

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 22, 2020. The meeting was called to order by the Board President, Mrs. Kris Huegel, at 7:30 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 April 6, 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 – 7:30 P.M.

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

II. Roll Call

Mrs. Kris Huegel – President, present
Mrs. Debra Tedesco – Vice President, absent
Mrs. Bethany Buccino, – present
Dr. Steven LoCascio –present
Mr. Theodore Skopak – present

Also present : Mrs. Michelle V. Gadaleta, Superintendent/Principal; Mr. Steven J. Lella, Business Administrator/Board Secretary 1 reporter from The Progress and 5 members of the Public.

III. Flag Salute

- The Board President led the salute to the flag.

IV. President's Report

- Mrs. Huegel thanked Mrs. Gadaleta, Mr. Lella, the Essex Fells Staff and the families of Essex Fells during this challenging time.

V. Public Comment on Agenda

- None

VI. Curriculum & Instruction

- Mrs. Gadaleta noted that remote learning has been extended until May 15th, at which time we will wait for further guidance from the Governor.

VII. Buildings and Grounds

- Mr. Lella informed the Board that the rolling pick-up platform paving had been completed a couple of weeks ago.
- Mr. Lella notified the Board that the field upgrade project had just been completed. The vendor will return one day next week for a final rolling of the fields. The maintenance will begin in June. Mrs. Gadaleta noted that the fields looked great and that she had spoken with Lauren Lombardy who also agreed and thanked the Board of Education.

VIII. Finance

- None

IX. Policy

- None

X. Superintendent's Report

- Thank you to the parents, students, and staff for the commitment and sacrifices demonstrated during these unprecedented times. Essex Fells School has shown that Studies do Pass into Character when difficult situations present themselves. My heartfelt sympathy goes out to all the school families and staff members who have lost loved ones due to this pandemic. Well wishes also go out to those families and staff members who continue to fight. I have been working closely with the teachers' association to continually adjust our remote learning structure to best serve the families of Essex Fells School. It is understandable that all families are different and present with a variety of needs. Our teachers, specialists, paraprofessionals, therapists, and support staff members have all been working to make as many accommodations as possible. The teachers have been adapting their approaches, lessons, projects, and of course the ways they assess students because of the home learning environment. As teachers, the constant observation and interaction with their students are what is missed most. Additionally, the district is in the process of solidifying how teachers will complete their professional State mandates including evaluations and professional development requirements. As the Governor's May 15th date for re-evaluation of closure or return approaches, there are a number of potential topics we are preparing for including a possible reopening plan for EFS, complete with sterilizing and health monitoring protocols. In addition, the special education extended school year needs to be considered whether it is held in-house or remotely. End of year assessments of student progress and baseline levels for the 2020-2021 school year need to be modified as well. End of the year special events will be considered such as remaining trips and sixth-grade graduation. A process for the return of school property will need to be managed along with the dissemination of personal property belonging to students and staff remaining at the school. While I am hopeful that we can finish the school year out together, I am cognizant of the fact that ultimately that reality may not be possible. If not, we will continue to provide a hybrid of synchronous and asynchronous lessons until the time it is determined it is safely permissible for the students and staff to resume classes at Essex Fells School. Until then, let us be thankful for the gift of time that we have been given with our families. Building quality memories is an opportunity we do not want to pass up during this juncture. Please remember to take comfort in knowing that we are all in this together.
- Mrs. Gadaleta noted that she had received successful feedback from families regarding the remote learning.

XI. Business Administrator's Report

- Mr. Lella noted that the 2020-21 Budget Presentation would be on May 6th. Mr. Lella provided the Board with the power point presentation for their review.
- Mr. Lella noted the open BOE position as Mrs. Tedesco had resigned from her position. Mr. Lella thanked Mrs. Tedesco for her time serving on the Essex Fells Board of Education. We will advertise to fill the position for the remainder of the calendar year.
- Mr. Lella also noted we will need to appoint a new Vice President.

XII. 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 meetings:

March 4, 2020 Workshop Minutes
 March 18, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio

Seconded by: Mrs. Buccino

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves bills and claims for April in the amount of \$128,073.97 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 \$357,143.87 including \$332,783.94 for the gross payroll, \$4,809.05 for the Board's share of FICA/Medicare and \$19,550.88 for the State's share of FICA/Medicare.

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 March as certified by the Business Administrator and authorized by the Superintendent of Schools.
4. **RESOLVED** that the Essex Fells Board of Education hereby approves the submission of a grant application for the Safety Grant Program through the New Jersey Schools Insurance Group's ERIC NORTH Subfund for the purposes described in the application, in the amount of \$2,008.62 for the period July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio

Seconded by: Mrs. Buccino

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

5. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approve the resignation of Board Member, Mrs. Debra Tedesco, effective April 22, 2020.

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio

Seconded by: Mrs. Buccino

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

XIII. Old Business / Board Discussion

- None

XIV. New Business / Board Discussion

- None

XV. Meeting Open for Public Comment

- Mrs. Autret thanked everyone for the excellent work everyone has done during this difficult time.

XVI. Adjournment

At 7:45 P.M the Board of Education made a motion to adjourn. The next **Meeting** will be held remotely on May 6 at 7:30 P.M. for the purposes of Public 2020-2021 Budget Presentation. The May **Regular Meeting** will be held on **Wednesday, May 20, 2020 at 7:30 P.M.** in the Media Center.

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio

Seconded by: Mrs. Buccino

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Respectfully Submitted,

Mr. Steven J. Lella
Business Administrator/ Board Secretary