

**MENDHAM TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BROOKSIDE, NEW JERSEY
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GYMNASIUM
(MEETING IS BEING HELD VIRTUALLY,
NO IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE WILL BE ALLOWED)
REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2020, 7:30 PM**

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 pm.

II. Flag Salute - Mrs. Holquist led the flag salute.

III. Roll Call of the Board of Education

Mrs. Gretchen Holquist	President	Present
Mr. Aadithya Thayyar	Vice President	Present
Mr. Andrew Christmann		Present
Mr. Peter Dumovic		Present
Mrs. Heather Fraser		Present
Mr. Richard Gondek		Present
Mrs. Joan Mody		Present

Also present: Dr. Salvatore Constantino, Superintendent
Mrs. Donna Mosner, School Business Administrator
General Public – 6 approximately

IV. Sunshine Law

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this act, Mendham Township Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time, and place thereof posted in the Mendham Township Board of Education Office, sent to the Clerk of Mendham Township, and the Observer Tribune and the Daily Record. This is an official meeting.

V. Superintendent's Report

- District Updates, News, and Events
- Suspension, Truancy, and Emergency/Fire Drill Report (Attachments)
- Governor's Educator of the Year: Ms. Diane Emr and Mr. Charles Gallo
- Other -
 - Snow Day Clarification – use of days during virtual learning
 - ES: "Live" Video Holiday Sing-Along - Wednesday, December 22 @ 6:00 pm
 - Proclamations for Sterry Colvin, Rich Gondek, and Heather Fraser

PROCLAMATION (1)

WHEREAS, Sterry Colvin has been employed from July 16, 2003, through December 31, 2020, as a Custodian; and

WHEREAS, Sterry Colvin exemplified expertise, commitment, and professionalism in his duties; and

WHEREAS, Sterry Colvin had provided the Mendham Township Board of Education of his intention to retire from employment effective December 31, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Mendham Township Board of Education will present Sterry Colvin with a copy of this resolution signed by the President of the Board and the Superintendent of Schools;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Mendham Township Board of Education recognizes Sterry Colvin's retirement effective December 31, 2020, and extends to him congratulations and best wishes for a happy, healthy, and enjoyable retirement.

PROCLAMATION (2)

WHEREAS, Rich Gondek served honorably as a member of the Mendham Township Board of Education from January 2018 through December 2020; and,

WHEREAS, during his term as a member of the Mendham Township Board of Education, Rich Gondek advanced policies consistent with his personal commitment to the best education program possible for the students of Mendham Township; and,

WHEREAS, Rich Gondek was a valued member of many committees and in particular, provided leadership to the Policy Committee of the Mendham Township Board of Education; and,

WHEREAS, Rich Gondek lent his experience and time to engaging and informing the public in regard to the Board's financial program and plans; and,

WHEREAS, Rich Gondek worked tirelessly to partner with other Board members and Administration on the effective management of the Mendham Township School District;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, THAT the Mendham Township Board of Education at its meeting on the 15th of December, 2020 does hereby commend and thank Rich Gondek for his years of service to the Board of Education.

PROCLAMATION (3)

WHEREAS, Heather Fraser served honorably as a member of the Mendham Township Board of Education from January 2018 through December 2020; and,

WHEREAS, during her term as a member of the Mendham Township Board of Education, Heather Fraser advanced policies consistent with her personal commitment to the best education program possible for the students of Mendham Township; and,

WHEREAS, Heather Fraser was a valued member of many committees and in particular, provided leadership to the Personnel Committee of the Mendham Township Board of Education; and,

WHEREAS, Heather Fraser lent her experience and wisdom to preparing and planning for the Board's financial program and plans; and,

WHEREAS, Heather Fraser worked tirelessly to partner with other Board members and Administration on the effective management of the Mendham Township School District;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, THAT the Mendham Township Board of Education at its meeting on the 15th of December, 2020 does hereby commend and thank Heather Fraser for her years of service to the Board of Education.

Dr. Constantino spoke about all three individuals leaving the district

Mr. S. Colvin was in the district for 17 years and he has always been a loyal and dedicated employee. I spoke with him today and he is happy to be moving on to the next chapter of his life but will miss everyone. He is a wonderful person and will be greatly missed.

Mr. Gondek and Mrs. Fraser have both offered wisdom, guidance, and support over the last several years. I truly appreciate this from each of them and they will be missed.

Mrs. Holquist also thanked Mr. Colvin for his dedicated years of service. She also thanked both Mr. Gondek and Mrs. Fraser for their support and help towards making the continued success.

Mr. Thayyar – Thank you to Mr. Colvin for your loyalty over the last 17 years. Thank you to Mrs. Fraser and Mr. Gondek for your service and commitment to the district.

Mr. Christmann – Thank you to both board members, wonderful that you were able to be part of the board, good to know that you may be able to come back one day. Nice to see that Mr. Colvin had such an impact on the district over his 17 years of service.

Mrs. Mody – thank you both, personally, you were both a great source of guidance particularly for me, your insight was appreciated.

- Brian Jendryka - Presentation of new resident survey data

Mr. Thayyar – Thank you Mr. Jendryka for taking the time to do this and coming to the meeting to provide us with the results.

