

December 11, 2023

The Stillwater Township Board of Education met on December 11, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the Stillwater School Library for a Regular Board of Education Meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Krista Galante, President, at 7:00 p.m. In accordance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law, the time, date and location of this meeting was provided to the New Jersey Herald & Star Ledger on January 10, 2023. Notices were posted in the Stillwater School, Town Hall, Stillwater Post Office, Swartwood Post Office and the Stillwater School Website.

Mrs. Galante led the flag salute. The following Board members were present: Mrs. Galante, Mrs. Kraft, Mrs. Valeich, Mr. Franek, Mrs. Frey, Mrs. Voris (arrived 7:04pm), and Mr. DeGroat.

Absent: Mrs. Williver and Mrs. Thibault.

Also present were William Kochis, Superintendent, René Metzgar, Business Administrator/Board Secretary, Marissa Cramer, Principal/Supervisor of CST and Special Education/Basic Skills, and members of the public.

BOARD BUSINESS

1. Motion made by Mrs. Frey, second by Mr. DeGroat, to approve the Regular Board of Education meeting minutes & Executive Session Meeting minutes from November 20, 2023. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.
2. Sussex County School Board Association Meeting update- Mrs. Kraft reported on the meeting that was held last Monday at Green Hills School. The meeting covered workshop summary, next year's workshop dates will be October 21-24, 2024. They recognized retired board members and introduced new members. They also adopted the county bylaws. The program was then broke out to two roundtables- Ethics for School Boards and Marking School Districts/Social media. The next meeting will be virtual on January 30, 2023.

Mrs. Voris arrived 7:04 pm

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Kochis reported on the following:

- Congratulated Mary DiRienzo for being the 2023-24 Gov. Educator of the Year for Stillwater Township School.
- Congratulated to Mr. Gary Post for being our 2023-2024 Support Staff of the Year.
- TREP\$ Program-Thanked all the students, staff and community who came out to support. Also thanked Mrs. Mahedy and Mrs. Robinson for all their hard work and preparing the students.
- Tire Swing Update
- Event Reminders:
 - Senior Luncheon tomorrow beginning at 11:30 am
 - Winter Concert on Thursday at 7 pm

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Mrs. Galante wished everyone a Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

*This public session is designed for members of the public to speak on items for Board consideration. By law, the Board of Education is under no obligation to respond to public comment. If the Board of Education chooses to respond, it does not waive its right thereafter not to respond. Members of the public are asked to state their name and address for the record. ***Members of the public are requested to keep their comments to a maximum of 5 minutes. ***

Dave Manser, Township Committee Liaison, introduced himself.

ACTION ITEMS:

PERSONNEL

1. Motion made by Mr. DeGroat, second by Mr. Franek, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve attached professional days. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.
2. Resolution made by Mr. DeGroat, second by Mrs. Frey, for René Metzgar to attend the New Jersey Association of School Administrators Techspo conference on January 24-26, 2024:

WHEREAS, The Stillwater Board of Education is required pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12* to adopt policy and approve travel expenditures by district employees and board members using local, State, or Federal funds to ensure that travel is educationally necessary and fiscally prudent; and

WHEREAS, The board of education has determined that the conference and informational programs sponsored by New Jersey Association of School Administrators Techspo and set forth below are directly related to and within the scope of the employees duties; and

WHEREAS, The board of education has determined that the workshop, training and informational programs sponsored by New Jersey Association of School Administrators Techspo forth below are directly related to and within the scope of the traveler's current responsibilities and the board's professional development plan; and

WHEREAS, The board of education has determined that participation in the New Jersey Association of School Administrators Techspo workshop, training and informational programs requires school district travel expenditures and that this travel is critical to the instructional needs of the district and/or furthers the efficient operation of the district; and

WHEREAS, The board of education has determined that the school district travel expenditures to New Jersey Association of School Administrators Techspo programs are in compliance with State travel guidelines as established by the Department of the Treasury and within the guidelines established by the federal Office of Management and Budget; except as superseded by conflicting provisions of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes; and

WHEREAS, The board of education finds that a mileage reimbursement rate equal to that of the mileage reimbursement rate of [\$.47] per mile is a reasonable rate; and

WHEREAS, the board of education has determined that participation in the New Jersey Association of School Administrators Techspo workshop training and informational programs is in compliance with the district policy on travel; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Stillwater board of education hereby approves the attendance of the listed district employees at the listed New Jersey Association of School Administrators Techspo Network conference training and informational programs, and the costs of attendance including all registration fees, and statutorily authorized travel expenditures, provided that such expenditures are within the annual maximum travel expenditure amount; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Stillwater Board of Education authorizes in advance, as required by statute, attendance at the following New Jersey Association of School Administrators Techspo, training programs and informational events:

New Jersey Association of School Administrators Techspo
January 24-26, 2024
Registration \$540
Hotel Room- \$97/night plus occupancy fees
Mileage- \$0.47/mile plus tolls
M&IE- \$59 per full day, First & Last: \$44.25/day

A roll call vote was taken and unanimously approved.

3. Motion made by Mr. DeGroat, second by Mrs. Valeich, to approve extension for medical leave of absence for employee #721 from January 3, 2024 with the intent to return January 8, 2024. This leave includes an additional week covered by FMLA (7 weeks total). A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

4. Motion made by Mr. DeGroat, second by Mrs. Frey, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the following part-time Para-Professional staff member for employment for the 2023-2024 school year from January 2, 2024-June 30, 2024 to be paid at an hourly rate, pending criminal history and background check:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Base Hourly Rate</u>	<u>Adjustments</u>	<u>Total Hourly Rate</u>	<u>Contract Hours</u>
Ponte, Isabel	Special Education	\$15.13	N/A	\$15.13	27.5 hours/week

A roll call vote was taken and unanimously approved.

5. Motion made by Mr. DeGroat, second by Mr. Franek, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to accept with regret, the resignation of Kamryn Polowy, effective December 19, 2023. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.
6. Motion made by Mr. DeGroat, second by Mrs. Frey, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the following revised substitute rates effective January 1, 2024 due to the increase in the NJ State Minimum wage requirement:

Teacher \$110 (with sub cert) [If the substitute is in the same position for more than forty (40) days the rate will be 1/200th of step 0 on the salary guide].

Aide \$98.36 per day (no sub cert)

Secretary \$98.36 per day (no sub cert)

Custodian \$15.13 per hour

A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

7. Motion made by Mr. DeGroat, second by Mrs. Kraft, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the following revised contracts from January 1, 2024-June 30, 2024 due to the increase in the NJ State Minimum wage requirement, salaries to be prorated to start date of January 1, 2024:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Base Hourly Rate</u>	<u>Adjustments</u>	<u>Total Hourly Rate</u>
Amella, Maria	Part-Time Paraprofessional	\$15.13	Teacher Certification: \$1.00	\$16.13
Perez, Emily	Part-Time Paraprofessional	\$15.13	Associates: \$0.50	\$15.63
Schneider, Kathrine	Part-Time Paraprofessional	\$15.13	Bachelor's: \$0.75	\$15.88
Sheridan, Deirde	Part-Time Paraprofessional	\$15.13	N/A	\$15.13
Sipley, Jennifer	Part-Time Paraprofessional	\$15.13	N/A	\$15.13

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Base Hourly Rate</u>	<u>Base Salary</u>	<u>Adjustments</u>	<u>Total Salary</u>
Amabile, Lindsay	Full-Time Paraprofessional	\$15.13	\$17,898.79	Bachelor's: \$750	\$18,648.79

Leahy, Killian	Full-Time Paraprofessional	\$15.13	\$17,898.79	N/A	\$17,898.79
Kampka, Kimberly	Part-Time Custodian	\$15.13	\$18,156	N/A	\$18,156.00
Walaszczyk, A. Cristina	Full-Time Paraprofessional	\$15.13	\$17,898.79	N/A	\$17,898.79

A roll call vote was taken and unanimously approved.

- Motion made by Mr. DeGroat, second by Mrs. Valeich, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the following substitute paraprofessionals/main office secretaries for the 2023-2024 school year, pending criminal history and background check:

Megan Hurley
Carissa Roycroft

A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

- Motion made by Mr. DeGroat, second by Mr. Franek, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the following graduate class at Centenary University for Danielle Hoon, reimbursement as per SEA contract:

<u>Title of Course</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Inclusive Practices	January 8, 2024- April 28, 2024	\$2,110.95

A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

- Motion made by Mr. DeGroat, second by Mrs. Frey, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the following before & after school programs for the 2023-2024 school year. The stipend for each teacher is \$410:

<u>Club Name</u>	<u>Staff Member #1</u>	<u>Staff member #2</u>	<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Grant</u>
Foreign Language Club	Maureen Riva	Mary DiRienzo	Grades 5/6	ARP - BSD
E-Gaming Club	Danielle Hoon	Lorraine Bickhardt	Grade 5	ARP - BSD

A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

POLICY

- Motion made by Mrs. Frey, second by Mr. DeGroat, to approve the second reading of the following new policy:

Policy #3320.1 Green Purchasing

A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

EDUCATION & CURRICULUM

1. Motion made by Mrs. Kraft, second by Mrs. Valeich, to rescind the following motion that was approved at the October 16, 2023 Regular Board of Education Meeting:
Motion made by Mrs. Kraft, second by Mrs. Williver, to approve Alexandra Caccacale from Phoenix University as a student teacher to be placed in Michele Birds' second grade class for 12 weeks beginning January 2024. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

2. Motion made by Mrs. Kraft, second by Mrs. Valeich, to approve Alexandra Caccavale from Phoenix University as a student teacher to be placed in Erica Then's third grade class beginning January 8, 2024-March 31, 2024. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

BUILDING & GROUNDS

1. Mrs. Metzgar provided an update on the following Building & Grounds items:
 - 1988 cracks- Geotech Engineer
 - PA System
 - Phone System
 - Blinking Speed light

2. Motion made by Mr. Franek, second by Mr. DeGroat, to approve building and use calendar for January 2024. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

