

**FORT LEE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
FORT LEE, NEW JERSEY**

**MINUTES – SPECIAL PUBLIC WORK SESSION**

Monday, March 4, 2013

Fort Lee High School Auditorium,  
3000 Lemoine Ave. Fort Lee, New Jersey 07024

1. The Special Public Work Session was called to order at 7:00 PM by Mr. Yusang Park, President of the Fort Lee Board of Education.

2. Mr. Joseph Surace led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

3. **PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT**

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice 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 Fort Lee Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time, and place thereof posted in the entrance hall of the Board Office, 2175 Lemoine Avenue; published in the Board's designated online media outlet/newspapers: Fort Lee Patch.com, The Record, The Star Ledger, The Suburbanite; filed with the Clerk of the Borough of Fort Lee; and mailed to all persons, if any, who have requested said notice. Please be advised that this meeting is being taped and will be broadcasted on local TV and the district's website at a future date.

During the course of the board meeting, the Fort Lee Board of Education offers members of the public an opportunity to address issues regarding the operation of the Fort Lee Public Schools. The Board reminds those individuals who take this opportunity to identify themselves by name and address and to limit their comments to items listed on the agenda and/or items directly related to the operation of the School District. Issues raised by members of the public may or may not be responded to by the Board. All comments will be considered and a response will be forthcoming if and when appropriate. The Board asks all members of the public to be courteous and mindful of the rights of other individuals when speaking. Specifically, comments regarding students and employees of the Board are discouraged and will not be responded to by the Board. Students and employees have specific legal rights afforded by the laws of New Jersey. The Board bears no responsibility nor will it be liable for any comments made by members of the public. Members of the public should consider their comment in light of the legal rights of those affected or identified in their comments and be aware that they are legally responsible and liable for their comments.

4. **ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Mrs. Esther Han Silver, Mrs. Holly Morell, Mrs. Candace Romba,  
Mr. David Sarnoff, Mr. Peter Suh, Mr. Joseph Surace (left 8:21 pm),  
Ms. Helen Yoon and Mr. Yusang Park

ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Sharon Amato, Mrs. Cheryl Balletto and Mr. Dennis McKeever, Esq.

ABSENT: Mr. Steven Engravalle and Mr. Carmelo Luppino, Jr.

5. **PUBLIC WORK SESSION: PURPOSE OF THIS SPECIAL PUBLIC WORK SESSION -**

- ◆ **TO ADJOURN IMMEDIATELY INTO PRIVATE SESSION TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL MATTERS**

6. At approximately 7:05 PM, Mr. David Sarnoff, offered, Mr. Peter Suh seconded by, to adjourn the Public Work Session and go into the Private Work Session. On voice vote, motion carried unanimously.
7. At approximately 8:05 PM the board of education readjourned into the Special Public Work Session

The board attorney read three resolutions that the board would be considering that night.

8. **QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON ITEMS LISTED ON TONIGHT'S AGENDA AND ANY OTHER TOPIC OF CONCERN**

