

The Board of Education of the Borough of Essex Fells, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in a Reorganizational Meeting held in the Media Center on January 3, 2024. The meeting was called to order by the Board Secretary, Mr. Steven J. Lella, at 7:33 P.M. Mr. Lella read the following Statement of Compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act: “In compliance with Chapter 231 of the Laws of 1975, a notice for this meeting was posted at the respective offices of the Essex Fells School as of January 4th 2023. Agendas were mailed to the Clerk of the Borough of Essex Fells, the Progress, and the Star Ledger.

I. Call to Order – 7:33 P.M. – Board Secretary; Mr. Steven J. Lella

II. Roll Call

Mrs. Amanda Haber, President-Present
Mr. John Toth, Vice-President-Present
Mr. Raj Mehta-Present
Mrs. Caragh Lavoie-Present
Mrs. Jacquelyn Burke-Absent

Also present: Dr. Michelle V. Gadaleta, Superintendent/Principal; Mr. Steven J. Lella, Business Administrator/Board Secretary; 1 Staff Member and 2 Members of the Public.

III. Flag Salute

- The Board Secretary led the flag salute.

IV. Election Report

The annual School Election was conducted on Tuesday, November 7th, 2023, between the hours of 6:00 A.M. and 8:00 P.M.

The results of the election, as reported and certified by the Essex County Clerk, are as follows:

Members of the Board of Education: Mr. Raj Mehta 233 votes

V. Reorganization of the Board of Education

- Mr. Lella administered the Oath of Office to elected member Mr. Raj Mehta.
- Mr. Lella conducted roll call.
- Election of President: Mr. Toth nominated Mrs. Haber.

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie

Seconded by: Mr.Toth

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

- Election of VP: Mr. Mehta nominated Mr. Toth.

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie

Seconded by: Mr. Toth

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

- Mrs. Haber took over the meeting.

VI. Board Comments/President’s Report

- Mrs. Haber welcomed Mr. Mehta back on to the Board and looks forward to another year serving as Board President

VII. Public Comment on Agenda Items Only

- None

VIII. Superintendent’s Report

- Dr. Gadaleta thanked all the Board members for their service. She is very thankful to have BOE members who choose to volunteer in this day and age and provide their support. Dr. Gadaleta commended the Essex Fells Board of Education members for continuing to put the children of EFS first and is very proud and thankful to have such a Board.
- Dr. Gadaleta provided an update on the BCBA position. The first individual was not able to take the position due to a family emergency.

IX. Old Business / Board Discussion

- Mr. Lella reported that he has begun budget development and discussions with Dr. Gadaleta, and staff requests have been submitted. The challenge will be planning for potential out of district costs and increase in health benefits costs, as well as beginning negotiations.

X. New Business / Board Discussion

- Dr. Gadaleta noted the 2024 Board of Education Meeting dates.
- Mr. Lella informed the Board to be on the lookout for the 2024 BOE Disclosure statement email from DOE.

XI. Reorganization Action Items

RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves Reorganization Action Items #01 - 2.

1. RESOLVED that the Board of Education adopts the New Jersey School Board Member Code of Ethics.

NOTES: Code of Ethics Attached/Bylaws

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie

Seconded by: Mr. Toth

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

2. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves the following dates for its meetings in the ensuing year (*dates subject to change):

Wednesday	January 17, 2024	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday	February 7, 2024	Workshop Meeting
Wednesday	February 21, 2024	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday	March 6, 2024	Workshop Meeting
Wednesday	March 20, 2024	Regular Monthly Business Meeting

Wednesday	April 17, 2024	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday	May 1, 2024	Workshop Meeting
Wednesday	May 15, 2024	Regular Meeting
Wednesday	May 29, 2024	Reappointment Meeting
Wednesday	June 12, 2024	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday	August 21, 2024	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday	September 4, 2024	Workshop Meeting
Wednesday	September 18, 2024	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday	October 2, 2024	Workshop Meeting
Wednesday	October 16, 2024	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday	November 6, 2024	Workshop Meeting
Wednesday	November 20, 2024	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday	December 11, 2024	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday	January 8, 2025 (TBD)	Reorganizational/Workshop Meeting

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie

Seconded by: Mr. Toth

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

3. RESOLVED that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the Medical Leave of Absence for 33573791 from January 2, 2024, through June 19, 2024, using the following days:

January 2, 2024 – May 22, 2024	Medical Leave of Absence utilizing Sick days
May 23, 2024 – June 19, 2024	FMLA

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie

Seconded by: Mr. Toth

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

XI. Public Comment

- Mayor Davis congratulated Mr. Mehta for being re-elected to the Board and thanked all the Board of Education members for their service.
- Mayor Davis sees how well his children and other children of EFS do after attending EFS. Mayor Davis was thankful and notes this is a reflection of Dr. Gadaleta, the Board and the staff efforts.

XIII. Resolution to Enter Executive Session

The following Resolution was called at 7:46 P.M.

WHEREAS the following subject is not appropriate to be discussed in a public meeting and is within the exemptions which may be discussed and acted upon and,

WHEREAS only the following subject(s) shall be discussed in private recess by the Board and the minutes made available to the public as soon as the reason for exemption no longer exists, it is therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED at the Public Meeting of the Essex Fells Board of Education on this day Wednesday, January 3rd, 2024, pursuant to Sections 7 & 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, the following subject(s) shall be discussed in a session of the Board closed to the public:

Please be advised that the Board will be going into executive session for approximately thirty minutes for the purpose of discussing litigation regarding special education, personnel and negotiations. Action will not be taken in public after the executive session.

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie

Seconded by: Mr. Toth

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

XIV. Adjournment

At 7:58 PM the board made a motion to adjourn. The next **Regular Meeting** of the Board of Education will be held on **Wednesday, January 17, 2024, at 7:30 P.M.** in the media center.

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie

Seconded by: Mrs. Burke

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Respectfully Submitted,

Mr. Steven J. Lella
Business Administrator/
Board Secretary