



LIVINGSTON BOARD OF EDUCATION WORKSHOP/VOTING MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Public Session - Hybrid Meeting at Administration Building – 7:00 p.m.

A **Workshop/Voting Meeting** of the Livingston Board of Education was held on this date in the large conference room in the Administration Building and via Zoom and Facebook Live. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by the Board President, Seth Cohen, who announced that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by amendment to notice approved at the Board's reorganization meeting on January 4, 2022 and posted at the Board of Education office and communicated to *The Star Ledger*, *West Essex Tribune*, *TAPinto Livingston* and the Livingston Township Clerk.

Members Present: Jenissa Arnette, Pamela Chirls, Seth Cohen, Vineeta Khanna (joined at 7:10 p.m.) and Samantha Messer

Members Absent: Ethan Hirsch

Also in Attendance: Dr. Matthew Block, Michael Davison, Lisa Capone-Steiger, Mark Stern, Susan Burman and Joann Goldberg

There were approximately three members of the public and staff in person and approximately 65 members of the public and staff watching remotely through the webinar and a Facebook livestream.

Mr. Cohen and Dr. Block both congratulated our hockey team for an incredible season. The team made it to the State finals at the Prudential Center in Newark.

Dr. Block also congratulated the Lancer Wrestling Team who advanced five members to the NJSIAA Individual State Tournament in Atlantic City this past weekend. Two of the team members took sixth place in the State of New Jersey in their respective weight classes.

Dr. Block announced that *Fiddler on the Roof* will be coming to the LHS theater in two weeks.

Superintendent's Report

1. Calendar Discussion 2023-2024

Dr. Block reviewed the calendar explaining how we were able to include the many holidays celebrated by our diverse community, keep a weeklong February break and still build in three snow days. Dr. Block continued that Eid has been added to the calendar as a professional development day for staff but a day off for students.

Ms. Messer suggested the administration find a creative way to handle the elementary conferences in April to minimize instructional disruption since that month has a week off for spring break, a

professional development day and two partial days for Passover. The rest of the board agreed with her suggestion.

Dr. Block responded that he will discuss this with the principals.

2. Introduction to the Budget/Budget Presentation

Dr. Block began the budget presentation by reviewing the investments we made in last year's budget, by connecting our budget with district priorities and by showing the link to board budget goals. Dr. Block continued with a review of curriculum, technology, staffing and the buildings and grounds initiatives that are included in the proposed budget.

Mr. Davison reviewed the financial slides, the main cost drivers in the draft budget and the ongoing ways we contain costs. Mr. Davison explained the budget is at the 2% cap utilizing an enrollment adjustment and banked cap. Mr. Davison continued that the tax levy inclusive of debt service at 2% equals \$121,143,204 and that the tax impact on a home assessed at \$700,000 would be approximately \$256. Mr. Davison added that the approval of the tentative budget enables us to submit the numbers to the county and that the board may make changes to the budget up until the public hearing on April 26.

Mrs. Khanna asked if the capital reserve funds that will be used for the turf field can be used to increase other areas of the budget and Mr. Davison responded that the funds can only be used for larger scale capital projects such as roofs, parking lots or construction; we cannot move the money to a general fund to use for staffing.

Mrs. Khanna asked about prioritizing some of our capital projects to possibly move some aside for next year's budget and Mr. Davison responded he has already moved some money into the next fiscal year but left in the health and safety related projects we felt need to be done in this budget.

Mrs. Khanna and Mrs. Chirls asked what staffing would look like in the humanities area since there are two positions included in the budget.

Mr. Stern responded we currently have art and music teachers partner with the other teacher by pushing into the classes that they can to supplement. The two additional teachers would allow them to be in the classes with more frequency to enhance the program.

Mrs. Khanna asked about the rising costs of special education tuition and Mrs. Steiger responded that even though we have less students going out, the tuition rates have increased because out of district schools can define their own tuition rates, they are not capped at 2%.

Due to the increasing use of technology in the district, Mrs. Khanna supports having tech coaches in each building.

