



LIVINGSTON BOARD OF EDUCATION REORGANIZATION MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, January 2, 2025

Executive Session - 6:00-6:30 p.m.

Public Session - Administration Building – 7:00 p.m.

A **Reorganization Meeting** of the Livingston Board of Education was held on this date in the large conference room in the Administration Building and via a Facebook livestream. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Jessica Rapp, Business Administrator/Board Secretary, who announced that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by amendment to notice approved at the Board's reorganization meeting on January 3, 2024 and posted at the Board of Education office and communicated to *The Star Ledger*, *West Essex Tribune*, *TAPinto Livingston* and the Livingston Township Clerk.

Members Present: Pamela Chirls, Seth Cohen, Fang Gong, Parul Khemka, Inna Yelisevich and Darcy Bialick

Also in Attendance: Dr. Daniel Fishbein, Jessica Rapp, Lisa Capone-Steiger, Mark Stern, Susan Burman, Attorney Arsen Zatarian and Joann Goldberg

Mr. Cohen moved the following:

Executive Session

Whereas, the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-11, permits the Board of Education to meet in closed session to discuss certain matters; now, therefore be it

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education adjourns to closed session to discuss:

- personnel

Action may be taken upon return to the public session. The full length of the meeting is anticipated to be approximately 30 minutes; and be it

Further Resolved, the minutes of this closed session be made public when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

Mrs. Gong seconded the motion.

Vote all in favor.

At 7:00 p.m., Mrs. Rapp reconvened the meeting.

Eliana and Polina Zuyev led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Rapp read the election results:

Election Results – November 5, 2024

(Officially certified by the Board of Elections)

For three year term (vote for two) on the Board of Education

Pamela Chirls	7,087
Inna Yelisevich	5,498
Samantha Messer	5,289

Swearing in of New Board Members

Mrs. Rapp administered the oath of office to Pamela Chirls for a three-year term as a Board Member.

Mrs. Rapp administered the oath of office to Inna Yelisevich for a three-year term as a Board Member.

Election of President

Mrs. Rapp called for nominations for the position of President of the Board.

Mrs. Chirls nominated Mr. Cohen.

Mrs. Khemka seconded the nomination.

There being no further nominations for the position of President, nominations were closed.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mrs. Gong, Mrs. Khemka, Mrs. Yelisevich, Mr. Cohen
Nayes - None

Board President Takes Chair

Mr. Cohen took the chair as President.

Election of Vice President

Mr. Cohen called for nominations for the position of Vice President of the Board.

Mrs. Gong nominated Mrs. Khemka.

Mrs. Chirls seconded the nomination.

There being no further nominations for the position of Vice President, nominations were closed.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mrs. Gong, Mrs. Khemka, Mrs. Yelisevich, Mr. Cohen
Nayes - None

Mr. Cohen offered condolences, thoughts and prayers and asked for a moment of silence for the parent of one of our students who was involved in a tragic accident over the break and for Barry Segal and Joyce Gore, two long time LPS teachers.

Superintendent's Report

Due to the considerable discussion on social media regarding a personnel decision that was acted upon during the December 11, 2024 LBOE meeting, Dr. Fishbein explained our general process for addressing an employee whose performance falls short of expectations or when disciplinary actions are needed.

Dr. Fishbein explained that usually, one infraction does not lead to immediate release from employment unless that infraction is egregious and release is warranted. Most situations in which employment is terminated occur after multiple infractions that make continued employment a detriment to the district and students. District administrators follow a rigorous, documented process to ensure fair and justified decisions and while the district cannot share specific details, Dr. Fishbein assured the community that all employees are informed of the reasons for administrative actions and that such decisions are made in the best interest of our students and the district's integrity.

Dr. Fishbein also addressed one of our community member's comments about food donations. The district uses non-perishable food items that do not require specific temperature controls appropriately in the schools. However, food that requires temperature maintenance cannot be provided to outside entities. Additionally, due to food safety regulations, we cannot accept donations of food brought from home, such as uneaten portions of students' lunches. These measures ensure compliance with food safety guidelines and help us avoid risks such as food borne illnesses resulting from improper storage or handling.

