M.** and the next **Regular Meeting** is scheduled remotely for **Wednesday, December 16, 2020 at 7:30 P.M.**

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio

Seconded by: Mrs. Buccino

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Respectfully Submitted,

Mr. Steven J. Lella
Business Administrator/
Board Secretary