

Minutes of **Wednesday April 19, 2023, Public Meeting** of the Orange Board of Education held at 6:00 pm.

Shawneque Johnson is presiding over tonight's Meeting.

Ms. Sueann Gravesande

Mr. Derrick Henry – **late, not present for roll call.**

Ms. Samantha Crockett – **absent.**

Ms. Fatimah Turner, Ph.D.

Mr. Siaka Sherif – **late, not present for roll call.**

Ms. Shawneque Johnson, President

Mr. Jeffrey Wingfield – **absent.**

Mr. David Armstrong

Mr. Tyrone Tarver

ROLL CALL (5) PRESENT (2) LATE (2) ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT:

- Dr. Gerald Fitzhugh II, Superintendent of Schools
- Mr. Jason Ballard, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary
- Mr. Lamont Zachary, Assistant Business Administrator/Board Secretary
- Ms. Jessica Kleen, School Board Attorney Substitute with the firm of Machado Law Group

FLAG SALUTE

Ms. Johnson motions to close the Executive session and move into a public meeting.

Moved by Mr. Henry Seconded by Ms. Gravesande

ROLL CALL (7) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (2) ABSENT

Ms. Johnson communicates that tonight's board meeting will go a little differently. Ms. Johnson introduces City Mayor Warren. Ms. Johnson communicate that tonight our superintendent Dr. Fitzhugh will be receiving a proclamation. Mayor Warren communicates that he met with the leadership of the Board of Education and met with a number of its leadership staff and administrators to discuss the job and the experience we just had with our lovely superintendent recently there were some crisis and some concerns about Urban education in particular and then incidences of mass spread violence in particular and I asked the president whether or not there will be space for me to come in to publicly report on the response and the responsibility that the superintendent issued during this crisis there were multiple levels of jurisdiction that came in there were unknown threats and it is during that period of time that schools across the country had been tested about how they handle potential crisis and I was just gratified to know that Dr. Fitzhugh.

Mayor Warrant continues to share that our superintendent Dr. Fitzhugh, was on task with the needs of the children was on task with the needs of the teachers and staff administrators. A healthy and robust respect for the physical layout of our buildings that had to be examined and swept for any possible danger so whatever training they gave you they did it well thank you for communicating with our Police Department our Public Safety overall and our billing department. I just wanted to encourage you in this regard I wanted to thank the

board for giving you the license to be trained and to do what you do on a regular and daily basis what you did does not come from a nine-to-five type of professional it comes from someone who is well immersed in this community and in this district and certainly you demonstrated that and I went on behalf of the city of Orange Township.

Mayor Warren communicates that he wants to firstly thank Dr. Fitzhugh. He wants to encourage you and your business administrator to start to look at facilities and Capital Improvements so that we are collectively, and I want to be a leader in going down to Trenton to make sure that this board is funded properly thank you sir and congratulations on your leadership thank you thank you madam president thank you for allowing me the time and to the board. Thank you for the great job that you do um you can see the board members each day, but I get a chance to see what they do in real-time and how concerned they are.

Ms. Johnson communicates that the student representative is not in attendance and Dr. Fitzhugh will speak next.

Dr. Fitzhugh communicates that his presentation will be a little different today. Dr. Fitzhugh communicates that he however will provide an update on this one update is pivotal to the work that we're doing in the school district. The community received two letters from my office the first being on April 12th very late at night the second letter came out on April 18th because there were further updates as related to the threat that occurred at Orange High School. Because Orange Prep is part of the campus, we of course had to lock down Orange Preparatory Academy of Inquiry and Innovation with I just want to take a few moments where the president just to reiterate it to folks to not get an opportunity to read my letter for you to hear it from my words. Dr. Fitzhugh reads the letter sent out to parents out loud and enforces that the news delivered by News12 was untrue and inaccurate. Dr. Fitzhugh communicates that safety is the priority.

Dr. Fitzhugh takes the time to thank the staff, the police department, to anyone who lent a hand to Orange.

This concludes the superintendent's report.

Ms. Johnson motions to approve March 8, 2023, public meeting minutes.

