

Minutes of the Special Public Meeting of the Monroe Township Board of Education which was held at the Monroe Township High School on May 5, 2022.

The meeting was called to order by Board President Chrissy Skurbe at 7:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Ms. Michele Arminio (arrived at 7:07 p.m.)
Ms. Kathleen Belko
Ms. Karen Bierman
Ms. Gazala Bohra
Mr. Ken Chiarella
Ms. Katie Fabiano
Mr. Adi Nikitinsky
Ms. Kate Rattner
Ms. Chrissy Skurbe

JAMESBURG BOARD MEMBER REPRESENTATIVE PRESENT

Mr. Paul Rutsky

STAFF PRESENT

Ms. Chari Chanley, Acting Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Adam Layman, Assistant Superintendent of Schools

ATTORNEY PRESENT

Mr. Vito Gagliardi, Porzio, Bromberg & Newman, P.C.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC – approximately 25

A motion was made by Ms. Belko and seconded by Mr. Chiarella to appoint Ms. Karen Bierman as the Temporary Board Secretary for this meeting.

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Ms. Bierman took the roll call and read the following statement:

In accordance with the provisions of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law, the Monroe Township Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published and electronic notice provided by having the date, time, and place thereof posted May 03, 2022:

1. At all schools,
2. On the District website at <https://www.monroe.k12.nj.us/>,
3. Home News Tribune,
4. Cranbury Press, and
5. Filed with the Clerk of the Municipality.

Ms. Skurbe announced that she appreciates all who came out to the meeting this evening and reminded members of the public that when they speak during public forum, they should maintain a tone of respect and civility. Courteous behavior is extremely important to maintain proper decorum and foster a safe environment for all involved. All speakers should state their name and address and will have four minutes to speak.

PUBLIC FORUM

Betty Saborido 2 Barrymore Drive – thanked the Board and administration for their hours of service to the District. Ms. Saborido offered support for the members of the Board and expressed disappointment in the public “bashing” that some of the members have been receiving. On behalf of SEPAG, Ms. Saborido offered support on the extension of Ms. Chanley and offered many accomplishments district-wide that have been realized since she began in November.

Tim Eosso 2 Allison Court – speaking for the many residents that signed a petition back in 2018 requesting an investigation into the business administrator, Mr. Eosso spoke in favor of the suspension until an investigation can be conducted. Mr. Eosso offered apologies to the board members and administration that have been treated unfairly while serving the District. Mr. Eosso mentioned the decrease in taxes for the second year in a row and many other accomplishments that the current board and administration are responsible for.

Patricia Melia, Aloia Law Firm Bloomfield – on behalf of the Monroe Parents for Education, Ms. Melia spoke in regard to the resolutions listed on the agenda for the extension of the contract for the Acting Superintendent and the continued suspension of the employ # 1052. Ms. Melia spoke of potential conflicts that any of the board members may have with voting on either of those two resolutions. Ms. Melia stated that Ms. Skurbe, Mr. Nikitinsky and Mr. Chiarella should recuse themselves from voting on the Acting Superintendent’s contract based on their alleged close personal friendship.

Prakash Parab 33 Dayna Drive – regarding the business administrator’s position, Mr. Parab requested that legal process follow it’s due process. Mr. Parab suggested that a forensic audit is appropriate at least every three years considering the size of the school district. Next, Mr. Parab stated that the business administrator needs to keep out of politics and understand they report to the superintendent. Lastly, Mr. Parab requested that the members of the board vote yes on the extension of Ms. Chanley’s contract.

Elizabeth Hance Rossmore resident – expressed concern that her tax dollars will not be appropriately expended as she believes there will be legal battles by the erroneously suspending the business administrator or approving a further extension of the acting superintendent’s contract. Ms. Hance requested that the Board vote no on those two resolutions.

Liz Pruester 29 Spruce Meadows Drive – regarding a prior speakers comments regarding friendship, Ms. Pruester recalled the lack of concern with past board member’s friendships with the business administrator. Ms. Pruester stated that she has developed friendships with district employees and board members through her volunteer work and indicated that friendship is what this town needs more of.

Linda Bozowski 388 Orrington Lane – thanked the Board for moving the public forum before the closed session meeting this evening. Ms. Bozowski questioned what the inappropriate accounting principles in the business office, adding that the auditing firm delivered no negative comments on the audit. Ms. Bozowski questioned the alleged days off that Ms. Chanley is taking to go to school. Lastly, Ms. Bozowski questioned documents that were received via OPRA that indicate Ms. Chanley is not qualified to be a superintendent.

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Michael Olesky 50 Mayberry Ave – expressed disappointment with the resolutions listed on the agenda. Mr. Olesky stated that it appears that there is a personal vendetta against Mr. Gorski adding that he has been excluded from the referendum process. Mr. Olesky requested that the Board make decisions based on the best outcome for the students.

Pradeep Melam 4 Jake Place – Referring to the members of the public that are speaking in support of Mr. Gorski, Mr. Melam reported that he was the one who OPRA'd Mr. Gorski's Ethics Violations and forwarded it to past board leadership who continually stated that it was a personnel matter. Mr. Melam questioned where all the residents here tonight were back then. Lastly, Mr. Melam stated that the concern with the Middle School yearbook happened prior to Ms. Chanley becoming acting superintendent.

Roberta Nelsen 145 Tournament Drive – accused the Board of not being concerned with facts, transparency or ethics and requested that they vote no on the acting superintendent's extension and the suspension of the business administrator.

Madeline Riback 23 Riviera Drive - requested that the Board vote to restore Mr. Gorski to his position and vote no to extend Ms. Chanley's contract extension. Ms. Riback suggested that the Board develop board goals.

Brian Fabiano 19 Patricia Place – expressed concern with the barriers and police presence this evening, adding that it implies animosity between the Board and the community. Mr. Fabiano inquired why the extension of the acting superintendent's contract wasn't presented in this format back in February. Next, Mr. Fabiano stated that each board member knows if they are conflicted and asked that they recall and stand by the oaths they have taken and by their principals.

Tracey Hart 110 Avenue K East – inquired what the true issues are with the way the business administrator and the business office was operating. Ms. Hart stated that the Board has more pressing concerns that are more problematic such as overcrowding; curriculum development; passing a referendum; and an establishment of a community meeting group to address parental concerns. Ms. Hart asked the Board to not extend the acting superintendent's contract.

Kathy Kolupanowich 104 North Bergen Mills Road – spoke in support of Mr. Gorski being reinstated. Ms. Kolupanowich alleged that a plan has been in the works to get rid of Mr. Gorski and they are utilizing the Bill List as a catalyst for removing him.

Ravi Cheruvu 14 Byrne Court – stated that he wants the best highly qualified administrators to take care of the schools. Mr. Cheruvu implied that he hasn't seen any progress in the schools just chaos in the district.

Peter Tufano 10 Katherine Street – spoke regarding the previous speakers who supported no votes on the resolutions this evening, insinuating that most of those people here are not the ones fighting for fair funding and improvements to the district. Mr. Tufano recalled previous attorney advice that said there is nothing unethical about members of the board and administrators being friends.

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Doug Poye 4 Tamarack Road – spoke regarding the continued suspension of the business administrator. Mr. Poye spoke in support of and recalled many accomplishments of the business administrator and suggested if the Board doesn't agree with the payment of bills process they need to change the annual resolution and policy approving such payment procedures. Next, Mr. Poye expressed concern with the lack of decency the agenda and notice of the meeting contained, adding that although they may be legal, they are not right.

Sarah Aziz 3 Launcelot Drive – requested that the Board reinstate the business administrator. Ms. Aziz suggested that he was unjustly suspended without any due process. Ms. Aziz stated that the Board should order a forensic investigation into the abuse of tuition reimbursements for Ms. Chanley. Lastly, Ms. Aziz suggested that the Board vote no on the contract extension for Ms. Chanley.

