# LOWER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES WORK SESSION AND REGULAR MEETING FEBRUARY 26, 2025

Call to Order:

Work Session: Started at 6:00 p.m.

#### **Work Session Meeting:**

# Roll Call:

**Present** 

Cynthia Baldacchini

Lauren Cox

Monica DiVito

James Morris

Lauren Randle

Joseph Thomas

Jonathan Vile

Patricia Smith

Gary Douglass

#### Also in Attendance:

Patricia Ryan, Board Secretary Brett Gorman, Board Attorney

Absent

Jeff Samaniego, Superintendent

#### **Agenda Items:**

- Mrs. Baldacchini inquired about the employees requesting to use FMLA time so far in advance of the date requesting leave. Mr. Gorman replied that knowing in advance helps with hiring a long-term substitute for the staff members on the leave.
- Mrs. Smith inquired about the tuition contract in motion F-2 and asked who pays for this tuition. Mrs. Ryan responded that the tuition will be paid by Middle Twp. BOE.

#### Non-Agenda Items:

- Mr. Vile wanted to know if we allow religious exemptions for the measles vaccination. Mr. Gorman replied yes, with a request from the parent.
- Mrs. Smith mentioned that she attended an NJSBA webinar which explained the board's self-evaluation and she feel that our board should conduct another self-evaluation. Mr. Gorman said this can be discussed in the Executive session. Mrs. Smith also will distribute information from the NJSBA county meeting to all members.
- Mr. Douglass discussed Read Across America\_(red, white, and blue day) and how it was changed to blue, black, and gold day and how political views should remain out of the schools.
   Mrs. Smith suggested that the board policies concerning politics be re-evaluated.

Other Matters: None

**Motion to enter Executive Session** 

Motion: Baldacchini Second: Thomas

**Discussion:** None All Voted in Favor

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

**Personnel**: Employee #5983; #4993; and #4810

H.I.B. Sandman #1 2024-2025

**Other Matters: None** 

Motion to return to Regular Session: Motion: Vile Second: Cox

**Discussion: None All Voted in Favor:** 

Regular Meeting: Started at 7:08 p.m.

# **Roll Call:**

# **Present**

Cynthia Baldacchini

Lauren Cox

Monica DiVito

James Morris

Lauren Randle

Joseph Thomas

Jonathan Vile

Patricia Smith

**Gary Douglass** 

#### **Also in Attendance:**

Patricia Ryan, Board Secretary Brett Gorman, Board Attorney

#### **Absent**

Jeff Samaniego, Superintendent

#### Salute to the Flag.

#### **Statement:**

Notice of this meeting of the Lower Township Board of Education, listing the Agenda as known, was duly sent to the Cape May County Herald - Times Newspaper, The Press of Atlantic City, posted at the Municipal Building, and a copy thereof delivered to the Township Clerk; in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

#### **District Mission Statement:**

"Dedicated to academic excellence, Lower Township Elementary Schools will nurture and challenge all students in a safe and innovative learning community. By encouraging respect and responsibility, students become self-directed, passionate, lifelong learners who will reach their potential. We are dedicated to supporting all students in exceeding the New Jersey Student Learning Standards."

#### **Vision Statement:**

Every Student, Every Day, Learning, Teaching, Exploring, Succeeding.

#### 2022-2024 Board Goal:

Establish a system with district leadership to ensure that board policies are consistently being implemented and enforced.

#### **2024-2025 Board Goals:**

Support the district's effort to enhance student achievement, staff development, and parent engagement through policy and advocacy while maintaining the fiscal integrity of the budget.

#### This meeting will be conducted in accordance with:

District Policy: #0164 Conduct of Board Meetings

District Policy: #0167 Public Participation in Board Meetings

#### 1) REPORTS:

A) Board President: None

**B**} Superintendent: (Read by Mr. Douglass)

- -Mr. Samaniego mentioned that *Read Across America* is coming up next week and that he wanted to thank our librarians Mrs. Sekela, Mrs. Grace, and Mrs. Donohue for the preparation and planning of it.
- -Mr. Samaniego also wanted to thank everyone for their part in the Five West spaghetti dinner fundraiser, with special thanks to Heather Roth, Heather Sekela, and the Education Foundation.
- -Mr. Samaniego wanted everyone to know that on March 4th at 4:00 p.m. the Mitnick library will have their dedication ceremony to honor Dr. James Rochford.

#### **C**} School Business Administrator:

- Mrs. Ryan informed the Board that the district was awarded the Elite II Level (the highest level) by the ACCASBO JIF for the 2023-24 school for the safety incentive award which totaled \$3,000.00. In addition, Mrs. Ryan stated that the district received an additional \$4,000.00 for financial excellence in the Worker's Compensation insurance claims reporting. Mrs. Ryan recognized Patti Jacob and Sue Nelson for all their hard work and dedication in accomplishing this status for our district.
- Mrs. Ryan stated that the 2025-2026 budget deadline is approaching and that Governor Murphy conducted his budget address for the 2026 fiscal year and stated that they are proposing record-high spending for education at \$12.1 billion dollars for our K-12 school districts.
- Mrs. Ryan stated that the state aid funding reports will be available on 2/28/25 and will be discussing the preliminary budget along with the finance committee on Monday, March 3, 2025.
- **D**} Presentations: None

#### **E**} Committee Reports:

**Building and Grounds Committee:** None

**Curriculum Committee:** Mrs. DiVito informed the Board that that the last meeting was conducted on 2/10/24 where they discussed the ELA cumulative/review process and the Pre-K expansion project. The next meeting date is not yet determined.

**Finance Committee:** Mr. Vile informed the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 3, 2025.

# **F**} Board Comment:

- Mr. Vile thanked everyone for their involvement in the spagnetti dinner fundraiser.
- Mrs. Randle also thanked everyone for the spaghetti dinner preparation and planning and thanked all involved in Parent Engagement Night.
- Mrs. Cox thanked John King for the midway checkpoint letter and also thanked
   Mrs. Voumard for all that she has done for our district and congratulated her on her retirement.
- Mr. Thomas thanked Mrs. Ryan for organizing the meeting and wished her well on the up and coming budget submission.

# 2} APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

January 13, 2025 Special Executive Session Meeting (Interviews) January 14, 2025 Special Executive Session Meeting (Interviews) January 15, 2025 Special Executive Session Meeting (Interviews) January 22, 2025 Board Meeting and Executive Session

Motion: Smith Second: Vile

**Discussion: None** 

**Voted Yes:** 

Cynthia Baldacchini

Lauren Cox

Monica DiVito

James Morris

Lauren Randle

Joseph Thomas

Jonathan Vile

Patricia Smith

Gary Douglass

#### 3} CONSENT AGENDA:

#### **OPEN MEETING TO THE PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON CONSENT ITEMS ONLY:**

**PLEASE NOTE:** Each speaker shall identify him/herself by giving their name and address and will be allowed to speak once for a period not to exceed four minutes. The public comment portion of all Board Meetings shall not exceed forty minutes in total. Prior to the roll call vote, any member of the board may ask for discussion on any of the items within the block.

#### -No Public Comments

The following items are believed to be items of a routine nature and will be moved as a block of action items. Prior to the roll call vote, any member may ask for discussion on any of the items within the block.

#### R. Routine Matters

# **R-1** Approval of Financial Statements:

Secretary's and custodian's reports for January 2025 which are in agreement as certified by the Board Secretary, that no budgetary account has been over-expended, in violation of NJAC 6:20-2.12 (a), (d).

- R-2 Approval of Transfers: January 22, 2025- February 26, 2025 {Backup R-2}
- R-3 Approval of Bill List: January 22, 2025 February 26, 2025 {Backup R-3}
- R-4 Approval of Cafeteria Report: February 2025 {Backup R-4}
- R-5 Approval of Travel: None

#### P. Personnel:

1. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the following substitutes be approve for the 2024-2025 school year, pending receipt of required documentation: (Backup P-1)

#### SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Brooke Pruszinski, Stephen Spencer

#### **SUBSTITUTE CLASSROOM AIDES**

Samantha Martin, Stephen Spencer, Holly Mader, Keith Cleary, Jennifer Pietro

#### SUBSTITUTE CAFETERIA AIDE

**Anthony Leonardis** 

#### SUBSTITUTE FOOD SERVICE WORKER

**Anthony Leonardis** 

#### **SUBSTITUTE BUS AIDES**

Anthony Leonardis, Suzanne Speigel

2. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the following on-call substitutes as daily part-time staff:

<u>Employee</u>	<u>Position</u>	Effective Date	
Kristen Connolly	Paraprofessional	1/20/25	
Kira Fleming	Classroom Aide	1/27/25	
Katherine Black	Paraprofessional	2/5/25	

3. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Diana Stevenson as Temporary 1st Grade Teacher, at the Carl T. Mitnick School, effective February 6, 2025 until date to be determined.

- 4. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education accept, with regret, the retirement of Rachelle Voumard, Preschool Teacher at the David C. Douglass Veterans Memorial School, effective July 1, 2025. (Backup P-4)
- **5.** On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the job description for Computer/Network Technician. (Backup P-5)
- On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Veronica Abel, Preschool Teacher at the Carl T. Mitnick School, for placement of MA+15 on the LTEEA Teachers' Salary Guide, to reflect an increase of credits to her degree, effective March 1, 2025. (Backup P-6)
- 7. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the following Non-FMLA's:

Employee #5203, effective September 1, 2025 to November 1, 2025 Employee #6003, effective November 25, 2024 to February 28, 2025 Employee #5584, effective January 3, 2025 to March 2, 2025 Employee #6091, effective January 14, 2025 to TBD

- 8. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve FMLA for Employee #5232, effective September 1, 2025 to January 1, 2026. (BOARD TABLED THIS MOTION)
- 9. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve FMLA for Employee #5778, effective September 1, 2025 to January 1, 2026. (BOARD TABLED THIS MOTION)
- **10.** On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approves John Flanigan as School Security Officer at Maud Abrams effective March 1, 2025, pending documentation. (Backup P-10)
- 11. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approves Stephen Hilbert as Full Time Maintenance/Custodian in the district, effective April 1, 2025. (Backup P-11)
- 12. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approves the transfer of Albert Flitcroft, School Security Officer at Maud Abrams School to School Security Officer at Sandman Consolidated effective March 10, 2025.
- H. Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying: None
- L. Legislative and Internal Policies:
- 1. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the second reading for the following revisions to existing or new Policies and Regulations: (Backup L-1)

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
5512	Policy	Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying
5533	Policy	Student Smoking
5533	Regulation	Student Smoking
7441	Policy & Regulation	Electronic Surveillance In School Buildings and on School Grounds
9320	Policy & Regulation	Cooperation with Law Enforcement Agencies
5516	Policy	Use of Electronic Communication Devices
5516	Regulation	Use of Electronic Communication Devices
5701	Policy	Academic Integrity
5710	Policy	Student Grievance

2. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the first reading for the following revisions to existing or new Policies and Regulations: (Backup L-2)

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
0155	Policy	Board Committees
8500	Policy	Food Services
5111	Policy	Eligibility of Resident/Nonresident Students
5111	Regulation	Eligibility of Resident/Nonresident Students
2260	Policy	Equity in School and Classroom Practices
2260	Regulation	Equity in School and Classroom Practices
		Complaint Procedures
2422	Policy	Comprehensive Health and Physical Education
2428.1	Policy	Standards-Based Instructional Priorities

- **3.** On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education to approve the authorization of the Affirmative Action Team to conduct the needs assessment and develop a Comprehensive Equity Plan (CEP) for school years 2025-26 through 2027-28.
- **4.** On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the Revised 2024-2025 District Calendar. (Backup L-4)

#### E. Education:

1. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the following placement for the 2024-2025 school year:

**Student #19126** - 1st grade student placed on Homebound Instruction effective 2/11/25 until further notice.

#### F. Finance and Insurance:

- 1. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education to authorize the sale of the following items through GovDeals:
  - Dell Servers Power Edge 2950 Qty. 5 "As Is Condition Unknown" No Drives; No Power Supply Anticipated Sale Price: \$200 ea.

Aruba Switches 2530 - Qty. 19 - "As Is - Condition Unknown"
 Dell Switches 2920 - Qty. 5 - "As Is - Condition Unknown"
 Anticipated Sale Price: \$500 ea.

3) Cisco IP Phone Equipment CP 8831 - Qty 3 - Condition: Operable Cisco IP Phone Equipment CP BEKCM - Qty 10 - Condition: Operable Anticipated Sale Prices #300.00 ca

Anticipated Sale Price: \$300.00 ea.

4) **Wi-Fi Link - Air Grid M5** - Qty 2 - Condition: Operable Anticipated Sale Price: \$50 ea.

- 2. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education to approve the tuition contract for student #18787 from Middle Township Board of Education as a Choice student now attending Cape May County Special Services School District effective 9/1/2024 through 6/30/2025, contract as pass through totaling \$37,350. (Backup F-2)
- 3. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approves the Change Order (CO-02) request required in the completion of the district's HVAC Project. (Backup F-3)
- 4. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education authorize the application for the Local Recreation Improvement Grant FY25 to fund new playground equipment at Mitnick School for the second grade students.

**TABLED MOTIONS:** Motions Personnel-8 and Personnel-9 were tabled due to Board questions concerning procedures.

Motion: Vile Second: Cox

All Voted in Favor

#### MOTION ON CONSENT AGENDA ON ALL MOTIONS LISTED BELOW:

Routine Matters: R-1 to R-5

Personnel: P-1 to P-12 (Tabled Motion P-8 and P-9)

Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying: None Legislative and Internal Policies: L-1 to L-4

Education: E-1 Finance: F-1 to F-4

Motion: Baldacchini Second: Cox

**Discussion: None** 

**Voted Yes** 

Cynthia Baldacchini Lauren Cox Monica DiVito James Morris

Lauren Randle Joseph Thomas

# **4) NON-CONSENT AGENDA:** (Read by Mr. Douglass)

-Mr. Samaniego congratulated Mrs Voumard on her retirement and told her she would be missed.

-Mr. Samaniego also congratulated Jack Flanigan and Steve Hilbert and welcomed them into the district.

# 5} OLD/NEW BUSINESS:

- **6**} **OPEN MEETING TO THE PUBLIC:** (public comment rules as read above apply):
  - Mr. Riley of Cape May (father of a student) was concerned about his daughter being touched by another student.
  - Mr. Bill Abrams from Lower Township expressed his concerns on the Read Across America changes.
  - Mr. Douglass stated he was not happy with the Read Across America changes and that the Superintendent was aware. Mr. Douglass will discuss this with Mr. Samaniego and will follow up.
  - Mrs. Smith states that she would like to look at the district's political policies and make sure that we are all aware of these policies.

#### 7} GOOD TO THE ORDER:

- A) Next Board Meeting: Work session: March 19, 2025
- **B**} Emergency Drill: 2/27/25 Lockdown Drill
- C} Fire Drills: 2/3/25 Sandman School; 2/4/25 Maud Abrams School; 2/24/25 Mitnick School; 2/25/25 Memorial

**Motion to enter Second Executive Session** 

Motion: Vile Second: Smith

**All Voted In Favor** 

#### **8**} **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Entered Executive Session at 7:45 pm.

Other Matters: Discussion of Superintendent Candidates and Interviews

Motion to come out of Executive Session Motion: Thomas Second: Baldacchini

**Discussion: None All Voted in Favor** 

# 9} ADJOURNMENT

# **MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**

Motion: Randle Second: Cox

**Discussion:** None All in Voted in Favor:

This meeting concluded at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Ryan

School Business Administrator/ Board Secretary

# LOWER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING FEBRUARY 26, 2025

Meeting was called to order at 6:19 p.m.

### **Roll Call:**

#### Present:

Cynthia Baldacchini

Lauren Cox

Monica DiVito

James Morris

Lauren Randle

Joseph Thomas

Jonathan Vile

Patricia Smith

**Gary Douglass** 

#### Also in Attendance:

Patricia Ryan, Board Secretary Brett Gorman, Board Attorney

#### Absent:

Jeff Samaniego, Superintendent

Motion to enter Executive Session Motion: Thomas Second: Smith

All Voted in Favor

#### 8} EXECUTIVE SESSION #1:

Personnel Matters: Employee #5983, Employee #4993, Employee #4810, Employee #4155

- <u>Employee #4993 and Employee 4810</u>- The Board discussed the litigation concerning this Matter
- Employee#4155 The Board discussed the fit for duty exam.
- <u>Employee 5983</u>- The Board discussed the student incident. (Mrs. Ryan left room due to conflict)

**H.I.B. Sandman #1 2024-2025** - Mr. Samaniego reviewed the issues relative to this situation and it was not considered a H.I.B.

Motion to return to Regular Session:

Motion: <u>Vile</u> Second: <u>Cox</u>

**Discussion: None All Voted in Favor** 

-Return to Second Executive Session at 7:45 pm.

**Motion to enter Second Executive Session** 

Motion: <u>Vile</u> Second: <u>Smith</u>

**All Voted in Favor** 

# **EXECUTIVE SESSION #2:**

Other Matters: Discussion of Superintendent Candidates and Interviews

**Motion to come out of Second Executive Session** 

Motion: Thomas Second: Baldacchini

**Discussion: None All Voted in Favor** 

# 9} ADJOURNMENT

#### **MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**

Motion: Randle Second: Cox

All Voted in Favor:

This meeting concluded at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Ryan

School Business Administrator/ Board Secretary

# LOWER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION

**WHEREAS,** while the Sen. Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq.) requires all meetings of the Lower Township Board of Education to be held in public, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) sets forth nine (9) types of matters that may lawfully be discussed in "Executive Session," i.e. without the public being permitted to attend, and

**WHEREAS,** the Lower Township Board of Education has determined that <u>6</u> issues permitted by N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) to be discussed without the public in attendance shall be discussed during an Executive Session to be held on February 26, 2025 at <u>6:19 P.M.</u> and <u>7:45 P.M.</u> and

**WHEREAS**, the nine (9) exceptions to public meetings set forth in N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) are listed below, and next to each exception is a box within which **the number** of issues to be privately discussed that fall within that exception shall be written, and after each exception is a space where additional information that will disclose as much information about the discussion as possible without undermining the purpose of the exception shall be written.

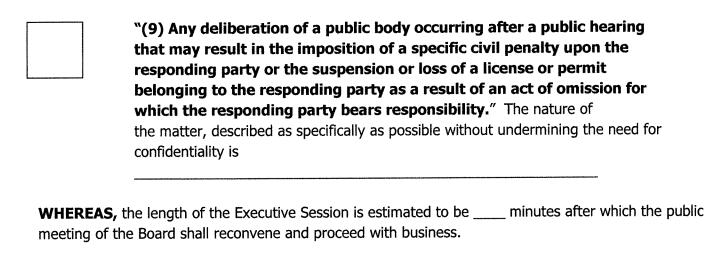
	"(1) Any matter which, by express provision of Federal law, State statute or rule of court shall be rendered confidential or excluded from public discussion." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without
	undermining the need for confidentiality is
	"(2) Any matter in which the release of information would impair a right to receive funds from the federal government." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is
Х	"(3) Any material the disclosure of which constitutes an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy such as any records, data, reports,

"(3) Any material the disclosure of which constitutes an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy such as any records, data, reports, recommendations, or other personal material of any educational, training, social service, medical, health, custodial, child protection, rehabilitation, legal defense, welfare, housing, relocation, insurance and similar program or institution operated by a public body pertaining to any specific individual admitted to or served by such institution or program, including but not limited to information relative to the individual's personal and family circumstances, and any material pertaining to admission, discharge, treatment, progress or condition of any individual, unless the individual concerned (or, in the case of a minor or incompetent, his guardian) shall request in writing that the same be disclosed publicly."

H.I.B. Sandman #1 2024-25

	"(4) Any collective bargaining agreement, or the terms and conditions of which are proposed for inclusion in any collective bargaining agreement, including the negotiation of terms and conditions with employees or representatives of employees of the public body"		
	"(5) Any matter involving the purchase lease or acquisition of real property with public funds, the setting of bank rates or investment of public funds where it could adversely affect the public interest if discussion of such matters were disclosed." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is Personnel matters		
_	"(6) Any tactics and techniques utilized in protecting the safety and		
	property of the public provided that their disclosure could impair such		
	protection. Any investigations of violations or possible violations of the		
	law." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is;		
	"(7) Any pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation in which the public body's/or may become a party. Any matters falling within the attorney-client privilege, to the extent that confidentiality is required in order for the attorney to exercise his ethical duties as a lawyer." The parties to and docket numbers of each item of litigation and/or the parties to each contract discussed are and nature of the discussion, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is:		
X	"(8) Any matter involving the employment, appointment, termination of employment, terms and conditions of employment, evaluation of the performance, promotion or disciplining of any specific prospective		
	public officer or employee or current public officer or employee		
	employed or appointed by the public body, unless all individual employees or appointees whose rights could be adversely affected		
	request in writing that such matter or matters be discussed at a public		
	meeting." Subject to the balancing of the public's interest and the employee's		
	privacy rights under South Jersey Publishing Co. v. New Jersey Expressway		
	Authority, 124 N.J. 478, the employee(s) and nature of the discussion, described as		
	specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality:		
	Employee #5983: Employee #4993: Employee #4810: Employee 4155: Superintendent		

Candidates and Interviews



**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Lower Township Board of Education will go into Executive Session for **only** the above stated reasons;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board hereby declares that its discussion of the aforementioned subject(s) will be made public at a time when the public's interest in disclosure is greater than any privacy or governmental interest being protected from disclosure. For each of the above items, the estimated date by which such disclosure can be made and/or the occurrence that needs to take place before disclosure can be made are listed below (attach separate sheet if necessary)

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board Secretary, at the present public meeting, shall read aloud enough of this resolution so that members of the public in attendance can understand, as precisely as possible, the nature of the matters that will privately be discussed.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board Secretary, on the next business day following this meeting, shall furnish a copy of this resolution to any member of the public who requests one at the fees allowed by N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq.