



LIVINGSTON BOARD OF EDUCATION WORKSHOP/VOTING MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, November 9, 2021

Executive Session - Hybrid Meeting - 6:00 p.m.

Public Session - Hybrid Meeting at Administration Building – 7:00 p.m.

A **Workshop/Voting Meeting** of the Livingston Board of Education was held on this date in the large conference room in the Administration Building and via Zoom and Facebook Live. The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by the Board President, Samantha Messer, who announced that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by amendment to notice approved at the Board's reorganization meeting on January 4, 2021 and posted at the Board of Education office and communicated to *The Star Ledger*, *West Essex Tribune*, *TAPinto Livingston* and the Livingston Township Clerk.

Mr. Cohen moved the following:

Executive Session

Whereas, the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-11, permits the Board of Education to meet in closed session to discuss certain matters; now, therefore be it

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education adjourns to closed session to discuss:

- HIB Training and Personnel

Action may be taken upon return to public session. The full length of the meeting is anticipated to be approximately 60 minutes and be it

Further Resolved, the minutes of this closed session be made public when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

Mrs. Khanna seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mr. Cohen, Mrs. Khanna, Mrs. Konner, Ms. Messer
Nays - None

At 7:05 p.m., Ms. Messer reconvened the public meeting.

Members Present: Pamela Chirls, Seth Cohen, Vineeta Khanna, Ronnie Konner, Samantha Messer and Ethan Hirsch

Also in Attendance: Dr. Matthew Block, Steven Robinson, Lisa Capone-Steiger, Mark Stern, Susan Burman and Joann Goldberg

There were approximately ten members of the public and staff in person and approximately 37 members of the public and staff watching remotely through the webinar and a Facebook Live Stream.

Ms. Messer and Dr. Block congratulated Mrs. Chirls on being reelected to the board and to Jenissa Arnette on a successful election.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Block announced he observed Mr. Stern and Mrs. Topylko as they provided a professional development session yesterday on data teams where staff are learning how to use data to guide our instruction and help students achieve and succeed.

Mr. Cohen expressed interest in seeing some of that work.

Dr. Block thanked the staff for their efforts and professionalism in taking on additional work and covering extra classes while we are experiencing difficult staffing shortages.

Dr. Block announced the old Sears at the Livingston Mall is a vaccination site and encouraged everybody to take advantage of the facility by signing up online to get a vaccine.

Dr. Block announced our girls soccer team will be playing in the sectional finals this Friday and wished them luck.

Dr. Block welcomed Michael Davison, our next Business Administrator, who is on the agenda for approval tonight.

1. Athletic Fields Update

Mr. Robinson explained with regard to turfing the pit at the high school, we would plan to go out to bid by the end of the calendar year or early January with the possibility of awarding the bid in early February. Construction timelines would be between May and November of 2022. Mr. Robinson explained the impact on lighting on surrounding neighbors would be minimal. Mr. Robinson continued that the cost estimate, which includes the turf, lights and drainage, is projected to be lower than \$3,000,000. Mr. Robinson continued we would take all of this out of our capital reserve, with no cost to the taxpayers. Mr. Robinson added that we estimate we will still have \$3,400,000 remaining in capital reserve after this project is completed.

Anthony Gianforcaro, our architect, projected two views of the field, explaining that the turf would be used for soccer, boys/girls lacrosse, field hockey, baseball, softball and football. In addition, the field is large enough to use for football or marching band practice. There is also the possibility of adding a shot put and discus circle and area for javelin in the turfed area off of the field. Mr. Gianforcaro continued they will also add dugouts for baseball and softball and a short wall with a big net to keep the balls in the field.

Mr. Robinson continued they met with a number of the coaches and the football coaches expressed they don't need permanent lines drawn so we are looking at having them painted on a seasonal basis. Some of the items the coaches requested that will be incorporated into the drawings are dugouts, a bullpen area/batting cage, a higher net along the third base line to keep balls in play, sidewalks, a set of stairs to get to the field from the bleacher area, the height of the fence and setting home plate deeper into the turf.

