



## **LIVINGSTON BOARD OF EDUCATION AND LIVINGSTON TOWNSHIP COUNCIL FIVE-ON-FIVE MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, June 11, 2025

MPMS Auditorium - 11 Broadlawn Drive - 7:00 p.m.

A **Five-on-Five Meeting** of the Livingston Board of Education and Livingston Township Council was held on this date in the Mount Pleasant Middle School Auditorium and via a Facebook Livestream. 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 2, 2025, and posted at the Board of Education office and communicated to *The Star Ledger*, *West Essex Tribune*, *TAPinto Livingston* and the Livingston Township Clerk.

Mayor Edward Meinhardt announced in accordance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Law, P.L. 1975, C. 231, adequate notice of a joint Meeting with the Livingston Township Council and Livingston Board of Education on Wednesday, June 11, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at Mount Pleasant Middle School Auditorium, 11 Broadlawn Dr, Livingston, New Jersey has been provided. Specifically the 48-Hour Notice was emailed to the West Essex Tribune, the TAPinto Livingston, and Star Ledger on Monday, June 9, 2025.

Township Council: Mayor Edward Meinhardt, Deputy Mayor Shawn Klein, Council Member Alfred Anthony, Council Member Ketan Bhuptani and Council Member Michael Vieira

LBOE Members: President Seth Cohen, Vice President Parul Khemka, Pamela Chirls, Fang Gong and Inna Yelisevich

Also in Attendance:

From the Township: Barry Lewis Jr., Russ Jones and Attorney Jarriid Kantor  
From LPS: Dr. Daniel Fishbein, Jessica Rapp and Joann Goldberg

### **Workshop Items**

#### **1. Ordinances: Parking, PILOT**

The Board of Education acknowledged and shared its appreciation to the Township Council for passing two ordinances. One is directly related to parking at the high school, and the other is about how we can best work together in utilizing PILOTs to help the school district handle the potential impact of development in our community. Both ordinances are a direct result of the collaboration between the two groups during their monthly liaison meetings.

#### **2. Development Update**

Mr. Lewis explained that as a result of the affordable housing litigation and their obligation to comply, the Township has approved a number of projects. He continued that they recognize the potential impact on the schools and want to keep the Board as up to date as possible with the best

information he has available, so he has provided everyone with an updated spreadsheet identifying the status of all the projects currently awaiting action. It also includes projections of the number of school-aged children coming out of new units based on the recent Rutgers study. Dr. Fishbein provided Mr. Lewis with actual data showing how many school children have been generated from existing developments in the community, which is higher than the Rutgers study.

Mr. Lewis continued that they are committed to providing the Board of Education with current information on upcoming developments and to working together in any way they can.

### 3. Demographic Study Update and Facility Plan Update

Dr. Fishbein explained that we went out for an RFP for a demographic study and have entered into an agreement with a company. Since there are not many demographers, we are in line for them to begin their work, which includes reaching out to the district for enrollment information and the Township for construction information. We will also share Mr. Lewis' spreadsheet with the demographer.

Dr. Fishbein added that the district is discussing options/concepts that were provided by the Long Range Facilities Committee that was formed last year, but does not yet have a definitive plan. He expects the demographic study to take approximately two months once it begins, but does not have a timeline for getting a facilities plan together at this time.

### 4. Enrollment Data

Dr. Fishbein reviewed enrollment data that is current as of Monday, June 9, which showed the district has grown by 89 students since September. Dr. Fishbein also shared historic enrollment data with the group.

Dr. Fishbein explained that we are up by about 140 students more than what was projected in the 2021 demographic study, and when reviewing the number of students coming from new developments, we are getting more students than what is projected in the Rutgers study.

Dr. Fishbein also shared our incoming kindergarten enrollment, which starts in February and runs through the first day of school.

Mr. Viera asked about the 2007 baby boom and whether those students are starting to graduate out of our schools and how that would affect any plans, and Dr. Fishbein explained birth rates are cyclical and when we look at the historical data, since 2012-2013, our enrollment has grown by a little under 700 students.

Mr. Cohen expressed that the Board of Education is committed to sharing our enrollment data with the Township so they can see how many students are coming out of new developments.

### 5. Monmouth Court

Mr. Lewis explained that the LBOE conveyed the Monmouth Court building to the Township many years ago for \$1.00. The Township has used it for recreational facilities, and in more recent years, the Board of Education retook possession of the second floor and invested money to make improvements to the building. As the Board's space needs continue to increase, they approached the Township Council about taking back possession of the building. After some discussion, the Township decided to convey back the entire building to the Board of Education, and they agreed to cooperate in relocating some of the recreational programs into other spaces.

The entire Monmouth Court property was listed on the Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI), so Mr. Lewis went through the administrative process to get permission to carve off the school building from the fields, had a surveyor prepare a subdivision map, brought it in front of the proper committees for a hearing and will finalize the subdivision to allow the Board of

Education to take ownership of the building while leaving the fields on the ROSI. Mr. Lewis anticipates they will be able to convey the building to the Board of Education within the next month, with a final closing in a few months.

Mr. Bhuptani asked how the district will use Monmouth Court, and Dr. Fishbein responded that we will continue to use the building as an alternative high school.

#### 6. Shared Service: Trees; Fields; Camps, Gyms

Mr. Lewis explained the productive and cooperative relationship we share, which includes the Board of Education allowing the Township use of the fields, gyms and athletic fields for recreational sports and camps as well as the Township and DPW providing maintenance to those fields while also providing the Board of Education with plowing and salting services in the winter and tree planting and pruning during other times of the year. Beautification at schools is on the request of the district, with funding from the Township's tree fund. Sharing services helps to save the taxpayers' money, and both entities are committed to continuing to do so.

Mrs. Khemka asked how frequently the fields are evaluated for their playing condition, and Mr. Lewis will check and get back to her.

#### 7. Invitation to Partner in Planning for the 250th USA Anniversary

Natalie Toyko, Director of Curriculum and Instruction and Dawn Feeley, Supervisor of Social Studies Gr. 7-12, shared a few ideas on how to celebrate July 4, 2026, the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and invited the Township to work with us as we plan for this event. It can be a townwide, community-wide way to engage in activities together.

Some of the ideas/activities being planned to help connect the present day with the past include:

- Reaching out to the other towns called Livingston across the country to allow students and children to feel a part of a larger community and to celebrate together.
- America's 250th! Ambassadors - a crew of LHS students who will be trained to conduct oral history interviews with community members who remember the bicentennial;
- Create a time capsule.
- Interdisciplinary Talks - using Lancer Time to invite students and community members to come and tell their stories and/or focus on the theme of "What Unites Us."
- Host a logo contest for students in the district that results in posters that are hung around campus/town/on LPS and Township websites;
- A lesson about how fireworks function and possibly host a fireworks show.
- Physical Education teachers to host a Freedom Run, a 5K or something similar, throughout the town;
- Collaborating with the Livingston Historical Society to research members of the community from back in the Revolution who fought in the war. Learn who the people in our neighborhood were, and what stories they have to tell.

The Township Council members agreed they would like to help and participate in any way they can.

The Council expressed that they are open to having students serve on the July 4 committee. They already have an ordinance allowing students on their committee, so they just need volunteers. Mr. Bhuptani suggested that students who are interested in volunteering can reach out to him or Mr. Vieira.

## **Public Comment**

Tara Heyderman, Livingston, proposed looking into whether the road on Foxcroft Drive can be made one-way to help with the traffic flow during pick up and drop off of students to Heritage Middle School.

Mike Anderson asked with Aquinas closing, is there any consideration by either group to take over the property?

Mr. Lewis responded that both the Board of Education and Township are aware the school is closing and have had some discussion with the Archdiocese about purchasing the property; however, they are not interested in selling, so we are investigating other options for leasing the facilities and/or parking lot.

Mr. Anderson also asked about investing money in our fields in order to improve them.

Anastasia Larkin, Livingston, asked if there is a master plan to address our growing community, where she sees the schools and sports programs bursting at the seams. She asked if there is any forethought where we can get more space, and what happens to the infrastructure when we bring in all these people, but have nowhere to put them.

Dr. Fishbein explained that last year, we had a Long Range Facilities Planning Committee that met to discuss how to address these issues, and we are undergoing a demographic study to help develop a plan for expanding the schools.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 7:44 p.m., Mrs. Chirls made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mrs. Khemka seconded the motion.

Vote all in favor.

**Respectfully submitted,**



---

**Jessica Rapp**  
**LBOE Board Secretary**