

**FORT LEE BOARD OF EDUCATION
FORT LEE, NEW JERSEY**

MINUTES – SPECIAL PUBLIC WORK SESSION

Wednesday, March 20, 2013

Fort Lee High School Library/Media Center,
3000 Lemoine Ave. Fort Lee, New Jersey 07024

1. The Special Public Work Session was called to order at 7:45 PM by Mr. Yusang Park, President of the Fort Lee Board of Education.

2. Mr. David Sarnoff led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

3. **PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT**

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of the Act, the Fort Lee Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time, and place thereof posted in the entrance hall of the Board Office, 2175 Lemoine Avenue; published in the Board's designated online media outlet/newspapers: Fort Lee Patch.com, The Record, The Star Ledger, The Suburbanite; filed with the Clerk of the Borough of Fort Lee; and mailed to all persons, if any, who have requested said notice. Please be advised that this meeting is being taped and will be broadcasted on local TV and the district's website at a future date.

During the course of the board meeting, the Fort Lee Board of Education offers members of the public an opportunity to address issues regarding the operation of the Fort Lee Public Schools. The Board reminds those individuals who take this opportunity to identify themselves by name and address and to limit their comments to items listed on the agenda and/or items directly related to the operation of the School District. Issues raised by members of the public may or may not be responded to by the Board. All comments will be considered and a response will be forthcoming if and when appropriate. The Board asks all members of the public to be courteous and mindful of the rights of other individuals when speaking. Specifically, comments regarding students and employees of the Board are discouraged and will not be responded to by the Board. Students and employees have specific legal rights afforded by the laws of New Jersey. The Board bears no responsibility nor will it be liable for any comments made by members of the public. Members of the public should consider their comment in light of the legal rights of those affected or identified in their comments and be aware that they are legally responsible and liable for their comments.

4. **ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Mrs. Esther Han Silver, Mrs. Holly Morell, Mrs. Candace Romba,
Mr. David Sarnoff, Ms. Helen Yoon (left 8:40 pm), and Mr. Yusang Park

ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Sharon Amato, Mrs. Cheryl Balletto and Mr. Paul Grigg, Esq.

ABSENT: Mr. Carmelo Luppino, Jr., Mr. Peter Suh and Mr. Joseph Surace

5. **PUBLIC WORK SESSION: PURPOSE OF THIS SPECIAL PUBLIC WORK SESSION - TO ADJOURN IMMEDIATELY INTO PRIVATE SESSION TO DISCUSS THE 2013-2014 BUDGET AND PERSONNEL MATTERS**
6. At approximately 7:48 PM, Mrs. Candace Romba, offered, Mr. David Sarnoff seconded by, to adjourn the Public Work Session and go into the Private Work Session. On voice vote, motion carried unanimously. Dr. Sharon Amato and Mrs. Cheryl Balletto left the meeting.
7. At approximately 9:30 PM the board of education readjoined into the Special Public Work Session.
8. **RETURNED TO SPECIAL PUBLIC WORK SESSION – TO DISCUSS THE 2013-2014 BUDGET AND PERSONNEL MATTERS**
- ◆ Mrs. Cheryl Balletto gave a presentation on the budget highlights from a fiscal perspective.
 - ◆ Dr. Sharon Amato gave a presentation on the budget from a program perspective.
 - ◆ Mrs. Cheryl Balletto answered a question about health benefits. She stated the budget needs rewording so it's easier to understand. Is the budget using 20% but the actual cost increase for the 13-14 budget is 10%? There is a reduction in benefits cost due to the whole district contributing per the new law.
 - ◆ Mrs. Han Silver asked if the \$22,000 would be used for the tax levy reduction or would it go towards technology.
 - ◆ Dr. Sharon Amato stated that the Special Education Director would like IPADS.
 - ◆ Mr. Yusang Park stated that the athletics, marching band and color guard uniforms are not in good condition.
 - ◆ Mrs. Holly Morell described the students using uniforms that look like costumes from party city and have tape on them.
 - ◆ Mrs. Candace Romba stated that sports teams can use new uniforms.
 - ◆ Dr. Sharon Amato stated that this came to my attention today through the principal that the band and the athletic department will need uniforms and the principal agrees to move some funds.
 - ◆ Mr. David Sarnoff stated that the track team does not have a working track. Will we be redoing the track?
 - ◆ Mr. Yusang Park stated that transportation is needed for events. \$65,000 for merit pay clause can come up with funding for three positions and find a better usage.
 - ◆ Dr. Sharon Amato stated that there is a merit pay because of caps.
 - ◆ Mr. Yusang Park stated that there is no contractual obligation for merit pay for two positions and the board has not discussed it.
 - ◆ Mrs. Candace Romba stated that one position is not filled.
 - ◆ Mr. Paul Grigg stated that it is not an unusual practice for merit pay to the Business Administrator, Assistant Superintendent or Superintendent. In their case it is due to salary caps. We have approved the preliminary budget and will approve the final budget in advance. The budget is fluid and items can change. We could have a couple of odd placements. We may have someone retire that you didn't know. The merit pay is legitimate and the county does ask for contracts.
 - ◆ Mr. Yusang Park stated that he clarified the board's intent and priority for the budgetary goal to be directed to the students.
 - ◆ Mrs. Esther Han Silver asked if there is a way to go below the 2% tax levy cap.
 - ◆ Mrs. Cheryl Balletto stated yes you can go below 2% cap by reducing expenditures.
 - ◆ Mr. David Sarnoff spoke about retirements and the Technology requirements for the next two years. He said if we were purchasing machines and wireless. We were getting \$1 million financed over the next five years. We are moving towards the 21st century and need to be competitive. He stated that we will get a competitive rate and are spending wisely. We will be seeing the final plan shortly.
 - ◆ Mr. Yusang Park stated that the current budget has two additional supervisors.