The second view of the field was an aerial view and Mr. Robinson highlighted the barrier between the field and the houses behind.

When asked about the impact of lighting, Mr. Gianforcaro explained we will be using LED lighting that not only projects downwards but also provides less spillage off the field so there will be no impact on the residents.

Mrs. Chirls asked about drainage and Mr. Gianforcaro responded they will have to put clean stone underneath the turf to act as a detention system that would tie into one of the catch basins on the property.

Mrs. Konner asked what accommodations will be made to reassign practices and games while the field is under construction and Mr. Robinson responded the coaches and athletic director felt they wouldn't have an issue scheduling them.

Mrs. Chirls asked if there was coordination with the Township on the plan and area surrounding and Mr. Robinson responded there were many meetings with the township fields committee on this issue and if we plan to go out to bid, he will discuss with some of the clubs before it is finalized.

Mrs. Chirls inquired if there are other projects coming up related to facilities that they should be concerned about and Mr. Robinson responded there is nothing right now.

Mrs. Khanna asked when they would have to commit to the project and Mr. Robinson responded that if we award the bid, we are committed to the project in the 2022-2023 budget and that money is drawn down from the capital reserve as soon as the bills become due. Once the bid is awarded, we are tied to the project.

Mrs. Konner asked when we need to go in front of the Planning Board and Mr. Gianforcaro responded he would work to get to their December meeting

Ms. Messer asked the board members if they agreed to go out to bid on this project and the five unanimously agreed.

Mr. Robinson told Mr. Gianforcaro to get started on the documents.

2. ESSER III Funds

Mr. Robinson began by showing how the \$1,563,118 in the American Rescue Plan (ARP) ESSER III funding will be allocated and explained that although we need to submit a general plan to the State by November 24, we have until 2024 to spend this money. The full presentation, which provides an overview from Mr. Robinson, Mrs. Steiger and Mr. Stern on how the money will be spent has been posted on our website. As part of the application process, the district is soliciting community feedback through TellUS@livingston.org.

Mrs. Chirls asked how we would make decisions about who will deliver mental health services to students and Mrs. Steiger responded we will look to have a balance between our own staff and outside consultants who have expertise in the areas of need.

Mrs. Khanna asked how we determine who needs evidence based learning and Mrs. Steiger responded that we use different forms of data, grades, principal and teacher recommendations, LinkIt benchmarking system and parents reaching out. Students who receive intervention and referral services as well as basic skills instruction or regular intervention are also invited.

Mr. Cohen expressed concern about what will happen post the period when the grant money is no longer available and what thought is going into future budgets to sustain some of these programs.

Mr. Cohen asked if we anticipate doing the HVAC maintenance over the course of three years or all at once and Mr. Robinson responded that once the State approves the grant, we will do it all at once.

Mr. Cohen asked if the grant application asks how the money will be allocated over the years or for a general sense and Mrs. Steiger responded it appears to be a general sense.

Mr. Cohen and Mrs. Konner asked that we come back to them at certain times to let them know how the money is being spent over the years. Mrs. Chirls added to include how it falls into the existing budget.

Mrs. Konner asked if we could make modifications later on and Mr. Stern responded there are check in points and updates along the way and they are discussing modifications.

Mrs. Chirls asked why the focus on executive functioning skills sequence is for grades 6 to 9 rather than other transitional years when students haven't been in the building consistently.

Mr. Stern responded the feedback they received was about the transition into the middle school and high school but that they are open to looking at other grades.

Mrs. Chirls asked if there will also be after school support for things like homework and Mrs. Steiger responded yes.

Mrs. Konner asked which stakeholders were involved in the process and Ms. Messer asked for an outline of how we reached out to the community before we accept the grant.

Mrs. Steiger responded that the administrative team has had conversations with staff and the LEA leadership and Dr. Block added we will be posting the presentation to the website with a link to solicit community input.

Ms. Messer requested the board receive a copy of what we plan to submit to the State.

