

# **BLAIRSTOWN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Blairstown, New Jersey 07825**

[www.blairstownelem.net](http://www.blairstownelem.net)

## **February 27, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

**CALL TO ORDER** The Blairstown Township Board of Education held this meeting in the School Library on Thursday, February 27, 2020.  
Mrs. McElroy, Board Vice-President, called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

**FLAG SALUTE** Everyone present was requested to rise and repeat the Pledge of Allegiance.

**SUNSHINE LAW** Mrs. McElroy read the Notice of Meeting and Mission Statement

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

**ROLL CALL** The following board members were present: Mrs. Inscho, Ms. Klein, Mrs. McElroy, Mrs. Rolph, and Mrs. Sikkes  
Absent: Mrs. Gerhardt and Mrs. Shaffer

Tardy: Mr. Cook arrived at 8:05PM

**Also Present:** Mr. Saalfield, Superintendent; Mrs. Petty, SBA/Board Secretary;  
Andrew Brown, Esquire; and approximately twelve members of the staff/ public.

**APPROVE REGULAR MINUTES** - A motion was made by Ms. Klein and seconded by Mrs. Sikkes, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes as submitted for January 9, 2020.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Superintendent's Report** – Mr. Saalfield reported on the following items:
  - Attending a recent NJASA Special Education Committee meeting
  - Meeting with PTG regarding playground enhancements
  - Attending a meeting on Event Security, which was held at NWR
  - Discussing the continuation of the CST shared services arrangement with Frelinghuysen BOE
  - Plans for the Spring Musical “Pirates Past Noon”
  - Receipt of a \$250 donation from the Blair Womans Club
  - This week's All-Star Band Performance at NWR

Mr. Saalfield asked Mrs. Sikkes and Ms. Klein if anyone from the cluster districts had contacted them on the new committee for shared services, but their response was negative. He also said that he would ask Mr. Cook about the Board's response to the information on Mental Health priorities.

2. **Principal's Report** – Dr. Elias was absent, but Mr. Saalfield noted that she had recently attended a “Stigma-Free” committee meeting in Knowlton and went to a workshop on Integrated Pest Management.

3. Spelling Bee Winners – The winners of our Spelling Bee were not able to attend the meeting, so they will be invited to the March meeting.
4. BOE Ethics Training by Kathleen Helewa, NJSBA Representative – Mrs. Helewa provided NJSBA-prepared hand-outs for the Board’s annual Ethics Training.
5. Superintendent Evaluation Training – Mrs. Helewa distribution information on the process of evaluating the Superintendent, which she briefly reviewed with the Board.

**PUBLIC HEARING & PETITION**

Mrs. Kelly Moore-Finley, a paraprofessional, spoke about her hourly rate in comparison to the rate for new hires, which is only a few more cents per hour as a result of the 2020 minimum wage increase. After having worked here for seven years, she felt that she needed to let the Board know that she felt hurt about the very small difference in pay.

Mrs. Patricia DiPalma spoke on the use of the word “individuality” with regard to how unfair the attention is for LGBT community and stated her strong opposition to its inclusion in the curriculum.

**APPROVE FINANCIAL REPORTS** - A motion was made by Mrs. McElroy, seconded by Mrs. Sikkes, and carried unanimously by roll call vote to approve the attached list of December Transfers in the amount of \$7,500 and the December Board Secretary’s reports, in agreement with the Treasurer’s Reports, in the amount of \$1,450,521.37, in Total Government Funds; and to certify that as of December 31, 2019, after review of the Secretary and Treasurer’s monthly financial reports (appropriations section) and upon consultation with the appropriate district officials, to the best of our knowledge no major account or fund has been overexpended in violation with N.J.A.C.6A:23A-16.10(c)4 and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district’s financial obligation for the fiscal year.

**APPROVE PAYMENT OF BILLS** - A motion was made by Mrs. McElroy, seconded by Mrs. Rolph, and carried unanimously by roll call vote to approve payment of the February 27<sup>th</sup> Bills & Claims List for the General Fund in the amount of \$1,120,744.85 and for the Food Service Fund in the amount of \$11,095.20

**MOTION ITEMS**

**A. PERSONNEL**

A motion was made by Mrs. Sikkes, seconded by Mrs. Rolph, and carried unanimously by roll call vote to approve the following ten motions:

1. Substitute – To accept the Superintendent’s recommendation to add the names of Carmen Cervantes and Aaron Coleman to the Substitute list for the 2019-20 School Year.
2. Hire Teacher – To accept the Superintendent’s recommendation to hire Danielle Muessig on Master’s Step 4 as a teacher for the position vacated by Mrs. Reade’s retirement on December 31, effective March 16 through June 30, 2020.

3. Move Across Guide – To approve Mrs. Bunce and Mrs. Crista Robinson’s requests to move across the BEA Salary Guide to the Master’s Degree column, effective February 1, 2020.
4. Hire Custodian – To accept Mr. Saalfield’s recommendation to hire Miguel Matos as a part-time custodian at the hourly rate of \$14, effective March 1 – June 30, 2020, pending receipt of criminal history clearance.
5. Hire Paraprofessionals – To accept Mr. Saalfield’s recommendation to hire Corey Russo and Kelly Smigel as part-time paraprofessionals at the hourly rate of \$11.00, effective March 1-June 30, 2020.
6. Hire Assistant Play Directors – To accept Mr. Saalfield’s recommendation to hire Barbara Warnkin and Maureen Konecnik as Assistant Play Directors (splitting the stipend).
7. Accept SBA’s Resignation – To accept the resignation, with regret, of Molly Petty, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, for the purpose of retirement, effective May 1, 2020.
8. Accept Treasurer’s Resignation – To accept the resignation of Georgette Range, Treasurer, for the purpose of retirement, effective May 1, 2020.
9. Reading Academy Positions – To accept Mr. Saalfield’s recommendations to appoint the attached list of staff members to the Reading Academy at the hourly rate of \$40.
10. Approve NJFLA Request – To approve Mrs. Reynolds’ February 27<sup>th</sup> request for an intermittent leave of absence under the New Jersey Family Leave Act.
11. Superintendent’s Pre-Conference – Mr. Saalfield passed out the calendar for this spring’s Superintendent evaluation process. The Board was requested to complete their online evaluation by March 31 so that the timeline for completion of the process by June 30<sup>th</sup> can be accomplished.

