

The Board of Education of the Borough of Essex Fells, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in a Regular Public Meeting held in the Media Center on December 14, 2022. The meeting was called to order by the Board President, Mrs. Amanda Haber, at 7:30 P.M. Mrs. Haber 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 5, 2022. Agendas were mailed to the Clerk of the Borough of Essex Fells, the Progress, and the Star Ledger.

I. Call to Order – 7:30 P.M.

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

II. Roll Call

Mrs. Amanda Haber, President-Present
 Mr. John Toth, Vice-President-Present
 Mrs. Kris Huegel-Present
 Mr. Raj Mehta-Absent
 Mr. Theodore Skopak-Present

Also present: Dr. Michelle V. Gadaleta, Superintendent/Principal; Mr. Steven J. Lella, Business Administrator/Board Secretary; 3 Staff Members, 2 Members of the Public, Mayor Davis and Dr. Nitti.

III. Flag Salute

- The Board President led the salute to the flag.

IV. President's Report

- Good evening and thank you for joining us this evening. This is our final meeting of the calendar year which means that this is our final meeting with Mrs. Huegel and Mr. Skopak. I would like to start by thanking Mrs. Huegel and Mr. Skopak for their years of service on this board. As your terms end, I want to congratulate you on a job well done. You have selflessly dedicated your time to ensuring that what was best for the students was always at the forefront. Both of you have offered your unique perspectives that have helped to build discussions and support the vision of the school. Many times these were difficult decisions and conversations, but your ability to put the student's needs first, have been pivotal for the school community. Your work has built upon the foundation of success that Essex Fells School prides itself on. Your commitment to the students, families, and staff of Essex Fells School has been invaluable. Thank you both and we hope to see you at meetings in the future. As the board transitions, I want to thank Mr. Mehta and Mr. Toth as well. Your continued support for the school will undoubtedly lead to successful student outcomes.

On tonight's agenda for approval we have the Health and Physical Education curriculum as well as the Library curriculum. Additionally, we have drafts to review of most of the other subject areas. I want to acknowledge the thoughtfulness and care that was put into this work. You eased the minds of the board and the community as we navigated the NJ standards, particularly with Health and Physical Education. Curriculum writing is arduous and time consuming. Despite obvious obstacles, we thank the teams for having these curriculums ready for approval within the 2022 calendar year.

On behalf of the Board I want to wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday and New Year.

V. Public Comment on Agenda Items Only

- None

VI. Superintendent's Report

- Dr. Gadaleta reported that Mrs. DaCosta finished a treatment today. We will continue to support her.
- The old playground has been removed and Dr. Gadaleta thanked the PTA, Mrs. Skopak and Mrs. Mehta.
- Dr. Gadaleta is keeping an eye on the weather for Thursday night and Friday morning.
- Dr. Gadaleta reported that we have been addressing Code of Conduct issues this year, relating to self-control, technology and disrespectful behavior. We will address with SEL and increased staffing.
- Dr. Gadaleta updated on the Board on the usage of the Share911 software and a recent drill. We will use the software as a means of communication after an event.
- Dr. Gadaleta noted that water fountains no longer need to be closed. We will flush and clean the units over break. Children are still encouraged to bring in a water bottle and utilize the touchless stations in each building.
- Dr. Gadaleta spoke about 2023-24 budget preparation. Staff are working on their requests and she is speaking with Mr. Lella on staffing and challenges for next year.
- Dr. Gadaleta mentioned the Safety Team Meeting & SCIP Committee Meetings from 12/12/22.
- Dr. Gadaleta is planning for an outdoor Holiday Concert on 12/22/22 at 1:30 pm.
- Dr. Gadaleta thanked Mrs. Huegel and Mr. Skopak for their time serving on the Board of Education, especially during unprecedented times.
 - Mrs. Huegel: I want to say thank you for the opportunity I have had these past 9 years to serve our community as a school board member. Thank you to my family for the 200 or so Wednesdays that I missed over the years. The first 6 years were a lot different than the last 3, with many new challenges to be faced and risen above. I am grateful for the role I was able to play along with my fellow board members, the administration, staff, children, PTA, Foundation and the families in making the education of the children of Essex Fells a top priority, regardless of the circumstances. Essex Fells School will always hold a special place in my heart.
 - Mr. Skopak thanked the community for the opportunity to serve on the Board, and what an honor it was. He thanked Dr. Gadaleta, Mr. Lella, the staff and his fellow BOE Members, noting what a truly amazing place this is.