3. Board Budget Goals

The group discussed their board budget goals which included allocating funds for the long and short term results of demographic study, to turf the pit, to create a student data system to track individual student performance of the whole child over time, to address achievement gaps, to move to an electronic business and accounting system, to invest in internships for LHS, to provide students with adult mentors, to create a new position to head Diversity and Inclusion efforts as well as assess those programs and practices, to expand offerings in our theater arts curriculum, to address potential capital needs stemming from the strategic plan, to use data to evaluate Math in Focus for lower elementary students, to support high quality special education services to ensure we are meeting the needs of MCC, SEPAC and OOD, to support college programs including investing in counselors for psychological support, to maintain small class sizes, to incorporate relational and cultural intelligence in the curriculum, to perform a safety analysis of district sites, for a bus depot, for crisis management and to use the strategic plan to identify short and long term goals for technology.

With regard to mental health, the group's budget goals included implementing a mental health pilot at LHS, establishing a depression screening plan, considering on-site programs for assessment and treatment, establishing programs to support students and to create on-line tools and technology for mental wellness.

Other items discussed included review of recommendations of the Planning Board prior to budget development, 5 on 5 and 2 on 2 with Town Council to identify items of mutual concern with budgetary implications, Finance and Facilities Committee meeting to review preliminary budget discussions and time to listen to the community to engage in productive dialogue in terms of their concerns to mitigate damaging effects.

Ms. Messer asked Mr. Hirsch to think about any goals he might suggest and bring them back to the next meeting.

Board Reports

Mrs. Khanna attended the SEPAC meeting on October 28 where there was a robust conversation about appointing the committee and revisiting the bylaws.

Mr. Cohen participated in the NJSBA annual meeting adding there were a lot of great presentations about diversity and inclusion this year and that the content is available for the next couple of weeks.

Mrs. Chirls and Mrs. Konner also participated in the NJSBA annual meeting. Mrs. Chirls asked Mr. Robinson to share the information with our new board member, if possible.

Mrs. Konner complimented Dr. Block on his message to everyone to decompress over the long weekend and holiday.

Public Input on Agenda Items ~ up to 15 minutes

Helen Engel reported that the district administration ran the SEPAC meeting when it should have been parent run and that it is not appropriate for the district to provide training. Mrs. Engel added no email went out to out of district parents or by principals asking for volunteers. Mrs. Engel asked for SPAN to come in and do the training for the current SEPAC reps so that they can write proper bylaws.

Bernard Searle, 14 Washington Court, suggested having a small committee put together to look at potential sites to house our buses.

Lauren Markon , 32 North Mitchell Avenue, asked how children are identified to participate in the summer learning programs and would children who are out of district be included in the mental health initiative and Saturday programs mentioned in the grant.

Mrs. Steiger responded that the summer intervention program was offered to students who aren't classified because they already participate in our extended school year programs. The summer program was for students referred through the I&RS teams or who are currently receiving basic skills instruction. Mrs. Steiger continued that for the grant moving forward, any of the enrichment activities that are offered after school, including mental health, will be available to any student in our schools including those who are out of district.

Amit Sud, 2 Jackson Drive, advocated for transparency and inclusion for SEPAC so that parents could have a greater voice. Mr. Sud also asked for better communication about what is available to them as a resource.

Pam Tepper, 10 Langtree Drive, suggested increasing the number of SEPAC meetings this year since there are many issues. Mrs. Tepper suggested having SPAN come in so they could be properly trained and reconvene the meetings with a fresh start. Mrs. Tepper stated she would

have liked her out of district child to have been invited to be included in more in-district activities prior to his graduating.

Alyse Heilpern, 4 Highland Drive, stated it is imperative we look at how SEPAC has been run, it should be a parent committee, there is a conflict of interest in having the district conduct training and would like SPAN to come in so parents can be properly trained.

Sofia Calderon, 130 West Hobart Gap Road, explained how turf fields are bad for your health and that we should be looking instead to install an organically grown natural grass field in the Pit area.

VOTING ITEMS

BUSINESS

Mr. Cohen moved the following:

3.1 Open Campus - Livingston High School Juniors

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education hereby grants permission for the LHS administration to extend Open Campus privileges to Livingston High School juniors for the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year with the understanding that all rules and regulations governing Open Campus will remain in effect.

3.2 Conferences and Overnight Trips

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves *Matthew Block*, Superintendent of Schools, to attend the AASA Pre-Conference Workshop and the AASA National Conference on Education from February 15-19, 2022 in Nashville, Tennessee, at a cost not to exceed \$3,200.

3.3 New Jersey Department of Education Waiver Application

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education recommends approval of the New Jersey Department of Education Waiver Application for the reduction of the \$1M insurance requirement for Parental Transportation Agreements for the 2021-2022 School Year to the State statutory minimum of \$15,000.

Mrs. Khanna seconded the motion.

Dr. Block explained 3.1 is for this year to help alleviate the number of students in the building during the colder months and will work with the same student parameters the seniors follow.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mr. Cohen*, Mrs. Khanna, Mrs. Konner, Ms. Messer
Nayes - None

*Mr. Cohen clarified his yes vote is for this year only because it is a Covid mitigation measure.

PERSONNEL

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

4.1 Appointment of School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the contract between the LBOE and *Michael Davison* (School Business Administrator/Board Secretary). The contract will commence on January 3, 2022 and end on June 30, 2022. A copy of this contract is on file at the Board Office and has been approved by the Executive County Superintendent.

4.2 Termination

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the termination of Employee # 8253 effective 12/23/2021.

Mrs. Khanna seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mr. Cohen, Mrs. Khanna, Mrs. Konner, Ms. Messer
Nayes - None

MISCELLANEOUS

Mrs. Khanna moved the following:

5.1 HIB Report

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education accepts the findings of HIB cases.

Mr. Cohen seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mr. Cohen, Mrs. Khanna, Mrs. Konner, Ms. Messer
Nayes - None

PREVIEW OF NOVEMBER 23, 2021 VOTING MEETING AGENDA

Approval of Minutes

1. Workshop/Voting Meeting Minutes of October 12, 2021
2. Voting Meeting Minutes of October 19, 2021
3. Public Portion of Executive Session Meeting Minutes of October 27, 2021

1. PROGRAM/CURRICULUM

1.1 Student Teachers

3. BUSINESS

3.1 Payment of Bills

3.2 Board Secretary Report – September 2021

3.3 Conferences and Overnight Trips

3.4 Field Trips

3.5 CJ PRIDE Shared Services Agreement

3.6 Parental Contract for Student Transportation

3.7 Policies and Regulations

4. PERSONNEL

- 4.1 Resignations**
- 4.2 Leaves of Absences**
- 4.3 Appointments**
- 4.4 Transfers**
- 4.5 Substitutes**
- 4.6 Stipends**
- 4.7 Extra Work Pay**
- 4.8 Proctors for COVID testing**
- 4.9 Extra Period Assignments**
- 4.10 Summer Work**
- 4.11 Memorandum of Understanding**

Mrs. Burman explained CJ Pride is a program for the recruitment of diverse educators.

Public Comment ~ up to 15 minutes

Parul Khema, 70 Elmwood Drive, expressed that SEPAC is not running correctly and asked for training for parents so they can lead them, a clear agenda and more than two meetings a year.

Nisha Khanna, 120 Shrewsbury Drive, asked for the definition of evidence based programs as listed in the grant and under special education, suggested we look at the impact a program is making versus the number of staff or anecdotal data.

Keith Hines asked how he could get on the next board agenda to give a presentation on hydroponic farming and Ms. Messer responded he should reach out to Mr. Robinson via email.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:00 p.m., Mr. Cohen made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mrs. Khanna seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mr. Cohen, Mrs. Khanna, Mrs. Konner, Ms. Messer
Nayes - None

Respectfully submitted,

Steven K. Robinson
Board Secretary

November 9, 2021