**B. FINANCE** - A motion was made by Mrs. McElroy, seconded by Mrs. Sikkes, and carried unanimously by roll call vote to approve the following five Finance items (RCV):

1. SEMI Waiver Request – To approve the SEMI waiver request for the 2020-21 School Year.
2. Workshop Request – To approve the attached list of workshop/mileage reimbursement requests.
3. Approve PSD Tuition Rate & Contract – To approve the Preschool Disabilities class tuition rate in the amount of \$9,100 for one student, including speech and occupational therapy services (2x/week each) as well as a personal Paraprofessional, effective March 1 – June 30, 2020 and to approve a special education (PSD) tuition contract with the Belvidere Board of Education for this student in the amount of \$9,100 for this time period.

4. Approve MD Tuition Rate & Contract – To approve the Multiple Disabilities class tuition rate in the amount of \$17,300 for one student, including speech (3x/week) and occupational therapy services (2x/week) as well as a personal Paraprofessional, effective March 1 – June 30, 2020 and to approve a special education (MD) tuition contract with the Belvidere Board of Education for this student in the amount of \$17,300 for this time period.
5. Accept Donation – To accept a donation for the art program in the amount of \$250 from the Blair Woman’s Club.

### **C. FACILITIES**

1. Facilities’ Use Requests – A motion was made by Mrs. Inscho, seconded by Mrs. Rolph, and carried unanimously to approve the attached list of Facilities’ Use Requests.
2. Lambert Road Property Sale Update - Mrs. Petty reported that she has not received any further updates from the Ridge & Valley Conservancy since she received the attached letter from the appraiser for Ridge & Valley Conservancy and Township of Blairstown.
3. Vail School Update – Mrs. Petty reported that in January she and Mr. Saalfield met members of the Historic Commission at the Vail School, and they were very interested in the old schoolhouse. Last week Mrs. Petty met with another member of the Commission so that he could take a look at the physical condition of the building, and he noted that the Historic Commission would love to be able to purchase the Vail School and that they will soon be making a formal proposal to the Township Committee.
4. February 3rd Fire Inspection Report – Mr. Saalfield reported on the recent findings of the February 3<sup>rd</sup> Fire Inspection, which requires that all new stairwell doors be purchased and exterior lighting above every exit door be installed, among other things in the 11-page report. Mrs. Petty called the inspector’s supervisor in Trenton, who will be coming back with the inspector on March 3 to review the findings with the administration.

### **D. POLICY**

1. First Reading – After a motion was made by Mrs. McElroy and seconded by Ms. Klein to approve the first Reading of Policy 5756 (Transgender Students), a great deal of discussion ensued. There were questions about requesting changes to the wording, which Mr. Brown said would have to be submitted to the Policy Committee members before they meet to review this policy in order to recommend possible changes at the second reading and adoption of this policy. Mrs. Rolph remarked that she would have voted differently if she had known that changes might be permitted, because she remembered that the last time this policy was on the agenda that the attorney had stated that changes would not be permitted.. The motion carried by roll call vote (3-yes; 2-no <Mr. Cook and Mrs. Sikkes> 1-abstention <Mrs. Rolph>).

**CORRESPONDENCE** – Mrs. Petty read the thank-you note from Denise Current, owner of Stocker Bus Company.

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. April BOE Meeting Date - A motion was made by Mrs. Sikkes, seconded by Ms. Klein, and carried unanimously to cancel the April 30 meeting and reschedule it on April 28. Mrs. Petty will advertise the date change.
2. Ad Hoc Survey Committee Report – All employees can participate. They will be issued a numbered survey in envelopes to ensure confidentiality. Mrs. Pfeiffer, BEA President, has suggested that the survey go out after Negotiations are over.
3. Mental Health Report – Mr. Cook will send out one more reminder for BOE members to provide their top 10 lists.
4. PEA Grant for Preschool Funding – This will come out later in the school year or summer.
5. Teacher Empowerment Training – This topic will be worked into the 2020-21 professional development calendar.
6. Policy 8600 (transportation) to be reviewed in August.

**PUBLIC HEARING & PETITION** – None.

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION** – A motion was made by Mrs. Sikkes, seconded by Mrs. Rolph, and carried unanimously to convene to Executive Session at 9:47PM to review prior minutes and to discuss matters of Negotiations, the candidate for the School Business Administrator position, and 2020-21 Staff Salaries.

After the Board returned to public session at 11:22PM, the following action was taken:

Hire SBA – A motion was made by Mrs. Sikkes, seconded by Mrs. McElroy, and carried unanimously by roll call vote to accept Mr. Saalfield’s recommendation to hire Matthew Herzer as the School Business Administrator/ Board Secretary at the annual salary of \$85,000 (pro-rated to \$14,166.67 for two months), effective May 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020, pending contract approval by the NJ Department of Education County Superintendent.

Approve Executive Session Minutes – A motion was made by Mrs. McElroy, seconded by Mrs. Sikkes, and carried unanimously to approve the October and December 2019 Executive Session Minutes as submitted.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Mrs. Sikkes, seconded by Mrs. McElroy, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 11:23PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Molly Petty  
School Business Administrator