VII. Superintendents Resolutions

RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves Superintendent Resolutions #01 –05.

- 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): Judi Reynolds
 Event: Section 504 Law in New Jersey
 Location: Virtual
 Date: 2/3/2023
 Cost: \$219.99

VIII. Business Administrator’s Report

- Mr. Lella noted the resolution for the ACES program, as we are going out to bid for gas and electric suppliers through May 2028.
- Mr. Lella noted the resolution to pay salary with an ESSER grant.
- We will contact vendors to see if someone can come out and provide an HVAC assessment of our units.
- Mr. Lella provided an update on the 2023-24 Budget, banked cap and challenges in budget preparation while staying under the 2% CAP. Mr. Lella noted that Health benefits, inflation, and out of district tuition costs, among our expenses, do not adhere to a 2% CAP.
- Mr. Lella reminded the BOE members of their annual NJSBA trainings.

IX. Business Resolutions

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

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

Regular Meeting Minutes	November 2, 2022
Executive Session Minutes	November 2, 2022
Regular Meeting Minutes	November 16, 2022
Executive Session Minutes	November 16, 2022
Regular Meeting Minutes	November 30, 2022
Executive Session Minutes	November 30, 2022
Moved by: Mrs. Huegel	Seconded by: Mr. Skopak
Ayes: 4	Nays: 0

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves bills and claims for December in the amount of \$138,866.51 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 \$355,880.40 including \$332,540.05 for the gross payroll, \$6,134.23 for the Board’s share of FICA/Medicare and \$17,206.12 for the State’s share of FICA/Medicare.

Moved by: Mrs. Huegel	Seconded by: Mr. Skopak
Ayes: 4	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: Mrs. Huegel	Seconded by: Mr. Skopak
Ayes: 4	Nays: 0

4. **WHEREAS**, the Alliance For Competitive Energy Services (hereinafter referred to as “ACES”), an alliance composed of the New Jersey School Boards Association (hereinafter referred to as “NJSBA”), the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, and the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials, will from time to time during the Effective Period as defined below solicit bids from electric power suppliers for electric generation services through an energy aggregation program in which NJSBA will act as Lead Agency of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System #E8801-

ACESCPS in accordance with the “Public School Contracts Law”, N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-1 et seq., and the Electric Discount and Energy Competition Act, N.J.S.A. 48:3-49 et seq. (“EDECA”) and the regulations promulgated thereunder; and

WHEREAS, the Essex Fells School District is a Participating member of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System and is eligible thereby to obtain electric generation services for its own use through one or more contracts to be awarded to electric power suppliers following said bids for electric generation services pursuant to the aggregation program; and

WHEREAS, the Lead Agency will from time to time during the Effective Period (from date of adoption through May, 2028 hereinafter referred to as “Effective Period”) issue one or more Requests for Bids for electric generation services on behalf of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System pursuant to the Public School Contracts Law and EDECA; and

WHEREAS, due to significant volatility and the potential for price increases in the wholesale electric market, Participating Members will preauthorize the Lead Agency to award contracts for Electric Generation Service in each service territory to one or more electric power suppliers that submit bids which are reasonably forecasted to provide estimated savings to the Participating Member based upon its previous electric usage and utility provided Basic Generation Service rates; and

WHEREAS, the Lead Agency will only award contracts for said electric generation services to electric power suppliers that submit bids with pricing reasonably estimated to be lower than the utility-provided basic generation service; and

WHEREAS, the District agrees to purchase all electric power needed for its own use (exclusive of on-site electric generation sources) during the Effective Period through any electric power supplier(s) awarded a contract, it being understood that the term of any one contract shall be subject to the provisions of Public School Contracts Law;

WHEREAS, the Lead Agency will notify the Department of Community Affairs’ Division of Local Government Services by mail prior to the issuance a Request for Bids for electric generation services, with the understanding that if the Division of Local Government Services does not respond within 10 business days, it will be deemed to have approved the issuance of the Request for Bids or the Request for Rebids.