Ram Ranganath 6 Owens Drive – suggested that if the ethics charges for Mr. Gorski were taken more seriously in the past, perhaps the District would be in a better shape today. Mr. Ranganath spoke in support of Ms. Chanley's extension and asked her not to get discouraged by a few members of the public as there the majority including the students support her.

CLOSED SESSION RESOLUTION

Be It Resolved that the Board of Education of the Township of Monroe hereby moves to go into Closed Session, in accordance with the Sunshine Law, Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975 (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 through 10:4-21), to discuss the following subject(s):

- Discussion of employment of School Business Administrator/Board Secretary
- Discussion of possible appointment of Acting School Business Administrator/Board Secretary
- Discussion regarding extending Acting Superintendent's appointment
- Matters protected by attorney/client privilege

Following closed session, action may be taken. The discussion conducted in closed session can be disclosed to the public at such time as the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

A motion was made by Mr. Chiarella and seconded by Mr. Nikitinsky that the members of the Board of Education go into closed session. Motion carried.

Ms. Arminio inquired if everyone involved has been properly noticed and documentation has been received. Ms. Skurbe responded yes.

Adjourned to Closed Session at 8:42 p.m.

Returned to Public Meeting at 11:04 p.m.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT **PERSONNEL (10-member vote)**

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A motion was made by Mr. Chiarella and seconded by Ms. Belko that Personnel Items A-C be approved by consent roll call. Motion carried with Ms. Fabiano and Ms. Rattner recusing, Ms. Arminio abstaining and Mr. Rutsky voting no on Item A; and Ms. Fabiano recusing, Ms. Rattner abstaining and Mr. Rutsky voting no on Item B. A copy of the Personnel section of the Superintendent's Report is attached to the official set of minutes.

A. The members of the Monroe Township Board of Education approve the following resolution extending the employment contract for Ms. Chari Chanley, Acting Superintendent of Schools, until June 30, 2022:

WHEREAS, on November 10, 2021, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-13.1, Chari Chanley was approved by the Acting Commissioner of Education to serve in the position of Acting Superintendent until February 10, 2022, while the District conducted a search for a permanent Superintendent; and

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-13.1 allows for extensions of such approvals for periods of three months; and

WHEREAS, as the search for a permanent Superintendent remained ongoing at the end of the first three-month period, upon the Board's request, the Acting Commissioner of Education extended the approval of the Acting Superintendent position for the period February 1, 2022 through May 11, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the search for a permanent Superintendent, which is being conducted with the assistance of the New Jersey School Boards Association, remains ongoing and the Board expects to be presented with a new group of resumes at a special meeting on May 19, with an eye toward naming a candidate by June 30, 2022; and

WHEREAS, in light of that timeline, the Board is in need of another extension of the approval of Ms. Chanley in the Acting Superintendent position.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby authorizes the Board Attorney to request from the Commissioner of Education an extension of the approval of Chari Chanley in the position of Acting Superintendent for the period May 12, 2022 through August 12, 2022, or until a permanent Superintendent begins employment, if sooner.

B. The Acting Superintendent recommends that members of the Monroe Township Board of Education approve the following resolution continuing the suspension of Employee #1052:

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:25-6, on April 27, 2022, the Acting Superintendent, with the approval of the Board President and Vice President, suspended Employee #1052, with pay; and

WHEREAS, the Acting Superintendent has reported this suspension to the Board as required by N.J.S.A. 18A:25-6; and

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WHEREAS, the Board wishes to continue the suspension at this time.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby continues the suspension, with pay, of Employee #1052, pending further action of the Board.

C. The Acting Superintendent recommends that members of the Monroe Township Board of Education approve the following resolution appointing Ms. Laura Allen as Acting School Business Administrator:

WHEREAS, a temporary vacancy currently exists in the position of School Business Administrator; and

WHEREAS, the position of School Business Administrator is critically important to the welfare of the School District; and

WHEREAS, the Board has sought candidates to fill the position of School Business Administrator on an acting basis, subject to further Board action; and

WHEREAS, following interviews of the candidates for the Acting School Business Administrator position, the Acting Superintendent believes that Ms. Laura Allen is the most qualified candidate for such acting position and recommends that the Board appoint Ms. Laura Allen as Acting School Business Administrator; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Laura Allen possesses the required certification and credentials for the position of Acting School Business Administrator; and

WHEREAS, the Board, following its independent review of Ms. Laura Allen's credentials and qualifications for such position, agrees with and accepts the Acting Superintendent's recommendation;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby appoints Ms. Laura Allen as Acting School Business Administrator at the rate of N/A, effective as of 12:01 a.m. on May 6, 2022 until 11:59 p.m. on June 30, 2022; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Acting Superintendent and/or her designee, hereby are authorized to obtain any and all approval(s) from the Department of Education required for Ms. Laura Allen to assume the position of School Business Administrator.

NEXT PUBLIC MEETING

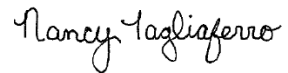
Ms. Skurbe stated that the next public meeting of the Monroe Township Board of Education will convene at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 11, 2022.

ADJOURNMENT

The public meeting adjourned at 11:07 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted,



Nancy Tagliaferro
Acting Board Secretary

The video recording of this meeting of the Monroe Township Board of Education can be found on the district website or <https://monroetv.viebit.com/index.php?folder=Board+of+Education>



Thursday, May 5, 2022
MONROE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

PLEASE TURN OFF ALL CELL PHONES DURING THE MEETING
ALL INDIVIDUALS SITTING AT THE BOARD TABLE SHOULD HAVE THEIR PHONES PUT AWAY

MONROE TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL
200 SCHOOLHOUSE ROAD
MONROE TOWNSHIP, NJ 08831
7:00 P.M.

Any member of the public may record the proceedings of a public meeting of the Board in a manner that does not interrupt the proceedings, inhibit the conduct of the meeting, or distract Board Members or other observers present at the meeting.

The Board will permit the use of tape recorders, still or movie cameras, or videotape cameras only when notice of such intended use has been given to the Board Secretary one day in advance of the meeting. Any video recording device must be located and operated from inconspicuous locations in the meeting room as determined by the presiding officer of the meeting. The presiding officer may also limit the number of video recording devices if he/she determines the number and position of the video recording devices will be an unnecessary intrusion to the meeting. In this event, preference will be given based on the order in which prior notice requesting to record the meeting was provided to the Board Secretary.

The presiding officer shall determine when any recording device interferes with the conduct of a Board meeting and may order that an interfering device be removed.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL

Subject	A. BOARD MEMBERS
Meeting	May 5, 2022 - MONROE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA
Category	3. ROLL CALL
Access	Public
Type	Information
Ms. Michele Arminio Ms. Kathleen Belko Ms. Karen Bierman Ms. Gazala Bohra Mr. Ken Chiarella Ms. Katie Fabiano Mr. Adi Nikitinsky Ms. Kate Rattner Ms. Chrissy Skurbe	

JAMESBURG BOARD MEMBER REPRESENTATIVE (See Note 2)

Mr. Paul Rutsky

STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Samaara Jain

Mr. Shivank Lattupally

4. STATEMENT

Subject	A. STATEMENT
Meeting	May 5, 2022 - MONROE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA
Category	4. STATEMENT
Access	Public
Type	Information

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1. At all schools,
2. On the District website at <https://www.monroe.k12.nj.us/>,
3. Home News Tribune,
4. Cranbury Press, and
5. Filed with the Clerk of the Municipality.

5. PUBLIC FORUM

Subject	A. PUBLIC FORUM (See Note 3)
Meeting	May 5, 2022 - MONROE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA
Category	5. PUBLIC FORUM
Access	Public
Type	
	See Note 3.