Mr. Dumovic – excellent survey, appreciate it. Where do we go from here? Relates to marketing, what other information do you want to see specifically from us with a broader marketing initiative?

Mr. Jendryka – update district and town website with an information sheet about the town and the schools.

Mr. Christmann – I find it very interesting that the reason people move to Mendham Township other than attributes of a house would involve government. In partnership with the town, we could amplify the attraction of the township in correlation with the school district.

Mrs. Mody – Dr. Constantino could you please post the survey and the results on the district website and send it out to the school community.

Dr. Constantino – that would be great and it is important for people to know.

VI. Board Secretary’s Report

➤ Operations & Finance:

- June 30, 2020 Audit is being finalized and I should have the report to the BOE for the regular meeting in January.
- 2016-2017 Federal Title I Audit – determination meeting was postponed until January due to COVID, so I should also have an update on that for the BOE at our next meeting.
- Mid-year Review: January 11, 2021 (virtual)

Have a happy and healthy holiday!

VII. Board President’s Report –

1. Ad Hoc - Bond/Referendum Committee – Mrs. Holquist delivered the report. She discussed the strategic approach to continue with a financially stable outlook while delivering an excellent education. Looking to have a referendum in December 2021 – corresponds with the current bonds expiring. The committee is evaluating the criteria and needs of the district, has met with an architectural firm, and will meet every two weeks during the process.

VIII. Correspondence – None.

IX. Committee Reports – a brief summary was shared by the chair of each committee about agenda items

- Curriculum and Instruction – Mrs. Mody delivered the report
- Operations and Finance – Mr. Thayyar delivered the report
- Personnel and Human Resources – Mrs. Fraser delivered the report
- Policy – Mr. Gondek delivered the report

IX. CONSENT ITEMS

Approval of Minutes

Work Session Minutes: November 17, 2020

Regular Session Minutes: November 24, 2020

Approval of Executive Minutes

Executive Session Minutes: None.

Curriculum and Instruction

1. Extra Instructional Periods

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves Darlene Sardinsky, LDTC, to provide additional instructional periods for the special education programs during remote learning, commencing 12/14/20 through 12/23/20. Additional periods not to exceed five periods per day, prorated on a stipend based on \$8,500/year.

Operations and Finance

1. **Certification Reports**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education certify pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:19-4, does certify that no line item account has encumbrances and expenditures which in total exceed the line item appropriation, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:17-9 and N.J.S.A. 18A:17-36, after review of the Board Secretary’s and Treasurer’s monthly financial reports for the month of December 2020 that no major accounts and fund balances in the 2020/2021 budget have been over expended and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district’s financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year.

2. **Board Secretary’s Report** (Attachment)

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the November 2020 Board Secretary’s Reports.

3. **Treasurer’s Report** (Attachment)

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the November 2020 Treasurer’s Reports.

4. **December 2020 Transfer Reports**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the December 2020 transfer report.

5. **December 2020 Bills List**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the final December 2020 Bills List. This includes payroll checks N0235 through N0237 and N0241 through N0243.

Fund 10	\$46,591.39
Fund 11	\$1,498,269.97
Fund 20	\$10,517.07
Fund 40	\$351,375.00
Fund 60	\$9075.28
Total:	<u>\$1,915,828.71</u>

6. **School Bus Emergency Evacuation Drill Report** (Attachment)

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education accepts the School Bus Emergency Evacuation Drill Report from the Hilltop Elementary School detailing the October 29, 2020 drill at 1:00 p.m.

Personnel and Human Resources

1. **Rescind: Leave of Absence**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education rescinds the emergency sick leave for the following employees:

Jeanne Brown
Donna CasaGrande
Nancy Hammer
Theresa McNamara

Darlyne Pieper
Ann Quidore
Stephanie Sawicki

2. **New Hire: Transportation Driver, Emily Perez** (*Attachments*)

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the appointment of Emily Perez, Full-Time Transportation Driver, at an hourly rate of \$30.00, effective 01/04/21 for the 2020 - 2021 school year.

3. **Full Time Custodian: Norma Arevalo Mogrovego**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board approves the appointment of Norma Arevalo Mogrovego, Full-Time Custodian, at an annual salary of \$32,000 prorated, effective 01/01/21 for the 2020 - 2021 school year.

4. **Part-Time Instructional Aide: Daragh Gallagher-Carpenter**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the appointment of Daragh Gallagher-Carpenter, Part-Time Instructional Aide, effective 12/02/20, at an hourly rate of \$18.35 for the 2020 - 2021 school year.

Mr. Dumovic moved to table the Approval of the Regular and Executive Minutes, seconded by Mr. Thayyar and the motion was CARRIED in a roll call vote: Mrs. Fraser; yes, Mr. Gondek; yes, Mrs. Mody; yes, Mr. Thayyar; yes, Mr. Christmann; yes, Mr. Dumovic; yes, and Mrs. Holquist; yes – motion carries.

