

## Regular Meeting

April 15, 2021

The Board met in a Regular meeting on Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was held at the Early Childhood Center, 270 First Street, Palisades Park, NJ. Access to the meeting was also provided via videoconferencing.

The assemblage saluted the Flag.

Roll Call: J. Kim, J. Mattessich, A. Garcia, S. Jang, R. Lee, K. Lim, T. Matarazzo, E. Min, T. Yang  
Dr. Joseph Cirillo, Mrs. Eulalia Gillis, Mr. Ben Choi

### **Statement of Presiding Officer:**

In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, I hereby state that adequate notice of this Regular meeting has been provided to the public by a written notice dated February 9, 2021.

The meeting has been:

- Emailed to all staff members.
- Communicated to at least one of the Board's designated newspapers.
- Filed with the Borough Clerk of Palisades Park.

### **Report of the Superintendent:**

Our High School seniors will be graduating on Monday, June 21<sup>st</sup> at Overpeck County Park located at 200 Roosevelt Place, Palisades Park. Time TBD.

The District is participating in the "NJ Clean Energy Program". This program offers incentives/rebates to participating K-12 school districts for upgrading their heating, lighting systems & equipment to promote a more energy efficient environment.

### **Report of the Board President:**

Mr. Kim announced that the PPEA negotiation have concluded, hopefully satisfactory to all involved. Negotiating a contract is a difficult task. The Board of Education serves the entire community, students as well as teachers.

Board member, Anieska Garcia, read a statement on behalf of the Board of Education. (Attached)

### **Report of the Board Attorney:**

Mr. Choi thanked the Board's Negotiations Committee. Negotiations concluded at 11:16 p.m. on April 14, 2021. The Board tried to negotiate fairly and to everyone's benefit.

The Board will vote to ratify 2 separate MOA's. One for a term of July 2019 – June 2022 and another for the period of July 2022 – June 2024.

Stephanie Jang thanked Mr. Ben Choi for his expert legal advice during the negotiations period.

## Statement on behalf of the Board of Education of Palisades Park

Dated: April 15, 2021  
Written and read by Anieska J. Garcia

The Palisades Park Board of Education would like to thank all who were involved in assisting to reach a resolution with the PPEA. As many of you are aware, there were times that while we were working towards a resolution, coming to an agreement seemed unattainable. Throughout this challenging process, the Board became aware, through the press- not through any direct notification from the PPEA, that a vote of no confidence was made against the Board. Respectfully, the PPEA is entitled to its opinion. Notwithstanding, we are happy that we were able to come together in the end and executed a Memorandum of Agreement earlier this week. We look forward to putting this difficult time behind us and working together in the best interest of the students of Palisades Park.

The purpose of this statement is not to address the no confidence vote made against this Board, but rather the inexplicable vote of no confidence made against the Superintendent Dr. Joseph Cirillo. We refer to the vote against Dr. Cirillo as being inexplicable at best, misinformed at worst- because Dr. Cirillo was a neutral party during negotiations. To be clear, Dr. Cirillo does not have a vote as to the Memorandum of Agreement. Dr. Cirillo's role as a neutral and most significantly as a resource in providing the Board with data and information that the Board would not have readily available during negotiations. It is not an exaggeration to say that Dr. Cirillo's role, despite being a neutral- was invaluable. The Board wants to put to rest any doubt and make it clear to the public that it has every confidence in Dr. Cirillo's leadership and role as Superintendent for the Palisades Park School District.

The Board would also like to address the disparaging comments made against Ben Choi and the Choi Law Group, who provided legal counsel to the Board throughout this process. The disparaging comments made against the Choi Law group were equally misplaced and in our opinion- unwarranted. The role of an attorney is not tell his or her client what to do. An attorney can not force their client to act against their will. The role of an attorney is to advise its

client on the law. It is that simple. When the Board consulted with the Choi Law group on legal matters and/or legal issues, the Choi Law group did what it was hired to do- render legal counsel. That was its sole role- to give the Board legal advice- and Ben Choi and the Choi Law Group did so competently, admirably and with exceptional grace.

As we look towards the future, it is our hope that we can renew the commitment that we made when we all chose to serve this community, whether as Board Members or members of staff at the Palisades Park School District, to serve in the best interest of the students of Palisades Park.

**Minute Approval:**

Motion to approve the March 18, 2021 minutes: J. Mattessich, second by T. Matarazzo, all ayes on roll call. 9 – 0

**Committee Reports:**

**Report of the Finance Committee – Mr. John Mattessich, Chairman**

- 1.) RESOLVED, that the Palisades Park Board of Education upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the transfers for the month ending March 31, 2021 in accordance with Title 18A:22-8.1 and designates the Interim Business Administrator make budget transfers between line items as necessary between month meetings of the Board.
  
- 2.) RESOLVED, that the Palisades Park Board of Education upon recommendation of the Superintendent, accepts the financial reports of the Business Administrator/Treasurer of School Moneys for the month ending February 28, 2021.

Furthermore, the Board certifies that in accordance with NJAC 6:20-2A that no major fund or account in the school budget has been over-expended, and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district’s financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year. (Report on file in the Board Office for review).

- 3.) RESOLVED, that the Palisades Park Board of Education upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the submission and acceptance of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSR II) funds provided by the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, effective through September 30, 2023, per the amounts listed below:

CRRSA ESSER II Allocation	Learning Acceleration	Mental Health Supports & Services
\$1,797,140	\$115,332	\$45,000

- 4.) RESOLVED, that the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent accepts the Financial Reports for the High School and the Lindbergh School Student Activities Accounts, month ending 03/31/21. (**Attached**)
  
- 5.) RESOLVED, that the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approves the 03/30/21 payroll in the amount of \$776,152.77 and 04/15/21 in the amount of \$743,332.82.

- 6.) RESOLVED, that the Palisades Park Board of Education upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the submission and acceptance of the FY21 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Basic Flow Through Grant amendment and carryover funds as follows:

Grant	Original Amount	FY20 Carryover Funds	Total FY22 Amount
IDEA Basic Flow Through	\$468,607	\$32,154	\$500,761

- 7.) RESOLVED, that the Palisades Park Board of Education upon recommendation by the Superintendent, to rescind motion #8 approved by the Palisades Park Board of Education on December 16, 2020, approving the application to budget carryover funds from the FY20 ESEA grant, as there are revisions to the carryover funds.

- 8.) RESOLVED, that the Palisades Park Board of Education upon recommendation by the Superintendent, approves the submission and acceptance of the FY21 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Consolidated Grant amendment and carryover funds as follows:

ESEA Title	Original Amount	FY20 Carryover Funds	Total FY22 Amount
Title I-A	\$564,388	\$36,910	\$601,298
Title I Reallocated	\$ 46,180	\$0	\$ 46,180
Title I SIA Part A	\$104,400	\$84,339	\$188,739
Title II	\$ 87,917	\$21,139	\$109,056
Title III	\$ 91,202	\$77,699	\$168,901
Title III Immigrant	\$ 30,472	\$22,895	\$ 53,367
Title IV	\$ 30,820	\$17,312	\$ 48,132

- 9.) RESOLVED, that the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approves a workshop (virtual) for Joanna Hali, CST Supervisor. "The NJ Special Education Annual Summit", May 7, 2021. Cost: \$149.00

10.) RESOLVED, that the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approves the April bill list in the amount of \$705,658.57.

Fund 10 (General/Current Fund)	\$575,967.12
Fund 20	<u>\$129,691.45</u>
	<b>\$705,658.57</b>

11.) RESOLVED, that the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approves a “salary adjustment request” for Eimy Padron, ECC Teacher.

Present Step/Salary: Step 5BA - \$51,807.00

Adjustment: Step 5 BA+15 - \$52,507.00 \* (Pending negotiations)

12.) RESOLVED, that the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approves the following requests for tuition reimbursement:

<u>Staff Member</u>	<u>Course/# Credits</u>	<u>Cost per Credit</u>
Inne Cho	Special Education Law (3)	\$741.75
	Current Law in Spec Ed (3)	\$741.75
	Research in Spec Ed (3)	\$741.75
Jenna Mancini	Lipid Biochemistry (3)	\$700.50
	Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (3)	\$700.50

Note: Tuition reimbursement is paid at the end of the school year.

13.) RESOLVED, that the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approves a residential private school placement at Bonnie Brae School in Basking Ridge, NJ. Annual tuition: \$43,890.00 (to be pro-rated). Effective date: 03/23/2021.

Motion by: J. Mattessich

Second by: A. Garcia

All ayes on roll call: 9 – 0

Report of the Buildings & Grounds Committee – Mrs. Stephanie Jang

- 1.) RESOLVED, that the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approves the renewal of a lease agreement with the “New Mercy Church” beginning Sunday, April 11, 2021 through December 2021.  
The Lessee will utilize the High School auditorium on Sundays between the hours of 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. The Lessee agrees to comply with the maximum occupancy requirements of the leased space and continue to follow mandated safety protocols.
- 2.) RESOLVED, that the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approves a request from the Palisades Park Recreation Department to use the High School gym on Tuesday & Thursday evenings beginning June 22<sup>nd</sup> through August 12<sup>th</sup>. The Rec Dept. is sponsoring a “basketball camp” for elementary school students in Grades K – 8.
- 3.) RESOLVED, that the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approves a request from the Palisades Park Recreation Department for the use of the Lindbergh School cafeteria and field beginning July 6<sup>th</sup> through August 6<sup>th</sup> for a “summer camp” program. Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- 4.) RESOLVED, that the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approves a request from John Wiseman (HS teacher/coach) to use the High School gym the week of June 28<sup>th</sup> between the hours of 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. A basketball camp will be held for students in grades 3 – 9. There will be a fee for participation in this program.
- 5.) RESOLVED, that the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approves the use of the HS gym on the following dates: June 21 & 23, July 12 & 14, and July 26 & 28.  
Program: - An “open gym” boys basketball program for students in Grades 9 – 12.

Motion by: S. Jang

Second by: J. Mattessich

All ayes on roll call: 9 – 0

**Report of the Personnel Committee – Dr. Thomas Matarazzo**

- 1.) RESOLVED, that the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approves the appointment of the following replacement teacher, effective April 19, 2021:

Ji Sung Rhyu  
MA – Columbia University  
Chemistry Teacher  
Step 7/6 yr: \$61,107.00 \*

- 2.) RESOLVED, that the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent accepts the resignation of Sandra Reyes, district custodian, effective 03/31/2021.
- 3.) RESOLVED, that the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approves Ana Martinez (part-time custodian) as a full- time custodian, effective 04/19/21. Salary: \$32,480.00 + benefits. (Replacing Sandra Reyes)
- 4.) RESOLVED, that the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent accepts the resignation of Luvia Osuna, Lindbergh School Aide, effective 04/30/2021.
- 5.) RESOLVED, that the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approves the following appointment:

Evelyn Salazar  
MA – Montclair University  
B.S.I. Teacher @ L.S.  
Effective: 04/26/21  
\$37.00/hour, not to exceed 29.5 hours per week

- 6.) RESOLVED, that the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approves an hourly pay increase (\$12.50) for the following custodians:

Clorinda Belevan	Luz Perez
Claudia Alonzo	Rosemary DaSouza
Fortunato Rojas	Jario Grisales

**\*Pending negotiations**

Motion by: T. Matarazzo

Second by: J. Mattessich

All ayes on roll call: 9 – 0



**Report of the Calendar Committee – Mrs. Eun Min**

1.) RESOLVED, that the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approves the attached school calendar for the 2021/2022 school year:

Motion by: E. Min

Second by: S. Jang

All eyes on roll call: 9 – 0

**New Business:**

1.) RESOLVED, that the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent approves Monday, June 21, 2021 as the date for the High School graduation ceremony.

2.) RESOLVED, that the Board upon the recommendation upon the recommendation of the Superintendent accepts a proposal from “Renaissance Unemployment Insurance Consultants”.

RUIC will provide the district an effective and efficient claims control program.

**Pricing: April 15, 2021 – June 30, 2021 No Charge**

**July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022 \$1,800.00**

Motion by: A. Garcia

Second by: S. Jang

All eyes on roll call: 9 – 0

**Closed Session:**

Motion to move into Executive Session: J. Mattessich, Second by: E. Min, All eyes on roll call.

Mr. Choi will advise the “non-conflicted” Board members on the PPEA negotiations/settlement.

**Open Session:**

The Board members voted to approve and ratify the following Memorandums of Agreement between the BOE and the Palisades Park Education Association:

- 1.) WHEREAS, the 2016 – 2019 Agreement between the Palisades Park Board of Education (PPBOE) and the Palisades Park Education Association (PPEA) expired in or about June 2019;

WHEREAS, the PPBOE and the PPEA have now negotiated terms memorialized in the attached Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) executed by the respective negotiating team members;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the PPBOE hereby approves and ratifies the attached MOA – Term: July 2019 – June 2022.

Introduced by: S. Jang

Second by: A. Garcia

Ayes on roll call: J. Kim, J. Mattessich, A. Garcia, S. Jang, R. Lee, K. Lim

(Members: Matarazzo, Min, Yang are conflicted and cannot vote on the MOA)

- 2.) WHEREAS, the 2016 to 2019 Agreement between the Palisades Park Board of Education (PPBOE) and the Palisades Park Education Association (PPEA) expired in or about June 2019.

WHEREAS, the PPBOE and the PPEA have not negotiated terms memorialized in the attached Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) executed by the respective negotiating team members,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the PPBOE hereby approves and ratifies the attached MOA – Term: July 2022 – June 2024.

Introduced by: R. Lee

Second by: A. Garcia

Ayes on roll call: J. Kim, J. Mattessich, A. Garcia, S. Jang, R. Lee, K. Lim

(Members: Matarazzo, Min, Yang are conflicted and cannot vote on the MOA)

Dr. Matarazzo congratulated the Negotiations Committee for their hard work. He commented that not all the Board members were privy to what transpired during the ongoing negotiation meetings because they were conflicted out.

**Audience Participation:**

Rose Lonis announced a Fundraiser for the Class of 2021 at the Elks Lodge, 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Palisades Park on Sunday, April 25<sup>th</sup>.

She also thanked Dr. Cirillo and the BOE for scheduling a Senior Prom and Graduation Ceremony For the Class of 2021.

Mr. Ben Choi issued a final statement regarding the PPEA contract process, "comments directed against Dr. Cirillo, himself and his law firm were unfair. Dr. Cirillo was neutral throughout the process". Mr. Choi stated that "the process was challenging and that he advised the Board lawfully and properly and was attacked because of it on Twitter, Facebook and in the press". He concluded by stating "he appreciated the comments of support by the Board and looked forward to refocusing and working with the Board and the PPEA to carry out our duties to the children and to the community".

There was no further public commentary.

A motion by T. Matarazzo, seconded by E. Min, all ayes on roll call to adjourn the meeting.