Dr. Fishbein continued that we encourage students to place uneaten items back in their lunchboxes to take home in order to reduce waste and allow parents to see what is consumed.

Lastly, to continue supporting students and families in need, we are exploring safe and sustainable options for food distribution and appreciate the community's understanding and commitment to maintaining the health and well-being of our students.

Board Member Code of Ethics

The board members each took a turn reading through the ten items listed in the Code of Ethics. It is a requirement of the board to review and sign an acknowledgement of the Code of Ethics each year.

Student Representative's Report

Miss Bialick explained that the track and field team had two meets over the break and recorded some incredibly impressive performances. The most notable of these successes was that of Jessica Oji, who won the girls shot put at the Coach Glynn Holiday Carnival this past Saturday and is currently ranked first in the nation for girls indoor shot put. In addition, the Interact Club held a painting class at the Livingston Senior Center, the Ski club has scheduled a trip for Saturday, January 11 to Camelback Mountain and the Student Government Association was hard at work planning and gaining approval for a winter movie night. The Student Government Association had a group meeting with class officers from every grade to discuss other ways to unite the different classes, with a particular focus on bridging the gap between underclassmen and upperclassmen. While these discussions are still ongoing, plans are in the works to create initiatives that will accomplish our goals of building a greater sense of community.

Public Comment

Melissa Deangelus, President of LEA, welcomed Mrs. Yelisevich and congratulated Mrs. Chirls. Mrs. Deangelus also thanked the administrators who have to make difficult decisions but do so in the best interest of Livingston.

Justin Alpert, Livingston, congratulated Mrs. Chirls and Mrs. Yelisevich and expressed condolences for Joyce Gore who was a fierce fighter for education.

Mr. Alpert requested there be more Five-on-Five Meetings, that the township and board of education work together to make investments that need to be made in the infrastructure of our community and to account for investments that need to be made in the future to ensure for healthy community growth.

Michelle Amin, Livingston, expressed her dissatisfaction that the Junior Prom will be held on a Friday night in March and asked to be involved in the conversation when planning in the future.

Larry Torres, Livingston, got the impression from the West Essex Tribune article about Miss Paulette that the district did not act appropriately.

Charles August, Livingston, asked when the Long Range Facilities Planning Committee will resume meeting so that we can start to put a plan together for the future.

Dalila Rosenstrauch, Livingston, read in the West Essex Tribune about Miss Paulette and spoke in favor of her character.

Ronnie Konner, Livingston, congratulated Mrs. Chirls and Mrs. Yelisevich on the election. Mrs. Konner also congratulated Mr. Cohen and Mrs. Khemka on becoming President and Vice President and looks forward to seeing what will be happening this next year. Mrs. Konner expressed her condolences for Joyce Gore who was a leader in this town regarding education. Mrs. Konner also hopes the district will take measures to help members of our community with food insecurity.

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

Rules for School Governance

Resolved, the Livingston Board of Education adopts all bylaws, policies and regulations in effect on January 2, 2025 in compliance with N.J.S.A. 18A:11-1.

Mrs. Khemka seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mrs. Gong, Mrs. Khemka, Mrs. Yelisevich, Mr. Cohen
Nays - None

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

Curricula and Textbooks

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education adopts all curricula and textbooks of record on January 2, 2025 in compliance with N.J.S.A. 18A:33-1 and 34.1.

Mrs. Khemka seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mrs. Gong, Mrs. Khemka, Mrs. Yelisevich, Mr. Cohen
Nays - None

Mrs. Khemka moved the following:

Bylaws, Policies & Regulations

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves all bylaws, policies and regulations previously adopted by the Board to date.

Mrs. Chirls seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mrs. Gong, Mrs. Khemka, Mrs. Yelisevich, Mr. Cohen
Nayes - None

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

Job Descriptions

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves all job descriptions previously adopted by the Board to date.

Mrs. Khemka seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mrs. Gong, Mrs. Khemka, Mrs. Yelisevich, Mr. Cohen
Nayes - None

Mrs. Khemka moved the following:

Official Newspapers/Media Outlets

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education designates *The Star Ledger*, *The West Essex Tribune* and *TAPinto Livingston* as official newspapers and media outlets for legal notices and other obligations.

Mrs. Chirls seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mrs. Gong, Mrs. Khemka, Mrs. Yelisevich, Mr. Cohen
Nayes - None

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

Financial Depositories and Signatures

Whereas, Seth Cohen has been elected president and Parul Khemka has been elected vice president of the Board of Education; and

Whereas, Jessica Rapp has been appointed Secretary of the Board; and

Whereas, Jessica Rapp has been appointed Treasurer of School Monies; and now therefore be it

Resolved, the Livingston Board of Education establish the following bank accounts at Somerset Regal Bank, Livingston, New Jersey and that Somerset Regal Bank is hereby requested, authorized and directed to honor all checks, draft and other orders for the payment of money drawn in the name of the Board of Education in the following accounts when bearing the true or approved facsimile signature(s) indicated:

Somerset Regal Bank

Account Title and Number	Signature(s)	
BOE School District of Livingston General Account 0108010471	Board President and Jessica Rapp and Dr. Daniel Fishbein	
BOE School District of Livingston Referendum 0108010505	Board President and Jessica Rapp and Dr. Daniel Fishbein	
Livingston Board of Education Payroll Account 0108010463	Board President and Jessica Rapp	
Livingston Board of Education Payroll Agency Account 0108010414	Board President and Jessica Rapp	
Burnet Hill Elementary School School Account 0108010547	Dr. Lisa Sama-Barreto Jessica Byrne Jessica Rapp	Any 2
Collins Elementary School School Account 0108010562	Michelle Cebula Stefanie Lichtstein Jessica Rapp	Any 2
Harrison Elementary School School Account 0108010539	Daniel Garcia Patricia Fernandez Jessica Rapp	Any 2
Hillside Elementary School School Account 0108010570	Carlos Gramata Gina Ioviero Jessica Rapp	Any 2
Mount Pleasant Elementary School School Account 0108010521	Dr. Lorena Dolan Gail Witt Jessica Rapp	Any 2
Riker Hill Elementary School School Account 0108010612	Brooke Benavides Deborah Paoella Jessica Rapp	Any 2
Mount Pleasant Middle School School Account 0108010554	Bronawyn O'Leary Gina Covello Jessica Rapp	Any 2
Heritage Middle School School Account 0108010513	Shawn Kelly Andrew Espinoza Charles Raphael Christina Woytas Jessica Rapp	Any 2
Livingston High School Activity Account 0108010588	Amro Mohammed Laura DeNicola Dr. Mary K. Pretto Marie Battist-Rock Jessica Rapp	Any 2
Livingston High School Athletic Account 0108010604	Amro Mohammed Laura DeNicola Dr. Mary K. Pretto Marie Battist-Rock David Cohen Jessica Rapp	Any 2
Livingston High School Special Account 0108010596	Amro Mohammed Laura DeNicola Dr. Mary K. Pretto Marie Battist-Rock	Any 2

	Jessica Rapp	
Livingston Board of Education Board Secretary's Petty Cash 0108010489	Dr. Daniel Fishbein Jessica Rapp Kylie McGlew	<i>Any 2</i>
Livingston Board of Education Capital Reserve Fund Account 0108010448	Wire Transfers to other Board of Education Accounts Only Jessica Rapp or Kylie McGlew	
Livingston Board of Education Unemployment Trust Fund Account 0108010455	Wire Transfers to other Board of Education Accounts Only Jessica Rapp or Kylie McGlew	
Livingston Board of Education Cafeteria 0108010430	Wire Transfers to other Board of Education Accounts Only Jessica Rapp or Kylie McGlew	
Livingston Board of Education Summer Pay 0208020752	Wire Transfers to other Board of Education Accounts Only Jessica Rapp or Kylie McGlew or Sean Smith	
Livingston Board of Education FSA 0108010422	Wire Transfers to other Board of Education Accounts Only Jessica Rapp or Kylie McGlew or Sean Smith	