NOW, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the District binds itself to the ACES Cooperative Pricing System ##E8801-ACESCPS to purchase all electric power needed for its own use (exclusive of on-site electric generation sources) during the Effective Period from the electric power supplier or suppliers awarded a contract for electric generation services by the Lead Agency; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Lead Agency of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System is hereby authorized to execute a master performance agreement that obligates the district to purchase electricity at the terms and conditions stated therein with a third-party supplier or suppliers who have been awarded the contract or contracts by the Lead Agency on behalf of the participating members of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System #E8801-ACESCPS (or any CPS number to be assigned in the future), and provided further that all such contracts shall be at prices reasonably forecast and estimated by the Lead Agency to provide savings to the Districts relative to the price charged for basic generation service by the electric public utility that would otherwise provide such service; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that ACES is authorized to continue to bid to obtain electric generation services at any time during the Effective Period on behalf of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System including, for example, a rebid if energy market conditions do not initially lead to a successful bid, on additional dates to be determined by the Lead Agency; and

FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall take effect immediately upon passage. The authorization provided to the NJSBA pursuant to the Local Public Contracts Laws (N.J.S.A. 40A:11-11(5)), and the Local Public and Public School Contracts Laws Administrative Code (N.J.A.C. 5:34-7.1 et seq.) shall be valid until May, 2028 (the Effective Period) at which time the Cooperative Pricing System will be subject to renewal. Any rescission or expiration of this resolution shall not affect any Agreements entered into prior to such rescission or expiration.

Moved by: Mrs. Huegel

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

5. **WHEREAS**, the Alliance For Competitive Energy Services (hereinafter referred to as “ACES”), an alliance composed of the New Jersey School Boards Association (hereinafter referred to as “NJSBA”), the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, and the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials, will from time to time during the Effective Period as defined below solicit bids from natural gas suppliers for retail natural gas supply services including interstate transportation to the local natural gas distribution utility company (Natural Gas Supply Services) through an energy aggregation program in which NJSBA will act as Lead Agency of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System #E8801-ACESCPS in accordance with the “Public School Contracts Law”, N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-1 et seq., and the Electric Discount and Energy Competition Act, N.J.S.A. 48:3-49 et seq. (“EDECA”) and the regulations promulgated thereunder; and

WHEREAS, the Essex Fells School District is a Participating member of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System and is eligible thereby to obtain natural gas services for its own use through one or more contracts to be awarded to natural gas suppliers following said bids for natural gas services pursuant to the aggregation program; and

WHEREAS, the Lead Agency will from time to time during the Effective Period (from date of adoption through May, 2028, hereinafter referred to as “Effective Period”) issue one or more Requests for Bids for natural gas services on behalf of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System pursuant to the Public School Contracts Law and EDECA; and

WHEREAS, due to significant volatility and the potential for price increases in the wholesale natural gas market, Participating Members will preauthorize the Lead Agency to award contracts for Natural Gas Supply Service in each service territory to one or more natural gas suppliers that submits bids which are reasonably forecasted to provide estimated savings to the Participating Member based upon its previous natural gas usage and utility provided Basic Gas Supply Service rates; and

WHEREAS, the Lead Agency will only award contracts for said Natural Gas Supply Services to natural gas suppliers that submit bids with pricing reasonably estimated to be lower than the utility-provided basic gas supply service; and

WHEREAS, the District agrees to purchase all Natural Gas Supply Services for its own use during the Effective Period through any natural gas supplier(s) awarded a contract, it being understood that the term of any one contract shall be subject to the provisions of Public School Contracts Law; and

WHEREAS, the Lead Agency will notify the Department of Community Affairs’ Division of Local Government Services by mail prior to the issuance a Request for Bids for natural gas supply services, with the understanding that if the Division of Local Government Services does not respond within 10 business days, it will be deemed to have approved the issuance of the Request for Bids or the Request for Rebids.

NOW, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the District binds itself to the ACES Cooperative Pricing System ##E8801-ACESCPS to purchase all natural gas supply services needed for its own use during the Effective Period from the natural gas supplier or suppliers awarded a contract for natural Gas supply services by the Lead Agency; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Lead Agency of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System is hereby authorized to execute a master performance agreement that obligates the district to purchase natural gas at the terms and conditions stated therein with a third-party supplier or suppliers who have been awarded the contract or contracts by the Lead Agency on behalf of the participating members of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System #E8801-ACESCPS (or any CPS number to be assigned in the future), and provided further that all such contracts shall be at prices reasonably forecast and estimated by the Lead Agency to provide savings to the districts relative to the price charged for basic gas supply service by the natural gas public utility that would otherwise provide such service; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that ACES is authorized to continue to bid to obtain natural gas services at any time during the Effective Period on behalf of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System including, for example, a rebid if energy market conditions do not initially lead to a successful bid, on additional dates to be determined by the Lead Agency; and

FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall take effect immediately upon passage. The authorization provided to the NJSBA pursuant to the Local Public Contracts Laws (N.J.S.A. 40A:11-11(5)), and the Local Public and Public School Contracts Laws Administrative Code (N.J.A.C. 5:34-7.1 et seq.) shall be valid until May, 2028 (the Effective Period) at which time the Cooperative Pricing System will be subject to renewal. Any rescission of this resolution shall not affect any Agreements entered into prior to such rescission or expiration.

Moved by: Mrs. Huegel

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

- 6. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approve American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP – ESSER II) Funds in the amount of \$18,750 to be used as salary reimbursement for paraprofessional salary (Caroline King) for the 2021-22 School Year to account 20-484-200-100.

Moved by: Mrs. Huegel

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

IX. Old Business / Board Discussion

- Dr. Gadaleta provided a 1st draft of STEAM, Spanish and Visual & Performing Arts Curriculum.
- Dr. Gadaleta provided working documents for LA, math, Social Studies and Science.
- Dr. Gadaleta provided Policy 9205 with revisions from the EFTA.
- Mr. Lella and Dr. Gadaleta noted a revision to the language in Dr. Gadaleta’s current contract, which will be approved at a future meeting.
- Dr. Gadaleta noted that the roof project has been completed.

X. New Business / Board Discussion

- Dr. Gadaleta explained the School Security Program Policy, the Board discussed.
- Dr. Gadaleta shared the Supervision Policy with the Board. Tiny Treasurers notified the district that they can no longer take on children who were not picked up at dismissal.
- Dr. Gadaleta provided a Health Procedure and Safe Return Plan update Dr. Gadaleta noted we will update our plan if any changes are needed. Flu cases spiked over Thanksgiving, but have calmed down. We will continue to follow CDC masking guidelines for those who test positive, which is days 5 to 10 upon return. The Board discussed.

XI. Public Comment

- Mayor Davis thanked Mrs. Huegel and Mr. Skopak for their years of service on the Essex Fells BOE. He also appreciated the efforts of the BOE, Administration and staff to get through these last few years. He thanked the district on behalf of the community.
- Mayor Davis discussed the Class III Officer, noting agreements need to be done as soon as possible to properly vet, hire and train the officer. Budget challenges will be addressed with the CFO.
- Mayor Davis spoke on the upcoming budget challenges and the 2% CAP as well as the proposed large increases to the Health Benefits plan. He noted the district makes up ¼ of the town budget. The county is also dealing with increased health benefits costs, which are rising by 24%, and ways to address are staffing cuts.

XIII. Adjournment

At 8:37 P.M. the Board made a motion to adjourn. The next meeting of the Board of Education will be held on **Wednesday, January 4, 2023, at 7:30 P.M.** in the Media Center.

Moved by: Mrs. Huegel

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Respectfully Submitted,

Mr. Steven J. Lella
Business Administrator/Board Secretary