

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 April 21, 2021. 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 8, 2021. 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
 Dr. Steven LoCascio, Vice-President-present
 Mrs. Amanda Haber-present
 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 38 members of the public.

III. Flag Salute

- The Board President led the salute to the flag.

IV. Public Comment on Agenda Items Only

- None

V. President’s Report

Good evening everyone-

Thank you for joining us tonight. We hope you all had a wonderful spring break. Mrs. Gadaleta has a lot of news to share tonight, so I will keep it brief. On behalf of the Board, I would just like to mention that it has been 10 days since the return from spring break, and we have had no new reported COVID cases. The last reported case was March 30th. Thank you to everyone for following the guidelines that are in place to keep the staff and students safe. We could not do it without everyone’s cooperation. Now it is time for the Superintendent’s Report.

VI. Superintendent’s Report

- Mrs. Gadaleta reported that there were no new cases of COVID. Essex Fells School continues to operate based on DOH guidelines and will continue to do so. Mrs. Gadaleta also noted that these guidelines are continuously changing. As some schools have reduced distancing in classrooms to 3 feet in order to open, EFS will maintain 6 feet of distancing to keep all students and staff safe.
- Mrs. Gadaleta reported that there had been guidance regarding the Spring and Fall 2021 State Assessments. Districts have to provide that assessments are still being completed, and EFS has submitted the necessary data to the state. Spring testing will be postponed until the fall.

- Mrs. Gadaleta noted that she was finalizing staffing for the 2021-22 school year, and that there is a possibility of a RIF.
- Mrs. Gadaleta informed the Board that she would be meeting with the head of the ADL to discuss a presentation to EFS.
- Mrs. Gadaleta noted that she had been elected to the NJ Council of Education.
- Mrs. Gadaleta informed the Board that she had attained full Graduate Program Completion and read a statement of thanks. The BOE members congratulated Mrs. Gadaleta on completing her graduate program especially through the pandemic, and thanked her for her dedication.

VII. Superintendents Resolutions

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

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): Michelle Barshay
 Event: Developing Executive Functioning Skills in Class & At a Distance
 Location: Virtual
 Date: 3/30/21

Cost: \$0.00
 Staff Member(s): Tracie Wieczorek
 Event: Wilson
 Location: Virtual
 Date: 4/29/21
 Cost: \$0.00

Staff Member(s): Kimberly Trafford
 Event: What's New in Children's Books 2021
 Location: Virtual
 Date: 5/13/21
 Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Allison Myers
 Event: Learners Edge: Understanding Anxiety
 Location: Virtual
 Date: 5/7/21
 Cost: \$0.00

Staff Member(s): Allison Myers
 Event: ASCD: Solving Academic and Behavior Problems in a Remote Environment
 Location: Virtual
 Date: 5/7/21
 Cost: \$0.00

Staff Member(s): Allison Myers
 Event: ASCD: Tailoring Classroom Technology Tips for Learning Outside the Classroom
 Location: Virtual
 Date: 5/7/21
 Cost: \$0.00

Staff Member(s): Judi Reynolds

Event: Oppositional, Defiant, Disruptive Children: Non-Medication Approaches to Challenging Behavior

Location: Virtual

Date: 5/5/21

Cost: \$219.99

Staff Member(s): Rory Duarte

Event: Purposeful Play to Increase Students Academic Learning and Social-Emotional Growth

Location: Virtual

Date: 5/3/21

Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Marissa Burger

Event: Purposeful Play to Increase Students Academic Learning and Social-Emotional Growth

Location: Virtual

Date: 5/4/21

Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Michelle Truchel

Event: Catching Up Students Who've Fallen Behind in Reading and Writing

Location: Virtual

Date: 5/24/21

Cost: \$279.00

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the Agreement between the Essex Fells School District and GHR Education during the 2020-2021 school year for substitute nurses.

