

SOUTH PLAINFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
125 Jackson Avenue  
South Plainfield, NJ 07080  
Telephone: 908-754-4620

**Special Business Meeting– Wednesday, August 1, 2018 – 6:00 P.M.**  
**South Plainfield High School**  
**200 Lake Street**  
**South Plainfield, NJ 07080**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Seesselberg called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. SALUTE TO FLAG

III. ROLL CALL- Stephen Fried, Assistant Business Administrator/  
Assistant Board Secretary

Present: Mrs. Anesh, Mr. Giannakis, Mr. Pennisi, Mrs. Wolak, Mr. Chapman, Mr. Seesselberg

Mr. Cassio arrived at 6:07 p.m.

Mr. Both arrived at 6:47 p.m.

Absent: Mrs. Boyle

Also Present: Dr. Noreen Lishak, Superintendent; Ms. Mary Malyska, Assistant Superintendent; Mr. Stephen Fried, Assistant Business Administrator/Assistant Board Secretary; Mr. Joseph Roselle, Legal Counsel

Announcement:

South Plainfield Public Schools Mission Statement:

Students are the focus of the South Plainfield Public Schools. We will provide a dynamic, rigorous, relevant and technology-enriched curriculum, guided by the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. Our mission is to develop life-long learners who are prepared to succeed in a global and diverse society. We are resolved to educate the whole child, instilling the desire within our students to question and to become divergent thinkers who can achieve their fullest potential.

In accordance with the terms of the Sunshine Law, adequate notice of this meeting was posted in all school buildings, the Administration Building, Borough Clerk's office, Police Headquarters, Public Library, four newspapers and W.C.T.C. on July 27, 2018.

Special Business Meeting  
August 1, 2018

Please be advised:

- There is no smoking on school grounds - inside or outside - at any time.
- Please silence all electronic devices.
- Pursuant to District Policy #0167, each statement made by a participant shall be limited to three minutes' duration and no participant may speak more than once on the same topic.

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

RESOLVED, pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1, *et. seq.*) that the Board meets in closed session to discuss confidential matters pertaining to personnel and legal matters.

1. a matter rendered confidential by federal or state law
2. a matter in which release of information would impair the right to receive government funds
3. material the disclosure of which constitutes an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy
4. a collective bargaining agreement and/or negotiations related to it
5. a matter involving the purchase, lease, or acquisition of real property with public fund
6. protection of public safety and property and/or investigations of possible violations or violations of law
7. pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation and/or matters of attorney-client privilege
8. specific prospective or current employees unless all who could be adversely affected request an open session
9. deliberation after a public hearing that could result in a civil penalty or other loss

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the matters discussed in closed session shall be made public as soon as the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis

SECOND: Mr. Pennisi

VOTE: 6-0

V. COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

A. Agenda Additions and/or Deletions

Mr. Chapman said that he would like to make an addition to the agenda in that my family would like the board to approve the donation of two team lunches for the football players during their summer split sessions that are coming up in a couple of weeks. We estimate the cost to be between \$500-600.

Motion to add donation as item number two under Curriculum and Student Activities.

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis SECOND: Mrs. Anesh VOTE: 6-0

Mr. Cassio said that he would also like to donate through Twin City Pharmacy a lunch for the football team. He said that he just found out about this about an hour ago so he would like to make a donation as well.

Motion to add donation as item number three under Curriculum and Student Activities.

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis SECOND: Mr. Pennisi VOTE: 6-0

B. Public Comments (Agenda Items Only)

VI. CURRICULUM/STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. Approval for Middle School 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Trip

RESOLVED, upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools that the Board of Education approve the following trip for students:

Target Group: South Plainfield Middle School 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Students

Washington D.C. and Annapolis, MD

June 5, 2019 - June 7, 2019

Trip funded through parents and multiple fundraisers

Number of students: 250

Trip Proposal: Roger Vroom, Kelly Richkus

Chaperones: 1 District Administrator, 13 Faculty/Staff Members, Approximately 55 parent chaperones (TBD) at a later date.

2. Accept Gift Donation

Accept the donation of two lunches valued at approximately \$500-600 the high school football team during their upcoming summer split sessions from Doug and Michele Chapman.

3. Accept Gift donation

Accept the donation of lunch to the high school football team during their summer split sessions from Twin City Pharmacy.

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis SECOND: Mr. Chapman VOTE: 7-0

Special Business Meeting  
August 1, 2018

VII. PERSONNEL

Motion by Member Mr. Giannakis, seconded by Mr. Pennisi to accept the recommendation of the superintendent and adopt the following:

RESOLVED, that the South Plainfield Board of Education approve the following:

(NOTE: Approval of this resolution authorizes the superintendent to submit to the county superintendent applications for emergent hiring and the applicant's attestation and proof that he/she has not been convicted of any disqualifying crime pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:6-7.1 et. seq., N.J.S.A. 18A:39-17 et. seq., or N.J.S.A. 18A:6-4.13 et. seq. This includes background checks and fingerprinting for those employees listed below: (All appointments are contingent upon receipt of proper teaching certification **and the satisfaction of all requirements set forth in P.L. 2018, c.5.** All salary placements are pending receipt of college transcripts verifying degree status and letter stating years of service in other districts, \*denotes mentoring required.)

**VII.A. Resignations, Retirements, Terminations**

RESOLVED, that the South Plainfield Board of Education approve the following:

Code	Name	Action	Position	Location	Date Eff.	Discussion
1.	Valencia, Dana	Resign	Italian Teacher	High School	9/25/18 or sooner	Letter Dated 07/27/18
2.	Colameco, Rachel	Resign	Physical Therapist	District	9/29/18 or sooner	Letter dated 08/01/18

**VII.B. Appointments, Transfers**

Code	Name	Action	Position	Deg /Step	Salary/ Hrly. Rate	Location	Date Effective	Date Term.	Discussion
1.	*Winter, Katherine	Approve	Kindergarten Teacher	Step 1 BA	\$52,735	Kennedy School	09/01/2018	06/30/2019	Acct#: 11-120-100-101-05

**VII.C. Adjustments, Stipends, Degree Changes**

Code	Name	Action	Position	Degree/Step/ No. of Hrs.	Salary/ Stipend	Location	Date Effective	Date Term.	Discussion
1.	Giannakis, Jaime	Approve	Head Competition Cheerleading Coach	Step 1	\$5,321	High School	11/12/2018	03/22/2019	Acct#: 11-402-100-100-22
1.	Udrija, Emina	Approve	Volunteer Field Hockey Coach	N/A	N/A	High School	8/08/2018	12/03/2019	N/A

DISCUSSION:

Dr. Lishak said that she would like to make a statement regarding one of the names on for appointment in reference to our cheer team. She said that we recognize that as a district we had a systemic issue in our tryout process and as we move forward, she will be working closely with the Athletic Director, Mr. McCann as well as Mr. Spring and all of the coaches in order to make sure that we have a clear criteria and process. The issue itself was systemic and our intention is to address these issues as we move forward so something like this will never happen again.

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis

SECOND: Mr. Pennisi

VOTE: 7-0

Special Business Meeting  
August 1, 2018

Mr. Giannakis abstained on item VII.C. #1

VIII. FINANCE

1. Approve Professional Development Expenditure – Staff/Board Member

RESOLVED, upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approve the following travel expenditures, which are compliant with State payment guidelines, employee job responsibilities and critical to the needs of the school district pursuant to Bylaw #0147. (Acct. #11.000.230.585.12)

Name	Title	Workshop	Dates	Components	Not to Exceed Amounts
Debbie Boyle	Board Member	NJSBA Leadership Training Monmouth Junction, NJ	8/1/18	Cost: Mileage	\$50.00 \$12.40

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis

SECOND: Mr. Pennisi

VOTE: 7-0

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Michael Surowiec said that he has a couple of questions with regards to the situation and developments with respect to the competition cheer issue. He said that he is trying to understand how it is decided that everyone that tried out makes the team. He also asked if economic consideration is factored in when you decide to take every girl on. He said that there are uniforms to be purchased, scheduling, bussing and maybe additional coaches if the size of the team reaches that magnitude.

Mr. Surowiec asked what the plan is for dealing with an individual, a parent in particular, that has broken the code of conduct before the season even begins. He said that this individual has recently insulted and disparaged children, parents, and coaching staff openly and publicly on social media. Mr. Surowiec said that he thinks that it is unacceptable and he doesn't think that's the forum, especially when you are bringing kids into it. He said that it creates a real issue irrespective of the systemic issue that you have with the way that the selection process was implemented. He said that it seems that the selection process is across the board with all athletics where every kid makes the team. He said that he doesn't know how cheer was any different in the respect that those that didn't make it, and there were some that made the team last year that didn't make it this year, so it didn't seem to be a bias decision by any means. It seems that it was done the way that everyone had expected it to be done.

Mr. Surowiec asked if other options were given to those athletes or participants that tried out and didn't make it. Were they given the option to try out for track or some other athletic endeavor as his daughter was given when she didn't make the middle school team

and may or may not have had the same skills or qualifications of the girls that did. He said that now all of a sudden they are all on the team. He said that it doesn't make a whole lot of sense and the one thing he is trying to understand is that how one parent's complaint about being displeased about the process seems to govern everyone's actions over the past few weeks with the resignation of the coach which, in talking with other parents, seems to have been made under duress and possibly the contents of it coached by executive influence. Mr. Surowiec said that he thinks that there are a lot of parents that are unhappy with the way that it was handled and that he agrees that something should be done but he doesn't know if what was done was the correct decisions to make at the time.

#### X. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Pennisi said that Mrs. Boyle asked him to remind everybody that she wasn't here because she is at a workshop that she had already signed up for but that she also supported the recommendations that are on the agenda today.

Mrs. Anesh said that as a board member, sometimes our decisions are very difficult to make and a lot of times we have to make the decisions that are in the best interest of our students. As far as the cheer goes we want this cheer team to move forward and without a decision tonight that may not have been possible. We have to have trust in our administrators that they make the best selection for the positions that they interview for and we have to support them when it is necessary and that's the reason for my decision tonight and the fact that we are addressing some issues in the district.

Mr. Pennisi said just so you can clarify one of the things when you are talking about procedures, you are talking about every sport because there have been issues in other sports similar to this and that is what the administration is going to be working on. He said that he wants parents to know that it doesn't just have to do with this issued because obviously if you were working by the past and you were there you would be doing the same thing over and over again.

Mr. Seesselberg said that he would like to add that it's not just in sports. There are selection processes for drum major and leaders in the band, the leads in the plays, captains of robotic teams, debate team, and things like that. He said that what he has asked Dr. Lishak to do with the rest of her administrators is to come up with a clear and defined procedure that everybody knows about going in and making sure it's fair to all of the participants so that we don't go through this again.

Special Business Meeting  
August 1, 2018

XI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business of the Board, there was a motion to adjourn at 6:50 p.m.

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis

SECOND: Mr. Pennisi

VOTE: 7-0

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Fried  
Assistant Business Administrator/Assistant Board Secretary