- ◆ Dr. Sharon Amato referred to the change in curriculum and the kind of teaching if we want to be prepared for the future. We are supervising teachers and offering support. We are a large district, large class sizes with different student needs, data and feedback from the principals. Typically districts our size have several at the High School levels. They can't do all the evaluations and the new teacher evaluations must be more robust, provide coaching and a high level of accountability. One supervisor is better than none but if we had two to assist principals it will enhance education for students and reduce outside consultants to a degree.
- ◆ Mr. Yusang Park stated that we had supervisors at the High School and we had two at the elementary level.
- ◆ Dr. Sharon Amato stated that we had ten supervisors when she started and due to budget cuts we are down to two. Cuts from state aid cut it all out.
- ◆ Mr. Yusang Park stated that he had a presentation and presented a sunny perspective. The drop in ranking but SAT scores did go down 40 points.
- ◆ Dr. Sharon Amato stated that there is a lot of scientific data. HSPA will change and we will rather be ahead than behind. We are good and strong but can always get better. My job is to recommend the best education to benefit the school district. I am a taxpayer and it is a tough issue.
- ◆ Mr. Yusang Park stated that it is our job to balance but if we have to cut the first thing would be a supervisory position.
- ◆ Dr. Sharon Amato stated that she gave a handout to clarify the 21st century learning. Student data is impacted by everything. There are different kids this year than last. Leadership raises achievement and supervisors are leaders who lead teachers. Everything is lined and balanced from the top down. Track one student over time.
- ◆ Mr. Yusang Park stated that the board would like the big picture.
- ◆ Dr. Sharon Amato stated that the Strategic Plan is how we met the board's goal. Most of the work is done by her, the supervisors and principals.
- ◆ Mrs. Candace Romba asked if we had a Director of Curriculum in the budget.
- ◆ Mr. David Sarnoff asked if the supervisors are in place that could affect the cost of Professional Development. The half days are very inconvenient for working parents.
- ◆ Dr. Sharon Amato stated that this is a contractual issue for Professional Development days. We should make sure the supervisors are trained and then they will show teachers but we don't have the time, money or the space.
- ◆ Mrs. Holly Morell asked will we have the extra supervisor to replace the need for the half days. We just got two supervisors and don't need to hire another two.
- ◆ Dr. Sharon Amato stated that this will save us some money by doing some training ourselves on the Professional Development days but need to offer this to the staff and send in a plan.
- ◆ Mr. David Sarnoff stated that he asked the public to support initiatives passed by three votes. The board's mission is with understanding in these difficult times and we still have unemployment.
- ◆ Mrs. Esther Han Silver asked how does the role of the Director of Curriculum fit in.
- ◆ Dr. Sharon Amato stated that the Director of Curriculum works with the supervisors and principals to oversee data, testing and Professional Development. We can support building learning would be a great benefit.
- ◆ Mr. Howard Pearl stated that this is a great conversation but is 11 pm and he is not given the opportunity to speak. People have left because it is so late. Can't this be done in private session?
- ◆ Mr. David Sarnoff stated that he has been coming to meetings since School #1 and details were never discussed and time not taken to review. This board is trying to do the job. We will show the public and have the committee's best interest and not run the clock on the public.
- ◆ Mr. Howard Pearl stated that this could have been done in an hour.

