

*CLOSTER BOARD OF EDUCATION*

*Closter, New Jersey*

MINUTES

WORK SESSION

*Tenakill Middle School*

*March 12, 2020*

7:30 PM

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The Board meeting was called to order by Mr. Lambert at 7:30PM

The following Board members were present:

Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Cross, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera,  
Ms. Finkelstein, Mr. Lambert

The following Board members were absent:

None

Also present:

Mr. McHale and Mr. Villanueva

*NEW JERSEY OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT STATEMENT - Read by the President:*

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meeting of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this Act, the Secretary to the Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting by having the date, time, and place thereof, posted at each school building within the district, the Board of Education office, the Office of the Borough Clerk, and transmitted to *The Record* and *Northern Valley Suburbanite* newspapers.

*PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE*

*SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT*

Mr. McHale informed the Board and the public that earlier in the evening, Bergen County Executive James Tedesco III ordered all schools in the county to close as of 3:00 p.m. of March 13th for a period of at least two weeks. Closter Public Schools will operate a single session schedule that day and staff will stay for professional development to prepare for virtual learning days. Mr. McHale shared the district's plan for virtual learning.

SY 2020-2021 Preliminary Budget Presentation

Mr. Villanueva, School Business Administrator provided a presentation of the SY 2020-2021 preliminary budget as recommended by the Finance Committee.

- The current expense and capital outlay budget is \$22,634,460
- The tax levy to support the current expense is \$20,517,275 represents an increase of 3.21%
- The budget includes an enrollment adjustment of \$49,287 and the use of banked cap in the amount of \$190,495.
- The preliminary budget includes staff reductions, shared services and a significant increase on budgeted Special Education out of district placement.
- Various capital projects are identified and included in this budget.
- Health benefits are increased by 11% for the second half of the year, dental premiums at 0% increase and general insurance increased by 7.25%
- All other areas of the budget remain at current levels of funding.

The budget is submitted to the County for review and approval prior to advertising. The public hearing and adoption of the SY 20-21 budget are scheduled for the April 30, 2020 meeting.

Mr. Villanueva thanked the Board's Finance Committee, Mr. McHale, Administrators and Supervisors for their work.

Mr. Linn asked Mr. Villanueva to explain the big increase on the Instructional Training line. Mr. Villanueva responded that the Northern Valley Curriculum Center gave credit from prior years based on surplus, but is no longer available for SY 20-21.

BOARD OPERATIONS

Moved by Ms. Bhagat, seconded by Ms. Micera to approve Motions A-B.

Motion was approved by a roll call vote of the Board as follows:

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Cross, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Ms. Finkelstein, Mr. Lambert  
NAYS: None

- A. Motion to approve February 27, 2020 minutes.
- B. Motion to approve Friday, March 13, 2020 as a one-session day for students so that teachers may use the afternoon as a Professional Development Day for virtual learning training.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON AGENDA ITEMS

Moved by Ms. Micera, seconded by Ms. Finkelstein to open the meeting to the public.

*Statements made by individual participants are limited to a duration of three (3) minutes unless otherwise announced at the beginning of the discussion. The Board urges large groups to select one person to represent them. The Board reminds those individuals who take the opportunity to speak to please step up, identify themselves by name and address, and to limit their comments*

to items listed on the agenda.

1. Meytal Cohen Marcs - 380 Piermont Rd.  
Ms. Marcs asked for the specifics on the reduction of the Maintenance/Custodial budget line and if there is an impact to the operation of the district. Mr. Villanueva explained that he is working closely with the Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds to make sure that the staff reduction won't cause any disruption to the services offered. Mr. McHale also responded that the recommended staff reduction was thought out to ensure that instruction is not affected.
2. Ms. Limor Moshkovich - 58 Taillon Terrace  
Ms. Moshkovich wanted to get some details on the reduction of one class in 2nd grade and what that means in future years. Mr. McHale responded that the current 1st grade class is relatively small compared to the other grade levels. The elimination of one class is still in line with the class size of the other grade levels. He said that the school monitors the enrollment trend and will adjust every year.

Moved by Ms. Micera, seconded by Ms. Finkelstein to resume the regular order of business.

#### CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE

**Chairperson Ms. Bhagat, Mr. Linn, Ms. Cross**

Moved by Ms. Micera, seconded by Ms. Finkelstein to approve Motions A-C.  
Motions were approved by a roll call vote of the Board as follows:

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Cross, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Ms. Finkelstein, Mr. Lambert  
NAYS: None

#### A. **APPROVAL - Staff Coursework**

Motion to approve the following courses for 2019-2020 as recommended to the Superintendent by the Principals:

Staff Member: Leigh Bomzer  
Course No./Title: MAT 901A Math Activities: Intermediate Grades  
Institution: Fresno Pacific University  
Credits: 3

Staff Member: Leigh Bomzer  
Course No./Title: MAT 912 Great Mathematicians Before 1700  
Institution: Fresno Pacific University  
Credits: 3

**B. APPROVAL - Staff Conferences**

Motion to approve the following staff conferences:

Staff Member/s: Margaret Churchill  
Conference: NJTESOL/NJBE Annual Conference  
Location: New Brunswick, NJ  
Date: May 27-29, 2020  
Cost to Board: \$0

Staff Member/s: Floro Villanueva  
Conference: NJASBO Annual Conference  
Location: Atlantic City, NJ  
Date: June 3-5, 2020  
Cost to Board: \$824.35

Staff Member/s: Lauren Barbieri, Karen Caruso, Erica Cho,  
Barbara Cullere, Charlene Gerbig, Kate Maher  
Conference: DEAC Meeting  
Location: TMS Conference Room  
Date: March 30, 2020  
Cost to Board: \$225.00 (5 half-day subs)

Staff Member/s: Gila Rachlin  
Conference: Region III Speech Therapists Regional Meeting  
Location: NVCC  
Date: 3/24/20  
Cost to Board: \$0

Staff Member/s: Lauren Barbieri  
Conference: NVCC Instructional Coaching  
Location: Luther Lee Emerson School, Demarest  
Date: March 25, 2020  
Cost to Board: \$45.00

Staff Member/s: Ralph Chappell  
Conference: 2020 NJSBGA Conference/Expo  
Location: Atlantic City, NJ  
Date: March 23-25, 2020  
Cost to Board: \$643.93

C. **APPROVAL - Field Trips**

Motion to approve the following field trips:

School: Tenakill  
Group: Small Ensembles Trip  
Month: June  
Destination: Closter Senior Center

**FINANCE AND PHYSICAL PLANT COMMITTEE**

***Chairperson Ms. Kwon, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Finkelstein***

Moved by Ms. Kwon, seconded by Ms. Lee to approve Motions A-G.  
Motions were approved by a roll call vote of the Board as follows:

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Cross, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Ms. Finkelstein, Mr. Lambert  
NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Monthly Bills**

Motion to approve payment of bills from February 27, 2020 to March 12, 2020 in the amount of:

General Fund (Fund 10)	\$797,753.73
Special Revenue (Fund 20)	\$ 3,518.11
Enterprise (Milk – Fund 60)	\$ 460.63
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$801,732.47</b>

B. **APPROVAL - Purchase of Classroom Furniture**

Motion to approve the purchase of classroom furniture in the amount of \$17,921.92 through the ESCNJ 17/18-16 contract.

C. **APPROVAL OF THE PRELIMINARY BUDGET FOR THE 2020-2021 SY**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Closter Board of Education, County of Bergen, approves the preliminary 2020-2021 school year budget as follows:

	<b><i>Budget</i></b>	<b><i>Local Tax Levy</i></b>
General Current Expense (Fund 11)	\$ 22,021,319	\$ 20,517,275
Capital Outlay (Fund 12)	\$ 613,141	

GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$ 22,634,460	\$ 20,517,275
Special Revenue Fund (Fund 20)	\$ 289,295	\$ 0
Debt Service Fund (Fund 40)	\$ 295,380	\$ 295,380
<b>Total Base Budget</b>	<b>\$ 23,219,135</b>	<b>\$ 20,812,655</b>

And

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Fund tax levy of **\$20,517,275** is approved to support Current General Expense that includes an Enrollment Adjustment of **\$49,287** , and the use of **\$190,495** Banked Cap. The total budget tax levy including Debt Service Fund is **\$ 20,812,655.**

And

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Closter Board of Education accepts the State School Aid for the 2020-21 school year as follows:

Transportation Aid	\$	93,632
Special Education Aid	\$	738,593
Security Aid	\$	91,347
Less: SDA Assessment	\$	<u>-14,941</u>
<b>Total Aid</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>908,631</b>

And

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Closter Board of Education withdraws **\$540,000** from the Board of Education's approved Capital Reserve Account to fund Other Capital Projects:

**Hillside Elementary School**

- Roof Replacement in D Wing - \$395,000
- Sidewalk and Curb Replacement on Homans Avenue - \$10,000
- Parking Lot Seal and Line Stripe - \$18,000

**Tenakill Middle School**

- Sidewalk and Curb Replacement on Harrington Avenue - \$60,000
- Airedale Heating Upgrade - \$13,000
- Sidewalk and Curb Replacement on High Street - \$15,000

- Asbestos Abatement and VCT Floor Tiles Replacement - \$29,000

D. **APPROVAL OF THE 2020-21 PRELIMINARY BUDGET – ENROLLMENT ADJUSTMENT**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Closter Board of Education approves the use of the enrollment adjustment permitting the tax levy to increase above 2% in the amount of **\$49,287**.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Business Administrator/Board Secretary is authorized to submit the preliminary budget with the inclusion of the enrollment adjustment as noted above.

E. **APPROVAL OF THE 2020-2021 PRELIMINARY BUDGET – USE OF BANKED CAP**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Closter Board of Education approves the use of banked cap adjustment permitting the tax levy to increase above 2% in the amount of **\$190,495**. The banked cap is to help support the purchase of Go Math! Series for K-5 in the amount of \$25,903, Big Ideas Math for Grades 6-8 in the amount of \$19,125 and the purchase of new iPads, Macbooks and Promethean Boards for Hillside Elementary School and Tenakill Middle School in the amount of \$145,467.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the needs identified in the use of Banked Cap must be completed by the end of the 2020-21 budget year and will not be deferred or incrementally completed over a longer period of time; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Business Administrator/Board Secretary is authorized to submit the preliminary budget with the inclusion of the use of banked cap as noted above.

F. **APPROVAL OF MAXIMUM TRAVEL EXPENDITURES FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR**

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12, in each pre-budget year, the Closter Board of Education is required to establish a maximum travel expenditure amount for the budget year which may not be exceeded; and

WHEREAS, the Closter Board of Education has determined that the maximum travel expenditure amount includes all travel that is supported by state and local funds; and

WHEREAS, the Closter Board of Education had previously established a maximum amount for the pre-budget year 2019-2020 as \$25,000.00

WHEREAS, the Closter Board of Education has expended \$10,816.79 of the maximum amount for the pre-budget year to date; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Closter Board of Education hereby establishes the maximum travel expenditure amount of the 2020-21 school year as \$25,000.00.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Business Administrator/Board Secretary is authorized to track and record these costs to ensure that the maximum amount is not exceeded.

G. **APPROVAL - Use of Facilities**

Motion to approve the following organizations to use the facilities at Tenakill Middle School and Hillside Elementary

- Vikings Futbol Club to use Hillside Elementary School outdoor field April 2020 to June 2020.
- PTO to use Hillside Elementary School Gymnasium for Gaga Nights March 2020 to May 2020.
- Summer Stem Academy to use Tenakill Middle School July 6 to July 24, 2020.
- Closter Pack 20 to use Hillside Elementary School parking lot for Push Kart Derby, May 2020.

**PERSONNEL AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

***Chairperson Ms. Lee, Mr. Lambert***

Moved by Ms. Lee, seconded by Ms. Finkelstein to approve Motions A - I. Motions were approved by a roll call vote of the Board as follows:

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Cross, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Ms. Finkelstein, Mr. Lambert

NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Long-Term Leave Replacement**

Motion to approve, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, Amanda Eastman as leave replacement teacher for BSI/resource room, starting March 13, 2020. Salary will be \$200 per day on days 1 through 10; then beginning on day 11, MA Step 0, pro-rated, ending on the last day of school in June 2020.

B. **APPROVAL - Paraprofessionals**

Motion to approve Senada Gurzakovic (*pending criminal history check*) as a



paraprofessional for Hillside Elementary School, 5.25 hours, hourly rate \$18.03.

C. **APPROVAL - Substitute**

Motion to approve the following substitutes for the 2019-2020 school year:

**Substitute Teachers**

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Certification</u></b>
Tarannumnigar Contractor	NJ Substitute Certificate
Jiyeon Kim	NJ Substitute Certificate

**Substitute Custodian**

William Angresano (*pending criminal history check*)

D. **APPROVAL - Resignation**

Motion to approve, with regrets, the resignation of the following:

- Alexis Velella, Paraprofessional, effective March 5, 2020
- Shannon Hone, Paraprofessional, effective March 20, 2020
- Ashley McConnell, Teacher on LOA, effective immediately

E. **APPROVAL - Leave of Absence Extension - Staci Levine**

Motion to approve leave of absence extension for Staci Levine with a return date of June 1, 2020.

F. **APPROVAL - Leave of Absence Extension - Alexandra Meril**

Motion to extend leave of absence for Alexandra Meril for the 2020-2021 school year, with return in September 2021.

G. **APPROVAL - Student Teacher Placement**

Motion to approve Brittany Galligan, Montclair State University student, for 35-hours field experience at Hillside Elementary School. Ms. Galligan will be observing in Ms. Vastano's first grade class.

H. **APPROVAL - Student Teacher Placement**

Motion to approve Hyewon Cho, student at Seton Hall University, to complete Clinical Practice I (two days a week), and Clinical Practice II (five days a week), for required fieldwork and classroom observation at Hillside Elementary School from Fall 2020 - Spring 2021, **pending criminal history background check**. Ms. Cho will be observing Ms. Levy's second grade class.

I. **APPROVAL - Student Teacher Placement**

Motion to approve Isabella Prastos, student at Bergen Community College, to conduct ten hours of classroom observation, Spring 2020, **pending criminal**

**history background check.** Ms. Prastos will be observing in Tenakill Middle School.

**POLICY COMMITTEE**

***Chairperson Ms. Micera. Ms. Kothari***

Moved by Ms. Kothari, seconded by Ms. Bhagat to approve Motion A.  
Motions were approved by a roll call vote of the Board as follows:

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Cross, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Ms. Finkelstein, Mr. Lambert

NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - First Reading of Amended Tutoring Policies**

Motion to approve the first reading of the following amended policies as per Appendix A attached:

- 6164.6 - Tutoring
- 4138.2 - Private Tutoring

**BOARD COMMITTEES**

Ms. Bhagat shared with the board and public the notes of the March 5th curriculum committee meeting:

- Math curriculum for SY 20-21
- Cultural awareness - LGBTQ students, and students are not allowed to opt out
- Science scores - Level 3
- Teachers PD

Mr. Lambert informed the board that the finance committee met earlier in the evening to discuss the budget that was approved by the board.

**OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

A motion was presented to cancel the March 26, 2020 BOE Meeting.

Motion was moved by Mr. Linn, seconded by Ms. Lee  
Motion was approved by a voice vote.

**PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

Moved by Ms. Kothari, seconded by Ms. Kwon to open the meeting to public discussion.

1. Ms. Libby Choron - 78 Venue Drive  
Ms. Choron is asking for clarification as far as how absences are recorded based on fear of coronavirus. She expressed that the two schools are inconsistent with

how these absences are recorded. Mr. McHale responded that both schools are using the same protocol and record those absences as unexcused, unless the student is ill. Mr. McHale reminded parents that students must not be out more than 10% of the school days. He also explained the impact of chronic absenteeism to the district's rating and potential funding.

2. Councilwoman Dolores Witko

Ms. Witko would like to hear the district's plan for school closure. Mr. McHale shared the information from his Superintendent's report.

Moved by Ms. Micera, seconded by Ms. Finkelstein to close the meeting to public discussion.

CLOSED SESSION MOTION (If required)

Moved by Ms. Micera, seconded by Ms. Finkelstein to approve the following Closed Session Motion. Motion was approved by a voice vote of the Board:

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Cross, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Ms. Finkelstein, Mr. Lambert  
NAYS: None

BE IT RESOLVED that the Closter Board of Education will adjourn to a Closed Session to discuss the following:

HIB

The matters so discussed will be disclosed to the public as soon as and to the extent that such disclosure can be made without adversely affecting the public.

The Board went into Closed Session at 8:26PM.

The Board reconvened from Closed Session at 8:42PM.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Ms. Finkelstein, seconded by Ms. Kothari to adjourn the meeting at 8:43PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Fidro Villarueva, Jr.  
Business Administrator/Board Secretary