

**PARK RIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
PARK RIDGE, NEW JERSEY  
REORGANIZATION MEETING MINUTES**

**High School Little Theater**

**MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2025  
7:00 P.M. Public**

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Wright at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call

R. Fisher	J. Pierotti	N. Agoos	J. Bucco	R. Browne	D. Bradler
X	X	X	X	X	X

Also Present:

Dr. Robert Gamper    Robert Wright    A. Zartarian

**II. Swearing In of New Board Member**

Mr. Bradler was sworn in as a Board Member with a term to expire in the year 2027.

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Wright.

Reading of the "Open Public Meetings Act" by Mr. Wright.

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT**

This is to advise the general public and to instruct that it be recorded in the minutes that in compliance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, entitled the "Open Public Meetings Act," the Park Ridge Board of Education on January 11, 2024 caused to be posted at the Office of the Board of Education located at 85 Pascack Road, Park Ridge, New Jersey and on January 11, 2024 sent to The Record, 1 Garret Mountain Plaza, P.O. Box 471, Woodland Park, NJ 07424-0471 and The Ridgewood News, 1 Garrett Mountain Plaza, PO Box 471, Woodland Park NJ 07424-0471 and on January 11, 2024 delivered to the Office of the Municipal Clerk of Park Ridge and the Park Ridge Public Library a meeting notice setting forth the time, date and location of this meeting.

Public participation may be limited to 3 minutes per person.

II. ORGANIZATION MEETING Superintendent’s/Business Administrator’s Report:

A. RESULTS OF THE ELECTION:

CANDIDATES – 2 Members for 3 years:

<u>CANDIDATE</u>
David Bradler
Christopher Amitrano

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION OF A PRESIDENT

*Ms. Agoos moved the nomination of Mr. Bradler for President.*

*Mr. Bucco seconded the motion.*

Roll call for election of Mr. Bradler as President:

RF JP NA JB RB DB  
Y Y Y Y Y Y

B. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION OF A VICE-PRESIDENT

*Ms. Agoos moved the nomination of Ms. Browne for Vice-President.*

*Mr. Pierotti seconded the motion.*

Roll call for election of MS. Browne as Vice-President:

RF JP NA JB RB DB  
Y Y Y Y Y Y

C. HEARING OF CITIZENS – LIMITED TO AGENDA ITEMS

Hearing of Citizens will be restricted to three minutes per person for a total of fifteen minutes for comments on agenda items only. The Board bears no responsibility, nor will it be liable for any comments made by the public. Please be advised that all comments are maintained as a matter of public record.

*Mr. Amitrano spoke, stating that he was not provided the correct information in a timely manner. As a result, he was forced to find an alternate vendor. He felt this was a deliberate attempt to keep him off the Board. He had hoped to fix this in time for the meeting but was unable to. He concluded by stating that this was not his fault.*

*Ms. Stevens spoke about the time set for the West Ridge Elementary School Graduation. She indicated that she has been asking for a reason for the change in time for several months and has not been given a response. She expressed concern that parents and siblings would be unable to attend the event because of the time. She felt the move to 11:30 am was not properly explained and requested an honest answer to her questions.*

*Ms. Bauer spoke about Policy 5756. She expressed concern that it is impacting the long-term health of students. She spoke about open communication with parents and a right to know what is going on with their children. She expressed concern about students dealing with gender identity issues and parents not being aware. She was also concerned that this policy would allow male students to be in the same spaces as females. She viewed the removal of the policy as a safety concern.*

*Mr. Fisher then asked that several Policies be removed from the consent agenda. They were:*

*Policy 0155*

*Policy 0164*

*Policy 5756*

*He also asked that the meeting dates be changed.*

*Mr. Fisher indicated that he opposes the consent agenda but that he was moving forward in an effort to work together with fellow board members to tackle problems.*

*A motion was made by Mr. Fisher to introduce an amendment to Policy 0164. The motion passed as follows:*

