

MINUTES OF THE PATERSON BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

November 8, 2023 – 6:00 p.m.
Remote Meeting (via Zoom)

Presiding: Comm. Nakima Redmon, President

Present:

Dr. Laurie W. Newell, Superintendent of Schools
Khalifah Shabazz-Charles, Esq., General Counsel
Boris Zaydel, Esq., Board Counsel

PRESENTATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Promotional, Marketing and Branding Services

Mr. Justin Wimberly: Thank you for having me today. My name is Justin Wimberly, CEO and Cofounder of Zone 6, LLC. Zone 6 is a sports media and marketing company based here in North Jersey. Passaic County and Bergen County is where we complete most of our work. From 2019 to now we have expanded along the East Coast with some projects. Our latest project we completed was hosting a High School Football Classic at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. In 2019, Dr. Gerald Glisson gave us the opportunity to host Midnight Ghost Madness where Zone 6 volunteered to have a giveaway, have an MC, a DJ, special effects, and different contests. The event was used as a fundraiser for the Girls and Boys basketball program. Admission was \$5 and around 75% of the gym was occupied. It was a great event and turnout. It's an event that still goes on to this day, even though we're not a part of it. Over the last four years, Zone 6 has hosted with some of the top teams in the State of New Jersey and held games on college campuses such as William Paterson, Kean University, Montclair State, and even hosted a classic at Met-Life Stadium last season. Throughout our classic season seven games allowed Kennedy and Eastside High Schools as participants. At one of the college sites over the last two years Eastside High School was given the opportunity to play at Montclair State University versus Clifton High School. They also played against Passaic Valley High School in 2021 at William Paterson. Throughout these seven games, we gave each program a minimum of 50-100 complimentary tickets. Our expenses since 2019 to now working with Eastside and Kennedy athletics have exceeded \$60,000. Most of this is possible due to some of our other bigger clients that we work with. Here in North Jersey, they gave us the opportunity to give our athletes here in the City of Paterson the same things that we do with teams outside of Paterson. This past fall, Zone 6 hosted four games with Eastside and Kennedy. We had two games on Labor Day weekend. One of the games was originally scheduled at Orange High School. Their field is condemned, and the state wouldn't allow them to play on it. Both athletic directors agreed to move the game to Hinchliffe Stadium for safety purposes. Throughout the time of Zone 6's existence, Paterson Public Schools has contributed \$2,000 towards events hosted by us. \$2,000 went towards fireworks on Labor Day weekend on Friday, September 1 where Eastside High School played Rancocas Valley High School at Hinchliffe Stadium. Due to the last game's attendance of close to 4,000 attendees from the Eastside versus Tech game, Eastside High School will be receiving \$3,000 in donations. Throughout this past summer, Kennedy High School received over \$2,900 in gear sponsored by Zone 6. They participated in a Zone 6 707 tournament this past June on Juneteenth weekend in Teaneck, New Jersey. We also have been able to provide these opportunities due to

some generous sponsors that we have, such as Gatorade, McDonald's, Monto Orthopedics, and Below Body Bar. Our goal for each of the programs is to build a culture. Of course, it's very hard with low attendance on each roster of each of the teams and there's no band compared to most of the high schools that do still exist with high school football. That does create low attendance at home games or games in general that Eastside and Kennedy participates in. Zone 6 is open to working with Paterson Public Schools on the side of marketing. Not just from an athletics standpoint, but we would be open to working with the district to promote student athletes and education overall. We have surpassed over 30,000 followers on all social media platforms. Our ties are made up of 6.2% of the residents from the City of Paterson. I would like to open the floor for anyone that might have any questions. For the games we've done in the past, tickets have never surpassed the expenses. But as I mentioned before, due to some of our other games that we were able to host, that does allow us to give the kids here in the City of Paterson the same opportunities.

MINUTES OF THE PATERSON BOARD OF EDUCATION WORKSHOP MEETING

November 8, 2023 – 6:20 p.m.
Remote Meeting (via Zoom)

Presiding: Comm. Nakima Redmon, President

Present:

Dr. Laurie W. Newell, Superintendent of Schools
Khalifah Shabazz-Charles, Esq., General Counsel
Boris Zaydel, Esq., Board Counsel

Comm. Jonathan Hodges
Comm. Dania Martinez, Vice President

Comm. Della McCall
Comm. Kenneth Simmons

Absent:

Comm. Oshin Castillo-Cruz
Comm. Valerie Freeman
Comm. Eddie Gonzalez
Comm. Manuel Martinez

Comm. Redmon read the Open Public Meetings Act:

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice of, and to attend the meetings of the Paterson Public School District, as well as other public bodies at which any business affecting the interest of the public is discussed or acted upon.

In accordance with the provisions of this law, the Paterson Public School District has caused adequate and electronic notice of this meeting:

**Workshop Meeting
November 8, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.
Remote
90 Delaware Avenue
Paterson, New Jersey**

to be published by having the date, time and place posted in the office of the City Clerk of the City of Paterson, at the entrance of the Paterson Public School offices, on the district's website, and by sending notice of the meeting to the Arab Voice, El Diario, the Italian Voice, the North Jersey Herald & News, and The Record.

Comm. Simmons: Can you repeat what you said in terms of ticket sales and expenses?

Mr. Wimberly: The expenses have exceeded over \$60,000 since 2019. We only had one event in 2019, which was the Midnight Ghost Madness. That was a huge expense, but most of our expenses have come from the High School Football Classic. With those expenses, we have been able to provide opportunities at college venues, media days, professional game day content, post-game meals, t-shirts, fireworks, video game trucks, and a lot of other entertainment apart from those classics. From those games, attendance was very low. Even at Montclair State University we technically lost \$1,800 from doing the event. Eastside was the home participating team in the classic. Passaic Valley was the home team. Eastside was not scheduled to receive anything from ticket sales. The Orange High School game this year, they were listed as the home team as well. The other game we had was Kennedy versus Berringer where attendance was under 100 people. The one good game that we've had in seven games was at Ridgewood versus Eastside High School where the program received funds from that game, and then this year from the Passaic County Tech game, Eastside will be receiving \$3,000 back from ticket sales.

Comm. Simmons: If the programs were selling tickets, they would receive what they would as if they were selling tickets on their own. You're just promoting and marketing the event.

Mr. Wimberly: That's correct. We do operate the ticket sales, but we do promote and market the event. As I mentioned before, at each of those games there has been a minimum of 50 complimentary tickets given out and a maximum of 100 per game. The Eastside roster has about 50 kids and Kennedy has around 35 kids. Each kid has had the opportunity to get at least one free ticket to use per game.

Comm. McCall: As soon as he's done, I want to make sure that I'm able to speak pertaining to this meeting.

Comm. Simmons: Outside of the football and basketball games, I've seen camps where college coaches attend. Have any of our athletes from those events received college scholarships? When our athletes have the opportunity to showcase their talents, have they received any scholarships from those?

Mr. Wimberly: Within the first 72 hours of launching our platform, I had a kid named Jamir Wright Collins from Kennedy High School, who was a two-sport athlete. We launched the company and did a photo shoot at Hackensack High School. We had two other kids that were All-American, one from Bergen Catholic, Jordan Morant, and Jaylin Berger. We mixed the kids with people who had scholarships. We also had four kids, including my brother, that we considered underrated, that were going to be diamonds in the rough for sure. We had over 2,000 followers in our first 48 hours of launching on social media. By the following week, Jamir Wright Collins had five scholarships. It didn't make sense that he was making 7-foot-high jumps and probably one of the top players in New Jersey and didn't have a scholarship going into his senior year.

Comm. Simmons: Wow. Okay.

Comm. Redmon: Thank you so much for presenting Zone 6 and for attending this meeting. I appreciate it.

Mr. Wimberly: Thank you so much. I hope everyone has a blessed night.

OTHER BUSINESS

Comm. McCall: First of all, I'm a little disturbed that we're even doing this virtual meeting. I have to be very honest. I wasn't even going to get onto this meeting. I don't think this is fair to our public, parents, and constituents who look forward to either attending our meetings or having the opportunity to attend. I know a lot of times we say we get more participation this way. I'm getting calls from some staff and community that they're very upset that we changed this meeting from in-person to virtual. In our retreat our facilitator clearly instructed us or gave us the advice that we should no longer be doing virtual meetings. Our meetings should be in-person. She said that to us a couple of times throughout the day. I said it at the last meeting and I'm going to say it at this meeting. If we're going to be a model of great leadership, then we have to be the start of it. This isn't to anyone or anything personal. This is my own conviction. I can't do this like this because to me this is not fair to the constituents who brought us to the table. I'm no longer going to participate in it because it's not right. We need to be in-person. We need to make ourselves available. We have to be the model of good leadership and I don't feel like that's what we're doing right here. I've been fighting within me about this meeting. I think that my colleagues need to be just as responsible to be at these meetings. We should not be trying to get through a meeting today or workshop, so to speak, without all of our colleagues being present or having a reason not to be absent. This is not what the community voted us in to do and I will not participate in it. I needed to say what I said before this meeting got started. Unfortunately, I'm going to leave the meeting. We have to start somewhere in making these commitments that we all raised our hands and took an oath to do. I'm very upset that this meeting was supposed to be in-person. Madam President, this is not directed to you, but I will say that we have a commitment to serve. It's bad enough we do our regular meetings virtual. Now when school is starting to roll and we're in our second month of educating our children here we are taking a meeting virtual again. I've said enough for tonight. I'm very sorry that I interrupted the meeting with my comments, but I needed it to be on record because we all have a responsibility to be great leaders. Thank you.

*Comm. McCall leaves the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Comm. Redmon: We have to go back into committee because we don't have a quorum, and this is exactly the reason why we're actually in a virtual setting. We didn't have enough members committed to come to this meeting tonight. Madam Superintendent, I will ask that your communications and presentations be ended. I'm going to end this meeting because we don't have the proper membership here. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for logging on tonight. I appreciate your time and patience with us tonight. You have a great evening.

Comm. Hodges: I was hoping to catch Della before she left. I understand her position, but I was hoping that we could get through the school's business tonight. We don't like to leave the business unfinished. That's a bad reflection on us. She can register her concerns and then decide not to attend to the future ones, but we have an obligation to finish the agenda. I apologize for being late. I was actually in conversation with Madam

President. Something unfortunate happened here which caused me to be late. She's left. Is that correct?

Comm. Redmon: She's already logged off the meeting. Right now, we have a membership of four and we're operating in committee.

Comm. Hodges: That's what I was trying to prevent. What are we going to do for the regular meeting?

Comm. Redmon: We have a meeting coming up on Monday. Today's business will have to be pushed to Monday's meeting.

Comm. Hodges: Is that going to be a regular meeting in-person?

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: My comment deals with Comm. Hodges' issue. This is a workshop meeting. While we advertise that we are allowed to take action at a workshop meeting, this meeting is meant to discuss issues that we may have with the agenda items so that it's a smoother meeting for the regular meeting. To answer Dr. Hodges' position and question, we can absolutely have discussion over the issues on tonight for tomorrow because essentially most of the issues were meant to be discussed today to vote on at the next meeting.

Comm. Hodges: We don't have any items to be voted on tonight?

Comm. Redmon: We do.

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: To the extent that we do, it's irrelevant if we don't have a quorum.

Comm. Hodges: That's what I was trying to get to. It looks bad for us if we don't get whatever was intended to happen to fully occur and I don't like to see that happen. I was hoping to catch Della before she left to try to keep the meeting running so that at least anything that had to be voted on was addressed. I do understand and appreciate Ms. Shabazz' point, but it still looks bad for us moving forward. I'm disappointed because I don't have much more time left with you folks and I really wanted to spend as much as I possibly can. I also want to congratulate Mr. Simmons and commiserate with Ms. Martinez.

Comm. Simmons: Thank you. You and I are both from the same city. Congratulate me on Wednesday after the certification.

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: Because we don't have a quorum, I do want us to tread lightly. The reality is we are in committee and that does entitle the Board to certain liberties that don't remain when we have a full quorum. At this point we need to make a decision. Perhaps we can inquire of the Superintendent if there are any urgent items that need to be addressed before the Board or the public. Otherwise, we don't have enough members to take action.

Comm. Hodges: This is not a public meeting where the public is asked to comment?

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: At this point, I think that is the problem. We are on a virtual platform, which is permissible, but it creates a bit of a quandary in that we are live. Although we are calling it committee, unless I'm incorrect and the public has been cut

off, we are live. This is technically a Board meeting. I think at this point at 6:40 we may need to make a decision about how we'd like to move forward.

Comm. Redmon: If we don't have any other questions on what we heard earlier with regards to the presentation that was presented to us, I'm going to ask that we direct our questions to the Superintendent with regards to the agenda. If we don't have any other questions regarding the agenda, the meeting will be ending unfortunately.

Comm. Simmons: Since we technically opened the meeting, how do you technically close it? What happens?

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: I would recommend, since this is a live meeting, that we close it through a vote. Again, this is the gray area we're operating in. If this was just a real committee meeting, we wouldn't have to do that. But we did open the meeting, so I recommend that we close this committee meeting through a vote.

Comm. Hodges: If we opened the public meeting, is it not considered to be a meeting where the public is allowed to speak? If we close it and there are people in the public here, they may consider that a denial of their opportunity to speak.

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: Boris, do we have any people who are registered for public comment?

Mr. Zaydel: Not on the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Comm. Hodges, seconded by Comm. Simmons, that the meeting be adjourned. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:42 p.m.



Mr. Richard Matthews
Business Administrator/Board Secretary