

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
AUDUBON HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 2025
7:00 P.M.
MINUTES

- I. **Call to Order:** In accordance with the provisions of the New Jersey Open Public Meeting Act of 1975, the Audubon Board of Education transmitted notice of the meeting, scheduled at 7:00 pm in the Audubon Junior-Senior High School Media Center to the Retrospect newspaper and the Borough Clerk and by postings on the Audubon Public School District website and at the Main and the Pine Street entrances of the Junior-Senior High School.

II. **Flag Salute**

III. **Roll Call**

SY 2023-2025

 X Ammie Davis

 X Stephen Wilson

 X Sara Kuhlen

SY 2024-2026

 A Alison Lipsky
Arrived at 7:04pm

 X Mark Gatti

 X Bill Wilson

SY 2025-2027

 X Danielle DiFrancesco

 X Allison Cox

 X Andrea Robinson

SY 2025 Mt. Ephraim Representative

 X Jonathan Maxson

IV. **Participation:** (Agenda Items Only)

Steve Bellis, staff member, read a statement regarding his position as hallway monitor being eliminated in the 2025-2026 school year. Statement attached.

The Board of Education recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues and the importance of allowing members of the public to express themselves on school matters of community interest.

In order to permit the fair and orderly expression of such comment, the Board has set aside two portions of this Board meeting for public comment on any school or school district issue that a member of the public feels may be of interest to the residents of the school district.

For the first portion, public comments are invited on matters pertaining only to the agenda for tonight's meeting. For the second portion, public comments are invited on all matters pertaining to the school district.

Participants should announce their name, address, and any group they may represent, if applicable. The Board reserves the right to limit public discussion. Public discussion of a topic will be limited to fifteen (15)

minutes, and individual speakers will be limited to three (3) minutes. No participant may speak more than once on the same topic until all others who wish to speak on that topic have been heard. Reference bylaws #0167 of the Audubon Public Schools Board of Education Manual.

The Board uses the public comment period as an opportunity to listen to citizens. Not all issues brought to a Board meeting will be resolved at that particular meeting. Complaints stated or actions requested by the public may be taken under advisement by the Board for investigation, discussion, actions, or disposition at a later date or time. The public comments sessions are an opportunity for citizens to share their opinions and remarks with the Board; it is not a question and answer session. The Board may or may not respond to public comments at the time they are made and is under no obligation to do so.

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Motion by Mr. Maxson seconded by Mrs. Cox to approve the resolution for board to enter into closed Authorizing Executive session at 7:10pm for the following purposes. Motion approved by unanimous roll call (10-0)

V. Authorizing Executive Session:

WHEREAS, while the Sen. Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 et seq.) requires all meetings of the **Audubon Board of Education** to be held in public, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) sets forth nine types of matters that may lawfully be discussed in Executive Session," i.e. without the public being permitted to attend; and

WHEREAS, the **Audubon Board of Education** has deemed it necessary to go into closed session to discuss certain matters that are exempted from the Public; and

WHEREAS, the nine exceptions to public meetings set forth in N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) are listed below, and next to each exception is a box within which the number of issues to be privately discussed that fall within that exception shall be written, and after each exception is a space where additional information that will disclose as much information about the decision as possible without undermining the purpose of the exception shall be written.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the **Audubon Board of Education** will go into closed session for the following reason(s) as outlined in N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b):

 X Any matter which, by express provision of Federal Law, State Statute, or Rule of Court shall be rendered confidential or excluded from discussion in public;

 Any matter in which the release of information would impair a right to receive funds from the federal government;

 X Any material the disclosure of which constitutes an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy such as any records, data, reports, recommendations, or other personal material of any educational, training, social service, medical, health, custodial, child protection, rehabilitation, legal defense, welfare, housing, relocation, insurance and similar program or institution operated by a public body pertaining to any specific individual admitted to or served by such institution or program, including but not limited to information relative to the individual's personal and family circumstances, and any material pertaining to admission, discharge, treatment, progress or condition of any individual, unless the individual concerned (or, in the case of a minor or incompetent, his guardian) shall request in writing that the same be disclosed publicly;

_____ Any collective bargaining agreement, or the terms and conditions of which are proposed for inclusion in any collective bargaining agreement, including the negotiation of terms and conditions with employees or representatives of employees of the public body

_____ Any matter involving the purchase lease or acquisition of real property with public funds, the setting of bank rates or investment of public funds where it could adversely affect the public interest if discussion of such matters were disclosed;

_____ Any tactics and techniques utilized in protecting the safety and property of the public provided that their disclosure could impair such protection;

 X Any investigations of violations or possible violations of the law;

_____ Any pending or anticipated litigation or negotiation in which the public body is or may become a party. Any matters falling within the attorney-client privilege, to the extent that confidentiality is required in order for the attorney to exercise his ethical duties as a lawyer;

 X Any matter involving the employment, appointment, termination of employment, terms and conditions of employment, evaluation of the performance, promotion or disciplining of any specific prospective public officer or employee or current public officer or employee employed or appointed by the public body, unless all individual employees or appointees whose rights could be adversely affected request in writing that such matter or matters be discussed at a public; Specifically the evaluation of the Superintendent

_____ Any deliberation of a public body occurring after a public hearing that may result in the imposition of a specific civil penalty upon the responding party or the suspension or loss of a license or permit belonging to the responding party as a result of an act of omission for which the responding party bears responsibility;

WHEREAS, the length of the Executive Session is undetermined; however, the **Audubon Board of Education** will make every attempt to estimate the time of the session prior to convening the session after which the public meeting shall reconvene and the Audubon Board of Education will proceed with business.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the **Audubon Board of Education** will go into Executive Session for only the above-stated reasons;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Audubon Board of Education** hereby declares that its discussion of the aforementioned subject(s) may be made public at a time when the Audubon Board of Education attorney advises that the disclosure of the discussion will not detrimentally affect any right, interest, or duty of the school district or any other entity with respect to said discussion.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Board of Education**, for the aforementioned reasons, hereby declares that the public is excluded from the portion of the meeting during which the above discussion shall take place and hereby directs the board secretary to take the appropriate action to effectuate the terms of this resolution.

Motion by Ms. Maxson seconded by Mrs. Cox to adjourn closed Authorizing Executive session at 9:08pm. Motion approved by unanimous roll call (10-0)

All motions are voted on by all members unless otherwise marked with a +.

Board of Education Goals

Through oversight and advocacy in committee meetings, regular monthly meetings, and through a close review of Superintendent recommendations, the Board will

- ❖ continue to provide equitable access to a rigorous curriculum while focusing on improving student achievement and decreasing achievement gaps.
- ❖ work to maintain a cost-effective budget that provides for educational resources, supports a preventative maintenance program, and encourages & facilitates long-range facility improvements while remaining fiscally responsible.
- ❖ foster a safe and positive school climate and culture in order to positively impact student motivation, engagement, and achievement.

- VI. **GOVERNANCE**: **Chairperson – Alison Lipsky**; Committee Members – Danielle DiFrancesco, Sara Kuhlen, Jonathan Maxson; and Alternate – Andrea Robinson

None at this time.

- VII. **OPERATIONS**: **Chairperson – Allison Cox**; Committee Members – Ammie Davis, Stephen Wilson, Mark Gatti; and Alternate – Danielle DiFrancesco

MOTION TO APPROVE ITEM 1

Motion by Mr. Maxson and seconded by Mr. Gatti

1. Motion to approve the following Resolution to Approve Application for Additional Expenditures and Acceptance of Tax Levy Incentive Aid

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) has released guidance dated March 28, 2025, authorizing eligible school districts to apply for increased general fund appropriations under the FY2026 State Budget Appropriations Act; and

WHEREAS, the Audubon Public School District qualifies for this opportunity, having a general fund tax levy below its Local Fair Share and total expenditures below its State-determined adequacy budget for the 2025-26 school year; and

WHEREAS, the District proposes an increase in general fund appropriations totaling \$ **1,000,000.00** consisting of an \$ **952,381.00** increase to be raised through the local tax levy, and an additional \$ **47,619.00** to be provided as Tax Levy Incentive Aid from the State of New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, the Board has reviewed and affirms the application and supports the strategic use of these additional resources to support instructional programming and maintain fiscal sustainability;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Audubon Board of Education hereby approves the submission of the application for increased appropriations in the amount of \$ **1,000,000.00**; approves an increase to the local tax levy in the amount of \$ **952,381.00**; and accepts the anticipated award of \$ **47,619.00** in Tax Levy Incentive Aid from the State of New Jersey.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board authorizes the School Business Administrator to complete and submit all documentation necessary to effectuate the application and to incorporate the approved increases into the FY 2025-26 budget accordingly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board affirms the additional funds shall be used solely to support a thorough and efficient education, as required under N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-46 and 18A:7F-70, and consistent with all NJDOE guidance.

Motion to Approve Item(s) 1 through 1: J. Maxson Second: M. Gatti

Roll Call

X Ammie Davis X Stephen Wilson N Sara Kuhlen X Johnathan Maxson
X Alison Lipsky X Mark Gatti X Bill Wilson
X Danielle DiFrancesco X Allison Cox X Andrea Robinson

VOTE FOR ITEM 1

Motion approved by Majority roll call (9-1-0) Member Kuhlen voted no

VIII. EDUCATION: Chairperson – Andrea Robinson; Committee Members – Sara Kuhlen, Johnathan Maxson, Bill Wilson; and Alternate – Alison Lipsky.

None at this time.

IX. HUMAN RESOURCES: Chairperson - Ammie Davis; Committee Members - Allison Cox, Stephen Wilson, Mark Gatti and Alternate - Bill Wilson

None at this time.

X. Public Participation: (Open Discussion)

Tricia Martel, AEA Representative thanked the board on moving forward with the Tax Levy Incentive Application.

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XI. ADJOURNMENT

1. The next meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for Wednesday, April 16, 2025 at 6:30 pm in the Audubon Junior-Senior High School Media Center.
2. Motion by Mr. Maxson seconded by Ms. Lipsky to adjourn meeting at approximately 9:12pm.
Motion approved by unanimous roll call (10-0)

Motion to Approve: J. Maxson Second: A. Lipsky

Roll Call

<u>X</u> Ammie Davis	<u>X</u> Stephen Wilson	<u>X</u> Sara Kuhlen	<u>X</u> Johnathan Maxson
<u>X</u> Alison Lipsky	<u>X</u> Mark Gatti	<u>X</u> Bill Wilson	
<u>X</u> Danielle DiFrancesco	<u>X</u> Allison Cox	<u>X</u> Andrea Robinson	

The Audubon Board of Education reserves the right to add and/or delete motions or make changes to motions in this agenda up to the time of the meeting and during the actual meeting.

Deborah Roncace
Business Administrator/Board Secretary