6. CLOSED SESSION RESOLUTION

Subject	A. CLOSED SESSION RESOLUTION
Meeting	May 5, 2022 - MONROE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA
Category	6. CLOSED SESSION RESOLUTION
Access	Public
Type	

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7. PERSONNEL

Subject	A. PERSONNEL ITEMS A-C
Meeting	May 5, 2022 - MONROE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA
Category	7. PERSONNEL
Access	Public
Type	

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WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-13.1 allows for extensions of such approvals for periods of three months; and

WHEREAS, as the search for a permanent Superintendent remained ongoing at the end of the first three-month period, upon the Board's request, the Acting Commissioner of Education extended the approval of the Acting Superintendent position for the period February 1, 2022 through May 11, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the search for a permanent Superintendent, which is being conducted with the assistance of the New Jersey School Boards Association, remains ongoing and the Board expects to be presented with a new group of resumes at a special meeting on May 19, with an eye toward naming a candidate by June 30, 2022; and

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WHEREAS, the position of School Business Administrator is critically important to the welfare of the School District; and

WHEREAS, the Board has sought candidates to fill the position of School Business Administrator on an acting basis, subject to further Board action; and

WHEREAS, following interviews of the candidates for the Acting School Business Administrator position, the Acting Superintendent believes that Ms. Laura Allen is the most qualified candidate for such acting position and recommends that the Board appoint Ms. Laura Allen as Acting School Business Administrator; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Laura Allen possesses the required certification and credentials for the position of Acting School Business Administrator; and

WHEREAS, the Board, following its independent review of Ms. Laura Allen's credentials and qualifications for such position, agrees with and accepts the Acting Superintendent's recommendation;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby appoints Ms. Laura Allen as Acting School Business Administrator at the rate of _____, effective as of 12:01 a.m. on May 6, 2022 until 11:59 p.m. on June 30, 2022; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Acting Superintendent and/or her designee, hereby are authorized to obtain any and all approval(s) from the Department of Education required for Ms. Laura Allen to assume the position of School Business Administrator.

8. NEXT SCHEDULED BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MAY 11, 2022

Subject **A. NEXT SCHEDULED BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MAY 11, 2022**

Meeting May 5, 2022 - MONROE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

Category 8. NEXT SCHEDULED BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MAY 11, 2022

Access Public

Type

The next scheduled Board of Education Meeting is scheduled for May 11, 2022 7:00 p.m.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Subject **A. NOTES**

Meeting May 5, 2022 - MONROE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

Category 9. ADJOURNMENT

Access Public

Type Action

NOTES

Note 1: Any member of the public may record the proceedings of a public meeting of the Board in a manner that does not interrupt the proceedings, inhibit the conduct of the meeting, or distract Board Members or other observers present at the meeting.

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Note 2: The Jamesburg Representative shall be eligible to vote on only those matters specifically designated in N.J.S.A 18A:38-8.1, as follows:

1. Tuition to be charged the sending district by the receiving district and the bill lists or contracts for the purchase, operation or maintenance of facilities, equipment and instructional materials to be used in the education of the pupils of the sending district.
2. New capital construction to be utilized by sending district pupils.
3. Appointment, transfer or removal of teaching staff members providing services to pupils of the sending district, including any teaching staff member who is a member of the receiving district's central administrative staff.
4. Addition or deletion of curricular and extracurricular programs involving pupils of the sending district.
5. Any matter directly involving sending district students or programs and services used by them.
6. The annual receiving district budget.
7. Any collectively-negotiated agreement involving employees who provide services used by sending district students.
8. Any individual employee contracts not covered by a collectively-negotiated agreement, if those employees provide or oversee programs or services utilized by sending district students.
9. Any matter concerning governance of the receiving district board of education, including, but not limited to, the selection of board president and vice-president, approval of board bylaws, and the employment of professionals or consultants such as attorneys, architects, engineers, or others who provide services to the receiving district board of education.

In accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:38-8.1, the Jamesburg Representative is eligible to vote on the items delineated by an asterisk (*) in the Superintendent's and Business Administrator/Board Secretary's Board Action section of the Agenda.

Note 3: Public discussion is confined to this portion of the Agenda unless permission is granted by the Board President prior to the start of the meeting or when the Board is considering a Special Agenda Item that the Board deems appropriate for public participation. Anyone wishing to address the Board is requested to stand and state his/her name and address.