

***MEETING OF THE LAKEWOOD BOARD OF EDUCATION HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 2009, AT 8:00 P.M. IN THE PRINCETON AVENUE AUDITORIUM, 655 PRINCETON AVENUE, LAKEWOOD, NEW JERSEY 08701***

Mr. Galdo, Board President, called the meeting to order at 8:03 p.m. Cynthia Romano, Administrative Assistant to the Board, read the following notice:

**SUNSHINE LAW**

***Sunshine  
Law***

Pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 231, of the Laws of 1976 (THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT), Mr. Finger notified the public that notice of the date, time, location and agenda of this meeting, to the extent known, was provided at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the commencement of this meeting in the following manner:

1. By posting such notice on the public announcement board of the Lakewood Board of Education Offices, and the Lakewood Township Municipal Building.
2. By mailing such notice to the offices of the Asbury Park Press and the Tri-Town News.
3. By filing such notice with the Board Secretary.
4. By mailing such notice to all individuals who requested and paid for a copy of same.

**ROLL CALL:**

***Roll Call***

**Board Members Present:** Mr. Gonter, Mr. Grunhut,  
Mrs. Miccio, Mr. Neumann,  
Mr. Ostreicher, Mr. Tift,  
Mr. Thomas, Mr. Galdo

**Board Members Absent:** Mr. Silver

**Also Attending:** Eugenia E. Lawson, Acting  
Superintendent, William T.  
Andersen, Assistant Superin-  
tendent, Robert S. Finger,  
Business Administrator,  
Michael I. Inzelbuch, Esq.

***Also  
Attending***

Mr. Galdo – “I want to apologize to everyone.  
I said when I as a Board President am wrong,

***Mr. Galdo***

I will apologize to a body. And I was wrong. The other night to those of you who were here, when I walked out. I am still the elected President of this body and as such at times I will make decisions that I think are best for the overall of this body. Again tonight I apologize to you. You must remember that there are nine people up here that are elected by you. We do not receive pay for what we do. We take a lot of criticism for what we do and why we do it and how we do it. I'm sorry again tonight, we are late, but I must say to you, the crisis that becomes this Board and what it is has to be settled by a group of nine people that you elected. So again accept my apologies for being late."

**MINUTES**

***Minutes***

Mrs. Miccio moved, seconded by Mr. Thomas to approve the Conference, Executive and Regular Meeting Minutes of June 24, 30, July 7 and July 8, 2009.

**ROLL CALL:**

***Roll Call***

**YES:** Mr. Gonter, Mr. Grunhut,  
Mrs. Miccio, Mr. Neumann,  
Mr. Ostreicher, Mr. Thomas,  
Mr. Tift, Mr. Galdo

**NO:** None

**ABSTAIN:** Mr. Grunhut on June 24  
Mr. Gonter, Mr. Neumann and  
Mr. Thomas on June 30  
Mrs. Miccio on July 8 and  
Mr. Neumann on July 7 and 8

**MOTION PASSED**

**RECOGNITION OF PUBLIC**

***Public Recog.***

Mr. Galdo reminded all of those present of the four minute rule.

**07/22/09**

Mr. Waters – "1275 Old County Line Rd. and product of the Lakewood school system many, many years ago. Tonight the people

***Mr. Waters***

that are behind me are here in support of Mrs. Lawson. They represent the majority population of the Lakewood student body. They want to keep continuity in our school system. They want the best for their children. They want their children to have an opportunity to get through this school system and have a chance for the future. We would hope that decisions would be made in the best interest of these young people so that we can keep some continuity between the top job, the teachers and the students. So the morale in the school system can be maintained. We have had a lot of changes in this district and we've had some mistakes made. We even hired a Business Administrator that I even warned you ahead of time that it wasn't a good choice, but you made the choice anyway. So I hope that you are open minded and that you listen to the public here. That's not you Mr. Finger. Cynthia knows who I am talking about. It's very important that when the public comes to a school board and tries to talk to you and tries to ask you and tries to suggest and give you an idea of what they would like in their school system, that you consider the thoughts that come from the public. We would not like you to be an autonomous board that just does whatever you want to do. And I hope that this is not the way this Board is. These people are here in support of this lady. They have come here from their homes and their families and I hope you listen to what they have to say tonight. I know some of you up there and I hope in your hearts that you'll listen tonight and I hope that you'll do right by the students of Lakewood. These kids need support. Especially at this time in our history. And I hope that you'll support these students by supporting someone that's at this time in our history best suited to make decisions for them."

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***Public Recog.  
Cont.***

Pastor Thomas – "211 East Fourth St. I've been in Lakewood for about 45 years. Seen a lot of different changes also. I've known

Jeannie Lawson for approximately 35 years and I know her to be a woman who has a heart for Lakewood. She's a prior student of Lakewood school system and we are blessed to have her as the acting, hopefully permanent Superintendent and I think it would be a real tragedy for us to lose a person of her caliber. We've lost good people. I see some sitting on the board because we didn't act in the way we should have acted. It would be a tragedy to lose Jeannie as good a job as she's doing. We don't need to re-invent the wheel. She's doing a good job right now. So it would be crazy to bring somebody else in who doesn't have the experience or dedication that Jeannie has. So we come here to lift up and hopefully you folks will do the right thing and keep her as the permanent Superintendent of the Lakewood school system."

***Pastor Thomas***

Carol Cousins – "President Lakewood Education Association. The LEA believes that the success of this district depends on the stability of a district. In the past year, Mrs. Lawson has created an environment of change while allowing us to believe that we were changing for very positive reasons. The staff once again felt that we were not operating in the business as usual mode as has been implied by some. The payroll office is stable and this district met AYP. Those were major accomplishments. After the search committee was established, I hoped that the process of searching for a superintendent would not end up like many of our other searches. You see I've been here long enough to know what happens all the time. I became even more concerned when the idea of educators serving on the committee was questioned. Who better to represent the children than educators who nurture them everyday. The LEA would like to believe that

***Ms. Cousins***

this Board's concern is also to provide a stable environment where leadership has the heart of the district in mind. You once again have the ability to select someone who knows and is a part of this community. I implore you to

**07/22/09  
Public Recog.  
Cont.**

do the right thing tonight.”

Glenn Wilson – “138 Colonial Drive. I also accept your apologies for Monday night. It is my hope tonight to walk out of here. You guys haven’t made the right decision and the right decision is none other than to elect Eugenia Lawson as the permanent Superintendent of our schools. If that decision was not so, you will leave us no choice Mr. Chairman then to believe that there is a plan for the failure of our children. We come tonight and we are somewhat tossed between right and wrong and hopefully it is my desire to believe that there isn’t such a plan. Having been in Lakewood most of my life, especially in the last ten years, we have all seen the transition of this town and it appears that there is a plan for the failure of every system in this town that pertains to us. Let’s not make no mistakes. There are two kinds of people in this town and if you look at the audience tonight, only one side is here tonight. The other school system is safely tucked away. Our children live in constant uncertainty and then it appears that every time we tell the truth, we are labeled as anti-Semitic. We are not anti-Semitic. We have lived in this town with everybody. I as a pastor have no hatred in my heart against anyone but injustice in any community is an injustice. And it’s wrong and I hope that tonight this Board and I often question at every meeting you will hear me question the passion of this particular Board. I really wonder, are they listening to us tonight. Or is our message going in one ear and out the other. I wonder. When they got here tonight were their minds already made up and everything that we are saying tonight is just to allow us to vent. Well let me say something

to you. This kind of atmosphere is perfect. This is the breeding ground for a community to rise up and no longer take sitting down the injustice that we have been subject to in the past. So I say to you tonight, do the right thing for our children. We would like also to be able to say, our children are

**Mr. Wilson**

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**Public Recog.  
Cont.**

safe just like everybody else in this town.  
Thank you Mr. Chairman.”

Erica Rodriguez – “I live at 115 Leesville  
Road, Jackson.”

***Ms. Rodriguez***

Mr. Inzelbuch – “Through the Chair. I’m  
sorry, we don’t allow people and the LEA  
will agree with me, people who are not  
residents of Lakewood cannot speak.”

***Mr. Inzelbuch***

Erica Rodriguez – “But I work in this  
community.”

***Ms. Rodriguez***

Mr. Inzelbuch – “Do you work for Lakewood  
schools?”

***Mr. Inzelbuch***

Erica Rodriguez – “I work with Lakewood  
schools. I work with the State of New Jersey.”

***Ms. Rodriguez***

Mr. Inzelbuch – “In what capacity. I’m just  
asking because what is good for one is good  
for all.”

***Mr. Inzelbuch***

Erica Rodriguez – “Division for Youth and  
Family Services.”

***Ms. Rodriguez***

Mr. Inzelbuch – “Through the Chair. A  
special motion can be made allowing Ms.  
Rodriguez to speak say yea.”

***Mr. Inzelbuch***

All members present replied “yea”.

Erica Rodriguez – “I just wanted to get the  
opportunity to speak on behalf of Mrs.  
Eugenia. I work with the community here.  
I work a lot with the children in these schools.  
I’ve seen many things especially working for

***Ms. Rodriguez***

the Division of Youth and Family. We are in  
a community where these children really are  
in need of help. We need leadership people  
with passion. People who are willing to  
stand up for these children who need some  
kind of hope. And it has been my experience  
with Jeannie that this is a woman of passion  
and dedication who looks at these children  
and is willing to allow them the opportunity

**07/22/09**

***Public Recog.  
Cont.***

to aspire more than what it is that this community has allowed them to see. They need to know that there is a hope outside these walls of Lakewood. They need to know that there is a chance for them to aspire to better and I really believe that Mrs. Jeannie is in a position to be able to give these children that promise, that hope so that they can begin to aspire to bigger and better than what they've seen thus far."

Evan Segui – "243 Fourth Street. I also am a product of the Lakewood school system. Actually one of your Board members Leonard Thomas, I have a classroom picture when you used to have hair and I want to say that I support Jeannie Lawson. I think she is the most qualified individual for this position and I hope that the Board does consider her for that permanent position. I do accept the Chairman's apologies, but I will not accept the Board's apologies next time when and if she is not elected as permanent Superintendent. Thank you."

***E. Segui***

Colin Lewis – "It's nice to see you all. It's nice to be here. New Life Discovery Corporation, 211 East Fourth Street. It's a non-profit organization."

***C. Lewis***

Mr. Inzelbuch – "Through the Chair. Mr. Lewis who I know and have been friends with for many years, do you live in Lakewood sir?"

***Mr. Inzelbuch***

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***Public Recog.  
Cont.***

Mr. Lewis – "No, I don't."

***C. Lewis***

Mr. Inzelbuch – "Do you work in Lakewood?"

***Mr. Inzelbuch***

Mr. Lewis – "Right now I do yes."

***C. Lewis***

Mr. Inzelbuch – "Therefore, to the Board, this man should be allowed to speak. All in favor

***Mr. Inzelbuch***

say “aye”.

All members replied “aye”.

Colin Lewis – “I appreciate that. It’s a honor to be here with my brothers and sisters here to support Eugenia for the permanent position. For the Board members who may not know, I’ve done a lot with the Lakewood school system. I’ve been involved in the BADD Festival for 15 years and the Project Prom and the Senior Citizen Prom and Brotherhood Essay Contest for close to 20 years. I believe we are at a critical time right now for Lakewood’s youth. There’s a couple of things I wrote down that I wanted to say, but you know I am going to say it. One last thing that you may not know about, but I do is that for over ten years I’ve been studying and researching Rabbi Aaron Kotler and the three things that I do believe is the assessment of his life. I’m going to bring up one. The one is a mandate to teach generations and I believe as public servants whether you are on the Township Committee, you are assigned to be a public servant, but you guys have an amazing responsibility in that you have the continuation of that mandate to teach generations. And I believe you have a woman in front of you who when I was trying to write down the words, the words that came to me and I’m going to choose one and I wrote down four. One is compassion to be concerned about all the children of Lakewood and as Pastor Glenn said I had a colleague of mine who said our children, this children and in our hearts

there are many of us who believe that they are all our children. I don’t care what people have to say. I know what I have to stand here and say. I know my brothers have to stand here and say. And we are standing here to say they are all our children. We are concerned about the education of everyone. I don’t care about what anybody else thinks. And I know that in this woman’s heart in her heart which consecrates her values that consecrates her actions that she cares about the education of all our children. That’s the mandate that you have

**C. Lewis**

**07/22/09**

**Public Recog.  
Cont.**

**C. Lewis**

now to teach generations. I've watched you.  
We are at a critical time.

It's outstanding the repositioning of Ms. Yuli at the High School. We have some outstanding administrators in our elementary schools. Ms. Schwartz is here, an excellent principal. And I also believe that it is very inspiring that Gil Suarez is back. That's a very motivational thing for the children to see him in the halls. For the parents. So there's three things that are critical. I believe at this time where we are. One test scores and I have heard, and I don't even think about test scores, but consistently as I heard Eugenia come out in the community, she would emphasize test scores. I am so happy that this is a priority in her mind. So test scores is important. Parental involvement you all know is important. That's how come I was so motivated to see brother Tracey Tift while we were here trying to motivate us to get involved in the PTO and I believe what Eugenia brings is she brings a connectivity to the community. She brings a connectivity that people know her. She can bring out the parents. That is that motivating force for parental involvement. And of course the last thing is hope and morale and motivation and that's another thing that she brings at this time. This is a critical time. Now we have given her the opportunity and I thank you because I know a lot of you were involved

in this for the one year of service. But what we are saying is give her that opportunity that she's been here to be the permanent Superintendent and let's see if she can motivate and bring this community together and take us to the test scores. The words that I have for her that I wrote down were professionalism, integrity, sensitivity and always she serves with excellence. Please, please let's give her the opportunity."

Mr. Galdo – "Warren Sherrard. Are you here?"

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**Public Recog.**  
**Cont.**

**Mr. Galdo**

Mr. Inzelbuch – “Mr. Sherrard, I know you, but I must ask. Are you a resident of Lakewood?”

**Mr. Inzelbuch**

Mr. Sherrard – “No I am not.”

**Mr. Sherrard**

Mr. Inzelbuch – “All members, may I have an aye for Mr. Sherrard to speak.”

**Mr. Inzelbuch**

All members replied “aye”.

Mr. Sherrard – “Thank you very much. I am the associate pastor of the New Life Christian Center. I am also president of the Lakewood Clergy Association. I stand here this evening in support of Eugenia Lawson as Superintendent of Lakewood schools. Everyone has spoken very eloquently so there’s not much that I can add but I would like to say the following. What Colin indicated was so critical. We are at a moment of opportunity. You the Board of Education have a phenomenal opportunity to demonstrate to the members of this community who are here represented that you care about all the children of the Lakewood school district. You have an opportunity to reach out to us as we believe that many of us have reached out to you. This Board of Education has often times had a combative relationship with the com-

**Mr. Sherrard**

munity. I think that you have an opportunity here in Eugenia Lawson to bridge the gap between this community and yourselves. I implore you, I urge you not to let this opportunity pass you by. Many of us in the community have been meeting over many months to talk about what’s going on in the Lakewood school district. And a lot it is your fault and a lot of it is our fault. But we have rededicated ourselves to coming together to try to provide opportunity for all of our children. The passion that you see in this room is not against any community. The passion that you see is for black, brown and white public school children in this district. That’s what the

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**Public Recog.**  
**Cont.**

**Mr. Sherrard**

passion is for. The people here before you are not against anyone. They are for their children and what we are saying in one voice this evening is that Eugenia Lawson has a connection to this community. She is eminently qualified to perform the job. I don't think anyone among you can question that. So what we are saying is give her the opportunity to do what she can do. What she has been called to do. What she is prepared to do and what we the parents of these children are asking her to do. Make her Superintendent of the Lakewood school district."

Fred Rush – "2023 Madison Avenue. I guess this is probably my sixth meeting in a row and they were all for one thing. Like the reverend said, I accept your apologies for your leaving which you shouldn't have. You might have been able to finish this business the other night. But that's beside the point. You know I have come here often to say. Sure I don't come here all the time, but when I do show up there's an issue. The issue today and I want to keep it positive because that's what we should be doing. I have told you guys on more

***Mr. Rush***

than one occasion that I support Mrs. Lawson. We've seen what she's done in the last year. We have proved what she's done. Test scores are up and all the stuff that you've heard. You've heard some people get up here and passionately talk about what it is that we should do. Now, we can only wait and hope that you guys will do the right thing. Once again, I know you guys have had a long debate. This has been a long drawn out process. It should not have been that long. But you asked the community to be involved. They are involved. It started out with the search committee, you've seen a lot of people out here on a number of occasions to voice their support. Now, I don't know

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***Public Recog.  
Cont.***

***Mr. Rush***

what has happened in other communities or what is happening for other people, but I do know what is happening for Mrs. Lawson. People have been here. They are here again tonight and I'll let you also know Chet that regardless of my opinion, I know she's going to be superintendent. And there's issues that we might disagree on sometimes, but I want to be here to discuss those issues with her because I kind of feel that you guys are going to do the right thing and select her. And a month from now when we have another meeting, she sitting in that same chair, because it doesn't say Acting Superintendent or Interim Superintendent. It says Superintendent. We want that to be a permanent fixture so you guys make sure you do what needs to be done and I'm sure that a lot of the people that you see here, you'll see them again. Especially when there are things that we need to come out and support. Thank you."

Rev. Brigham – "Lakewood Outreach Church. I can remember back in 1971, I was sitting probably right around here

and watching the talent show that was going on on the stage right here and I can remember one of the students got up and he sang "Jeremiah was a Bullfrog". That was very popular at that time. And I can also remember back in 1971 that the Jackson Five was a very popular group and Michael Jackson had sung some of his famous songs "One, Two, Three, ABC", and I can remember how the young people of this school. All the fifth graders were here in 1971, and I can remember how many of the young people here could relate to a musical group that looked like them. They were proud of the Jackson Five. Somebody that had achieved such success. And as I work with the homeless of Lakewood and Ocean County, I believe because I grew up in Lakewood,

***Rev. Brigham***

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***Public Recog.  
Cont.***

***Rev. Brigham***

the people of Lakewood can relate to me  
and I can relate to them.

Eugenia Lawson went to school in Lakewood, N.J. She can relate to the students of Lakewood and they can relate to her. That means a lot. It carries a lot of weight. Now in Lakewood we've got a lot of issues. We have a very interesting town. Very dynamic. Also Dr. King he fought a battle against the south of this country decades ago. Against segregation and racism. He took on the whole system of the south of segregation and he won the battle. It cost him his life, but he won the battle. And here in Lakewood we have a lot of segregation going on. We got segregated Head Start. We've got segregated special education, segregated clinics in town and most of all and the most egregious of all, segregated Section 8 housing in town. It is wrong of course. I thought Dr. King fought that fight and won it, but it has reared its ugly head here in Lakewood.

And I know Eugenia Lawson is a person the students of Lakewood can relate to and I believe she's the person for the job. Thank you."

Hillary Greenberg – "I live at 14 Dawn Winds Court, part of one of the planned communities here and I have been the truancy mediator for the Town of Lakewood for ten years. And I was informed this year in June that there will no longer be truancy for our children here. To me it is very important that the children are given a chance with truancy mediation. I get to see all the children. I don't care what color they are, what they look like, what they carry in their pockets. I am here to try and save the children of Lakewood. It is very important to me. And Betty Buckholz who is the truancy officer will be retiring in January and she informed me that there will not be any more mediation. I'd like to try and change that. The reason I called Chet Galdo to find

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**Public Recog.**  
**Cont.**

**H. Greenberg**

out when the meeting was, my community and I collect supplies for the children. Last year I brought six bags of supplies for the schools and I've been bringing clothes to Betty who dispurses them to all the needy families. I want to start collecting supplies for the school year and I don't have a job anymore. I don't know what to do with it. Here I am a volunteer and doing it for ten years and cannot do anything to help the children. Thank you very much."

Mrs. Lawson – "I think I need to take an opportunity to respond to you Mrs. Greenberg because a response is warranted. Actually the information that we are not providing mediation is erroneous. We are actually increasing those, but through the efforts of Mr. Inzelbuch and working with Senator Singer and committee people, one of the problems we were having with the process was that they were lagging behind and our students were actually out of school for too long a time. So we had a joint meeting with these individuals and actually we were able to

**Mrs. Lawson**

move the mediation process directly to a Judge. Our process is actually better than it has been in the past. And in fact we also know that Betty may be retiring, so we will have in fact two attendance officers in the district because we recognize the importance of making sure that our students are not truant, that they have a quick and expedient process when they are out of school. And, in fact, our process has actually been better. I just wanted to clarify that the information was erroneous."

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**Public Recog.  
Cont.**

Mr. Inzelbuch – "Through the Chair. Let it not be understood your work was valued by the district. However, Eugenia and I identified several ideas together. One of them being truancy. As she said, I'll say it more direct, there were sometimes months before we got in front of a Judge. Not your doing. We met together and this was one of Eugenia's proactive moves. We actually now get in front of a Judge within hopefully one month or a month

**Mr. Inzelbuch**

and one half and you would agree that is a great improvement. So please it is nothing personal towards you, but we the responsible people for the children of our public schools, Eugenia with my assistance, Senator Singer, the Township Committee and the Court System was involved in the meeting. We now said you know what, we don't need that middle step anymore. Let's get to a Judge quicker so these kids come to school. We thank you for your dedicated work, but thanks to Jeannie Lawson, the process has gotten better."

Pastor Jackson – "271 Joe Parker Road. We are here for a positive reason, amen. We have heard a lot of positive things said tonight about Mrs. Lawson. But we understand there is something that keeps people down. Keep people in slavery and that's the lack of education. If anybody should know this, you should know this most of all. One of the main things that

***Pastor Jackson***

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***Public Recog.  
Cont.***

God has said to Moses is tell the people to educate the children. Write it on the door, above the door and write it when they lay down, when they sit to eat. Educate them and when you can't write it, put up a memorial. Why, so they can be educated about where they came from. How they been delivered so they will know where they're going. If you want to stop a person from going somewhere, make them forget about where they came from. And if you don't use the people who know where they came from, you can't get nobody else to lead them there. How in the world can I lead the Israelites out of Egypt if I was never there? Mrs. Lawson been here and spent her time not just in Lakewood but around New Jersey. And she came back to Lakewood to put some positive things here. Now to take that away from her, you would take away not just from her, but also from those who need to know where they've been so they could know where they are going. Education is powerful. You teach a person and they change their attitude. Education changes. It makes a person want to go somewhere, makes it want to do something when they know and they have a pur-

pose in going. Keep Mrs. Lawson. Thank you.”

Mr. Thomas – “Through the Chair. I would like to make a motion.”

**Mr. Thomas**

Mr. Inzelbuch – “Through the Chair. To make a motion out of turn, you need a motion to take it out of turn.”

**Mr. Inzelbuch**

**MOTION TO GO OUT OF TURN TO  
MAKE A MOTION**

***Motion To Go  
Out of Turn***

Mr. Thomas moved, seconded by Mr. Tift to approve the motion to go out of turn.

**07/22/09**

**ROLL CALL:**

***Roll Call***

**YES:** Mr. Gonter, Mr. Grunhut,  
Mrs. Miccio, Mr. Neumann,  
Mr. Ostreicher, Mr. Thomas,  
Mr. Tift, Mr. Galdo

**NO:** None

**ABSTAIN:** None

**MOTION PASSED**

**MOTION TO SELECT MRS. LAWSON  
AS SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
IN LAKEWOOD FOR THE NEXT THREE  
YEARS**

***Motion on  
Mrs. Lawson***

Mr. Thomas moved, seconded by Mr. Tift to select Mrs. Lawson as the Superintendent of Schools for the next three years.

Mr. Thomas – “Through the Chair. This is still something that has to be voted on and I want to take the opportunity to share my take on what I’ve seen here tonight. The experience of the last year. The experience of the last seven and one half years on this Board of Education. The experience of some of the decisions that we’ve made that some of us sitting up here have had to live with

**Mr. Thomas**

and regret to talk about an opportunity that sits before us to do something that I've taken a lot of heat as a Board member from a lot of people and I often said to them, that I have faith in my Board members. That I believe not what people would say to me, but that I've labored with these people behind closed doors. That I've labored with the men and women that you see up here and that even when there are times when people could not believe that there were people on this Board of Education that might not necessarily have kids in this school, but that they were concerned about what was going on with the kids in the school. I've been saying for a long time that I believe that some of the best ways to lead is for someone to see somebody that they know they can assimilate and

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**Mr. Thomas**

**Cont.**

be. It has been my belief after all of the candidates, after all of the extensive interviews that we saw some good people on paper. We've seen good people on paper before. What I've witnessed is someone who came in and I don't need to reiterate what was said here, who has shown how you can get people out, bring different communities together. I've been in Lakewood my entire life and I see things going on in this room that I don't even see going on in some of our churches. I see people coming together of all races, creed, color, religion, socio economic status and as a Board member, my fellow Board members will tell you that there are a lot of things I say, but there is one thing that I'm always telling them, that we have a responsibility whether we like it or not as elected officials to listen to what our community has to say. And we are in a position that I consider to be a very unique position in time and I've said it before. We had another opportunity, I asked then everyone that has an opportunity to vote to think about the entire spectrum of what's going on here. To come outside of that shell and look at an opportunity to do something that we believe could help an entire community and change the direction that many people

have cast Lakewood away and don't think that we can do it. I believe that Lakewood has an opportunity for greatness. I believe that the differences that you see here on the Board are opportunities that many people will never get an opportunity to experience and take with them in life. When I graduated Lakewood High School, my best friends were Puerto Rican, my best friends were Black, my best friends were Jewish, my best friends were Italian. I've been the best man in almost each and every one of those weddings and that is the life that makes me love Lakewood. And so I say all that to say this that everyone has come before us. We've been through a labored process. This is an opportunity for each and every person here to truly search their hearts. The evidence has been laid out for us. I have not had any doubts. I just hope and pray that we do as many people have said before, the right thing because now is the time."

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***Motion On  
Mrs. Lawson***

Mr. Grunhut – "Can you review the rules again?"

***Mr. Grunhut***

Mr. Inzelbuch – "You need five votes to appoint a Superintendent. If I understand the motion, it is for a three year period, salary to be determined."

***Mr. Inzelbuch***

**ROLL CALL:**

***Roll Call***

**YES:** Mr. Thomas, Mr. Tift,  
Mr. Galdo

**NO:** Mr. Gonter, Mr. Grunhut,  
Mrs. Miccio, Mr. Ostreicher,

**ABSTAIN:** Mr. Neumann

**MOTION FAILED**

***Mr. Galdo***

Mr. Galdo – "We did have a second candidate and before I introduce that, let me say this to you. This was not a flawed process. This process I chaired for four and one half months. This process included twelve people from the community."

Mr. Inzelbuch – “Through the Chair. Mr. Galdo, you are the President. If you want to talk, talk. If you want to walk, walk. But get to what you are here to do.”

**Mr. Inzelbuch**

Mr. Galdo – “You listen to me for a change. I don’t need you mouthing off while I’m address this public. Now let me tell you what happened here. I sat and chaired a committee for four and one half months. I don’t get paid for this, neither does anybody else up here. Now just listen. We selected twelve people. That committee then reduced it to six to five and four were presented. Two of them were not acceptable, two were. The second person on that list was a person by the name of Lydia Silva. Since you haven’t accepted the first person, I make a motion that we put that name in play. Can I get a second?”

**Mr. Galdo**

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**MOTION TO APPOINT LYDIA SILVA  
SUPERINTENDENT OF LAKEWOOD  
SCHOOLS FOR A THREE YEAR PERIOD**

**Motion On  
Ms. Silva**

Mr. Galdo moved, seconded by Mr. Grunhut to appoint Lydia Silva as Superintendent of Lakewood Schools for a three year period.

Mr. Inzelbuch – “Before a vote is had according to Roberts Rules, there can be a discussion. But I would like to say something first. May I? I too am a graduate of Lakewood High School. I too have resided in this town for a majority of my life. I brought you Mrs. Lawson. She was my client in Monmouth County. She became my friend and what I hear tonight we knew long before you got here. She has passion, dedication and she has brought hope to the Board of Ed. So whatever you do tonight, don’t forget that. Thank you.”

**Mr. Inzelbuch**

Mr. Thomas – “Through the Chair. I am not a person ever at a loss for words. I think the first word that comes to mind is definite disappoint. I’ve shared with my Board members and my colleagues here the challenges that my own son

**Mr. Thomas**

has had and the hope that has come to me as a Board member laboring beside them and then despite that this is what I hear. I've never been more sad and I've sat through processes, have come out here and we've got a consensus and there have been times when I have not agreed and as a Board we come out here in a unified front because that is what we have done. And tonight I have to tell you that I am more than saddened. I am utterly disgusted that despite the true and overwhelming evidence that people's personalities would be stronger than principles. Because the principles as to why each and every one of us should be on this Board of Education should have been plainly laid out for you when you saw the changes that were occurring. We asked Mrs. Lawson when she came here to do three things. We asked her to transition from this building to the next. We asked her to clean up the Business Office. We asked her to open up school. She did that, she created partnerships with countless other organizations that I've never even had access to in my entire life in the Lakewood public school system. There were lists and lists of things that went on that once again we don't have to wait for somebody who told us they could do it on paper shows up. For those who have been on this Board and have witnessed our horrible decisions in areas of business, areas of Superintendencies and others, I think that I never ever wanted to believe that this Board of Education was part of the failure of what was going to be the Lakewood schools. But I have to tell you that a decision such as this takes Lakewood back, creates confusion and openly hurts the children. And there is no way that you can expect that someone comes from another place, has stuff on paper. We've seen evidence. You've heard from the community and despite that you could look at that for the people whose children have to be educated and say I flat out do not care. If that is the case, all seven and one half years, the bottom line is this is a travesty, this is fallacy, this horrible. I do not want you to leave because this motion

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***Motion On  
Ms. Silva***

***Mr. Thomas***

to elect this woman is still in the second and after that there is a vote. I would encourage you to stay. Because if there is a decision to be made, you should be here to witness it. I hope that you don't go away, you don't leave because I'm not going to leave and there is going to have some accountability because this is just horrible."

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Mr. Tift – "I would like to say a couple of things. For me being on this Board for the short time that I've been here, I would like to thank everybody for coming out and showing their support for Mrs. Lawson. If you weren't here to show your support, I would think that would more of a problem than you being here. It's good to see people come out to support someone who has been in this town, not just for a short time. She's been Acting Superintendent and is actually someone who grew up in this town, went to school in this town. I voted for her. Since I have been on this Board my main concern was to think of the best interests of my kids. I have two that go to the public school system. I see most of you here, members of my PTO Board. I am very active in the school and the community. I would like to say that Mrs. Lawson has my 100% support and I would think that she has everybody else's here as well. Thank you."

***Motion On  
Ms. Silva***

***Mr. Tift***

Mr. Inzelbuch – "Through the Chair. Mrs. Lawson, do you have anything you would like to say?"

***Mr. Inzelbuch***

Mrs. Lawson – "I want to thank all of you for your support. I certainly believe that during my time here a lot has happened. And I believe that I was sent here for a purpose at a time that I did not ask to come here. I was actually at home when I was called by Mr. Inzelbuch and brought in by the Board and asked to do the three things that Mr. Thomas laid out to you. There are many things that have been put into place in every area of this district that you're all aware of. There are partnerships, new admi-

***Mrs. Lawson***

nistrators, several colleges and universities who would never had approached Lakewood had it not been for them knowing my reputation state-wide and they have said that. And I'm going to be as candid as I can be here. I think that the Board in their actions with all the smiles in my face and with all the support to my face and recognizing publicly all the changes that have

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**Mrs. Lawson**  
**Cont.**

been made and acknowledging all the progress that this district has made in one year and I can tell you no one in a short period of time could potentially come into a district and make the types of changes that have been made here and I will not be shy to tell you that I will take full credit for those changes. Certainly with the collaboration with the people that you see in this room, it takes much having been in the State for seventeen years to come into a district like this one and be able to see through all of the clouds that were here and to be able to determine what things needed to be changed and to make those things happen. You can't do that as a solo. You have to be able to involve the people that you see in this room to work collaboratively with two unions, involve teachers, involve parents, involve students in the process. To be able to bring this district from a place of utter despair. To be able to bring a district that was in deficit for the past three years to a place where every Secretary's Report has been clean for the past eight or nine months. It has happened certainly by the grace of God and wisdom I believe he has given me as a leader, but certainly through the experience that I've had working in districts like this one, knowing the right questions to ask and the right places to look. As I told one or two Board members I would have to beg to question when you can acknowledge progress and make this decision, I would certainly say that there is an intention to see failure. I know the other candidate and I would say it takes every bit of a year just to know the landscape of a district. So to bring this year of kind of delay makes me understand

clearly that there is a purpose and the purpose is not about our children. The purpose is not about progress. Again I just want to finish by saying to all of you, I fully thank you for your support.”

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Mr. Galdo – “Let me just before I move on, say this. When she first came, I said it will take you sixty days to figure out how the phone works. It took her three days and we’ve been working together since.”

**Mr. Galdo**

The audience became extremely loud and disorderly.

Mr. Ostreicher – “Ladies and gentlemen, I kept quiet the whole night. There are some very specific rules on how a meeting needs to be conducted.”

**Mr. Ostreicher**

Mrs. Miccio – “The Board spent a lot of money in advertising and organizing this group and interviewing candidates. And they came up with the recommendations based on the facts.”

**Mrs. Miccio**

**ROLL CALL ON THE APPOINTMENT  
OF LYDIA SILVA**

**Roll Call  
On Ms. Silva**

**YES:** Mr. Gonter, Mr. Grunhut,  
Mrs. Miccio, Mr. Neumann,  
Mr. Ostreicher

**NO:** Mr. Thomas, Mr. Tift,  
Mr. Galdo

**ABSTAIN:** None

**MOTION PASSED**

Mr. Galdo – “I want to say that I am totally caught off guard by the attitude here tonight.”

**Mr. Galdo**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Adj.**

Mr. Grunhut moved, seconded by Mr. Ostreicher to adjourn the meeting.

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**ROLL CALL:**

***Roll Call***

**YES:** Mr. Gonter, Mr. Grunhut,  
Mrs. Miccio, Mr. Neumann,  
Mr. Ostreicher, Mr. Thomas,  
Mr. Tift, Mr. Galdo

**NO:** None

**ABSTAIN:**

**MOTION PASSED**

Mr. Galdo adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

***Mtg. Adj.***

Respectfully submitted,

**ROBERT S. FINGER  
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR/  
BOARD SECRETARY**

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