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Lawnside Board of Education Meeting Minutes
March 11, 2021

The Regular Meeting of the Lawnside Board of Education was called to order at 7:04 p.m. remotely through "Zoom" by Mrs. Sabrina Forrest, Board President. After repeating the Pledge of Allegiance and after observing a moment of silence, the following members answered present to the roll call:

Sabrina Forrest	Marsharee Wright
Mawusimensah Mears	Dajshia Gibson
Alexis Wilson	Nana Cauthorne

Also present was Ronn Johnson, Superintendent, Dawn Leary, Business Administrator.

Open Public Meeting Act

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meeting Act authorizes Board of Education to meet in Executive session under certain circumstances;

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meeting Act requires the Board to adopt a resolution at a public meeting to go into private session; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Lawnside Board of Education, that it is necessary to meet in executive session to discuss certain items involving:

1. Personnel and/or Student Matter

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any discussion held by the Board which need not remain confidential will be made public as soon as feasible. The minutes of the executive session will not be disclosed until the need for confidentiality no longer exist; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Education will return to open session to conduct business at the conclusion of the executive session.

Administration of the Oath for new board members by Lloyd Henderson

Phoenix Moore Ferin Catlett

I, **State Your Name**, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of New Jersey, and that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same and to the Governments established in the United States and this State, under the authority of the people. So help me God.

I, **State Your Name**, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I possess the qualifications prescribed by law for the office of member of a board of education, am not disqualified as a voter pursuant to RS 19:4-1, am not disqualified due to conviction of a crime or offense listed in N.J.S.A. 18A:12-1, and that I will faithfully, impartially, and justly perform all the duties of that office according to the best of my ability. So help me God.

I, **State Your Name**, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will undergo a criminal history background Investigation for the purpose of ensuring that I am not disqualified from membership due to conviction of a crime or offense listed in N.J.S.A. 18A: 12-1, and the results are/will be pending.

The following answered to New Board Member Roll Call:

Mrs. Forrest - Present
Mr. M. Mears - Present
Ms. Wilson – Present

Mrs. Wright - Present
Ms. Gibson - Present
Ms. Cauthorne - Present

Mr. Moore - Present
Ms. Catlett - Present

February 11, 2021
& February 25, 2021
Minutes

Motion by Alexis Wilson seconded by Dajshia Gibson, that the minutes of February 11, 2021 and February 25, 2021 be approved. Motion carried; Roll Call Vote: 5 – yes, 2 – abstentions 1 – no.

Mrs. Forrest – yes
Mr. Mears - no
Ms. Wilson – yes

Ms. Wright – yes
Ms. Gibson - yes
Ms. Cauthorne – yes

Mr. Moore - abstained
Ms. Catlett - abstained

Superintendent’s Report

Discussion Items:

Success of various Black History Month Programs

Perkins Arts Grant (Grade K-2) Western African Dance

Ms. Shamele Jordan thanked Dr. Johnson and provided information to the board regarding a club.

Dr. Johnson made the recommendation to approve his report.

Mr. M. Mears asked for a roll call vote on every item on the superintendent’s report. He said according to Robert’s Rules a roll call vote supersedes every item on the report. Mr. Rhone stated the interpretation of Robert Rules was not exactly accurate. The board can accept each item at will. It would be up to madam president. In terms of the superintendent’s report, it can be voted on as one item as opposed to other item Mr. M. Mears asked where the inaccuracy was. Mr. Rhone stated he was asking for a motion to be made about voting. Mrs. Forrest stated the board can check into Mr. Mears statement.

Mr. Moore asked what the other items were on the report. Dr. Johnson stated, he was given the board packet. He went on to explain his report in great detail, personnel, management and field trips. Executive Session items are not discussed publicly. Mrs. Forrest stated she wanted to make sure Mr. Moore had a packet today. Mr. Moore stated he did receive his packet today. Mrs. Forrest stated no one expects new board members to vote on everything. She said reports go out on Tuesday. If anyone has any questions, contact Dr. Johnson, Ms. Leary or herself. Ms. Leary stated packets are ready on Mondays and are also emailed.

District Goals

The District Goals were established in collaboration with the Lawnside Board of Education members at the Board retreat on Thursday, August 1, 2019.

Goal #1: Continue to engage with our community.

Goal #2: Development and implement programs that increase academic achievement and social emotional learning.

Goal #3: Increase ELA and Math scores by 5% on the NJSLA tests.

Enrollment-312

ADA - 286

Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying: 0

Suspension for February – 0

The Superintendent is not in receipt of any parental request for a Board Hearing at this time.

PERSONNEL - It is recommended by the Superintendent items 1-6 be approved as written

1. It is recommended that Ms. Dawn Leary’s Letter of Resignation as School Business Administrator/Board Secretary be approved effective May 6, 2021. *(60 Day notification requirement provided on Friday, March 5, 2021)*
2. It is recommended that Ms. Alexis Backus’ Request for Extended Leave (Maternity) be approved from the original date of April 12, 2021 to May 3, 2021.
3. It is recommended that Ms. Kira Brown’s Request for Leave (Maternity) be approved effective March 5, 2021 through June 30, 2021.
4. It is recommended Ms. Kouri Johnson be approved as a Long-Term Substitute (Maternity) at a rate of \$95 per diem effective March 1, 2021-June 16, 2021.
5. It is recommended Ms. Brittany Coleman’s Request for Leave (Maternity) be approved effective May 28, 2021.
6. It is recommended that Mr. Terry Henry’s Request for Leave (Medical) be approved effective February 8, 2021 through March 8, 2021.

Personnel Items
1-6

Motion by Marsharee Wright
seconded by Alexis Wilson
to approve personnel items 1-6.
Motion Carried; Roll Call Vote:
5 – yes, 2 – abstentions, 1 - no.

Mrs. Forrest – yes
Mr. Mears – no
Ms. Wilson – yes

Ms. Wright - yes
Ms. Gibson - yes
Ms. Cauthorne – yes

Mr. Moore - abstained
Ms. Catlett - abstained

MANAGEMENT- It is recommended by the Superintendent items 1-6 be approved as written

1. It is recommended the following positions be approved for posting for the 2021-2022 school year:

School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

PreSchool Teacher

Elementary Education Teacher

Teacher of Students with Disabilities

2. It is recommended that the School Calendar for the 2021-2022 school year be approved for submission to the County Office of Education.

3. It is recommended that the Letter of Agreement between the Perkins Center for the Arts and the Lawnside School District be approved. (*Grant funded through NJ State Council on the Arts*)

4. It is recommended that the "Agreement for Student Internships between Rowan University and the Lawnside School District" be approved effective February 22, 2021 through June 30, 2022.

5. It is recommended that the Educational Services Commission be approved to provide related services in the form of Occupational Therapy (3 days per week) and Physical Therapy (1 Day per week) for the 2021-2022 school year at a total cost of \$72,660 including Extended School Year services.

6. It is recommended It is recommended the following Professional Development opportunities be approved for the 2019-2020 school year: *All professional development will be funded through Title II*

Name	Workshop	Location	Date	Cost
Niphon Kirk Alyssa Miller	Intervention and Referral Services Team Training	Online	1/27/21 retroactive	\$106 per participant
Niphon Kirk Jessyca Harper	School Climate and Anti-Bullying Conference	Online	5/26/21	\$99 per participant

Name	Workshop	Location	Date	Cost
Laura Van Fossen	School Nurses: Best Practices for Addressing Mental Health Issues in Schools	Online	4/16/21	\$279

Management Item
1-6

Motion by Marsharee Wright
seconded by Alexis Wilson
to approve management items
1-6. Motion Carried; Roll Call
Vote: 5 – yes, 2 – abstentions
1 - no.

Mrs. Forrest – yes
Mr. Mears – no
Ms. Wilson – yes

Ms. Wright - yes
Ms. Gibson - yes
Ms. Cauthorne – yes

Mr. Moore - abstained
Ms. Catlett - abstained

Public Comments at 7:33 p.m.

Mr. Lloyd Henderson of 225 Miller Ave in Lawnside commented on the superintendent's report. He congratulated Dr. Johnson on the "Black History Month Program" He stated Cherry Hill School District has a mandate where Black History is required for graduation. He stated when he was a board member he asked the board to make Black History mandatory. He also said if a white school district can make it a requirement, then why can't Lawnside make it a requirement for eighth graders. So that when they attend Haddon Heights or Vocational School, they will have some background on achievement and productivity. The suggestion was made 15 years ago.

Mr. Lewis asked if the "public comments" needed to be on a resolution item. Mrs. Forrest stated, yes at this point. The second public comment is for any non-agenda item.

Correspondence – Ms. Leary read a "letter of interest" received from Amy Kearney

Mr. M. Mears of Lawnside asked if there was a notice sent out, and how was she aware that there was a vacancy. Mrs. Forrest stated, the vacant seat has been mentioned at the board meetings for awhile.

Mrs. Forrest asked Ms. Leary about board member training. Ms. Leary informed the board members that they were all registered for their online training and said December 31, 2021 is the deadline.

Committee Reports

Haddon Heights Representative – Ms. Alexis Wilson stated she attended Haddon Heights Board Meeting on Tuesday. There were nothing to report for Lawnside. She sadly reported the passing of a seventh grade student and said students are having trouble adjusting. She said keep everyone in your praise. Mrs. Forrest thanked Ms. Wilson for representing the Lawnside Board.

Camden County Representative – Mrs. Forrest serves on the Board of Directors. She stated there was a budget meeting in February and in March the audit was reviewed.

Ms. Wright asked Mrs. Forrest when Committees would be assigned. Mrs. Forrest stated she would finish today and had two left to assign.

Mr. M. Mears, a Lawnside resident stated he noticed there was an increase in the budget for 1.2 million. Mrs. Forrest stated the budget is made up of several factors and everything is counted. When there is money from the State it is included. The auditor reviewed the budget. Ms. Leary explained the budget process in greater detail. Mr. Mears asked what percentage contributes to the 1.2 million dollar increase. Mrs. Forrest stated there is not a 1.2 million dollar increase. She asked him if he was talking about the budget. She stated the budget is the kitty of the money. Mr. M. Mears said he was referring to resolution #31. He said he was trying to get a better understanding. Mrs. Forrest stated resolution #31 is just the submission to the County Office. Mrs. Forrest stated we have federal grants, state aid and money that was budgeted but not spent. All funds need to be included. The only percentages we deal with is the tax levy percentages. Dr. Johnson stated Mr. Mears question is reflected during the budget presentation and when we do the breakdown. Ms. Leary reviews and discusses the budget with the board. The first part is to submit a preliminary budget to the County Office to get approval to bring the budget before the board to discuss and then present to the public at the public hearing. The question should be answered in the next month or two. Mr. Mears asked if board members participate in the makeup of the budget. Mrs. Forrest answered "no". It is not the board members job to make up the budget.

New Business

R E S O L U T I O N 30 (2020-21)

WHEREAS, the State Department of Education permits transfers among the budgetary line item accounts;

AND WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Board of Education of the Borough of Lawnside to make such transfers;

AND WHEREAS, the need exists to adjust line item accounts to meet obligations encumbered and anticipated,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Education of the Borough of Lawnside that the Secretary is hereby authorized to make the following line item transfers:

GENERAL FUND:

<u>ACCOUNT</u>	<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>
11-000-100-566-00-00 Tuition to Pvt School	11,000.00	
11-000-230-340-00-00 Purchased Tech Svc.	700.00	
10-000-100-561-00-00 Transfers to Charter Schools		11,000.00

11-000-230-334-00-00
Architect Fees

700.00

Total

11,700.0011,700.00

Line Item Transfers
Resolution #30

Motion by Marsharee Wright
seconded by Alexis Wilson to
approve Line Transfers #30
Motion Carried; Roll Call Vote:
5 – yes, 2 – abstentions, 1 - no.

