

South Orange-Maplewood
Board of Education
January 6, 2021

A Reorganizational Meeting of the Board of Education of South Orange-Maplewood was held using the online video conference platform on January 6, 2021.

Board Secretary Paul Roth called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Adequate written notice of this meeting of the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education was sent to the Township and Village Clerks, The Star Ledger, the News Record, TAPintoSOMA.net, villagegreennj.com and the District website.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

OATH OF OFFICE

Mr. Roth administered the oaths of office to the elected Board Members: Susan Bergin, Elissa Malespina, Courtney Winkfield and Kamaljit Zubieta [The signed Oaths of Office are on file in the Board Secretary's Office.]

ROLL CALL: Present: Board Member Bergin, Board Member Cuttle,
Board Member Joshua, Board Member Maini,
Board Member Malespina, Board Member Siders,
Board Member Winkfield, Board Member Wright,
Board Member Zubieta, Student Rep. Forman

Absent: None

NINE VOTING MEMBERS AND ONE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE PRESENT

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Roth called for nominations for President of the Board.

Board Member Siders nominated Board Member Joshua. There were no further nominations for President.

ROLL CALL for Board Member Joshua as President: YES: Bergin, Cuttle, Joshua, Maini, Malespina, Siders, Winkfield, Wright, Zubieta NO: none

Board Member Joshua was elected President and assumed the Chair as President.

Board President Joshua made the following statement:

Today is supposed to be a mundane meeting on what is anything but a mundane day. It is not lost on me, that we just recited the Pledge of Allegiance, when earlier today, we witnessed the leader of this nation

do very little if anything to quell what was at best an insurrection. We watched citizens of this nation storm the United States Capitol building to incite fear and violence on behalf of the loser of the Presidential election. All of this during a national pandemic, as many of us were at home watching the news while our children were learning virtually.

I appreciate my colleagues' faith in me to lead this Board and I promise to do so with more humility and grace than we witnessed earlier today.

President Joshua called for nominations for 1st Vice President of the Board.

Board Member Zubieta nominated Board Member Cuttle. There were no further nominations for 1st Vice President.

ROLL CALL for Board Member Cuttle as 1st Vice President: YES: Bergin, Cuttle, Joshua, Maini, Malespina, Siders, Winkfield, Wright, Zubieta
NO: none

Board Member Cuttle was elected 1st Vice President.

President Joshua called for nominations for 2nd Vice President of the Board.

Board Member Maini nominated Board Member Siders as 2nd Vice President. There were no further nominations for 2nd Vice President.

ROLL CALL for Board Member Siders as 2nd Vice President: YES: Bergin, Cuttle, Joshua, Maini, Malespina, Siders, Winkfield, Wright, Zubieta
NO: none

Board Member Siders was elected 2nd Vice President.

ITEM FOR ACTION - REORGANIZATIONAL RESOLUTIONS

MOTION made by President Joshua, seconded by Board Member Cuttle that the Board of Education approves the following reorganizational resolutions 1-10:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Education:

1. Paul Roth as Board Secretary and authorize him to sign checks, notes, drafts, bills of exchange, acceptance, undertakings or other orders for payment of money.
2. Appoint Paul Roth as the Qualified Purchasing Agent and authorize Mr. Roth to negotiate and award contracts pursuant to NJSA 18A:18A-3.
3. Appoint Paul Roth as Custodian of Records for the school district.
4. Appoint Andrea Del Guercio as Assistant Board Secretary and

authorize her to sign checks, notes, drafts, bills of exchange, acceptance, undertakings or other orders for the payment of money in the absence of the Board Secretary.

5. Approve Stacey Robinson, Human Resource Director as the District ADA/504 Compliance Coordinator for employees.
6. Accept the By-Laws, Policies, Rules and Regulations.
7. Adopt the Public Meeting Calendar for 2021 per attached.
8. Adopt Code of Ethics
9. Adopt the following newspapers and electronic news media for legal advertisements and the publication of Board meetings for the 2020-2021 school year: The Star Ledger, News Record, TAPintoSOMA.net, villagegreennj.com or the New York Times.
10. Approve the following depositories for school monies:
 - Bank of America
 - PNC Bank
 - Chase Manhattan Bank
 - Wells Fargo Bank

ROLL CALL: Organizational Resolutions 1-10 passed. YES: Bergin, Cuttle, Joshua, Maini, Malespina, Siders, Winkfield, Wright, Zubieta NO: none

Motion made by Board President Joshua, seconded by Board Member Maini to allow distance participation in our monthly Regular Board Meeting during the COVID-19 emergency.

Motion passed 9 yes, 0 no.

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

SOMEA OFFICERS

Dear Board members,

We hope that you and your families are safe and well.

SOMEA is reaching out to you, as the leaders of the South Orange-Maplewood School District, to ask that you postpone the return to district buildings until the staff has had an opportunity to be vaccinated.

As the number of cases, and especially deaths, continue to grow exponentially in NJ and a new, more contagious strand of the virus (VUI - 202012/01) has arrived, the importance of postponing the return is paramount. The new variant, from the UK, is assumed to be here in NJ already, and reports have come in from NYC confirming cases of the strain. Medical professionals believe this variant is more contagious and symptoms are harder to recover from.

Vaccines have been approved and education staff, considered as essential workers, are in the second group (Phase 1b) that will receive them. Vaccinations are on the horizon and it is only a matter of weeks

before our group can begin to qualify. With so much to lose and being so close to a visible timeline of administering vaccinations, we believe that returning at this time would be a reckless decision, as it would put the physical health of students and staff at risk.

Prominent experts are publicly urging schools to remain closed for a while longer, as evidence shows that schools facilitate transmission of the virus. We must use what standing we have in the community to make sure the whole student body is represented and protected from learning in an unsafe environment.

We want to return to in-person instruction but only when it is safe or after being vaccinated. We miss our students. We miss our classrooms and schools. We want to be back in our buildings. Our schools, right now, are just not safe enough, especially given the changing nature of the virus with the introduction of the new variant.

Thank you for your continued support of the health and wellness of our staff and students. We hope that you will make the right decision for the health and safety of all.

SOMEA Officers

Rocio Lopez, Shira Lincoln, Phil McCormick, Laurie Pham

ITEMS FOR ACTION

MOTION made by Dr. Taylor, seconded by Board Member Cuttle, that the Board of Education approves the following:

4092. Approve the Board of Education Committee Liaisons for the 2021 calendar year as presented [committee list on file in Board Secretary's office].

4093. Approve the Board of Education Committees for the 2021 calendar year as presented [committee list on file in Board Secretary's office].

ROLL CALL: Motion 4092, 4093 passed. YES: Bergin, Cuttle, Joshua, Maini, Malespina, Siders, Winkfield, Wright, Zubieta NO: none

Ethics Training and Board Governance - NJSBA

Charlene Peterson, Field Representative for New Jersey School Boards Association facilitated the Ethics for School Officials and Board Governance Workshop.

The following topics were reviewed:

- School Ethics Act
- NJQSAC - Governance Indicator
- Required Training to be provided by NJSBA

- School Ethics Commission
- SEC Jurisdiction
 - Advisory Opinions N.J.S.A. 18A:12-31
 - Ethics Complaints
 - Penalties Recommended by SEC
 - 2020 Cases Considered by SEC
- Code of Ethics for School Board Members
- Conflicts of Interest
 - When to Recuse Yourself
 - Who Qualifies as a Relative
 - Hiring/Personnel
 - Personnel Issues
 - Collective Bargaining/Other Possible Conflicts
 - Volunteerism
 - Points to Consider
 - Links for Examples Used

Motion made by Board President Joshua, seconded by Board Member Malespina to change the order of tonight's agenda, to move New Business and Future Meetings ahead of making a motion to adjourn to Executive Session and not return to public session.

ROLL CALL: Motion to change the order of tonight's agenda passed. YES: Bergin, Cuttle, Joshua, Maini, Malespina, Siders, Winkfield, Wright, Zubieta NO: none

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

NONE.

NEW BUSINESS

- Board Member Malespina proposed that the next Board Meeting be held in a public or hybrid setting.
- Board Member Cuttle informed the Board of an upcoming food and coat drives.
- Board Member Siders requested the Board continue to hold committee meetings in a virtual setting, post pandemic.
- Board Members discussed public committee meetings.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board of Education will meet in Executive Session on Monday, January 25, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. using the online video conference platform, in-person (location to be disclosed before the meeting) or a hybrid setting, to discuss personnel, legal issues, negotiations and other matters to be announced at a later date. Immediately following the Closed Session, the Board of Education will meet in public session at 7:30 p.m. using the online video conference platform, in person (location to be disclosed before the meeting) or a hybrid setting.

The community can view the meeting by following the steps provided on the District website. Action will be taken.

Motion made by Board President Joshua, seconded by Board Member Wright to adjourn to Executive Session to discuss personnel, legal issues, negotiations and other matters. Motion to adjourn to Executive Session unanimously approved at 8:43 p.m.

Paul Roth, Board Secretary