

**MENDHAM TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BROOKSIDE, NEW JERSEY
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STAFF DEVELOPMENT ROOM
(MEETING IS BEING HELD VIRTUALLY,
NO IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE WILL BE ALLOWED)
WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 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, Business Administrator/Board Secretary
General Public – 68 approximately

IV. Sunshine Law – Mrs. Holquist read the following statement -

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, the 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

- Middle School Choir Repertoire 2020 - 2021
- Middle School Orchestra Program Selections for December 10, 2020
- Middle School Cheerleading (masks 100%/virtual performances/after school activity)
- Middle School Basketball (highly doubtful/no teams to play)
- Guidance Counselors at November 24
- Town Survey Results - Brian Jendryka (December)
- Election Results/Status

VI. Board Secretary’s Report

Board Office Updates and Events:

➤ **Benefit**

Open Enrollment (10/15/2020 through 11/13/2020)

Responses to the open enrollment period have come in from everyone, all 146 employees have responded;

- 73 employees have elected to keep the current health benefit plan
- 39 employees would like to continue to waive health benefits
- 27 employees have opted to move into the New Jersey Educators Health Plan (NJEHP)
- 7 new hires will be moved into that plan automatically effective January 1, 2020, based upon the new Chapter 44 regulations

New Jersey Horizon Blue Cross & Blue Shield will be renewed as of January 1, 2020, with a 7% increase for 12 months.

The New Jersey Educators Health Plan rates as of January 1, 2020, represent an 8% decrease to those figures, however, anyone that moves into that plan will pay contributions based upon a percentage of their salary and not the premium as in the past, which means the district is looking at an additional expense of \$72,231 to be added to the renewal of 7% based upon these changes

Therefore, the health benefits increase will be 7% plus the additional expenses due to the change in Chapter 44 employee contributions. Options to be discussed further with the Operations & Finance committee

➤ **Solar**

I reached out to a contact at New Jersey's Clean Energy Program (NJCEP) and requested to have a Local Government Energy Audit (LGEA) – this program allows residents and entities ways to save energy and the environment. A team has been assigned to our district and I have provided them with 14 months of energy bills for both buildings so that they can determine how we can improve our energy use. This program will not only help to identify cost-justified energy-efficiency measures, it will also subsidize the full cost of the audit. Unfortunately, similar to several agencies with the state, they are backlogged due to social distancing and COVID restrictions for approximately 2 months, so I will keep you updated when I have more news.

Mr. Dumovic wanted to know what type of funds the district would be able to recoup with the change in benefits.

Mrs. Mosner commented that it is too early to tell and that an update would be provided after open enrollment.

Mr. Dumovic inquired as to an update of the debt service/bonding options.

Mrs. Mosner said that the district could save some funding by paying the last new payments to the bank directly but that this option is not available until April when the bonds can be called.

VII. Board President's Report – Formed two ad hoc committees

1. Negotiations – Mrs. Mody, Mr. Dumovic, and Mrs. Holquist
2. Bond/Referendum – Mr. Christmann, Mr. Thayyar, and Mrs. Holquist.

VIII. Correspondence – N/A

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

X. Unofficial Results of Election - November 5, 2020

Unofficial results of the November 5, 2020 School Board Elections for two, three year terms on the Mendham Township Board of Elections were as follows:

<u>Candidates (Four Candidates - 2 seats - 3-Year Term)</u>	<u>Total Votes</u>
Thomas Keeling	1,258
Robert Wowk	1,325
Richard Gondek	1,034
Rekha J. Mandel	1,279

XI. CONSENT ITEMS

Approval of Minutes

Work Session Minutes: October 13, 2020

Regular Session Minutes: October 27, 2020

Approval of Executive Minutes

Executive Session Minutes: October 13, 2020

Curriculum and Instruction

1. **Audiological Support Services**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approve the Lake Drive Program to provide Audiological Support Services for one (1) student (14047627) for 3 hours at a rate of \$200.00 per hour for a total not to exceed \$600.00.

2. **Home Instruction**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the continuation of Home Instruction by Charles Gallo commencing December 1, 2020, through January 29, 2021, for one (1) student (12546235) for up to a total of ten (10) hours per week, at a rate of \$41.00 per hour.

3. **HIB Self-Assessment for Determining Grades** (Attachments)

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the submission of the Mendham Township Elementary School’s and the Mendham Township Middle School’s Self-Assessment for Determining Grades under the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act to the New Jersey Department of Education.

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 November 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. **November 2020 Transfer Reports**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approve the November 2020 transfer report.

3. **November 2020 Bills List**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the final November 2020 Bills List. This includes payroll checks N0218 through N0220 and N0221 and N0222 through N0226.

Fund 10	\$
Fund 11	\$
Fund 20	\$
Fund 40	\$
Total:	\$

4. **District Travel**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Board of Education approves the listed travel events in agreement with Chapter 53, Public Law 2007, NJSA 18A:11-12, NJAC 6A:23A-1. All mileage will be reimbursed at the maximum NJ Circular 08-19-OMB rate (currently \$0.35 per mile).

Program Name	Date	Employee	Event Cost	Total Cost
Rutgers Online Conference: Literacy Development	11/17/20	Lisa Lombardo	\$35.00	\$35.00
Rutgers Online Conference: Literacy Development	12/10/20	Lisa Lombardo	\$35.00	\$35.00

5. **School Bus Emergency Evacuation Drill Reports** (*Attachments*)

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education accepts the School Bus Emergency Evacuation Drill Reports from the Mendham Township Elementary School detailing the October 15, 2020 drill at 8:50 a.m., Mendham Township Middle School (blue cohort) detailing the October 15, 2020 drill at 2:45 p.m., and Mendham Township Middle School (gold cohort) detailing the October 15, 2020 drill at 2:45 p.m.

6. **2020 - 2021 Joint Transportation Agreement with Sussex County Regional Transportation Cooperative** (*Attachments*)

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the 2020 - 2021 Joint Transportation Agreement between the Mendham Township Board of Education and the Sussex County Regional Transportation Cooperative for transportation to special education, schools for the handicapped, and other students who have specialized and specific transportation needs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the 2020 - 2021 Joint Transportation Agreement between the Mendham Township Board of Education and the Sussex County Regional Transportation Cooperative for transportation of students to Public Schools and Private Schools; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the 2020 - 2021 Joint Transportation Agreement between the Mendham Township Board of Education and the Sussex County Regional Transportation Cooperative for transportation of students to sporting events and field trip expeditions to specific destinations.

Personnel and Human Resources

1. **Staff Retirement - Sterry Colvin** (*Attachment*)
BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education accepts with regret, the letter of retirement from Sterry Colvin, Elementary School Custodian, effective January 1, 2021.

2. **Staff Resignation - Rosalynn Ariza**
BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education accepts the letter of resignation from Rosalynn Ariza, Elementary School Cafeteria/Recess Aide, effective November 23, 2020.

3. **Leave of Absence - Elizabeth Hollman** (*Attachment*)
BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby approves Elizabeth Hollman, Middle School Teacher, for a leave of absence, having received doctor's certification, commencing January 29, 2021, under the Federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), ending after Twelve (12) weeks on April 30, 2021, while utilizing Twenty Eight (28) sick days.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board hereby approves Eight (8) weeks under the NJ Family Leave Act (FLA) for Elizabeth Hollman, commencing on April 5, 2021, through May 27, 2021, as requested in writing; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board hereby approves Elizabeth Hollman with an anticipated return to work date of May 28, 2021.

4. **Substitute Transportation Dispatcher - Deborah Mercurio**
BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the appointment of Deborah Mercurio, Substitute Transportation Dispatcher for the 2020 - 2021 school year at the current rate of \$20.00 per hour.

5. **Substitute Cafeteria/Recess Aide - Olga Garcia**
BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the appointment of Olga Garcia, Substitute Cafeteria/Recess Aide, at the current rate of \$12.14 per hour for the 2020 - 2021 school year.

6. **Substitute Teachers**
BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the following substitute teachers, pending completion of paperwork, for the 2020 - 2021 school year at the current rate of \$92.00 per day:

James Francks Christine Thalacker

Policy and Planning

1. **Second Reading** (*Attachments*)
BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the second reading of the following policies and regulations:

P 1620 Administrative Employment Contracts (M) (Revised)
P 2431 Athletic Competition (M) (Revised)
R 2431.1 Emergency Procedures for Sports and Other Athletic Activity (M) (Revised)
P 2464 Gifted and Talented Students (M) (Revised)
P 5330.05 Seizure Action Plan (M) (New)
R 5330.05 Seizure Action Plan (M) (New)

- P 6440 Cooperative Purchasing (M) (Revised)
- P 6470.01 Electronic Funds Transfer and Claimant Certification (M) (New)
- R 6470.01 Electronic Funds Transfer and Claimant Certification (M) (New)
- P 7440 School District Security (M) (Revised)
- R 7440 School District Security (M) (Revised)
- P 7450 Property Inventory (M) (Revised)
- P 7510 Use of Facilities (M) (Revised)
- R 7510 Use of Facilities (M) (Revised)
- P 8420 Emergency and Crisis Situations (M) (Revised)
- P 8561 Procurement Procedures for School Nutrition Programs (M) (Revised)

XII. ACTION ITEMS

Personnel and Human Resources

1. **Substitute Teacher - Alexandria Doty**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves Alexandria Doty as a Substitute Teacher for the 2020 - 2021 school year at the current rate of \$92.00 per day.

Operations and Finance

1. **Use of District Facilities**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves the following use of facility applications for the 2020 - 2021 school year with the right to cancel based on school events and needs:

Organization	Location	Dates	Times	Responsible Party
Mendham Patriots	<u>ES</u> Gyms	10/19/20 - 03/15/21 Mondays-Fridays & Saturdays	5:30pm - 9:30pm 8:00am - 4:00pm	Patrick Reed
	<u>MS</u> Gyms	09/08/20 - 03/15/21 Mondays-Fridays Saturdays & Sundays	5:30pm - 9:30pm 8:00am - 6:30pm 11:00am - 6:00pm	
GRIT 360	<u>ES</u> Gyms	TBD	TBD	Kerry Foderingham
	<u>MS</u> Gyms			

Discussion:

Mrs. Mody – what is GRIT?

Dr. Constantino – a supplemental training program that coincides with the program.

Mr. Christmann – can we table the basketball again?

Mr. Dumovic – what is the drop-dead date to vote on this use of facilities motion?

Dr. Constantino – tonight – the program is starting after Thanksgiving.

Mr. Christmann – the total number of players currently exceeds guidelines, should be ten (10) according to current state guidelines for indoor activities.

Mr. Gondek – add to protocols that state guidelines supersede document to maintain compliance.

Mr. Mody – add language at the end to include document to be updated as needed.

Dr. Constantino stated that all of these would be added to the final document so that the BOE could vote.

Mr. Thayyar moved to approve Action Items for November 17, 2020; Approval items – Personnel and Human Resources item 1 and Operations and Finance item 1, seconded by Mrs. Fraser and the motion was CARRIED in a roll call vote: Mr. Dumovic; yes, Mrs. Fraser; yes, Mr. Gondek; yes, Mrs. Mody; yes, Mr. Thayyar; yes, Mr. Christmann; yes, and Mrs. Holquist; yes. All yes – motions carry.

XIII. Verbal Communications from the Public

Tracy Budnik - 8:28 PM - Will Girl Scout Troops be able to utilize the school property going forward as well?

Mrs. Holquist – that has not been discussed at this point.

Dr. Constantino – the girl scouts would be able to utilize the school if they apply for facility use, it would come before the BOE for review, similar to what we have done with this. Applications must go through the process, get reviewed, and voted on.

Tracy Budnik - 8:30 PM - Fair enough, thank you.

Thom Keeling - 8:31 PM - I have two topics I would like to touch upon. Am I able to speak to cover them?

1. Perm sub at the MS, are there any thoughts of doing this for special ed, it would be good practice to have a person who could cover both if it is a budget issue

2. The policy that is out there – student teacher be available outside of the classroom, curious the BOE opinion on that – support of the student within and outside their environment. Does the BOE permit the opportunity to provide additional support outside the school day?

Mrs. Holquist – the Board of Education is in support of the policy, however, things this year are a little different – nonetheless, student needs should be met according to policy and protocol.

Dr. Constantino – policy is long and needs contextual work, to extract part of it is difficult on a board member. We all believe if a teacher could spend additional time with their students it would be ideal, however, not all situations allow for that. All students should have access to the additional teacher contact time, it is not always possible for students to be able to receive additional help from a particular staff member, unfortunately.

Mr. Keeling – I will commend the BOE and administration - plan for the year was ingenious, with the full days on M-T and TR-F and with W half day. Can't that additional time available due to the half-day on Wednesday be used for additional contact time for students.

Dr. Constantino – forgive me, but this sounds like this is in regards to a particular student – maybe this should be addressed with me directly another time.

Mr. Keeling – I said my peace but I would like my other questions addressed.

Dr. Constantino – sounds like a great idea – having a permanent substitute with special education is a wonderful idea and should be explored in the future.

Dawn Cullinan - 8:31 PM - I would like to comment.

I just wanted to discuss the current state of the nation, I just wanted to provide a little backstory for the teachers that are with your children. Many staff members had to return knowing they cannot see their families or be with them because they have underlying issues. 100% of the staff has returned. I discussed with Dr. Constantino to see if we

could quarantine two weeks before the holiday as well. The teachers and staff understand how important it is for the students to see one another and be in school. Thank you for listening with an open mind and for working with us so that we can reach a common goal.

Mrs. Holquist – we appreciate what you all do for our children – look forward to the feedback.

CLOSED

XIV. Discussion

School Calendar/Schedule

Mr. Dumovic – question to Ops & Finance committee regarding the committee’s recommendation for the time between Thanksgiving and the winter break – recommendation that parents can chose the option of virtual distance learning. Yet, the first two weeks after the winter break the committee’s recommendation is for all virtual distant learning. Why the two different recommendations?

Mr. Thayyar – main process is operational – timely – not enough time to be fair to families. More time to see family and travel during winter break – thanksgiving is only a few days. Allowing people to have the option that they don’t have know after thanksgiving.

Mr. Dumovic – I think I understand the logic. It was great to hear the perspective of our teachers and staff. Let’s remember that as a school district we have been successful in providing in-person instruction for students PreK thru Grade 5 and a hybrid model of instruction for students in Grades 6-8. All the while ensuring the health and safety of students and staff. This accomplishment would not have been possible without the support of our teaching staff. It was great to hear the perspective of our teachers and staff, and especially if we receive something from our education association, I think we need to take that request seriously. Their support is so important and we want that to continue. While moving to all virtual distant learning may not be liked by some parents, I believe it is prudent and helps to safeguard the health of students and staff over this time. Out of an abundance of caution, given the higher likelihood of COVID-19 cases increasing over the holidays because of travel and Thanksgiving and Christmas gatherings, I am personally okay with students moving to all virtual distance learning over the holiday period. I hope we can return to in-person programming or a blended learning model in early-January. I cannot support the ops and finance committee recommendation.

Mrs. Fraser – I do not understand where you are going with that – please rephrase.

Mr. Dumovic – I think we go virtual from thanksgiving through winter break. I am not sure we put a stake in the ground for January yet but I think we need to be consistent – close completely and do virtual distance learning since we learned so much from the spring. My driver is the safety and health of the staff and students.

Mrs. Fraser – we have done a good job as a school district – AT summarized it very well based on discussions from the committee. Responsible parents – going remote after thanksgiving – companies close over winter break, which provides for more of an issue.

Mr. Dumovic – As a BOE, we have to ensure the education we are providing our students does not come at the expense of public health. So far, we have been able to provide a quality education while adhering to strict protocols. None of us

have a crystal ball. But the holiday period is certainly a safety concern given the heightened risk from in-person gatherings from different households. Many of our staff, including a number of our teachers are concerned and are looking to us for support as we heard from Ms. Cullinan.

Mr. Thayyar – need a plan so our educators can stay safe as well.

Mr. Gondek – in general, I like the two weeks after winter break – that full week off there is a lot of options to travel, same as the beginning of the year to have a soft opening. There is a definite impact on parents that do not have the option to work from home. We should have that when it makes sense. The impact on parents should also be a consideration – not necessarily a hard stop but a consideration since some cannot pivot as easily as others.

Mrs. Mody – I agree with a lot of what everyone has been stating. I think having a soft opening at the beginning of school worked well. I think it is sound and that there is sound reasoning, the teachers need to feel valued and their emotional needs must be considered too. Further discussion after they come back to us should take place.

Mrs. Holquist – winter break invites more travel in a very different way compared to thanksgiving – option to opt out from honest families is a good option. Looking forward to hearing from the association after their information comes back.

Dr. Constantino – movement around thanksgiving next week would be more of a challenge compared to this week – consideration before winter break can be discussed next Tuesday night to evaluate that and perhaps conclude.

Great discussion with good perspectives – option as of know that we are thinking of a soft opening in January put a pin in it

Health Benefits –

Mr. Christmann – I do realize that this is a change for the staff but I see this as an option for the district.

Mr. Dumovic – I want to hear from the staff and their thoughts.

Mrs. Mody – I would like to thank Mrs. Mosner for doing her homework and providing this option.

Mr. Gondek – I want to give points for the long-term stability and the short term flip sounds positive

Mrs. Fraser – I applaud Mrs. Mosner for looking at the future to minimize the increases - we did this at my job and it was a lot of work and change is never easy.

Mrs. Holquist – transition over time towards the new plan looks beneficial. Something we should talk more about at the next meeting.

XV. Adjournment

Moved by Mr. Thayyar, second by Mrs. Fraser to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Donna Mosner
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary