

**LOWER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES
EXECUTIVE SESSION
MARCH 20, 2024**

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call:

Present:

Lindsey Selby
Joseph Thomas
Lauren Randle
Jonathan Vile
Lauren Cox
Cynthia Baldacchini
Patricia Smith
Monica DiVito
Gary Douglass

Also in Attendance:

Jeff Samaniego, Superintendent
Patricia Ryan, Board Secretary/School Business Administrator
Brett Gorman, Board Attorney

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Personnel Matters: Employee #4810; #5396; #4155; #5486, #5284
H.I.B. Mitnick #3 2023-2024
H.I.B. Mitnick #4 2023-2024
H.I.B. Sandman #2 2023-2024

Personnel Matters

- **Employee #4810 and Employee 5396** -- Grievance level 3 – The grievance hearing was discussed along with a resolution to the issues of the grievance.
- **Employee #4155** – Mr. Gorman discussed the recommendations of discipline with the Board.
- **Employee #5486** – Mr. Samaniego informed the Board of employee's transfer in the District.
- **Employee #5284** – (Mr. Samaniego, Mr. Douglas, and Mrs. Ryan left room due to conflict) The Board and Mr. Gorman discussed the Superintendent evaluation.

H.I.B.

- **H.I.B. Mitnick #3 2023-2024** – Mr. Samaniego reviewed the issues relative to this situation and determined it was not considered a H.I.B.
- **H.I.B Mitnick #4 2023-2024** - Mr. Samaniego reviewed the issues relative to this situation and determined it was not considered a H.I.B.

- **H.I.B. Sandman #2 2023-2024** – Mr. Samaniego reviewed the issues relative to this situation and it was considered a HIB. There will be follow up disciplinary actions taken.

Other Matters: None

Motion: Selby Second: Vile

Discussion: None

All Voted in Favor

Motion to return to Regular Meeting:

Motion: Vile Second: Cox

This session ended at 7:09 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 8 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 March 20, 2024 at **6:00** P.M. 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 _____

"(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. Mitnick #3 2023-2024; H.I.B. Mitnick #4 2023-2024; H.I.B. Sandman #2 2023-2024

"(4) Any collective bargaining agreement, or the terms and conditions of which are proposed for inclusion in any collective bar

gaining 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 is or may become a party. Any matters falling within the attorney-client privilege, to the extent that confidentiality 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:

"(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 affect 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 #4810; Employee #5396; Employee #4155; Employee #5486; Employee #5284

"(9) Any deliberation of a public body occurring after a public hearing that may result in the imposition of a specific civil penalty upon the responding party or the suspension or loss of a license or permit belonging to the responding party as a result of an act of omission for which the responding party bears responsibility." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is _____

WHEREAS, the length of the Executive Session is estimated to be 72 minutes after which the public meeting of the Board shall reconvene and proceed with business.

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.

**LOWER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES
WORK SESSION AND REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 20, 2024**

Call to Order: Meeting started at 6:00 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Personnel Matters: Employee #4810; #5396; #4155; #5486, #5284
H.I.B. Mitnick #3 2023-2024
H.I.B. Mitnick #4 2023-2024
H.I.B. Sandman #2 2023-2024

Other Matters: None

Work Session: Started at 7:09 p.m.

Work Session Meeting:

Roll Call:

Present:

Lindsey Selby
Joseph Thomas
Lauren Randle
Jonathan Vile
Lauren Cox
Cynthia Baldacchini
Patricia Smith
Monica DiVito
Gary Douglass

Also in Attendance:

Jeff Samaniego, Superintendent
Patricia Ryan, Board Secretary/School Business Administrator
Brett Gorman, Board Attorney

Agenda Items:

- Mrs. Cox questioned motion F-1 regarding the \$17,000 travel expenses and the \$325,000 maintenance reserve.

Non-Agenda Items:

-Mr. Samaniego discussed the 2024-2025 calendar with the Board.

Motion to return to regular meeting:

Motion: Vile Second: Cox

Regular Meeting: Regular meeting started at 7:12 p.m.

Roll Call:

Present:

Lindsey Selby
Joseph Thomas

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Lauren Randle
Jonathan Vile
Lauren Cox
Cynthia Baldacchini
Patricia Smith
Monica DiVito
Gary Douglass

Also in Attendance:

Jeff Samaniego, Superintendent
Patricia Ryan, Board Secretary/School Business Administrator
Brett Gorman, Board Attorney

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

March 20, 2024

1} REPORTS:

A} Board President: None

B} Superintendent:

- The district's In-Service Day was Friday, March 15th where our Specials teachers and CST attended the County In-service at Cape Tech/Special Services.
- Mr. Samaniego thanked the Board and Association for the pay increase to the part-time bus aides.
- The district held their PreK Spring Fling and he thanked Mrs. Bosch, Administration, PreK staff for making this event a success.
- The Children's Dinner delivery was very successful with help of the Kiwanis Club, staff, parents and students who assisted in filling and delivering the bags of groceries for families in need. There were 450 bags of food were delivered.
- Mrs. Bowman, Mrs. Granero, and Mrs. Ryan applied for a High Impact Tutoring Grant that we received. 150 3rd-4th graders will receive one on one tutoring in language arts along with a chrome book to use.
- Mr. Samaniego thanked everyone for their participation in the District yearly calendar survey and Fall recess will be added into the week of NJEA.

C} School Business Administrator: None

D} **Presentations: Cape May Tennis Club** – The club extended their gratitude to the Board. This program started last summer where students received back packs filled with school supplies, a tennis racquet, and a hat to at least 50% of the underprivileged children.

E} **Committee Reports:**

Building and Grounds Committee: None

Curriculum Committee: Mrs. DiVito talked about the ELA Curriculum, the in-service day, shared services and the QSAC improvement plan.

Finance Committee: Mrs. Ryan stated that the committee discussed the budget, state aid, and the Pre-K facility project.

Goals Committee The goals committee informed the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for April 8th.

F} **Board Comment**

- Mrs. Smith thanked all for professional development for the teachers and staff.
- Mrs. Randle thanked all involved in the Spring Fling.
- Mrs. DiVito thanked involved in acquiring the High Impact Grant and how beneficial it will be to the students.

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- Mr. Vile thanked Mrs. Ryan for all of her work with the budget. Mr. Vile mentioned what a great experience it was this week helping with the Food Program deliveries.
- Mrs. Cox mentioned how great the suicide prevention training was and felt she was prepared in helping someone through a difficult situation.
- Mr. Thomas also thanked Mrs. Ryan for her hard work with the budget.
- Mrs. Baldacchini gave accolades to all involved in the High Impact Grant.

2} APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

February 28, 2024

Regular Meeting & Executive Meeting

Motion: Thomas

Second: Randle

Discussion: None

All Voted in Favor:

Lindsey Selby

Joseph Thomas

Lauren Randle

Jonathan Vile

Lauren Cox

Cynthia Baldacchini

Patricia Smith

Monica DiVito

Gary Douglass

3} CONSENT AGENDA: None

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.

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 without the block.

R. Routine Matters

R-1 Approval of Financial Statements: Secretary's and custodian's reports for **February 2024**, 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).

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- R-2 Approval of Transfers: February 28, 2024 - March 20, 2024**
{Backup R-2}
- R-3 Approval of Bill List: February 28, 2024 - March 20, 2024** {Backup R-3}
- R-4 Approval of Cafeteria Report: March 2024** {Backup R-4}
- R-5 Approval of Travel: October 2024** {Backup R-5}

P. Personnel:

- 1.** On the recommendation of the Superintendent that the following substitutes be approved for the 2023-2024 school year, pending receipt of required documentation: (Backup P-1)

SUBSTITUTES NEEDING MORE DOCUMENTATION

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Deborah Schaeffner, Martha Crawley, Tia Money

SUBSTITUTE BUS AIDES

Amanda Dodd, William Landis, Diane Axner, Terry Tolchin

SUBSTITUTE CUSTODIANS

Timothy Johnson, Russell Douglass, Sr.

SUBSTITUTE FOOD SERVICE AIDES

Diane Axner, Brian Kulas

SUBSTITUTE CAFETERIA AIDE

Diane Axner

- 2.** On the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Lower Township Board of Education approves the FMLA for Employee #4481, effective March 6, 2024 to April 17, 2024.
- 3.** On the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the transfer of Donna Geiger, Transportation Secretary, to School Secretary at the Maud Abrams School, no later than July 1, 2024. (Backup P-3)

H. Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying:

- 1.** The Board affirms the actions taken by the Superintendent and the School Safety Teams, for H.I.B. Mitnick #2 2023-2024; and H.I.B. Maud Abrams #5 2023-2024. (Backup H-1)

L. Legislative and Internal Policies:

- 1.** On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the 2023 LTES Safe Return Plan. (Backup L-1)

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E. Education: None.

F. Finance and Insurance:

1. On the recommendation of the Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the submission of the 2024-25 school district budget to the Executive County Superintendent, to apply for any statutory spending imitations as needed and establish April 24, 2024, as the date for Public Hearing:

General Fund	\$ 26,460,820
Special Revenues (Grants & Entitlements)	\$ 5,023,343
Debt Service Fund	\$ 1,510,480
TOTAL BUDGET	\$ 32,994,643
Local Tax Levy	<u>\$ 19,831,002</u>

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, to acknowledge that the 2024-2025 school budget, as described, results in a General Fund Tax Levy of **\$19,831,002**.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the district establish a maximum of \$17,000 in the 2024-2025 school year for travel related expenditures.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the district approves the withdrawal of \$325,000 from Maintenance Reserve per NJAC 6A:23A-14.2 (d).

2. On the recommendation of the Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the submittal of the 2024-2025 Preschool Budget. (Backup F-2)
3. On the recommendation of the Business Administrator, that the Annual Audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, is reviewed and accepted and the Recommendations and Corrective Action Plan be read into the public record: (complete document distributed under separate cover)

FYE 6/30/2023- Annual School Audit Lower Twp Schools

Findings & Recommendations:

- #1. Administrative Practices and Procedures – None.
- #2. Financial Planning, Accounting and Reporting – None.
- #3. School Purchasing Programs – None.
- #4. School Food Service – None.
- #5. Student Body Activities – None.

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- #6. Application for State School Aide – None.
- #7. Pupil Transportation – None.
- #8. Facilities and Capital Assets – None.
- #9. Miscellaneous – None.
- #10. Status of Prior Year Audit Findings/Recommendations – None.

FYE 6/30/2023 Annual School Audit Lower Twp. Schools

Findings: None.
Recommendation: None.
Corrective Action Plan: None.

- 4. On the recommendation of the Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the Cape May County Special Services School District 2024-2025 school year tuition rates:

ESY Tuition	\$3,350
ESY One-to One Aide	\$2,950
Preschool Disabilities	\$41,140
Autism	\$44,500
Emotional Regulation Impairment	\$44,350
Multiple Disabilities	\$37,350

- 5. On the recommendation of the Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the contract for participation in Cooperative Transportation Services with Cape May County Special Services School District for the 2024-2025 school year. (Backup F-5)
- 6. On the recommendation of the Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the renewal of Administrative Services with Ameriflex or dental and prescription COBRA coverage, effective April 1, 2024.

MOTION ON CONSENT AGENDA ON ALL MOTIONS LISTED BELOW:

Routine Matters: R-1 to R-5

Personnel: P-1 to P-3

Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying: H-1

Legislative and Internal Policies: L-1

Education: None

Finance and Insurance: F-1 to F-6

Addendum: A-1

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Motion: Thomas Second: Selby

Discussion: None

All Voted in Favor:

Lindsey Selby
Joseph Thomas
Lauren Randle
Jonathan Vile
Lauren Cox
Cynthia Baldacchini
Patricia Smith
Monica DiVito
Gary Douglass – Abstained from motion A-1

4} NON-CONSENT AGENDA: None

5} OLD/NEW BUSINESS: None

6} OPEN MEETING TO THE PUBLIC: (*public comment rules as read above apply*): None

7} GOOD OF THE ORDER:

A} Next Board Meeting: April 24, 2024

B} Fire Drills: 2/26/24 - Sandman School; 3/14/24 - Mitnick School and Maud Abrams School; 3/20/2024- Memorial School

C} Monthly Emergency Drill: 3/27/2024

D} Bus Evacuation Drills: N/A

8} ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

Motion: Thomas Second: Baldacchini

Discussion: None

All Voted in Favor:

This meeting concluded at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Patricia Ryan
School Business Administrator/ Board Secretary

March 20, 2024

ADDENDUM

- 1.** On the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the denial of the Level 3 grievance (#3202024) involving Employee #4810.