

**MINUTES OF THE PATERSON BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING**

December 17, 2025 – 6:04 p.m.
Remote Meeting (via Zoom)

Presiding: Comm. Eddie Gonzalez, President

Present:

Dr. Laurie W. Newell, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Rodney Henderson, Deputy Superintendent
Albert Buglione, Esq., General Counsel
Boris Zaydel, Esq., Board Counsel

Comm. Valerie Freeman
Comm. Della McCall
Comm. Hector Nieves
Comm. Joel Ramirez, Vice President

Comm. Mohammed Rashid
Comm. Kenneth Rosado
Comm. Kenneth Simmons
Comm. Corey Teague

The Salute to the Flag was led by Comm. Gonzalez.

Comm. Gonzalez 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:

**Special Meeting
December 17, 2025 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 TAPinto, the Arab Voice, El Diario, the Italian Voice, the North Jersey Herald & News, and The Record.

Comm. Gonzalez: We have a few items on here and we will have them explained if anyone has any questions. I just want to make sure that everyone did receive the email from Madam Secretary in reference to the amendment that was made on last week's resolution for the Hinchliffe Stadium fee structure. Legal folks added the verbiage that was requested, the amendment for recreation to be included as a separate tier for prek-12. Just make sure you have that. That doesn't require a vote. We already voted on it, but I did want everyone to have the updated verbiage on that. There are two items on here. The first one is to enter into an agreement for the parking for School No. 5 for 65 parking spots at the fireman's hall located on Walnut at \$3,500 per month, not to exceed

\$35,000 annually. This is a significant reduction from the previous agreement that we had. The second item is an add-on, but it's important. I don't know if everyone is updated. I would like to have someone on our team discuss it before we vote on this.

Mr. Buglione: Boris is probably in a better position right now to explain.

Mr. Zaydel: We're proposing to enter into a contract with an outside law firm based in DC. They are former USDOE employees who are uniquely positioned to deal with the regulatory bureaucracy that we're dealing with right now as we try to get the USDOE to reverse its decision to discontinue our Full Service Community School grants totaling \$2.8 million between two grants. This firm would serve to review a response that was drafted internally and is due on Friday. That is why it is being included on today's agenda, just because there is that time sensitive urgency. Are there any questions?

Comm. Freeman: Not on this item.

Comm. Gonzalez: Do you have a question on the other item?

Comm. Freeman: Yes, I do. On the parking situation, what was the cost of the parking garage by Hinchliffe Stadium? What was the amount that they were asking for?

Comm. Gonzalez: The original cost was double this for the same amount of parking.

Comm. Freeman: Who owns that parking garage?

Comm. Gonzalez: I think it's the Hinchliffe Redevelopment LLC or RPM.

Comm. Freeman: Is that Baye?

Comm. Gonzalez: Yes, it's that group. I know it's RPM, but I don't know if Baye is part of that as well. It might be the same group, but I'm not sure.

Comm. Nieves: I believe the amount was close to \$90,000. It was \$87,000 and change.

Comm. Gonzalez: It was a lot more. We know these guys. These are the firemen on Walnut Street.

Comm. Freeman: I know. I just wanted to get clarification on who owns and operates it and who would benefit from that. That price is ridiculous.

Comm. Gonzalez: To your point, for those who know the firemen, this is a non-profit that they have and they always contribute back to the community through many different initiatives. In October they do cancer awareness events and things throughout the whole year. They're always doing things for the community and supporting our kids so that would hopefully help fund a lot of their activities as well so they can expand on what they do. This is money that we have to spend, but it's going back into the community as well, so I think it's a double benefit. In addition to that, although it says 65 here, which is what we were asking for, I think they can fit more vehicles and they're not charging us per vehicle. If we can fit 70 vehicles, we can put 70 vehicles in there. They're not nickel-and-diming us for the number of vehicles. The other big difference I would add is that the other contract had us leaving by a certain time. They're much more flexible. They're not asking us to leave by that same timeframe. The other contract allowed 10 vehicles to stay until 6:00 p.m. after school, for example. Here every single vehicle can

stay until that time. They're not nickel-and-diming us on that part so I think this is a much better deal for what we're getting. Are there any other questions?