Mrs. Forrest – yes
Mr. Mears – no
Ms. Wilson – yes

Ms. Wright - yes
Ms. Gibson - yes
Ms. Cauthorne – yes

Mr. Moore - abstained
Ms. Catlett - abstained

RESOLUTION #31-2021

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Borough of Lawnside approved the school district budget for the 2021-22 school year for submission to the Executive County Superintendent for review as follows:

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Tax Levy</u>
Total Operating Budget	\$10,741,343	\$ 4,815,125
Total Grants & Entitlements	396,488	
Total Debt Service	<u>290,283</u>	<u>290,283</u>
	\$11,428,114	\$5,105,408

Budget Approval 2021-2022
Resolution #30

Motion by Marsharee Wright
seconded by Alexis Wilson to
approve 2021-2022 budget
Motion Carried; Roll Call Vote:
5 – yes, 2 – abstentions, 1 - no.

Mrs. Forrest – yes
Mr. Mears – no
Ms. Wilson – yes

Ms. Wright - yes
Ms. Gibson - yes
Ms. Cauthorne – yes

Mr. Moore - abstained
Ms. Catlett - abstained

Resolution #32 Treasurer/Secretary Report – was tabled until next meeting.

Payment of Bills/Receipts

Motion by Dajshia Gibson seconded by Phoenix Moore that the bills totaling \$558,516.52 for the General Fund for March and \$19,834.81 for Food Service, be approved for payment pending availability of funds. Motion Carried; Roll Call Vote: 7 – yes and 1 - no.

Mrs. Forrest – yes

Mr. Mears – no

Ms. Wilson – yes

Ms. Wright - yes

Ms. Gibson - yes

Ms. Cauthorne – yes

Mr. Moore - yes

Ms. Catlett - yes

Public Comments at 7:58 p.m.

Celeste Brown of 79 LaPierre Ave in Lawnside said it was good to be back and see everyone. She also said she was on dialysis and her household was hit hard with COVID-19 the week of Thanksgiving. She stated her 90 year old mother passed. She thanked Dr. Johnson and the school board. She is very proud of the city and gave "kudos" to Dr. Johnson, teachers and the school board for all of their hard work. Remember our main focus and objective is the children. Mrs. Forrest thanked Ms. Brown and offered her condolences for her loss.

Mr. Ervin Mears of 411 E. Charleston Ave in Lawnside congratulated Mr. Moore and Ms. Catlett on becoming board members. He stated he listened to Mr. Lloyd Henderson speak regarding Black History Month. It's not a good day, it's a sad day. He went on to say the two new board members, Mr. Moore and Ms. Catlett had to obtain an attorney to be seated. We had to go to the white folks and ask them to insure they were seated. They were qualified in January. Ms. Catlett's fingerprints were approved on February 2nd. It didn't look right, black folks running up to white folks telling them to enforce the seating of two duly elected school board members. Next issue, the school board has not collected the \$17,500 from the teachers who underpaid in Health Benefits last year (18A:16-17-1). The same law that we used for board members to be installed in January for the health benefits. You have to collect the money. If the board doesn't collect the taxpayers money, he will file a complaint with the Department of Education. The board has the right duty, and responsibility to look after the taxpayers money. He said this issue was brought up before and never addressed. Mrs. Forrest stated the \$17,500 issue was entertained months ago. Ms. Leary can check the minutes to see when action was taken. Secondly, she was advised by the State of New Jersey, Department of Education that fingerprints have to be cleared. The State was back logged with results due to COVID-19. Mrs. Forrest said she wants to make it publicly known that the board did nothing wrong. She asked Mr. Gordon, technology coordinator, to place Mr. Mears on mute due to constant interruptions. She said it was very inappropriate to ask a question, interrupt and then have a temper tantrum when you do not hear what you want to hear. She said she is only going to speak the truth. She also said, she functions on direction given by the Department of Education. We cannot seat board members until we have results. Mrs. Forrest explained the same process took place with Ms. Cauthorne where there was a waiting period. She said "this is not her board". This is about the students. We function as a full board. We need to come together. We're not hurting anyone but the kids.

Chris Lewis of 316 Ellis Court in Lawnside, stated, he presently lives in Florida. He said there was a request sent to the board regarding the renaming of the gym to "Carlton Perry" who was his brother. He was a coach and did a lot for Lawnside. His understanding is that the request was denied. He asked the board, "What could be done for all the others who gave contributions such as: Mr. Gaines, Ms. Smith and of course, Carlton Perry? All gave incredible contributions to Lawnside. Mr. Lewis said He was in the first kindergarten class at the school. Currently, he is a Risk Manager in Florida working for 15 municipalities, including school boards and counties. Board of Education members need to be aware of the rules so that meetings can run more smoothly. When time is taken away to explain the rules, it takes time away from other business. Mrs. Forrest gave her condolences to Mr. Lewis. She said the Outreach Committee consist of Ms. Nana Cauthorne who is the chairperson and Alexis Wilson. They can contact him when there is a meeting. Conversations did take place regarding other proposals to recognize others in the community. As stated by Ms. Celeste Brown, "Lawnside is a wonderful community. Mrs. Forrest asked Ms. Cauthorne if she wanted to speak. Ms. Cauthorne stated something will be done for Carlton and everyone else.

Councilwoman Rhonda Wardlow Hurley stated, "Just for the record, councilwoman Wardlow-Hurley made the request to rename the gym, not the Mayor. Mayor and Council have decided to honor Carlton another way. She stated she attended a meeting at Haddon Heights. We need to stop the foolishness, for a small community. We are trying to move forward. It's ridiculous. The business needs to be about the children. Stop the personal attacks. A young student took their own life. She hopes people are honored like: Carlton, Ms. Sissy and Mr. Gaines. We should honor people for work they do before they close their eyes.

Lavinia Taylor of 23 E. Emlen Ave in Lawnside stated she was very impressed with the Black History Month project. Friends were jealous. It was a very good activity. Her children were born and raised in Lawnside. The program was an eye opener. Children were actively involved. Kudos to the board. A lot of hard work and effort went into the program.

Ms. Celeste Brown of Lawnside said even though the PTA has not been active due to the pandemic she still is very supportive and help financially. Mrs. Forrest stated she will provide Ms. Brown's phone number to Ms. Leary to give to the teachers in case they need any support.

Ms. Shamele Jordan said to Ms. Taylor, she would love to go to Camden to do a program.

Board Member Comments at 8:18 p.m.

Mr. Phoenix Moore thanked Ms. Shamele Jordan for the Black History Month Project. He said he was inspired. Good job well done. With regards to the young child who took their own life, he said he grew up thinking he was a little special. He had friends who lost their lives. The school board shapes and forms the weird children. He apologized and said special students. It would be incredible to start a program where students can become creative.

Ms. Marsharee Wright congratulated the new board member, Mr. Moore and Ms. Catlett and welcomed them to the board. She said, "Buckle up, there is a lot of work to do". With regards to the open board seat, a vacancy notice should be sent to the community. She thanked Ms. Higgs and Mr. Jordan on the Black History Month Program. There was an event on February 20th "NJ Hook up on Black Women held a virtual event where 40% of participates were Lawnside Student. Student received a \$20 gift card. Eighth grade parents need to reach out to Norman Alston and Ayree Stevenson No school next Friday, hopefully parents can plan something fun to do. On April 3rd, the Borough

of Lawnside will be hosting "Clean Up Lawnside Activity". Can contact councilman Pollard.

Mr. M. Mears stated in regards to board members being prepared, he would like to make a motion to make sure all board members are provided with a hard copy of Title 18A and a mandated policy book. He went on to read a prepared written correspondence and said it was obvious that the board president, board secretary and board solicitor have failed to be honest and forth coming with information on the law and decision making. This will ensure that all members are equipped and have access to the laws that govern the school district. We have voting on things in the past that have been illegal. The board solicitor had advised the board on issues that later ended in legal trouble. To avoid this, provide information to new board members. Mrs. Forrest stated all the policies are posted on the website. She asked Mr. Mears was he making a motion. Mr. Mears stated he has a book of policies that has more information than what's listed on the website. He said the website is missing information. Ms. Wilson asked where the information came from. Mr. M. Mears said, it was a motion on the floor. Mrs. Forrest stated we are not entertaining motions. Mrs. Forrest stated we are at the end of our agenda and that a Mr. Mears was out of order. She said we have an agenda and that item needs to be added to our agenda. Mr. Mears said he could make a motion and the board vote on it. Ms. Wright said he has to make sure it is okay to add it to the agenda first. Mr. Mears said let's ask our school board solicitor. Ms. Wright said "yes" let's ask Mr. Rhone, for "Mr. Pay Attention". Mr. Rhone, board solicitor apologized to the guest and board members. He said school boards conducted a training. Ethics require school board members to provide correct information. They are laws regarding defamation and certain standards and such. He said he has a very thick skin as many people do. He stated he knows Mr. Mears is being sculpted by his mentor. As a point of concern, be careful about what you read and where you get it from. He told Mr. M. Mears to be careful. Mrs. Forrest stated Mr. Mears concerns will be addressed at another time. Mr. Moore said as a new member, he has been searching for information for new board members. He said he would like to second the motion so he doesn't step on anyone's toes. Mrs. Forrest stated as Ms. Wright said, there's no motion on the floor. That is something that would have to be added. She also Mr. Mears was being rude and several people are on the call. Mrs. Forrest went on to said, we have explained the budget in-depth and it's ironic that your screen name is "Pay Attention" and you don't pay attention. We have reviewed the budget in great detail. Mrs. Forrest said we have members who work and take time out. Everyone has a family. We need to realize when a question is asked, be kind enough to be quiet and receive the answer. We don't always get along, nor do we always agree, but right is right and wrong is wrong. Mrs. Forrest told Mr. Moore he will receive all the information he needs. Anyone elected to the board in the future, should contact the board office to see what they need to do. If you heard Ms. Leary tonight, she stated she was putting together hard copies of "new board member packets". She said if you have a question, shut up and listen. She has been a board member for 10 years and works harder as a board member, than on her own job. She doesn't get paid and nothing is being hidden. Ms. Wright told Mrs. Forrest not to explain anymore. Mr. M. Mears asked if the board would be following "Robert Rules". Mrs. Forrest asked if there was anything for Executive Session. Mr. Rhone asked to clarify things. He said as part of "Robert Rules", things can be walked on to the agenda however; the power lies with the president to add the item. Generally, you ask the board president and it is usually done for emergent matters or items that have arisen out of questions that came up during the meetings such as motion to resend something or amend something. Sometimes there are new item, however; that comes with "Robert Rules" of Order, not Disorder! Mr. Rhone said there is no problem with individuals putting forth their opinions. Once again, it's about the children. For example, when paying bills, there could be an issue with creditors if bills are not paid on time. If you are on this platform and you say "no" to paying bills, are you saying no to children? Are you saying no to student's with special needs and transportation. He said be mindful about what you do. There are guest watching.

He said be careful what you say and do. There are a lot of young board members that are hungry for knowledge, ask questions but do so in good faith and be willing to learn not just fight. Mrs. Forrest thanked Mr. Rhone. Mr. M. Mears asked was his motion going to be ignored. Mrs. Forrest asked if he heard what Mr. Rhone just said. Ms. Wright stated his motion should asked the board president if he could add it. We need to move forward. Ms. Wright said the motion was not worded correctly. Mrs. Forrest stated when a motion is made, we need to listen. In the best interest of the board, we need to move on and address this in committees.

Motion by Dajshia Gibson seconded by Alexis Wilson to adjourn the board meeting.

Mrs. Forrest – yes
Mr. Mears – left mtg.
Ms. Wilson – yes

Ms. Wright – left mtg.
Ms. Gibson - yes
Ms. Cauthorne – yes

Mr. Moore - yes
Ms. Catlett - yes

All in favor: 6 – Ayes. Motion carried by Unanimous Voice Vote.

Adjournment – 8:38 p.m.

CERTIFICATION

I, Dawn Leary, Business Administrator/Board Secretary of the Board of Education of the Borough of Lawnside in the County of Camden, New Jersey, HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing extract from the minutes of a meeting of the Board of Education duly called and held on *March 11, 2021* has been compared by me with the original minutes as officially recorded in the Minute Book of the Board of Education and is true, complete and correct copy thereof and of the whole of the original minutes so far as they relate to the subject matters referred to in the extract.

Respectfully Submitted



Dawn Leary
Business Administrator/Board Secretary