*M: RF S: JP*

*RF JP NA JB RB DB*

*Y Y Y Y Y Y*

*Mr. Fisher explained that he wanted to amend Policy 0164 to allow for Board members to use a phone to call in to a meeting. He cited the need to do this as a result of several meetings almost not obtaining a quorum. He commented that previous requests from him to allow remote participation were rejected due to cost and complexity of implementation. This option was inexpensive and easy to implement.*

*Several follow up questions/comments were asked.*

*Mr. Bucco asked if his amendment was for all 12 meetings. Mr. Fisher stated that it was, but he was willing to amend that.*

*Mr. Fisher commented that many towns are already doing this.*

*Ms. Agoos expressed concern that using the phone may result in people not hearing clearly what was being said. Mr. Fisher stated that the phone could be hooked up to a loudspeaker and did not see how this would require new technology. When asked if multiple Board members can use this option, he commented that it would be easy to accommodate.*

*Ms. Browne asked Mr. Fisher to name the specific Boards who were doing this. Mr. Fisher indicated that he would have to get back to her. Ms. Browne followed up asking about confidentiality in the executive session. Mr. Fisher stated that individuals would need to monitor themselves. He also felt that hypothetical scenarios were not helpful and felt they were being used to try and kill the concept.*

*Mr. Fisher felt that having the hybrid format was a good option as a backup.*

*Ms. Agoos commented that the issue should be moved to the Policy committee.*

*Mr. Fisher expressed concern that moving it to the committee would take too much time.*

*Mr. Bradler clarified that the committee would not sit on it for a long time and would allow them to fine tune the language.*

*Mr. Fisher agreed to withdraw the motion if there was a promise to act on it within the next 30 days. He was given verbal consent that it would.*

A motion to withdraw was made and passed as follows:

M: NA S: RF  
RF JP NA JB RB DB  
Y Y Y Y Y Y

*Mr. Fisher asked to be removed from any committee seats. He felt that the public had a right to see what was going on behind closed doors and the current format does not allow for this.*

*He then made a motion to amend Policy 0155. A motion was made by Mr. Fisher but no second was received.*

*Mr. Fisher then made a motion to remove Policy 5756 from the policies being adopted. A motion was made by Mr. Fisher and seconded by Mr. Bucco. Mr. Fisher then spoke about the rights of parents. He presented a hypothetical scenario of a student who tells a teacher that they are transgender. That information is kept from parents. He felt this was*

*unfair to parents as it did not allow them to address the situation. He then spoke about male student who decides they are a her and now staff has to refer to them as that. This male can now use female facilities. He referenced a situation which occurred at the Olympics which gave an athlete born male to compete against women. He also stated that this policy forces schools to support trans students with clubs. He commented that it would also lead to having tampons in the men’s room. He pointed to studies that showed these students are picked on more and develop mental health issues. This puts the district at risk. He asked if anyone who had a daughter would be comfortable having them change in front of a man.*

*Ms. Agoos expressed disagreement with Mr. Fisher’s statements. She felt there was a need for this policy and that the statements made were “gay bashing.”*

*The attorney was asked if the removal of the policy would be a problem. The attorney responded that there were several districts who had removed the policy. The ones who were currently in litigation were the ones who chose to amend versus rescind. He added that removing the policy did not preclude the district from following the law which the Policy was designed to provide structure to. The Board would still need to comply with the anti-bullying policies.*

*Mr. Fisher commented that the Edison Board of Education had repealed the policy and that with this policy in place, students would not be safe in the new locker rooms.*

A vote was taken and passed as follows:

M: RF S: JB  
RF JP NA JB RB DB  
Y Y N Y Y Y

*Mr. Fisher asked for several meeting dates be changed. The Board agreed to change the March, November, and Reorganization dates. The revised motion was voted on and passed as follows:*

M: RF S: JP  
RF JP NA JB RB DB  
Y Y Y Y Y Y

The revised Consent agenda was then voted on. The revised agenda passed as follows:

M: RF S: JP  
RF JP NA JB RB DB  
P Y Y Y Y Y

1. **PAYMENT OF VOUCHERS**  
Authorize the payment of vouchers that are due and payable each month prior to the regular meeting of the Board, including payroll, health benefits, debt service, social securities, and investments.
2. **APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS**  
Designate the Board Members on a rotating basis to review vouchers contained on the monthly List of Bills.
3. **CHART OF ACCOUNTS**  
Approval of the continuation of the Uniform Minimum Chart of Accounts in accordance with State statutes.
4. **LEGAL NEWSPAPERS**  
The Ridgewood News and The Record are appointed as the legal newspapers for advertisements. The Record is designated for legal notices; The Ridgewood News is being recommended in order to provide flexibility for emergencies.
5. **FACSIMILE SIGNATURE**  
The Park Ridge Board of Education approves the use of facsimile signatures of the Board President for the Operating Account.
6. **TIME AND PLACE OF REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING** – Pursuant to Board Policy #0154.

The Regular Monthly Meetings of the Park Ridge Board of Education will generally be held on the third Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Little Theater of the Park Ridge High School, except as indicated.

The dates for the regular monthly meetings are as follows:

January 27, 2025	August 25, 2025
February 24, 2025	September 15, 2025
March 10, 2025	October 20, 2025
April 28, 2025	November 24, 2025
May 19, 2025	December 15, 2025
June 16, 2025	

January 5, 2026 Reorganization Meeting

Other meetings will be designated as Special Meetings and advertised as needed.

**7. DEPOSITORIES AND SIGNATURES JANUARY 1, 2025 THROUGH THE NEXT REORGANIZATION MEETING:**

N.J.S.A. 17:9-9; 18a:17-34 and 18A:19-1

Bank – Provident Bank

- A. AGENCY ACCOUNT #XXXXX8117  
SBA/BS, Robert Wright  
and  
Superintendent, Dr. Robert Gamper  
or  
Assistant to SBA/BS, Grace Biancorosso
  
- B. PAYROLL ACCOUNT #XXXXX8125  
Superintendent, Dr. Robert Gamper
  
- C. UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION ACCOUNT #XXXXX8141  
SBA/BS, Robert Wright  
and  
Superintendent, Dr. Robert Gamper  
or  
Assistant to SBA/BS, Grace Biancorosso
  
- D. OPERATING ACCOUNT #XXXXX8109  
President or V.P.  
and  
SBA/BS, Robert Wright  
and  
Superintendent, Dr. Robert Gamper  
or  
Assistant to SBA/BS, Grace Biancorosso
  
- E. MERCHANT SERVICES DEPOSIT ACCOUNT #XXXXX8222
  
- F. MERCHANT ACCOUNT – FOOD SERVICES DEPOSIT ACCOUNT #XXXXX9792
  
- G. ATHLETIC ACCOUNT #XXXXX8168  
SBA/BS, Robert Wright  
and/or  
Superintendent, Dr. Robert Gamper  
and/or  
Assistant to SBA/BS, Grace Biancorosso

- H. EXTRA CURRICULAR ACCOUNT #XXXXX8176  
SBA/BS, Robert Wright  
and/or  
Superintendent, Dr. Robert Gamper  
and/or  
Assistant to SBA/BS, Grace Biancorosso
- I. PARK RIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION VARSITY CLUB, A/C #XXXXX8192  
SBA/BS, Robert Wright  
or  
Superintendent, Dr. Robert Gamper  
and  
Assistant to SBA/BS, Grace Biancorosso
- J. BEER FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP FUND, A/C #XXXXX8214
- K. WASHNIK AWARD SCHOLARSHIP FUND, A/C #XXXXX9571
- L. ICS INVESTMENT ACCOUNT, A/C# XXXXX9539
- M. JOHANNA MULHALL SCHOLARSHIP ACCOUNT, Managed by State of New Jersey Cash Management Fund A/C #XXXXXXXX8171
- N. ANDREW AND MARIE JOHNSON PRIZE, Managed by son, Edward Johnson through Vanguard Wellington  
A/C #0021/XXXXX9226

8. **DEPOSITORIES AND INVESTMENTS**

Pursuant to Title 17:12b-241, the Park Ridge Board of Education to authorize Robert Wright, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary and/or Krista Kersting, Assistant Business Administrator, to invest school funds and order wire transfers, if necessary to complete the transaction, in one or more accounts in any insured bank, whose principal office is located in New Jersey in any amount up to, but not exceeding, the amounts for which such accounts are insured.

Additionally, the Park Ridge Board of Education may invest in Cash Management Plans subject to the provisions outlined in LFN 2017-24R and as amended by P.L. 2018 c.40 which stipulates that funds be initially invested through a public depository participating in the Governmental Unit Deposit Protection Act (GUDPA) and that 100 percent of the principal and interest of each deposit is insured by the Federal deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC).

9. **PETTY CASH FUND**

Approval of the petty cash fund, as per Policy 6620.

10. **FLEXIBLE SPENDING PLAN**

Approval of the continuation of the district's flexible spending plan with Aflac.

11. **403(b) AND 457 DEFERRED COMPENSATION PLANS**

Approval of the continuation of the district's 403(b) and 457 deferred compensation plans and waiver of coverage incentive plan.

12. **ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**

Approval of Organizational Chart, as listed under Policy 1110.

13. **SECTION 125/CAFETERIA PLAN**

The Park Ridge Board of Education to authorize the Premium Conversion Plan, the "Plan," effective January 1, 2019, to allow eligible employees to elect to reduce their cash compensation in consideration of their receipt of certain employee and dependent health care coverage under the employer sponsored health plans. This Plan is intended to qualify as a "cafeteria plan" within the meaning of Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code.

14. **RE-ADOPTION OF BOARD POLICIES**

The Park Ridge Board of Education to re-adopt Board Policies and Regulations on file and shall remain in effect until the next organizational meeting unless otherwise amended.

15. **JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

The Park Ridge Board of Education to re-approve job descriptions, which are on file in the Superintendent's office.

16. **DISTRICT MISSION & VISION STATEMENT**

The Park Ridge Board of Education to approve the District Mission Statement.

17. **CUSTODIAN OF RECORDS**

The Park Ridge Board of Education to approve Robert Wright as Custodian of Records.

18. **QUALIFIED PURCHASING AGENT**

The Park Ridge Board of Education to approve Robert Wright as the district's Qualified Purchasing Agent.

19. **INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR (IPM)**

The Park Ridge Board of Education to approve David Librera as the IPM.

20. **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION OFFICER**  
The Park Ridge Board of Education to approve Troy Lederman as Public Agency Compliance (Affirmative Action) Officer of the Park Ridge School District.
21. **PUBLIC COMPLIANCE OFFICER**  
The Park Ridge Board of Education to approve Robert Wright as the district Public Agency Compliance Officer (P.A.C.O.).
22. **504 COMPLIANCE OFFICER**  
The Park Ridge Board of Education to approve Jill Connolly as the district 504 Compliance Officer.
23. **HIB COORDINATOR AND COMMITTEE/SPECIALISTS**  
The Park Ridge Board of Education to approve the following for the Park Ridge School District:
  - Jill Connolly as HIB Coordinator
  - Specialists
    - Camilo Marmolejo East Brook
    - Tamar Keller-Moczarski West Ridge
    - Andrew Yeager & Julie Worgul High School
24. **AHERA**  
The Park Ridge Board of Education to approve Robert Wright as the AHERA Coordinator.
25. **FEES FOR COPIES**  
Approval of continuation of fees for copies of public documents as follows:
  - .75 per page for first ten pages
  - .50 per page for next 11-20 pages
  - .25 per page for over 20 pages
26. **BID AUTHORIZATION**  
The Park Ridge Board of Education to authorize the Board Secretary/Business Administrator to advertise for bids in accordance with the provisions of Title 18A:18A 'Public School Contracts Law' in The Record or The Ridgewood News whenever appropriate for the period through the next Organizational Meeting. Such bids for goods and/or services are to be in accordance with prepared bid specifications and to be opened at the office of the Board Secretary/Business Administrator not less than 10 days subsequent to advertising.

27. **SAFETY AND HEALTH**

The Park Ridge Board of Education to approve Robert Wright as the district's Safety and Health Coordinator.

28. **SUBSTANCE AWARENESS**

The Park Ridge Board of Education to approve Andrew Yeager as the Substance Awareness Coordinator.

29. **RIGHT-TO-KNOW**

The Park Ridge Board of Education to approve Robert Wright as the Right-To-Know Coordinator.

30. **CODE OF ETHICS**

The Park Ridge Board of Education to discuss and approve the Code of Ethics. Each board member has to acknowledge and sign the receipt.

31. **APPROVAL OF COMMITTEES BY THE BOARD**

A. Ad Hoc Committees

- 1) Buildings & Grounds/Security/ Finance Committee
- 2) Education/Technology Committee
- 3) Policy/ Personnel /Negotiations Committee
- 4) Community Relations Committee
- 5) Housing & Development Committee

B. Delegates to:

- 1) New Jersey School Boards Association
- 2) Bergen County School Boards Association

32. **SCHOOL BOOSTER CLUBS**

The Park Ridge Board of Education recognizes the following school Booster Clubs:

S.P.A. - Supporters of the Performing Arts  
Park Ridge HS Band

Park Ridge Athletic Booster Clubs:

Cheerleader  
Football  
Boys and Girls Soccer  
Volleyball  
Wrestling  
Baseball  
Basketball  
Softball

Track  
Boys and Girls Lacrosse  
Operation Graduation (OpGrad)

**33. ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER**

The Park Ridge Board of Education approves Robert Wright or Krista Kersting to initiate ACH payments for the district.

**III. HEARING OF CITIZENS**

Hearing of Citizens will be restricted to three minutes per person for a total of fifteen minutes for comments on non-agenda items. The Board bears no responsibility, nor will it be liable for any comments made by the public. Please be advised that all comments are maintained as a matter of public record.

*A resident complained that one Board member appears to be controlling the meeting. She felt that there were a lot more important topics to discuss and this person was wasting time. She commented that someone 900 miles away should not be dictating how the meeting should go.*

*Another resident addressed the Board stating that they were upset that comments from the public are not heard until after the votes. She stated it would be more helpful if they could make their comments before something is decided.*

*Brittany, a resident, stated that the concerns being raised by Ms. Stevens about the graduation were not shared by the many of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade parents. She stated that this was being brought up to accommodate the individual and not the group. She pointed out that the individual was at the graduation event around 11:00 am last year handing out waters. She stated that the parents have already adjusted their plans to attend and many if you were to poll them, most would be in favor of the change.*

*Ms. Stevens stated that her reasons for wanting to change the times were not for herself but for others, especially those families with children with special needs.*

*Taylor, a resident, stated that most 6<sup>th</sup> grade parents want the graduation time changed. This allows them to go out to lunch afterwards. There is already a party planned for 6:00 pm. Changing the time now would interfere with that.*

*Maria, was surprised that the Board rescinded Policy 5756. She referenced that Board's mission statement of "Every Owl, Every Day." She fears that students will now not have protection. She felt there should have been a better way to handle this and wanted to know what the next steps are.*

*Mr. Fisher, citing personal privilege, made a comment that “you lost”. He then spoke about a change in the town and the nation. People are not happy with the way things are going and want change. The November election was a wakeup call.*

**IV. DISCUSSION**

A. Appointment of Committees – Tabled

**FINANCE RESOLUTIONS**

F1. The Park Ridge Board of Education approves the appointment of the following legal firms, per Board Policy 0153, for the period of January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025:

- Cleary, Giacobbe, Alfieri, Jacobs, L.L.C. - School Attorney
- Machado Law Group – Counsel for Special Services
- Wilentz Goldman & Spitzer - Bond Counsel
- Lerch, Vinci, Bliss, LLP – School Auditor

F2. The Park Ridge Board of Education approves the following vendors for the period of January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025, who will exceed the bid threshold:

- Cleary, Giacobbe, Alfieri, Jacobs, L.L.C.
- Machado Law Group
- Karl Environmental Group

M: NA S: RB

RF JP NA JB RB DB

P Y Y Y Y Y

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

M: RF S: NA

RF JP NA JB RB DB

Y Y Y Y Y Y

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Robert Wright  
Board Administrator/ Board Secretary