TRANSPORTATION

1. Motion made by Mrs. Valeich, second by Mrs. Frey, to approve the following field trips for the 2023-2024 school year:

Location	Grade
KRHS- Assembly for Speaker (Stossel)	Grades 5 & 6

A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

2. Motion made by Mrs. Valeich, second by Mr. DeGroat, to approve transportation with Stocker Bus for the following field trip for the 2023-2024 school year:

Date	Location	Grade	Cost
March 7, 2024	KRHS- Assembly for Speaker (Stossel)	Grades 5 & 6	\$278.90/bus 2 Busses=\$557.80 Paid through ARP ESSER BTSD

A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

BUDGET & FINANCE

1. Motion made by Mrs. Voris, second by Mr. Franek, to approve the following checks from November 21, 2023-December 11, 2023 as attached:

Account	Check Numbers	Amount
Funds 10, 11, 12, 20	29159-29200, N1130, void# 29196 & 29163	\$399,163.18
Capital Reserve	N1121	\$100,000
Student Activities	6674-6675	\$947.07
Cafeteria	2711	\$14,708.92
Grand Total		\$514,819.17

A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

2. Motion made by Mrs. Voris, second by Mr. DeGroat, to approve the attached list of purchase orders over \$1,000 for the 2023-2024 school year. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.
3. Motion made by Mrs. Voris, second by Mr. Franek, to approve monthly travel as attached. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

LEGISLATION

Tax Deduction for Classroom Supplies: Would allow educators to deduct from their gross income for the taxable year up to \$250 in unreimbursed expenses for the purchase of classroom supplies. K-12 teachers, counselors, speech language specialists, principals and aides that provide at least 900 hours of service in a public or private school would be eligible. The Assembly approved the bill in May 2023; it now awaits a final vote by the full Senate.

Expedited Certification Route for Paraprofessionals: would require the New Jersey State Board of Education to authorize an alternate, expedited route to teacher certification for paraprofessionals and instructional assistants. In developing the requirements for that expedited certification, the commissioner of education would be required to consult with representatives of the education community, including the New Jersey School Boards Association. The expedited route would include a formula for applying direct classroom service to any student teaching requirements, a formula for a GPA waiver, and “a requirement that the school district in which the candidate is currently employed make every reasonable effort to permit the candidate to perform any required student teaching in the school district while, if possible, continuing employment as a paraprofessional or an instructional assistant.”

Eliminating “Basic Skills” Teacher Certification Requirement: The committee discussed, but did not vote on, which would prohibit the State Board of Education from requiring teacher candidates to complete a Commissioner-approved test of basic reading, writing, and math skills (including but not limited to the Praxis Core assessment) in order to obtain a certificate of eligibility, certificate of eligibility with advanced standing, provisional, or standard instructional certificate.

School Bus Cameras: Permits the use of video cameras to crack down on motorists illegally passing school buses. More specifically, the bill authorizes the use of a school bus monitoring system to assist in the enforcement of existing law that prohibits motor vehicles from passing a school bus while it is stopped to pick up or drop off students. Alleged school bus passing violations captured by

such a monitoring system would be compiled into an evidence file and forwarded to the chief law enforcement officer of the municipality. If law enforcement determines that a violation has occurred, a summons would be issued. The money from any fines would be used for general municipal and school district purposes, including efforts to improve the monitoring and enforcement of the unlawful passing of school buses and the provision of public education safety programs. The bill would also increase the fines for any violations of the no-passing law, regardless of whether they are captured by a video camera or through police observations.

Child Abuse Detection and Prevention Training: Would take various steps designed to assist the New Jersey Department of Children and Families in detecting, investigating and preventing incidents of child abuse and neglect during a public health emergency. Regarding school district policy, the bill would require the New Jersey Department of Education and the NJDCF to develop an online training program for school employees on the detection and prevention of child abuse, including during a public health emergency that requires remote learning or other restrictions on in-person contact. The program would be made available to all school districts in the state free of charge to assist districts in meeting current requirements to train employees on the identification, detection, reporting and response to issues of child abuse.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Mrs. Voris reported on the following items:

- 6th Grade Recognition Committee- Enjoy a day of hot chocolate, cookies, and Santa at Timber Valley Tree Farm on 12/16.
- Stillwater Historical Society- Yuletide down Main Street- 12/17
- Stillwater Rec Bus Trip to NYC- 12/17
- Mrs. Voris also spoke about the PTA Family Fun Night that was held on December 8th.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Board member required training- Due December 31, 2023.

NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Metzgar informed the board that Lynda Knott is retiring from the Stillwater Township. She thanked her for her years of service and the continued partnership with the school. She will be greatly missed! Valerie Ingles will be the new clerk, so welcome Valerie!

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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None.

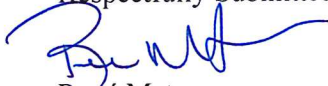
EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

ADJOURN

Motion made by Mr. DeGroat, second by Mr. Franek, to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,



René Metzgar
Business Administrator/Board Secretary