Mrs. Khemka seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mrs. Gong, Mrs. Khemka, Mrs. Yelisevich, Mr. Cohen
Nayes - None

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

Establishment of Annual Public Meeting Calendar

Resolved, the Livingston Board of Education approves the following annual public meeting calendar and executive session meeting calendar for 2025:

January, 2025		July, 2025	
2	<i>Reorganization</i>	15	<i>Voting</i>
14	<i>Voting</i>		
28	<i>Board Retreat/Workshop</i>	August, 2025	

		12	Voting
February, 2025			
11	Workshop	September, 2025	
25	Voting	9	Workshop
		30	Voting
March, 2025			
11	Workshop	October, 2025	
18	Voting	15	Workshop/Voting (Wed)
April, 2025			
8	Workshop	November, 2025	
29	Public Hearing/Voting	4	Workshop
		18	Voting
May, 2025			
6	Exec Session on Personnel	December, 2025	
13	Workshop/Voting	9	Voting
27	Voting	January, 2026	
		6	Reorganization
June, 2025			
10	Workshop		
17	Voting		

Until further notice, all meetings are to commence on Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. in a hybrid format both in person in the large conference room at the Administration Building, 11 Foxcroft Drive, and via a Facebook livestream, unless otherwise indicated. Please confirm dates on the District Calendar.

Mrs. Khemka seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mrs. Gong, Mrs. Khemka, Mrs. Yelisevich, Mr. Cohen
Nayes - None

BUSINESS

Mrs. Chirls moved the following:

3.1 Purchasing - Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the resolution as follows:

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-2 provides that a Board of Education shall assign the authority, responsibility and accountability for the purchasing activity of the Board of Education to a person or persons who shall have the power to prepare advertisements, to advertise for and receive bids and to award contracts as permitted by this chapter, and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 18A-18A-3 provides that contracts, awarded by the purchasing agent that do not exceed in the aggregate in a contract year the bid threshold (currently \$44,000), may be awarded by the purchasing agent without advertising for bids when so authorized by Board resolution, and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 18A-18A-37c provides that all contracts that are in the aggregate less than 15% of the bid threshold (currently \$6,600) may be awarded by the purchasing agent without soliciting competitive quotations if so authorized by Board resolution, and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Livingston Board of Education , pursuant to the statutes cited above, hereby appoints Jessica Rapp, Business Administrator/Board Secretary, as its duly authorized purchasing agent and is duly assigned the authority, responsibility and accountability for the purchasing activity effective for the period January 2, 2025 through to the date of the 2026 Reorganization Meeting, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Jessica Rapp, as purchasing agent, is authorized to process payments as necessary as part of regular District operations, to be ratified at the subsequent regular public meetings of the Board of Education, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Jessica Rapp is hereby authorized to award contracts on behalf of the Livingston Board of Education that are in the aggregate less than 15% of the Bid threshold (currently \$6,600) without soliciting competitive quotations, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Jessica Rapp is hereby authorized to seek competitive quotations, when applicable and practicable, when contracts in the aggregate exceed 15% of the bid threshold (currently \$6,600) but less than the bid threshold of \$44,000.

3.2 Purchasing - Assistant Business Administrator

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the resolution as follows:

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-2 provides that a Board of Education shall assign the authority, responsibility and accountability for the purchasing activity of the Board of Education to a person or persons who shall have the power to prepare advertisements, to advertise for and receive bids and to award contracts as permitted by this chapter, and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 18A-18A-3 provides that contracts, awarded by the purchasing agent that do not exceed in the aggregate in a contract year the bid threshold (currently \$44,000), may be awarded by the purchasing agent without advertising for bids when so authorized by Board resolution, and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 18A-18A-37c provides that all contracts that are in the aggregate less than 15% of the bid threshold (currently \$6,600) may be awarded by the purchasing agent without soliciting competitive quotations if so authorized by Board resolution, and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Livingston Board of Education , pursuant to the statutes cited above, hereby appoints Kylie McGlew, Assistant Business Administrator, as its duly authorized purchasing agent *pro tem*, in the event that Jessica Rapp, Business Administrator/Board Secretary, is unavailable, and is duly assigned the authority, responsibility and accountability for the purchasing activity of the Livingston Board of Education effective for the period January 2, 2025 through to the date of the 2026 Reorganization Meeting, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Kylie McGlew, as *pro tem* purchasing agent, is authorized to process payments as necessary as part of regular District operations, to be ratified at the subsequent regular public meetings of the Board of Education, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Kylie McGlew is hereby authorized to award contracts on behalf of the Livingston Board of Education that are in the aggregate less than 15% of the Bid threshold (currently \$6,600) without soliciting competitive quotations, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Kylie McGlew is hereby authorized to seek competitive quotations, when applicable and practicable, when contracts in the aggregate exceed 15% of the bid threshold (currently \$6,600) but less than the bid threshold of \$44,000.

3.3 Cooperative Purchasing

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education authorizes the Business Administrator/Board Secretary to jointly, by agreement, provide goods and services with other boards of education; and to seek sealed bids, from any and all education cooperative pricing systems, county contract and/or state contract for all goods and/or services required during the period of January 2, 2025 through to the date of the 2026 Reorganization Meeting. Date, receipt and advertisement of bids to be determined by the Business Administrator/Board Secretary. The list includes but is not limited to the following:

Educational Data Services Inc.
Educational Services Commission of New Jersey
Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission
Interloc Purchasing System (TIPS)
Mercer County Special Services School District
Morris County Cooperative Pricing Council
NJ Division of Purchase and Property (NJ START State Contract)
OMNIA Partners, Public Sector, Inc.
Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission
Sourcewell/Cooperative Purchasing Advantages

3.4 Board Member Assignments

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education accepts the President's designation of the following committee assignments as shown on **Attachment A**.

Mrs. Khemka seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mrs. Gong, Mrs. Khemka, Mrs. Yelisevich, Mr. Cohen
Nayes - None

PERSONNEL

Mrs. Chirls moved 4.1 and walk-in item 4.2:

4.1 Appointments

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education approves the applications indicated below (*) for emergent hiring for the following appointments under the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:16-1 et. seq., N.J.S.A. 18A:39.17 et. seq.; N.J.S.A. 18A:6-4.13 et. seq. All appointments are contingent upon reference checks in accordance with P.L. 2018, c.5.

Name	Location	Title	Tenure Track/LOA or LT Replacement	Replacing	Guide	Step	Salary	Effective Date
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<i>Erhya Kang</i>	CO	Applications Architect	NA	E. O'Connor	NA	NA	\$85,000 (prorated)*	2/1/2025
<i>Sean Smith</i>	CO	Payroll Manager	NA	J. Suarez	NA	NA	\$85,000 (prorated)*	1/21/2025

**salary will remain the same for the 2025-2026 school year.*

4.2 Resignations & Retirements

Resolved, that the Livingston Board of Education accepts the resignations of:

Name	Position	Reason	Location	Last Day of Employment
<i>Shelly Lipka</i>	Occupational Therapist	Retirement	BHE	December 31, 2024
<i>Ashwin Herekar</i>	LDT-C	Resignation	LHS	March 3, 2025
<i>Shawn Kellman</i>	Night Custodian	Resignation	LHS	January 2, 2025

Mrs. Khemka seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE - Ayes - Mrs. Chirls, Mrs. Gong, Mrs. Khemka, Mrs. Yelisevich, Mr. Cohen
Nayes - None

MISCELLANEOUS

There was no HIB Report.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

There was no new business.

Adjournment

At 7:35 p.m, Mrs. Chirls made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mrs. Khemka seconded the motion.

Vote all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,



Jessica Rapp
Board Secretary