Ms. Messer, Mr. Cohen and Mrs. Chirls had questions about how the class sections are working today, how these additional staff members would impact them and whether we can shift staff instead of adding more.

Ms. Messer asked if the need for math interventionists is a result of the pandemic and if so, could the ESSER funds be used to fill this gap since they wouldn't be a recurring cost.

Mrs. Steiger responded that the need doesn't have to do with Covid, it is something they have been assessing for a number of years and that the positions would stay in the budget going forward.

The board requested an up-to-date section report for the secondary schools as well as what a schedule might look like for the tech coaches and specialists at the elementary level so they could understand how the different staff members are being utilized. The board also requested data that shows them the impact provided by the interventionists referenced by Mrs. Steiger tonight.

Mrs. Khanna asked if we could put something aside in this budget in order to increase the number of college counselors.

Mrs. Chirls asked for the enrollment for Pre-K for next year.

Mrs. Chirls asked for an outline of the programming/staffing costs associated with our mental health and equity related initiatives. Mr. Cohen added the breakdown of expenses should include what is funded through ESSER and what is not.

Mrs. Khanna asked how much out-of-district tuition we are receiving from other districts.

There was a discussion about providing stipends for staff to provide mental health services after school hours and equity stipends to provide enhanced training and Mr. Cohen asked for more information on how a stipend based model would work.

Mr. Cohen expressed the following concerns: Since some efforts will be longer lasting than what the grant money will fund, how will those be absorbed into a future budget; how will achieving 2% using banked cap this year affect future budgets; and asked that we properly address staffing needs today so the board isn't in a position to have to make cuts in a few years.

Mrs. Chirls asked about the public budget forums and Mr. Davison responded that he and Dr. Block will be scheduling one via Zoom.

The board unanimously agreed to move the March 15 meeting to March 22 so that State aid numbers can be incorporated into the budget and so they have time to review the additional information they requested from the administration prior to voting on the tentative budget.

Board Reports

The board members all participated in Read Across America at various elementary schools and thanked the staff for putting it together and including them.

Public Input on Agenda Items ~ up to 15 minutes

Mike Ramer, 22 Mohawk Drive, expressed support for the initiatives included in the proposed budget but would also like to see more focus on college and guidance resources. Mr. Ramer asked what percentage of the budget or how much funding is directed towards guidance and college. Mr. Ramer also suggested the board find ways to get more of the community engaged in the meetings.

Cindy Goldstein, 24 Mayhew Drive, stated she is disappointed students are not off for Passover in the proposed calendar for 2023-2024 and suggested having a shorter break in February to allow for those days to be off.

Sophia Calderon, 130 West Hobart Gap Road, stated she is against the turf field project because it isn't good for the environment.

Laurie Lee, 47 Crossbrook Road, asked if there is a summary of what kind of college counseling services our district provides or an analysis between what our district and other public schools offer.

Tugce Yalt, 8 Fieldstone Drive, asked if she can see the NJSLA assessments by grade, thanked the board for acknowledging Eid on the 2023-2024 calendar and asked about what happens to students who test positive now that we are mask optional.

Jennifer Kessler, 44 Baker Road, suggested having two long weekends as short spring breaks in lieu of one full week off so that students and staff could have off on both Passover and Easter.

Dr. Block responded that we will be putting together a document to highlight our expenditures on mental health and will discuss the information in public.

Dr. Block thanked Miss Calderon for coming out to speak and appreciates her continued advocacy of her position on the issue. The administration will do their due diligence before the board approves going forward with the project.

Dr. Block continued that he has seen a significant impact in the eight months since we added a college counselor during our last budget cycle but that we continue to evaluate how we help students navigate the college process.

Dr. Block continued the quarantine requirements for mask optional is outlined in the NJ Guidelines for Schools. There is a link to the guidelines on our website as well as at the bottom of the script from his Friday message for anyone who wants this information.

With respect to the calendar comments, Dr. Block responded he will take another look and get back to the board.

VOTING ITEMS

BUSINESS

Ms. Messer moved the following:

3.1 Conferences and Overnight Trips

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the conferences and overnight trips as shown on **Attachment AA**.

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves *Daniel Brill*, to chaperone the qualifying members of the Varsity Wrestling Team participating in the NJSIAA Individual State Championship in Atlantic City, NJ from March 2 to 5, 2022 at no cost to the district.

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves *Tom Garzon, Hal Mordkoff, Sean Cruz and Michelle Hajjar*, to chaperone approximately 33 students participating in the FBLA State Competition in Atlantic City, NJ, from March 10 to 11, 2022 at no cost to the district.

Mrs. Chirls seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Ms. Arnette, Mrs. Chirls, Mr. Cohen, Mrs. Khanna, Ms. Messer
Nayes - None

PERSONNEL

Ms. Messer moved the following:

4.1 Resignations

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education accepts the resignations of:

Name	Position	Reason	Location	Last Day of Employment
<i>Heather Amling</i>	PRIDE Teacher	Resignation	BHE	February 4, 2022
<i>Corinne D'Anna*</i>	School Psychologist	Resignation	HMS	February 18, 2022
<i>Valerie Pronko</i>	Teacher of Business Ed	Resignation	LHS	February 28, 2022
<i>Gabrielle Titone</i>	Instructional Aide/TOSD	Resignation	Hillside	March 9, 2022
<i>Victoria Risorto*</i>	Teacher of Business Ed	Resignation	HMS	March 14, 2022
<i>Kathleen Guzman</i>	School Counselor	Resignation	LHS	April 14, 2022
<i>Alexandra Tighe</i>	TOSD	Resignation	BHE	April 29, 2022
<i>Darelene Romberger</i>	Payroll Manager	Resignation	CO	April 29, 2022

**as amended from a previous agenda*

4.2 Appointments

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the applications indicated below (*) for emergent hiring for the following appointments under the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:16-1 et. seq., N.J.S.A. 18A:39.17 et. seq.; N.J.S.A. 18A:6-4.13 et. seq. All appointments are contingent upon reference checks in accordance with P.L. 2018, c.5.

Name	Location	Title	Tenure Track/LOA or LT Replacement	Replacing	Guide	Step	Salary	Effective Date
<i>Sandra Bigotto</i>	Collins	Playground Aide	NA	NA	NA	NA	\$15.50/hr	2/28/2022
<i>Cindy Cooney*</i>	HMS	Teacher of Business Ed	First Year Tenure Track	V. Risorto	MA+32	13**	\$97,308 (prorated)	3/14/2022
<i>Amanda Dempsey</i>	BHE	Preschool Teacher	Leave Replacement	M. Jenkins-Kayzerman	BA	1-2	\$54,550 (prorated)	3/21/2022
<i>Lauren Wells</i>	LHS	Teacher of Social Studies	First Year Tenure Track	S. Engel	MA+16	11**	\$84,024 (prorated)	4/28/2022
<i>Samantha Halloran</i>	HMS	LDT-C	First Year Tenure Track	J. Route	MA+16	9	\$76,040, plus up to	8/30/2022

							10 days over the summer of 2022	
Max Diaz	LHS	Teacher of Biology & Chemistry	First Year Tenure Track	A. Kuziola	MA+32	1	\$68,500	8/30/2022

**as amended from a previous agenda
**will remain on same step in 2022-2023*

Mrs. Chirls seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Ms. Arnette, Mrs. Chirls, Mr. Cohen, Mrs. Khanna, Ms. Messer
Nays - None

MISCELLANEOUS

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

5.1 HIB Report

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education accepts the findings of HIB cases.

Ms. Messer seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Ms. Arnette, Mrs. Chirls, Mr. Cohen, Mrs. Khanna, Ms. Messer
Nays - None

PREVIEW OF MARCH 15, 2022 VOTING MEETING AGENDA

The board reviewed the items on the agenda for the next meeting.

Superintendent's Report

1. Demographic Study Presentation - Dr. Richard Grip, Statistical Forecasting

Approval of Minutes

1. Workshop/Voting Meeting Minutes of February 1, 2022
2. Voting Meeting Minutes of February 8, 2022
3. Public Portion of Executive Session Meeting Minutes of February 28, 2022
4. Executive Session Meeting Minutes of December 7, 2021; January 18, 2022; January 26, 2022; February 8, 2022 and February 28, 2022

PROGRAM/CURRICULUM

- 1.1 **Books and DVDs**
- 1.2 **Student Teachers**
- 1.3 **Field Trips**

STUDENT SERVICES

- 2.1 **Out of District Placements**
- 2.2 **Related Services/Medical Consultants**

BUSINESS

- 3.1 **Adoption of the Tentative Budget for School Year 2022-2023**
- 3.2 **Adjustment for Enrollment**
- 3.3 **Adjustment for Banked Cap**
- 3.4 **Capital Reserve Account Withdrawal**
- 3.5 **Maximum Travel**

- 3.6 Travel and Related Expense Reimbursement**
- 3.7 Payment of Bills**
- 3.8 Board Secretary Report – January 2022**
- 3.9 Transfers**
- 3.10 Union County Educational Services Commission**
- 3.11 Joint Transportation Agreement with Educational Services Commission of Morris County**
- 3.12 Acceptance of School Security Grant**
- 3.13 Certification of SDA Grant**
- 3.14 New Jersey Schools Insurance Group North Jersey Educational Insurance Fund Indemnity and Trust Agreement – Resolution to Join/Renew Membership**
- 3.15 Approval of Academic Calendar**
- 3.16 Business Travel - Site Visit**
- 3.17 Approval of TV Studio Cameras – Livingston High School**
- 3.18 Approval of Tent Rentals**
- PERSONNEL**
- 4.1 Resignations**
- 4.2 Leaves of Absences**
- 4.3 Substitutes**
- 4.4 Extra Work Pay**
- 4.5 Extra Period Assignments**
- 4.6 Stipends**
- 4.7 Mentor Fees**
- 4.8 Technical Certification Guide**
- MISCELLANEOUS**
- 5.1 HIB Report**
- 5.2 Suspension Report**

Public Comment ~ up to 15 minutes

There was no public comment.

Old Business

Mrs. Chirls attended the Planning Board meeting regarding the turf field and asked for the following items brought up at the meeting to be addressed: preventing water pellets from getting in the pond, storm water calculations to avoid drainage issues, locking the field with a fence, sharing the field with the Township when not in use and the height or placement of lights so that it is kept away from residential areas.

Mr. Davison responded that we can have the architect/engineer come to a future board meeting to address most of these items. Mr. Davison continued with regard to the fence, that the gate will have the capability of being locked but since we are in the preliminary stages of the project, we have time to decide if and when it will be locked. With regard to the sharing of the field, the school usage will take priority and then we can coordinate sharing other times with the Township.

Mr. Davison continued that approving the withdrawal from capital reserve in the budget doesn't bind the board to doing the project. If the board changed their mind, the money would be returned back to capital reserve. The board isn't committed to the project until it approves a bid for the work.

Mr. Cohen suggested we have an environmental study performed to address Miss Calderon's questions.

March 8, 2022

Mr. Cohen suggested the board revisit policy #0167.1 to amend or remove the mask mandate at board meetings so we are consistent with the schools.

The board discussed and decided to remove the vaccination and testing requirement from the policy at the next board meeting. In order to keep consistent with the visitors policy, the board will readdress whether or not to go to a mask optional policy for the board meetings in a few weeks.

New Business

Policy Committee

The board discussed and were all in favor of adding a Policy Committee. Mrs. Chirls and Mr. Cohen will sit on the committee. A revised copy of the Board Committees policy reflecting this addition will be added to the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10:05 p.m., Mrs. Chirls made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mrs. Khanna seconded the motion.

Vote all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael Davison
Board Secretary

March 8, 2022