9. **QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON ITEMS LISTED ON TONIGHT'S AGENDA AND ANY OTHER TOPIC OF CONCERN**

- ◆ Mr. Howard Pearl stated that at the meeting on Monday, March 11, 2013 Mr. Raferty and the committee said they would like to raise money for band uniforms. The Booster Clubs should not be separate.
- ◆ Mrs. Candace Romba stated that we have a committee and it should be brought to her attention.
- ◆ Mr. Paul Griggs stated this should be addressed to the chair of the board.
- ◆ Ms. Dadon stated that he is newly appointed to band boosters and it is a pleasure to be here. It is time to address the needs of the Performing Arts Program. The uniforms are at least twenty years old and we lease the instruments. See attached statement
- ◆ Dr. Sharon Amato asked if Ms. Dadon met with the principal.
- ◆ Ms. Dadon said yes and she is also speaking with Mr. Welte.
- ◆ Ms. Gina Ma stated that she became involved a couple of years ago and a lot of parents are trying to help. We thank the board for your work. We have a website to inform you if there is an event. We need to communicate better and there will be a fundraiser concert on April 12, 2013.
- ◆ Dr. Sharon Amato stated that the new reading programs K-5 is using Prentice Hall Reading Program 6, 7, and 8. There are different things at the High School and Advanced Math classes at the Middle School such as Pre-Algebra, Algebra, Geometry, the infusion of Technology in Science and Social Studies. This can't be done online because we don't have the technology and will sell only certain amount of licenses.
- ◆ Ms. Diane Sicheri asked if this was to be calculated for the future.
- ◆ Mrs. Paula Colbath asked if there was a requirement to go below the 2% cap and have two million incumbent. What can you do? The board should look hard because atomic clocks were promised and \$200,000 for Technology. Now the public hears of a Director of Curriculum and two new Supervisors. What will the board do with a search for a Superintendent and Dr. Amato is the best person. Mrs. Colbath suggested calling and recruiting since she doesn't know if she will be the new Superintendent or get an interim to mentor. The Resource Room is overcrowded and services four grades all at once in one room. You should look at the staff and then see if we need new people. She doesn't support an Assistant Superintendent, Director of Curriculum and two new supervisors. Slow down the spending. Does this budget contemplate a search?
- ◆ Mr. Yusang Park stated no and that the board is in process of discussing.
- ◆ Dr. Sharon Amato stated that we have \$500,000 for Curriculum and the continuation is primarily for books and manipulatives.
- ◆ Ms. Paula Colbath asked if the settlement agreement with Mr. Engravalle is finalized.
- ◆ Mr. Paul Grigg, Esq. stated that we have to talk to his partner and was waiting for approval from the Executive County Superintendent.
- ◆ Ms. Paula Colbath asked if Mr. Engravalle has been paid.
- ◆ Mrs. Cheryl Balletto stated no he has not received any money.
- ◆ Mrs. Candace Romba asked if we are looking to find money and going through the budget.
- ◆ Mrs. Paula Colbath stated that we would be delighted to be to see no tax increase.
- ◆ Ms. Ronin asked if we had supervisors already.
- ◆ Dr. Sharon Amato stated that we have two K-8 supervisors.
- ◆ The board attorney read three resolutions that the board would be considering that night.

Personnel	
#1P	RESIGNATION OF KATHLEEN WEISSMAN-WEI AS SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER AT FORT LEE EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER
#2P	TERMINATION OF DAMIRA MIHATOV AS CLASSROOM AIDE AT SCHOOL NO. 3
#3P	VOLUNTARY TRANSFER OF KRISTIN NICASTRO AS CLASSROOM AIDE

FROM FLECC TO SCHOOL NO. 3		
	Motion by Mrs. Candace Romba To Approve #1P - #3P	Seconded by Mrs. Esther Han Silver On roll call, Motion carried. Mrs. Holly Morell voted NAY to Resolution #2P. Resolutions 1P and 3P passed. Resolution 2P failed. Mr. Carmelo Luppino, Jr., Mr. Peter Suh, Mr. Joseph Surace and Ms. Helen Yoon were absent.

10. At approximately 11:45 PM, Mr. David Sarnoff, offered, Mrs. Esther Han Silver, seconded by, to adjourn the Special Public Work Session. On voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

Roll calls and resolutions of this meeting are attached.

Respectfully submitted,

CHERYL BALLETTA
 BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR/BOARD SECRETARY

CB/mp
 Att.
 3-27-13