

The Special Meeting of the Commercial Township Board of Education was held in the Administration Building, located at 1308 North Avenue, Port Norris, NJ, on Wednesday, October 17, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. Board President, Mrs. Perrelli, opened the meeting at 7:00 PM, leading the group in the pledge to the flag.

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

Board President, Mrs. Perrelli, read the following statement:

CALL TO ORDER

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meeting of the public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this Act, the Commercial Township Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time and place advertised in the Press of Atlantic City and South Jersey Times and posted in the Commercial Township Schools and District Office, and on the District website.

**ROLL CALL**

Board Secretary, Ms. Trish Birmingham, performed roll call and is listed as follows:

ROLL CALL

Mrs. Abbott	Present
Mrs. Dragotta	Present
Mrs. Plummer	Present
Mrs. Perrelli	Present
Mrs. Porter	Present
Mrs. Ronan	Absent
Mrs. Stormes-Rivera	Present
Mr. Sutton	Present
Mrs. Wilson-Smith	Present

Also present:

Mrs. Jean Smith - Interim Superintendent/Principal  
Mrs. Alysia Thomson – District Assistant Principal

CORRESP

**CORRESPONDENCE**

- Mrs. Kathy Vizzard announced the Annual Spaghetti Dinner at the Haleyville-Mauricetown School on Friday October 19, 2018.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**

Kathy Vizzard – stated she’s unsure of what is going on between the Board and the Transportation Dept., the focus needs to be on the kids, and fix the issues.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA

**FINANCE**

- 1. Shared Service Proposals** – Held until after Executive Session.

SHARED SERVICE PROPOSALS

**TRANSPORTATION**

- 2. Transportation Concerns** – The Board reviewed and discussed with the Transportation Dept. any concerns and matters. Mrs. Perrelli gave each Transportation Department Personnel three minutes to speak.

TRANSP CONCERNS

Brittany Fisher – stated she feels the department personnel work very hard, that their job is routine and when random changes are made with no background information consideration, chaos is caused. She continued that the buses are parked at Sheppard yards for safety reasons as well as troubleshooting ease. Amadis Terrero – explained her knowledge of all bus routes as a fill-in and floater. She stated that the safety of the drivers and the buses is maintained at the Sheppard yards. She stated winter is coming and when it snows, it is simple to clean the snow off with the machine. Amadis explained the mechanics are at the yards so if there is a mechanical issue it can be fixed timely. She pointed out if an issue occurred

with a bus while parked at HMS there would be no one to fix the bus timely and the driver(s) would have to wait for Sheppard mechanics to come on-site. She stated the drivers work very hard and are dedicated with their hearts. Amadis explained the drivers do not want chaos and back-and-forth conversations over issues that are not a real issue. She asked the Board to please consider all the drivers do.

Rosina Dennis – stated she parks her bus at HMS by choice and closer proximity from her house, however it is very dark when she arrives, and if the bus does not start then that is a huge problem. She stated the drivers go out of their way to make sure the kids are safe and on time. She stated there are not a lot of drivers knocking on the door to have a job, which would make the department have additional resources for more routes. Rosina questioned if the buses were all parked at the school, what safety measures would the Board take.

Julie Abbott asked Amadis if she parks her bus at the yard for safety or the ease of having the mechanics available. Amadis stated both.

Damaris Cruz – stated the only issue is where the buses are parked and that the safety and mechanics are a better option at Sheppard yard.

Cesarina Gonzalez – stated the drivers are proud of what they do, that everything was smooth and was a great beginning to the year with no parent complaints or late buses, and then there were problems that were not really problems. She stated the mechanics at Sheppard yards are very helpful when there is a problem and if the buses are at HMS there will be late routes if something is wrong with a bus and mechanics are not on site. She stated she is always on time and that is something that is important to her, the parents and the students, as they all need and like the routine.

Anthony Green – stated he is a man and being in the lot at HMS early in morning or later at night when it is dark is not something he likes. He stated the kids appreciate the drivers.

Jaime Roman – stated he had been terminated in the prior week for the second time, due to Mrs. Smith calling him, begging him to come back and telling him he had a job as a driver, but then the Board did not approve it. He stated he wanted to come back because he loves the kids, the community, and his coworkers.

Susan Walkup – stated she was not bashing the mechanics at Sheppard, but is mentioning the time they would need to get on-site to HMS in the case of a bus issue because they are very busy, not that they are not fulfilling their contractual job functions. She stated Mr. John Sheppard reserved an area in the lot(s) for the Commercial Twp BOE buses that was well lit and gated/secure. She stated a bus cannot legally be on the road with snow on it, and there is safety concerns with cleaning off a bus at HMS. Susan stated the drivers can plug the buses in, complete their pretrip requirement, and get mechanic help if need be at the Sheppard yard(s).

Discussion occurred regarding the amount of drivers needed at the current date. Susan explained 2 full time and 1 part time would complete the need for all routes.

The start and end times of the drivers were discussed and it was explained that the district has 10 vehicles as there were 10 drivers at the beginning of the year, and the small bus is necessary for the handicapped students in wheelchairs.

Julie Abbott asked how sports were factored into the schedule, as Coach Lanterman really appreciated the transportation, to which Susan explained the schedules of the drivers included the trips, field trips, etc. to complete 8 hours per day.

Sharon Porter stated the transportation committee was not going to get rid of transportation, but needed to review job descriptions, standard operating procedures and other items they did not have previously. She questioned where the jobs were being advertised as if Sheppard could not get drivers then how would the district. She mentioned that some drivers were rumored to called out sick on purpose or not come to work, which caused clubs and other routes to be cancelled, while thanking those drivers who did show up. Trish Birmingham stated there was no concerted effort of drivers to call out/not show up on purpose, and that Ms. Walkup had alerted the Board at the meeting on 10/9/18 that there would be a shortage of drivers to cover routes due to the low number of drivers on staff, prior scheduled days off, and the resignation of a driver.

Discussion occurred regarding Jaime Roman’s hiring, termination, no board approval of the termination, the rehiring and the board denial of rehiring. The timeline of events was reviewed, as Jaime Roman was training as a bus driver and on a bus, to which Mrs. Jean Smith stated she did not know he was on a bus. Dawn Robinson (member of the public) stated the reason the public thinks it is a personal issue with certain staff members because of the issues that are not actual issues and messing around with one person. Mr. Lou Russo (NJEA Representative) stated the drivers explained the parking issue very well. He stated the case could be stated that parking at Sheppard yards could be conceived as a binding past practice due to the timeframe it was a practice and that it would need to be negotiated with the CTEA in contract negotiation terms.

Ronald Sutton, Jr. stated the Board needs pull the reigns back within the transportation department and needed to ask the drivers their opinions about the parking situation. He stated he was unsure of where the buses were parked. Ms. Birmingham stated the transportation committee had met multiple times and the Board as a whole heard the findings from herself and Mrs. Smith, which were the same as explained by the drivers.

Julie Abbott stated Mr. Sheppard wouldn’t save the parking spots for the buses for random parking. Additional discussion occurred regarding fueling the buses, getting a fuel tank to place on the state police barracks property, reviewing the Zonar system.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motioned by Mrs. Porter and seconded by Mrs. Plummer that the Board of Education adjourn, by Resolution, into Executive Session, from which the public is excluded to discuss the shared service proposals for the business administrator position and transportation concerns. The results of this session will be made public immediately after, or as soon thereafter as a decision is reached, if permitted by law. (8:32 pm)

EXEC  
SESSION

Ayes: (8)                      Noes: (0)                      Abstain: (0)                      Motion Carried

Also Present:

Mrs. Jean Smith

Mrs. Alysia Thomson

Item reviewed in Executive Session:

**1. Shared Service Proposals**

Discussion occurred regarding the two proposals received from Oldmans Township School District and Pittsgrove Township School District to hold the Business Administrator position.

SHARED  
SERVICE  
PROPOSALS

**2. Transportation Items**

Discussion occurred regarding the transportation findings and conclusions of the previously discussed items.

TRANSP  
ITEMS

Moved by Mrs. Porter and seconded by Mr. Sutton that the Board of Education adjourn the executive session of the meeting. (10:25 pm)

EXIT EXEC

Ayes: (8)                      Noes: (0)                      Abstain: (0)                      Motion Carried

Moved by Mrs. Stormes-Rivera and seconded by Mrs. Porter that the Board of Education enter into public session. (10:25 pm)

ENTER  
REGULAR

Ayes: (8)                      Noes: (0)                      Abstain: (0)                      Motion Carried

**Shared Services Proposal** - Motioned by Mrs. Wilson-Smith and seconded by Mrs. Dragotta that the Board of Education approve the submitted proposal from Oldmans Township to provide Business Administrator services.

SHARED  
SERVICES –  
BA

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: (8)                      Noes: (0)                      Abstain: (0)                      Motion Carried

TRANSP  
PARKING

**Transportation Vehicles Parking** - Motioned by Mrs. Stormed-Rivera and seconded by Mrs. Plummer that the Board of Education approves the allowance of the district's transportation vehicles be housed at Sheppard yards and other administratively approved designated areas, effective October 17, 2018.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: (8)      Noes: (0)      Abstain: (0)      Motion Carried

BOARD  
MEETING  
DATES

**Board Meeting Dates** - Motioned by Mrs. Porter and seconded by Mrs. Abbott that the Board of Education approve the changing of the dates to hold board meetings to the 1<sup>st</sup> (first) Tuesday of each Month.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: (8)      Noes: (0)      Abstain: (0)      Motion Carried

ADJOURN

**ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Mrs. Dragotta and seconded by Mrs. Porter to adjourn the meeting. (10:28 pm)

Ayes: (8)      Noes: (0)      Abstain: (0)      Motion Carried

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Lawren Birmingham, Board Secretary  
October 17, 2018