

Special Meeting  
South Orange-Maplewood  
Board of Education  
July 12, 2021

A Special Meeting of the Board of Education of South Orange-Maplewood was held in the District Meeting Room at the Administration Building, 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, New Jersey as well as utilizing the online video conference platform on July 12, 2021.

Board President Thair Joshua called the meeting to order at 6:37 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

ROLL CALL: Present: Board Member Bergin, Board Member Cuttle  
Board Member Joshua, Board Member Maini,  
Board Member Malespina (remote), Board Member  
Siders (remote), Board Member Winkfield,  
Board Member Wright (remote)

Absent: None

*EIGHT VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT*

BOARD PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT

The School Board meeting is a business meeting in public not a meeting with the public. Oftentimes it may appear to members of our audience that the Board of Education takes action with very little comment and in many cases a unanimous vote. Before a matter is placed on the agenda at a public meeting, the Administration has thoroughly reviewed the matter with the Superintendent of Schools/Chief School Administrator (CSA). If the Superintendent of Schools/Chief School Administrator is satisfied that the matter is ready to be presented to the Board of Education, it is then referred to the appropriate Board Committee. The Members of the Board Committee work with Administration and the Superintendent to assure that the members fully understand the matter. After the committee discusses the matter, it is presented to the full Board for discussion before any action is taken. Only then, is it placed on the agenda for action at a public meeting.

Motion made by Board President Joshua, seconded by Board Member Maini to allow distance participation in tonight's Special Board Meeting.

Motion passed 8 yes, 0 no.

## HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

Alisa Wyrick

Hello. I feel the community has a need to know full disclosure and transparency of the past years' history of informed decision-making on the part of the Board of Education with regards to security and police presence at Underhill Field. A catalog of all known reported incidents, as well as the Board and schools' Administration reactions to complaints should immediately be made public and held accountable.

There seems to be no real information dissemination about the issue of how the school Board made decisions based on unsafe conditions on school grounds, and no substantiation as to how documented and serious incidents were being acted on in response.

Especially in light of the most current tragedy of a student loss of life, the community deserves a transparent update. Otherwise, it seems as if this issue is not being addressed publicly by the Board or Administrators to ensure the safety of all.

### CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS

Board President Joshua explained that the objective of tonight's meeting is to fill the vacancy on the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education, in line with the requirements set forth in Board Policy 0143 and NJSA 18A:13-11.

We have five applicants interviewing for this position this evening, Mr. Anthony Mazzocchi, Mr. Christopher Sabin, Dr. Qawi Telesford, Mr. Arun Vadlamani and Ms. Kaitlin Wittleder. As stated in our advertisement, each applicant will be given five minutes to make an opening statement, explaining why they are interested in the position, their qualifications and how they will serve the Board of Education. Afterwards the Board will ask a total of seven questions that have been collaborated on by the Board and the New Jersey School Boards Association. Applicants will have two minutes to answer. Once the interviews are over the Board will make a motion to adjourn to Executive Session to discuss the candidates.

Each candidate gave an opening statement. Board members had the opportunity to ask each candidate questions in which they were given two minutes to respond.

Motion made by Board President Joshua, seconded by Board Member Maini to adjourn to Executive Session to deliberate.

Motion to adjourn to Executive Session unanimously approved.

***The Board adjourned to Executive Session at 8:00 p.m.***

***The Board reconvened at 9:06 p.m.***

***8 Voting Members Present***

Board President Joshua thanked the candidates for their interest in serving as a member of the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education. On behalf of the entire Board I would like to say to the candidates who are not chosen tonight, that it is not a reflection of four people that we do not believe can do the job, we had a very qualified applicant pool.

#### ITEM FOR ACTION

Board President Joshua called for nominations to fill the Board vacancy.

Board Member Winkfield nominated Christopher Sabin, Board Member Maini seconded the nomination.

Board Member Malespina nominated Anthony Mazzocchi, Board Member Wright seconded the nomination.

4166. **Whereas** a vacancy has been caused on this board of education by resignation of Board Member Kamal Zubieta; and

**Whereas** this board of education has by law authority to fill a vacancy for the unexpired term thereof;

**Now, therefore,** be it resolved by a majority vote of all the remaining members of the board of education of the South Orange Maplewood School District that Christopher Sabin be and hereby is, appointed to serve as a member of the board of education of this school district for the unexpired term of July 12, 2021 ending on January 5, 2022.

Roll Call to appoint Christopher Sabin Motion 4166: YES: Board Member Bergen, Board Member Cuttle, Board Member Joshua, Board Member Maini, Board Member Siders, Board Member Winkfield NO: Board Member Malespina, Board Member Wright

#### OATH OF OFFICE

Mrs. Del Guercio administered the oath of office to appointed Board Member Christopher Sabin [The signed Oath of Office is on file in the Board Secretary's Office].

#### HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

NONE.

#### Future Meetings

The Board of Education will meet in Closed Session on Monday, July 19, 2021 at 6:30 pm in the Superintendent's Office, 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, NJ, as well as using the online video conference platform to discuss personnel and 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 pm in person and utilizing an online video conference platform which will include Hearing of Individuals. The community can view the meeting by following the

steps which will be listed on the agenda. If there are members of the community who would like to attend the meeting in person, please note that masks and social distancing are recommended in accordance with the guidance received from the local DOH. Action will be taken.

Motion made by Board President Joshua, seconded by Board Member Maini, that the Board of Education will meet in Executive Session prior to the July 19, 2021 Public Meeting to discuss personnel and legal issues, negotiations and other matters, the nature of which will be made public at a future date. Motion unanimously approved.

Motion made by Board President Joshua, seconded by Board Member Maini to adjourn to Executive Session. Motion unanimously approved at 9:20 p.m.

Board President Joshua thanked District Administration and staff for all they did to make tonight's meeting possible.

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Andrea Del Guercio, Acting Board Secretary