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

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:

6th Grade Car Wash - May 15, 2021

8:30am – 2:00pm on the Blacktop (between buildings)

Moved by: Dr.LoCascio

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

4. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent the appointment of, Caroline King, Substitute teacher for the school year 2020-2021 :

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

VIII. Business Administrator’s Report

- Mr. Lella provided an update on the 2021-22 budget.
- Mr. Lella noted that the first of four baseball field maintenances and playground cleaning was completed over spring break.
- Mr. Lella along with Mrs. Gadaleta informed the Board that we would be looking into improvements to our current upgrades in regards to the Alyssa’s Law compliance.

IX. Business Resolutions

RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves Business Resolutions #01-05.

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

Regular Meeting Minutes	3/3/21
Executive Session Minutes	3/3/21
Regular Meeting Minutes	3/17/21
Executive Session Minutes	3/17/21
Special Meeting Minutes	4/14/21
Executive Session Minutes	4/14/21
Moved by: Dr. LoCascio	Seconded by: Mr. Skopak
Ayes: 5	Nays: 0

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves bills and claims for April in the amounts of **\$155,644.18** as certified by the Business Administrator/Board Secretary; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the payroll for March as certified by the Business Administrator and approved by the Superintendent and Board President in the total amount of \$375,288.92, including \$349,646.42 for the gross payroll, \$5,731.06 for the Board’s share of FICA/Medicare and \$19,911.44 for the State’s share of FICA/Medicare.

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio	Seconded by: Mr. Skopak
Ayes: 5	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 February;

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: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

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

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

5. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves the tuition reimbursement for Michelle V. Gadaleta in the amount of \$752.25.

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

X. Old Business / Board Discussion

- Mrs. Gadaleta provided an update regarding the remote learning program. She is still meeting with the 6 families weekly or as needed.
- Mrs. Gadaleta noted that the traffic study may take place in September.

XI. New Business / Board Discussion

- Mrs. Gadaleta noted that the new health guidelines were covered in the Superintendent’s report.
- Mrs. Gadaleta reported that she had been contacted by Willow Lake & Jeff Lake summer camps regarding using the EFS parking lots for summer bus service. Mrs. Gadaleta will have further discussions with the EFPD to discuss concerns. The BOE discussed and was leaning to not using the EFS parking lots.
- Mrs. Gadaleta informed the BOE members of the staff thank you’s for the children staff room.
- Mrs. Gadaleta asked the Board about their interest in a possible June 2nd workshop. This will be discussed further as needed.

XII. Public Comment

- Mrs. Steiner congratulated Mrs. Gadaleta for the completion of her Graduate degree. She also provided some information regarding the Jeff Lake routes
- Mr. Dionisio congratulated Mrs. Gadaleta for her graduate degree. He also thanked her for the genesis updates.
- Mayor Davis noted that there may be commercial zoning activity limits regarding the summer camp utilization of the EFS parking lots. If it's not considered EFS education, it may not be permitted. Mrs. Gadaleta will contact the borough.
- Mayor Davis asked if the 2021-22 Budget Presentation slides could be made available to the public. Mayor Davis also asked about the use of new Federal ESSER funds for 2021-22, as well as not agreeing with the 2.99% tax levy increase in addition to the additional federal funds. Mrs. Gadaleta explained the planned appropriations of the ESSER funds and noted these funds were a one-time allocation to go above and beyond the current general fund budget for COVID related expenses.
- Mrs. Huegel read a brief statement from the attorney regarding the recent impasse in negotiations.

XIII. Resolution to Enter Executive Session

The Board convened in Executive Session at 8:15 P.M. to discuss personnel, legal matters and negotiations. 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: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

XIV. Adjournment

At 9:22 P.M. the Board of Education made a motion to adjourn. The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Education will be held on **Thursday, May 6, 2021 at 7:30 P.M.** virtually.

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Respectfully Submitted,

Mr. Steven J. Lella
 Business Administrator/
 Board Secretary