Moved by Mr. Armstrong Seconded by Dr. Turner
ROLL CALL (6) YEA (0) NAY (1)ABSTAIN (2) ABSENT

Ms. Johnson motions to approve March 8, 2023, closed meeting minutes.

Moved by Dr. Turner Seconded by Mr. Armstrong
ROLL CALL (7) YEA (0) NAY (0)ABSTAIN (2) ABSENT

Facilities Meeting: Mr. Armstrong communicates that the committee met on Monday, April 17th. The meeting began by going over the agenda, roll call, and several repairs needed throughout the district.

Finance Meeting: Mr. Sherif communicates that the budget was reviewed, and the board had a few questions regarding the budget and those concerns were addressed at the meeting. Mr. Sherif communicates that tonight there will be a few resolutions to transfer money from one account to another to make sure money is allocated for any necessary that may occur.

Public Relations: Dr. Turner communicates that the committee met on April 12 at 4:00 pm. The meeting went as usual with Dr. Fitzhugh and Mr. Davone discussing all the programs that went on throughout the district. Ms. Spotswood-Brown went through the parent portal and provide the visual to the committee. Covid-19 testing was discussed at this meeting and the district has seen a decrease in numbers throughout the weeks. Dr. Turner reminds us that the meeting is open to the public, and anyone is invited to attend.

Public Comments: Ms. Sawyer, Lincoln Avenue teacher and OEA representative communicates to the board feedback on the professional development that occurred on March 23, 2023. Ms. Sawyer begins to communicate that the Math department's implementation frequently becomes a concern amongst teachers during these training. Ms. Sawyer communicates that the instructor was able to break it down for better support classroom instruction through the exploration of a few questions.

Ms. Saint Harlene from Cleveland is concerned with the mental well-being of the students, staff, and parents. The community members want an answer as to why her daughter was in detention and she was not notified.

Dr. Fitzhugh communicates to the parent that these types of concerns cannot be discussed at public board meetings however he will give make sure they discuss more tomorrow. Dr. Fitzhugh addresses the question regarding the mental well-being of everyone at Cleveland and introduces Mr. Ballard to answer the parent's question regarding the repairs at Cleveland.

Mr. Ballard is happy to report to the community and the board member that the state did award the contract to a new construction company to restart and the building should be done by January 2025. The district will try its best to give Dr. Fitzhugh his wish of reopening in September of 2024.

Community member India Williams has a son who has an autistic son who needs OT and she has been waiting for those services since March 15 and she needs more answers as to why her son is not getting those services. Ms. Williams communicates that she is aware of the lack of availability in the industries however she needs better answers. She also mentioned that she was aware of the district a grant and wants to know what the district will be doing with those funding.

District lawyer Ms. Kleen communicates to Ms. Williams that this topic cannot be discussed at this meeting however the department of special services will be in touch with her.

Ms. Aysha Samuels community member wants to know why the district has so many sports but does not have enough academic summer programs.

Dr. Powell communicates to the community that there are several programs more like a staple program and we have STEM-related programs and robotics. Dr. Powell will get community member contact information to discuss it further.

Ms. Smith communicates that she has a wonderful student who does not speak English. Ms. Smith stated she requested services for the student and currently is using her phone to translate. Ms. Smith communicates that if the district continues to enroll kids at Heywood the district needs to provide the necessary tools to be able to teach the children. Ms. Smith also raises the question regarding the letter that was sent out on Friday regarding the attendance plan and a few teachers were worried and disgruntled. The letters seem threatening and seems like they are being punished by using their allocated days. Ms. Smith communicates a suggestion that the district on how they can improve and save the district money.

Ms. Patricia Garcia communicates that her daughter recently was enrolled at Orange High School and her daughter was not provided a laptop. Ms. Garcia communicates that she kept getting the run around from the district. Ms. Garcia reached out to the teacher and was made aware that her daughter was late and had three zeros when she later found out that her guidance counselor did not provide a schedule or a tour to ensure that she makes it to her class on time.

Dr. Fitzhugh communicates to Ms. Alcantara the student needs to have a Chromebook by 10:00 am tomorrow morning.

Dr. Fitzhugh asks Dr. Powell to get parent information to ensure that the student is provided with a schedule.

This concludes public comments.