Mrs. Fraser moved to approve the Committee Reports and the Consent Items for December 15, 2020; Curriculum & Instruction items 1, Operations & Finance items 1 – 6, Personnel & Human Resources items 1 – 4, seconded by Mrs. Gondek, and the motion was CARRIED in a roll call vote: Mr. Christmann; yes, Mr. Dumovic; yes, Mrs. Fraser; yes, Mr. Gondek; yes, Mrs. Mody; yes, Mr. Thayyar; yes, and Mrs. Holquist, yes – motions carry.

XI. Discussion

Mr. Dumovic – what are the dates for 2021?

Mrs. Holquist – they will be approved at the reorganizational meeting in January 2021.

Mr. Dumovic – has anyone responded to Mr. Keeling's correspondence from 11/24/20?

Mrs. Holquist – I have not.

Dr. Constantino – I have not either, Dr. Ciccone should craft a response, the policy committee can follow up.

XII. Verbal Communications from the Public

Geno Garofalo - 9:03 PM - Just want to wish you all a Happy Holiday Season! See you next year!

Bob Wowk - 9:03 PM - a couple of quick comments survey well done, few people saw a difference between the boro and township, the importance of why people leave the township. On referendum want to highlight that interest are low and a good point to do this but they will not change too soon. The idea that debt is rolling off is an okay idea just hesitate to how it is communicated to the public. Debt rolling off is not a reason, needs to be very transparent with the public. Thank you, wish you a good holiday, look forward to joining you next year.

Eric Mauriello - 9:03 PM - Yes I would like to talk – want to talk about remote learning. I want to understand why the decisions were made, remote learning is not as good of an experience as in person. This period of remote learning is a disappointment. Post thanksgiving segment, the board of health made the decision, leave it at that.

Pre-holiday segment and post-holiday segment. What was the rationale – Mr. Dumovic please respond.

Mr. Dumovic - I like answering direct questions, especially from you since I respect you but I defer to either Dr. Constantino or Mrs. Holquist to speak on behalf of the Board of Education.

Mrs. Holquist – there were several different discussions around covid – no one was excited to have the additional time at the MTMS due to the cases. In October, I asked the committee to evaluate Christmas as a soft opening after the holidays to help students to return safely. Accommodates parents to be aware and help to enforce a bit of a quarantine. The significant number of leave requests prior to the holiday put a risk on the district with limited subs to not be able to staff the buildings. Staff also requested to teach from home to quarantine safely to be able to see family during the holidays. Wanted to give parents as much notice as possible. Providing as much lead time and notice was the goal.

Dr. Constantino – Mrs. Holquist's summary captured it all.

Eric Mauriello - So it revolves around teacher requests and wants?

Mrs. Holquist – leave requests

Dr. Constantino – 8 cases for leave to be exact

Eric Mauriello – look at it that teachers are placing their will on their needs to see family, don't think this is eligible according to the state guidelines?

Dr. Constantino – it was reviewed by the district attorney.

Mr. Chistmann – the focus of the conversation was on the safety and well-being of staff and students.

Mr. Mody – teachers are in fact working now, delivering education to our students at this time.

Eric Mauriello – remote learning is a one in comparison to in-school learning which is a 10 and the hybrid was a 6. Since the minutes were tabled it is disappointing to not see the specifics. I am not a big proponent to close the schools. I think we have done very well, less than 10 cases in 4 months. Our cases are not up so we should benefit from that and not punish the students.

Mrs. Holquist – appreciate your feedback thank you for coming.

Eric Mauriello – maybe the district should do a survey on how the parents feel about the 50/50 model – more parents looking for in-person learning. Massive majority looking for live in-person teaching in the HS, interested to see if we will do the same survey

Dr. Constantino – great point – initially, overwhelming feedback to get students back in person over the summer – this is where the roomer or zoomer model grew out of. The issue is space and rooms, along with faculty to provide it correctly. Without the removal of a social distancing requirement, we would not have the capacity or staffing at the MS to come back more. Not sure where to go, unless we lower our distancing requirements.

Eric Mauriello – so we are going to continue to do this model for the remainder of the school year.

Dr. Constantino – some districts to a 3-foot model instead of a 6-foot model, if things progress in a positive way it is something the BOE will need to consider.

Eric Mauriello – conversations with both MS and HS – we are doing extremely well compared to other towns. Many are looking at private schools that are having the same experience as pre-covid.

Mrs. Holquist – always open to success stories, if something to learn it is maybe worth looking at to review our model. Hard to predict what it will look like a month from now. We want students back in the building safety based upon being compliant.

Dr. Constantino – we were aggressive in the beginning from a health and safety standpoint but by providing an excellent education while doing it. If we are smart and careful about moving forward we can hopefully consider ways to do it in person as much as possible.

Eric Mauriello – I would not be surprised that parents would not contribute to getting testing for our students. May provide teacher confidence to help them to be willing and more comfortable to be in school.

Dr. Constantino – expense may not necessarily be the only issue. Success stories may help us move in this direction in the near future.

CLOSED - Dr. Constantino - Thank you! PUBLIC COMMENT IS NOW CLOSED FOR THE MEETING – December 15, 2020

XIII. Adjournment

Moved by Mrs. Fraser second by Mr. Gondek to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Donna Mosner
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary