

MOONACHIE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Office of the Business Administrator/Board Secretary

MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING

Robert L. Craig School
Virtual Meeting
February 9, 2021

Call to order by Board President

Meeting opened at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call

Members Present: David Vaccaro

Charles Pallas

Matthew Vaccaro

Edmond Monti

Members Absent: James Campbell

Also Present: James Knipper, Acting Superintendent

Laurel Spadavecchia, Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Dana Genatt, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Connor Kimmel, Board Attorney

Dennis McKeever, Board Attorney

Pledge of Allegiance

State of Compliance:

The New Jersey Open Public Meeting Law was enacted to ensure the rights for 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 the Act, the Business Administrator/Board Secretary has caused notice of this meeting to be sent, announcing time and place thereof, and, to the extent known, the agenda of this meeting to the following: Borough of Moonachie and Office of the Superintendent of Schools.

- Acceptance of Minutes of January 19, 2021 closed session and regular session, and Superintendent Report Minutes – Attachment 1.1

Motion: Edmond Monti

Seconded: Matthew Vaccaro

Action taken: 4 Ayes. 1 Absent. Motion Approved.

- Acceptance of Correspondence None.

Motion:

Seconded:

Action taken:

- Superintendent’s Report

Mr. Knipper was pleased to announce that this year’s Read Across America program would incorporate the social and emotional aspect of learning heightened by the Covid-19 pandemic. Ms. Genatt described the program called “Healthy Living” to address the additional stress students, staff and families are experiencing. Topics included in the program are sports and fitness, nutrition, sleep, emotional well-being and relationship building. Guest readers will be present including those who incorporate a healthy lifestyle in their daily lives. The program takes place virtually on March 1-5, 2021.

Mr. Knipper also announced that teachers are busy working on aligning best practices in reading and ELA between younger grades and middle school teachers. Ms. Genatt is also actively reviewing core curriculum resources to incorporate in the 2021-2022 school year.

Mr. Knipper also announced the rate of Covid-19 transmission rates are the lowest they have been and our staff is preparing to get vaccinated when it becomes available to them.

Mr. David Vaccaro commended Mr. Knipper, Ms. Genatt and Mrs. Spadavecchia for keeping the schools safe and open for learning for our community. He personally feels, not only as a board member but also as a member of the community, like the district is doing an excellent job. Mr. Monti seconded that as well as Mr. Pallas.

Motion: Matthew Vaccaro

Seconded: Edmond Monti

Action taken: 4 Ayes. 1 Absent. Motion Approved.

- Student of the Month

<u>December</u>	<u>Grade</u>
Haylie Castillo	2
Kiara Cerna	4
Samuel Santamaria	7

- Submission of HIB Cases – January 2021

<u>Investigations</u>	<u>Confirmed Cases</u>
0	0

- Public Comments - (Agenda Items Only)

In addition, please be aware that employees of this School District retain the right of privacy and shall retain all rights regarding defamation and slander according to the laws of New Jersey. The Board shall not be held liable for comments made by members of the public and, in order to protect the privacy rights of employees in the District, the Board shall not respond to statements made by the public of or about District employees.

2. Finance

Motion: Charles Pallas

Seconded: Matthew Vaccaro

Action taken: 4 Ayes. 1 Absent. Motion Approved.

1. Resolved to approve the Bills and Claims against the Board of Education for equipment, materials and supplies furnished and delivered, and for work done and performed for January 2021 for a total of \$136,252.75 – Attachment 2.1
2. Resolved to approve the Check Register for the month of January 2021 for \$429,331.64 – Attachment 2.2
3. Resolved to approve the Payroll Check Register for January 31, 2021 for \$97,489.06 – Attachment 2.3
4. Resolved to approve Title I SIA Part A carryover funds of \$3750 for the 2020-2021 school year to reflect the following ESEA funds – Attachment 2.4

ESEA Application Section	2020-2021 Funding
Title 1A	\$90,073
Title I SIA Part A	\$24,450
Title II	\$15,952
Title III	\$2506
Title IV	\$11,763

5. Resolved to approve the Addendum to Transportation Service Agreement between the Moonachie Board of Education and South Bergen Jointure Commission for the 2020-2021 school year – Attachment 2.5
6. Resolved that the Moonachie Board of Education request that the County Executive Superintendent of Schools grant a waiver of compliance with respect to the district's participation in Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) Program for the 2021-2022 school year – Attachment 2.6
7. Resolved to continue to participate as a member in the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey for cooperative purchasing for the 2020-2021 school year.

3. Policy None.

Motion:

Seconded:

Action taken:

4. Personnel

Motion: Matthew Vaccaro

Seconded: Edmond Monti

Action taken: 3 Ayes for Motion 1. 1 No for Motion 1. 1 Absent.

4 Ayes for Motion 2. 1 absent. Both motions approved.

Mr. Pallas asked what grades participated in the RLC TX/Drama Club and asked if it was held after school. Mr. Knipper stated it was for children in grades 6-8th on Mondays through Thursdays for 1 hour after school incorporating both in-person and virtual learners. Mr. Pallas stated he would rather spend money on academic programs and stated he votes “no” for this motion. Mr. Monti commented that he feels the program does an outstanding job of allowing students a time for self-expression especially during these pandemic times. He feels it is a very good program and he votes in favor of the motion. Mr. Matthew Vaccaro added that he was a past member of RLC TV/Drama Club and sees the value in a well-rounded education that goes beyond Math and ELA. It gives them the opportunity to be social and learn social skills and he votes in favor of the motion. Mr. Pallas originally thought the cost was \$35,000 and Mr. David Vaccaro stated the cost was \$3,500 for the remainder of the year. Mr. Pallas still feels the money should go towards academic programs. Mr. Monti asked Mr. Knipper how academics were, to which Mr. Knipper replied that the data coming in from the state is very promising and that the district is not experiencing a covid fall-off in terms of learning growth as other districts are experiencing. He also noted that we are only one of a very few school districts that is offering full day instruction with in-person instruction accounting for more than half of all school days. This and the hard work of our instructional staff is the reason behind the growth in learning and not the reverse. Mr. Knipper would love to incorporate middle school sports in the district, but as that is not viable at this time he noted that the offering of RLC TV/ Drama Club is one of the few after school activities the students can participate in. The cost of the program is only one-quarter of the cost that has been approved every year as it normally includes two teachers for a full year and the district is only providing one teacher for a half-year program. It is his recommendation that the RLC TV/Drama Club be allowed to begin. Mr. Monti asked if students would leave school and come back for club and Mr. Knipper stated that students will remain in school and all social distancing guidelines would continue. Mr. David Vaccaro took a roll call vote.

1. Resolved to approve Greg Keelen as RLC TV/ Drama Club Advisor for 77.5 hours for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year at \$45.68 per hour.
2. Resolved to approve Chaeyoung Lee as Part-Time Aide for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year, effective February 10, 2021 at \$14.12 per hour.

5. Curriculum

Motion: Charles Pallas
Seconded: Matthew Vaccaro
Action taken: 4 Ayes. 1 Absent. Motion Approved.

1. Resolved to approve workshops:

Destination	Date	Cost
2021 Annual NJAHPERD Convention - Joseph Gingerelli	February 22-23, 2021	No Cost
Art of Education Winter Conference - Lee Ten Hoeve	February 10, 2021	\$149.00

6. Facilities None.

Motion:

Seconded:

Action taken:

7. Old Business None.

Motion:

Seconded:

Action taken:

8. New Business

Mr. Pallas stated that Mrs. Genatt is currently researching core curriculum used by nearby Blue Ribbon School Districts and she also included a list of textbooks being used. Mr. Knipper stated that is correct and she will report back to the board with her recommendation once her research is complete.

Mr. Pallas also would like to suggest that the superintendent appoint two members of the staff to specifically determine what can be done to resolve the many existing grading problems and he is inquiring if any thought had been given to this suggestion? Mr. Knipper stated that he investigated the Genesis reporting system and noted there were no errors in the gradebook. He also stated he reviewed this with Mr. Pallas. He then offered to meet again with Mr. Pallas but asked if summer would be a more appropriate time to do so. Mr. David Vaccaro asked if the investigation Mr. Knipper is conducting has ever been a board directive? Mr. Knipper stated it was a request from Mr. Pallas. Mr. David Vaccaro then asked Mr. Pallas to bring any concerns directly to the Board of Education for their determination whether an investigation is warranted. Mr. Pallas replied that he will try to abide by that request, but he feels like his investigation into this matter should be addressed. Mr. David Vaccaro stated that Mr. Pallas follow the protocol of bringing his concerns to the Board of Education for a formal discussion and vote of the Board to proceed. Mr. Monti inquired, as member of the Curriculum Committee, how he should proceed in discussing any concerns. Mr. David Vaccaro replied that as committee members meet and discuss issues and concerns, at that point they can bring their findings to the whole of the Board to have the Board determine if this is something they want the Superintendent to move on. A discussion followed to address Mr. Pallas' concerns of teachers

not having the same amount of grades as their cohort teacher, therefore having a discrepant amount of marks for students to be graded on as well as extra-credit and the weight of tests/quizzes, homework, and participation. Mr. Monti noted that the grading system has been revamped two summers ago and Mr. Knipper thanked Mr. Pallas and Mr. Monti for their work on this and assured the Board that teachers are adhering to the new grading system.

Motion: Matthew Vaccaro

Seconded: Edmond Monti

Action taken: 4 Ayes. 1 Absent. Motion Approved.

9. Information Items

1. Average Monthly Attendance from 1/1/21 – 1/31/21 – Attachment 9.1

2. Monthly Report of Attendance Officer for the month of January 2021 – Attachment 9.2

10. Discussion Items

11. Public Comments

Open: 7:24 p.m.

Closed: 7:25 p.m.

12. Adjournment at 7:26 p.m.

Motion: Charles Pallas

Seconded: Matthew Vaccaro

Action taken: 4 Ayes. 1 Absent. Motion Approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laurel Spadavecchia

Laurel Spadavecchia, Business Administrator/Board Secretary