BOARD RESOLUTIONS

Ms. Johnson motions to approve a consent agenda H1-N4 removing J1, J2, J3, J4, J5, L3

Moved by Mr. Armstrong Seconded by Dr. Turner

ROLL CALL (6) YEA (0) NAY () ABSTAIN (2) ABSENT (1) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE

Ms. Johnson motions to approve J1.

Moved by Mr. Henry Seconded by Dr. Turner

ROLL CALL (5) YEA (0) NAY (1) ABSTAIN (2) ABSENT (1) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE

Ms. Johnson motions to approve J2-J5

Moved by Mr. Henry Seconded by Ms. Gravesande

ROLL CALL (5) YEA (0) NAY (1) ABSTAIN (2) ABSENT (1) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE

Ms. Johnson motions to approve L3.

Moved by Ms. Gravesande Seconded by Mr. Armstrong

ROLL CALL (5) YEA (0) NAY (1) ABSTAIN (2) ABSENT (1) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE

Ms. Johnson motions to approve the Human Resource agenda.

Moved by Mr. Armstrong seconded by Dr. Turner

ROLL CALL (5) YEA (0) NAY (1) ABSTAIN (2) ABSENT (1) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE

(Ms. Gravesande votes yes however she abstains anything regarding Mr. Jeremy Gravesande)

Ms. Johnson makes the district aware of the scheduled meetings.

The curriculum virtual meeting will be held on April 23 at 3:30 pm

The facility virtual meeting will be held on May 1st at 3:30 pm

The public Relations virtual meeting will be held on May 3rd at 4:00 pm

The financing committee virtual meeting will be held on May 24 at 5:30 pm

Orange Board of Education's public meeting will be held on May 10th at 7:30 pm at OPA.

Policy Committee virtual meeting will be held May 4th at 4:00pm.

Human Resource Committee virtual meeting May 8 at 5 30 pm.

Board Comments

Dr. Fitzhugh communicates that April 5th, 2023, was National paraprofessionals appreciation day I know we were off but I wanted to make sure that that email went out and was set so that all you knew that the district appreciates the parents appreciate the community appreciates all you do every day in the classroom you can never tell who Who's Who in the classroom because it's such a fine old machine to our paraprofessionals We Salute and thank you Latin proud folks loud and proud.

Dr. Fitzhugh gives kudos to our school librarians district-wide thank you for all you do for the service of children [Applause] National assistant principals week April 3rd through April 7th please join me in thanking our assistant principals district-wide here and far favor all you do every day for the service of children April is Autism Awareness Month. Friday we're going to have a celebration over at Park Avenue so thank you to team Hackett and his team for putting together such a great experience for our students of autism let's give it up to our students and our staff who are diligent to make sure that our sense of autism is celebrated and appreciated May 1st no I'm going to do this May 1st to May 31st is national nurses month.

Dr. Fitzhugh hopes you knew that so to our school nurses in our district, we cannot do this work without you we thank you for all you do for the students and the staff okay so we're going to celebrate our nurses throughout

the month of May 1st is National principles day so, to all of our 15 principals in the district, We Salute and thank you for all you do for the service of children and staff. We've learned so much during the pandemic about coming together as one we didn't know about technology in terms of teaching from home did we but we learned it we mastered it and we made sure that children got what they needed on a Continuum every single day we do recognize that it's not the same as being in person right but our staff did a dynamic job during the pandemic and Beyond to ensure the children get what they need on a Continuum and I can say that because I go to the schools every day and I see greatness when I walk in every single building in this very District to our staff.

Dr. Fitzhugh turns it over to Ms. Johnson.

Ms. Johnson gives Dr. Powell a nice birthday shootout.

Dr. Fitzhugh thanks the staff and the families that came out and raised questions and concerns.

Ms. Kleen thanks the community for coming out and she communicates she's never worked for a hard-working board like Orange Public Schools.

Dr. Fitzhugh communicates that the board will be getting a break in July as well as staff who creates the reports.

Dr. Fitzhugh communicates that on April 26th the district will be recognizing all supervisors for their tremendous hard work.

Ms. Johnson moves to have the meeting adjourned.

Moved by Mr. Armstrong Seconded by Ms. Gravesande

ROLL CALL (6) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (2) ABSENT (1) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE