

Minutes of **Monday, January 23, 2017, Special Public Board Meeting** of the Orange Board Of Education held at 6:00 p.m., at the Administrative Building 451 Lincoln Avenue, Orange, New Jersey.

Cristina Mateo is presiding over tonight's meeting.

Mr. Abdul-Shabazz Ashanti **(absent)**
Ms. Gloria Fisher **(absent)**
Ms. Kyleesha Hill
Mr. Jarteau Israel
Mr. Jeffrey Wingfield
Mr. E. Lydell Carter
Ms. Cristina Mateo

ROLL CALL: (5) PRESENT (2) ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT:

- Mrs. Belinda Scott-Smiley, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent for Operations/Human Resource Services
- Dr. Paula E. Howard, Deputy Superintendent of Schools
- Mr. Akindele Ayodele, Assistant School Business Administrator/Board Secretary
- Mr. Ronald Hunt, School Board Attorney with the firm of Hunt, Hamlin & Ridley

In conformance with the **Board of Education Policy 1120-1 and Open Public Meeting Act, Chapter 231**, this is to announce that this Open Special Public Board Meeting of the Orange Board of Education is being convened with adequate notice. Notice of this meeting has been posted at the Administrative Office, filed with the City Clerk's Office of the City of Orange Township and delivered to the Orange Transcript and the Star Ledger.

The City of Orange Township Board of Education encourages the participation and input from members of the public at its board meetings. However, in accordance with Board Policy, verbal attacks against individual staff members or members of the Board are not permitted. Persons are encouraged to address the Board regarding comments relating to agenda items or issues concerning the educational process. The Board of Education thanks you for your cooperation.

FLAG SALUTE

ALL IN ATTENDANCE WILL PERFORM THE FLAG SALUTE

PRESENTATIONS

BOARD MINUTES

BOARD COMMENTS

- The meeting commenced with a roll call by Mr. Ayodele at 7:00pm, followed by the Flag Salute. The Board president welcomed members of the public.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Ms. Patricia Arthur asked the Board President to explain the resolution before the Board tonight. Ms. Mateo said it is to appoint the firm of attorney to work on a special job relating to changing from Type I to Type II. She also asked why appoint another law firm when there is an existing law firm hired by the Board. She wants to know why it is necessary. Ms. Mateo said the firm is being hired for a special service. She asked what took place in November 2016 necessitating the hiring of a legal firm.
- Ms. Ally march Rocco said it will be difficult to make a public comment without good explanation of background of why the meeting was called.
- Karen Wells said why not explain the reasons.
- Mr. Carter read the resolution to the Public.
- Ms. Arthur questioned the reasons why another law firm is being hired. She said moving form Type I to Type II requires an election to take place in April and further to put a resolution to shift voting to November.
- Ms. Rocco asked that when citizens of Orange voted to change to Type II and the Board as a rep, why are they voting to change what the citizens of Orange voted for? Ms. Mateo said the Board is not challenging the vote of the public.
- Janice Murrell said she is concerned with the decision of the Board, why do it 3 months late, and why not use Hunt instead of hiring a new law firm. She would like to know the justification for hiring a new attorney, wasting scarce funds, stating that this is a waste of tax payers' money.
- Derek Henry question why the Board could not find \$4,000 for the election, but they could find \$1,500 to pay legal fees. He complained that the Public were not notified of the meeting in time.
- Rev. Guyton said the Board does not want to answer all the questions asked. He is interested in answers to all questions.
- Mr. Edelstein rendered certain explanations to the public, stating that most members of the public are not well informed of the consequences. It affects budgeting etc. He said actions like this are governed by statutes of limitations. He said they have special expertise in election and school laws. He further explained that notice is 48 hours as required by law.
- Chris, from the Orange School District, said that changing will cost the \$2.5 Million bonding already approved. He said the public needs facts and figures.
- Bill Lewis said the Orange City Council does not know what they are doing. He said the YWCA was introduced to the Board and the City was not honest in its dealings with the District.

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- Ms. Arthur asked Mt. Edelstein whether a stop can be put on the election, moving it from April to November.
- Rev. Guyton suggested not hiring the law firm of Edelstein, use the current lawyer and save public funds. He said the Board should save the \$15,000 legal fee.
- Tyrone Tarver said that the problem of the Board is Transparency. He said he doesn't know if the Board is being transparent with the public. He said the public has spoken with their votes.
- Bill Lewis said there is a problem and the Board is looking in the wrong direction.
- Rev. Gordon commented, saying is the school board accountable to the public, this is the sense the public is getting and that is why they chose to change to type II.

BOARD RESOLUTIONS

**G17-007 RESOLUTION TO APPOINT THE LAW FIRM OF SCHWARTZ
SIMON EDELSTEIN & CELSO, LLC AS SPECIAL COUNSEL
TO THE ORANGE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

WHEREAS, the Orange Board of Education has decided that it is necessary to challenge the recent question and election that was conducted in the City of Orange to convert the Orange Board of Education from an appointed board to an elected board; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the regulation, the board believes that the said November 8, 2016 election and its protocol was conducted inappropriately; and

WHEREAS, the Orange Board of Education has determined to seek the Courts injunction to this process and legally challenge and put a stop to the election and all protocols as conducted by the Council of the City of Orange Township; and

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Orange Board of Education hereby appoints the law firm of Schwartz Simon Edelstein & Celso, LLC as a special counsel with such services to commence immediately for this case purpose only at an hourly rate of \$150 and not to exceed a total of \$15,000 (fifteen thousand dollars), any extension of the fee max must be approved by the Board and in accordance with those conditions as set forth in the legal services agreement; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board President and the Business Administrator/Board Secretary are hereby authorized to execute the Agreement and carry out this action of the Board.

Moved by E. Lydell Carter. Seconded by Jeffrey Wingfield

ROLL CALL: (5) YEA (0) NAY

DISTRICT MEETINGS

- Next scheduled meetings are as follows:

Public

- Facilities Committee Meeting – Monday, February 13, 2017 at 2:30 p.m., 451 Lincoln Avenue.
- Next Public Board Meeting – Tuesday, February, 14, 2017 at 7:30 p.m., 380 Central Avenue.
- Curriculum Committee Meeting – Tuesday, January 31, 2017 at 5:00 p.m., 451 Lincoln Avenue

Closed

- Human Resource Committee Meeting – Monday, February 13, 2016 at 4:00 p.m.

CORRESPONDENCES

COMMITTEE REPORTS

BOARD COMMENTS

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 and in conformance with the Board of Education Policy 1120-1 **and Open Public Meeting Act, Chapter 231**, this is to announce that the Orange Board Of Education will hold its next regularly scheduled **Meeting on February 14, 2017** Closed Session at 6:00 p.m. and Public Session at 7:00 p.m. It is expected that the discussion undertaken in the closed session board meeting can be made public at the time official action is taken or when its confidentiality is no longer required.


Motion to adjourn Public Session.

Moved by E. Lydell Carter. Seconded by Jeffrey Wingfield

ROLL CALL: (5) YEA (0) NAY

APPROVAL DATE: February 14, 2017

ATTESTED TO BY:



**School Business Administrator/
Board Secretary**