- ◆ Mrs. Paula Colbath stated the resolutions are to approve an agreement, accept a resignation and to appoint Dr. Amato as acting superintendent? Can you tell the financial impact?
- ◆ Mr. Dennis McKeever said yes, Mr. Engravalle will be paid \$66,000 and we cannot divulge the strategy but through mutual compromise. We have a waiver and release for any claims under confidentiality and non-desperate clauses.
- ◆ Mrs. Paula Colbath asked if the \$66,000 includes expenses? Can we get a copy?
- ◆ Mr. Dennis McKeever stated you can OPRA it tomorrow. Prior to approval is not a public document.
- ◆ Mrs. Paula Colbath asked how long is Dr. Sharon Amato's appointment.
- ◆ Mr. Dennis McKeever stated that there no concrete plans and the board is pleased with the Dr. Sharon Amato.
- ◆ Mrs. Paula Colbath asked if the Board plans to do a new search. They should look at the list of interims and tell us next steps.
- ◆ Mr. Joseph Surace stated give us a chance to catch our breath.
- ◆ Mrs. Paula Colbath stated that this has been a situation since July 30, 2012.
- ◆ Mr. Sean Armone asked if the board can discuss the reason for the resignation.
- ◆ Mr. Dennis McKeever stated that the reason is the relationship has been broken.
- ◆ Mrs. Nancy Stern asked if the severance agreement have to go to the commissioner for approval.
- ◆ Mr. Dennis McKeever stated that he talked to the county office at this time. They don't have to sign off but will give a copy as a courtesy.
- ◆ Mrs. Nancy Stern asked if Dr. Sharon Amato will have terms and conditions and will there be any differential of compensation. A resolution will normally state that.
- ◆ Mr. Dennis McKeever stated that it is under negotiations.
- ◆ Mrs. Nancy Stern asked if the budget question is based upon the new state numbers and are we planning to redo them.
- ◆ Mrs. Cheryl Balletto stated yes. The new state aid figures were received on February 28<sup>th</sup> and the additional monies will be included during the public budget hearing on March 28<sup>th</sup>. It will be one of the edit checks from the county office.
- ◆ Mrs. Esther Han Silver stated that this is not an easy situation. There needs to be a lot of discussion and consideration. We have to decide what would be best for the students.
- ◆ Mrs. Candace Romba stated that she is looking forward to doing something and is thankful for Dr. Sharon Amato.
- ◆ Mr. David Sarnoff thanked the board members in this matter for participating in the discussion and Mr. Park's leadership. I reviewed the oath I took as a Board member and it requires me to make decisions for the welfare of our students. I hope to be talking about other issues such as installing WIFI throughout the district at future meetings.
- ◆ Ms. Helen Yoon agreed with all that was said. It is a difficult process. She opposed the appointment of Mr. Engravalle. It is a difficult decision.
- ◆ Mr. Peter Suh agreed and for the best interest of the district and no one came out happy. We are in good hands with Dr. Amato. The board worked hard.
- ◆ Mrs. Holly Morell found this to be difficult and also wanted the best interest at heart. She wants the healing to start.

- ◆ Mr. Yusang Park read a statement.

"Have we made the right decision tonight? Only the test of time will tell. But what I can tell you with certainty is that we are making a pragmatic decision that we believe to be the best decision that is both practical and realistic that frees this district to move forward so we can focus on what we are supposed to be focused on: providing our children with the best education that we can afford in a safest environment we can provide. This fact however does not change or hide the fact that this decision is distasteful.

If you came here tonight with an expectation that this board will do its utmost to do whatever it is necessary however distasteful, for the sake of our children even if it means to go against everything you believe in about justice and moral virtue ....You have been undoubtedly assured.

The system is broken, however noble its original intention it might have been, its present form and effects are very much perverted and deformed from its original noble purpose. Our current predicament shines a painful light on the undeniable fact that we need a fundamental change in the way we govern and run our public school systems.

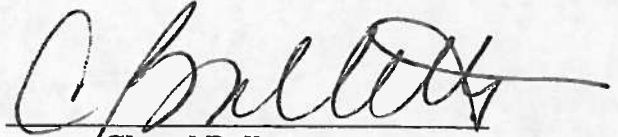
Until that day, however how much it sickens me to my stomach to reach a decision that we have made tonight, and whether you agree or disagree with our resolution, I hope you can agree with me when I tell you that this board is nothing less than the personification of true guardians who relentlessly advocates for our children and who will fight for your children within the system that is hopelessly slanted toward the special interest groups within the system under the guise of children's best interest."

FORT LEE BOARD OF EDUCATION

RESOLUTIONS

1P

*WHEREAS*, the Board hereby approves the Separation of Service Agreement between STEVEN ENGRAVALLE and the FORT LEE BOARD OF EDUCATION, executed on March 4, 2013.



Cheryl Balletto,  
Board Secretary

Dated: March 4, 2013

Motion by: Mr. Peter Suh

Seconded by: Mrs. Esther Han Silver

Motion Passed

Motion Failed

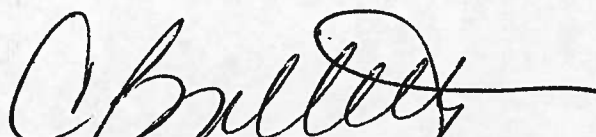
ROLL CALL	AYES	NAYS	ABSENT	ABSTAINED
MRS. ESTHER HAN SILVER	X			
MR. CARMELO LUPPINO			X	
MRS. HOLLY MORELL		X		
MRS. CANDACE ROMBA	X			
MR. DAVID SARNOFF	X			
MR. PETER SUH	X			
MR. JOSEPH SURACE	X			
MS. HELEN YOON	X			
MR. YUSANG PARK	X			

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the Separation of Service Agreement between STEVEN ENGRAVALLE and the FORT LEE BOARD OF EDUCATION, executed on March 4, 2013;

**WHEREAS**, on the close of business on March 4, 2013, STEVEN ENGRAVALLE will relinquish all rights to his employment as Superintendent of Schools with the FORT LEE BOARD OF EDUCATION;

**WHEREAS**, an irrevocable letter of resignation from all employment with the FORT LEE BOARD OF EDUCATION effective on or before March 4, 2013;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, the FORT LEE BOARD OF EDUCATION accepts the resignation of Steven Engravalle effective March 4, 2013.

  
Cheryl Balletto,  
Board Secretary

Dated: March 4, 2013

Motion by: Mr. Peter Suh

Seconded by: Mrs. Esther Han Silver

Motion Passed

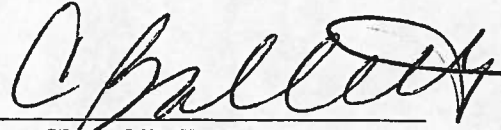
Motion Failed

ROLL CALL	AYES	NAYS	ABSENT	ABSTAINED
MRS. ESTHER HAN SILVER	X			
MR. CARMELO LUPPINO			X	
MRS. HOLLY MORELL		X		
MRS. CANDACE ROMBA	X			
MR. DAVID SARNOFF	X			
MR. PETER SUH	X			
MR. JOSEPH SURACE	X			
MS. HELEN YOON	X			
MR. YUSANG PARK	X			



3P

**RESOLVED**, that the FORT LEE BOARD OF EDUCATION, upon the recommendation of the President, appoints Dr. Sharon Amato, Ed.D. as Acting Superintendent of Schools, effective March 5, 2013.



Cheryl Balletto,  
Board Secretary

Dated: March 4, 2013

Motion by: Mr. Peter Suh

Seconded by: Mrs. Esther Han Silver

Motion Passed

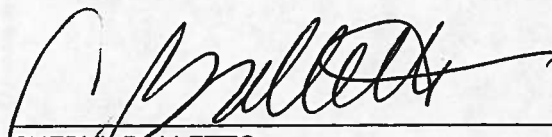
Motion Failed

ROLL CALL	AYES	NAYS	ABSENT	ABSTAINED
MRS. ESTHER HAN SILVER	X			
MR. CARMELO LUPPINO			X	
MRS. HOLLY MORELL	X			
MRS. CANDACE ROMBA	X			
MR. DAVID SARNOFF	X			
MR. PETER SUH	X			
MR. JOSEPH SURACE	X			
MS. HELEN YOON	X			
MR. YUSANG PARK	X			

9. At approximately 8:32 PM, Mr. Peter Suh, offered, Ms. Helen Yoon, seconded by, to adjourn the Special Public Work Session. On voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

Roll calls and resolutions of this meeting are attached.

Respectfully submitted,



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CHERYL BALLETO  
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR/BOARD SECRETARY

CB/mp  
Att.  
3-5-13