Comm. Freeman: I don't have any more. I'm just totally against anybody associated with Hinchliffe Stadium receiving any more money from the district when we haven't received anything from them yet. It's always going to be a no for me until they show me different.

Comm. Gonzalez: Just to be clear and to tie in what we passed last week, the fee structure language was amended to include recreation prek-12. You can take a look at that. We don't need to vote on it because we already discussed it and said we would add that, but the next piece is to make sure that we submit the calendar so that we have the 180 days. This is just saying that we're going to put in a request for 180 days and we will benefit from it, but I think the next step is to look at the calendar. I would suggest from June and then 180 consecutive days after that because that's the best season. That's the time that most people would want to use the stadium, as opposed to November through January. It's cold. I don't know what sports are playing at that timeframe and if we had it, we wouldn't really lease it out to anybody anyway. I don't know how many people would benefit from that season. That's the next step and I think with that amendment and with the resolution being passed last week it's really going to benefit us as a school district. Look what's happening. We didn't even know a week ago that they were going to pull federal dollars for our community schools. As you all know, our community schools get a lot of additional support and services for our youth, after-school programs and mentorships. Everything that the schools offer is what keeps kids inside the buildings and not outside on the streets. Unfortunately, we had to pivot to add this resolution to see if we could hopefully make an impact in keeping some of this funding. It's a hill that we have to climb, but I think it's we'll worth it. I do appreciate everybody being on the same page on that. If there's nothing else to add or discuss on these two items, we can put it up for a vote.

RESOLUTIONS FOR A VOTE:

Resolution No. 1

WHEREAS, the partnership with the Association Exempt Firemen of Paterson NJ A Corp, will permit School 5 staff members to park their vehicles in their parking lot for the 2025-2026 & 2026-2027 school years.

WHEREAS, the District has determined to acquire such services through a non-fair and open contract in accordance with N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.4 and 20.5, and by resolution of the board of education at a public meeting, without public advertising for bids, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5(a)(2).

WHEREAS, any contract, the amount of which exceeds the bid threshold, shall be negotiated and awarded by the board of education by resolution at a public meeting without public advertising for bids and bidding therefore if the subject matter thereof consists of extraordinary unspecifiable services which written specifications cannot reasonably describe.

BE IT RESOLVED, the Paterson Public School District will partner with the Association Exempt Firemen of Paterson NJ A Corp to provide staff parking for sixty-five (65) staff members. The current cost is \$3,500 per month, not to exceed \$35,000.00 annually for the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 school years.

Resolution No. 2

WHEREAS, the Paterson Public School District (the "District") has a need for specialized legal services in connection with efforts to seek reconsideration of the U.S. Department of Education's non-continuation of certain Full Service Community Schools ("FSCS") grant awards; and

WHEREAS, legal services are exempt from advertising and bidding requirements under the "professional services" exception to the Public School Contracts Law in N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5a(1); and

WHEREAS, the District wishes to retain Sligo Law Group PLLC, a law firm with specialized expertise in federal education and grants law, to provide limited-scope legal assistance related solely to the preparation and review of a reconsideration request in connection with the FSCS grants; and

WHEREAS, retaining Sligo Law Group PLLC for this limited purpose and duration is in the best interests of the District;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the District approves entering into a contract with Sligo Law Group PLLS in connection with a reconsideration request related to the Full Service Community Schools grants, at a reduced hourly rate of \$200.00 per hour for all attorneys, for a total cost not to exceed \$10,000 during the 2025-2026 school year.

It was moved by Comm. Rosado, seconded by Comm. Nieves that Resolution Nos. 1 and 2 be adopted. On roll call all members voted as follows:

Comm. Freeman: Yes.

Comm. McCall: I'm abstaining from Resolution No. 1 and my vote is yes on Resolution No. 2.

Comm. Nieves: Yes.

Comm. Ramirez: Yes.

Comm. Rashid: Yes.

Comm. Rosado: Yes.

Comm. Simmons: I'm going to double down on what I said last week. We are in lame duck. Resolution No. 1 is a new contract and as such we should not be voting on this. Conversely, Resolution No. 2 affects district operations. Although we are in lame duck, we can vote on it and the item is time-sensitive. I'm going to abstain from Resolution No. 1 and say yes to Resolution No. 2.

Comm. Teague: Yes.

Comm. Gonzalez: Yes on Resolution No. 1 and I'm abstaining from Resolution No. 2.

The motion carried.

Paterson Board of Education Standing Abstentions

Commissioner Valerie Freeman

- Self
- Family
- Paterson Cares, Inc.
- Paterson Community Health Center

Commissioner Eddie Gonzalez

- Self
- Family
- New Jersey Community Development Corporation (NJCDC)
- Community Charter School of Paterson

Commissioner Della McCall

- Self
- City of Paterson
- Educational Staffing Solutions (ESS) -Substitute Teachers

Commissioner Hector L. Nieves, Jr.

- Self
- City of Paterson

Commissioner Joel D. Ramirez

- Self
- City of Paterson
- Passaic County Community College
- State of New Jersey

Commissioner Mohammed H. Rashid

- Self
- City of Paterson

Commissioner Kenneth Rosado

- Self
- City Housing Authority
- City of Paterson
- Paterson Restoration Corp.

Commissioner Kenneth L. Simmons

- Self
- Family

Commissioner Corey L. Teague

- Self
- Paterson Police Department
- Paterson Policing

PUBLIC COMMENTS

It was moved by Comm. Teague, seconded by Comm. Rashid that the Public Comments portion of the meeting be opened. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

No speakers.

It was moved by Comm. Teague, seconded by Comm. McCall that the Public Comments portion of the meeting be closed. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS

Comm. Teague: I want to bring this to the attention of the Board because it does affect us. Before I say it, I do have email communications and documented evidence. ESS is locking out their staff and blaming the district and saying that the district is doing it when the district is not the one who is locking them out. We are being blamed for locking out personal assistants that work with students with disabilities and they are telling their staff that the school district is the one that is blocking them from the schools. That is a lie. We do not do that. I confirmed it through the administration. I've had email communications. Something has to be done so that they can stop lying on the district and saying that we're doing this to their staff when that's not the truth. I've been in communication with folks who have reached out to me. It's becoming a real issue, and I think we really need to address it.

Comm. Gonzalez: I appreciate it. I'll pass this on to Dr. Newell. Dr. Newell, can you respond to that?

Dr. Newell: When Cheryl and I got the email, it was forwarded to HR. We will look into it further, but Comm. Teague is correct. We have not been locking anyone out. I can send a formal response, but he is correct. Our head of personnel is aware.

Comm. Gonzalez: Is there any notification going out to these parents from the school district stating that it is open so we can correct this coming from the administration directly? Do you have access to those individuals? Do you have the list of those individuals that need that extra assistance?

Dr. Newell: I'll speak with Mr. Rojas.

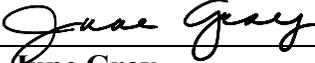
Comm. Freeman: That is a problem occurring in the district with personal aides. They're using ESS subs as personal aides and when there is no sub for the student, the student is either at the security desk or in the principal's office. If the student's IEP requires a personal aide, we have to make sure that we have one for that student. They're missing out on their education because they're having behaviors because they're used to one said personal aide, which was a sub, and now that the student is back in school, he can no longer have the other student because the other student was sick and out of school. They placed the personal aide with another student who becomes familiar with them and when he's not there his behavior is out of control. No one can control him so he's either at the security desk or in the office and he's losing instruction. We can't afford for that to continue for our students, especially it being in his IEP and required. We have to make sure that we have the staff to help these students. We just can't afford any more problems with special education. I don't understand it. I don't know what's going on, but we need to fix it and we need to fix it quickly. I, too, have gotten calls and text messages. All I can do is reach out, let Cheryl know what's going on and wait for a resolution of what's going to happen. The parents are getting very frustrated and we really don't need any more frustrations from parents. Not right now.

Comm. Gonzalez: Thank you. Are there any other comments or business? Have a blessed Christmas and New Year and I'll see everyone soon.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.



Ms. June Gray
Business Administrator