

**CALIFON BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
May 10, 2018**

***I. CALL TO ORDER – OPENING STATEMENT**

This meeting is called to order at 7:30 p.m. with the following opening statement read by Mr. Cantagallo:

“I would like to announce and have placed in the minutes that adequate notice of this meeting of the Califon Board of Education has been provided in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Proper notice of this Special Meeting was posted at the office of the Califon School, published in the Hunterdon County Democrat, mailed to the Hunterdon Review, and the Express Times. A copy of this notice has also been posted on the public bulletin board in the Municipal Building and filed with the Borough Clerk. The agenda of this meeting has been posted at the Califon School and on the district’s website”.

***II. THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

All present pledged to the flag.

***III. ROLL CALL**

Members present: Mrs. Nina DeCoster
 Dr. Jevan Furmanski
 Mr. Christopher Keiser
 Mr. Jeffrey Dahl
 Mr. Mark Cantagallo

Also present: Mr. Jason Kornegay, Superintendent
 Ms. Karin Laraway, Interim Board Secretary

***IV. PRESENTATION OF THE FEASIBILITY STUDY**

Mr. Cantagallo: The State of NJ continues to request that school districts, especially small school districts, look into sharing services, consolidating, and regionalization. North Hunterdon Voorhees Regional School District has been studying regionalizing the 13 sending districts into a K-12 district. The Califon BOE, realizing the declining enrollment, wanted to make sure Califon made its own decisions based on what is in the best interest of the Califon students. We are all here for the same reason-to provide a great education and the best opportunities available. The BOE has been discussing declining enrollment and the students’ best interests for a year and a half.

Mr. Kornegay: The conversation started about the low enrollment. Meetings were held with neighboring districts. The BOE approached an outside agency to help determine what action to take. Because Tewksbury, Lebanon Township, and Califon intersect, there was a narrow scope to look at a potential send/receive relationship. A starting point was to look at a send/receive relationship with Lebanon Township. Reviewing

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projections on future enrollment, could there be a structure that is educationally appropriate and where programs could continue. The driver is not finances, there are programmatic concerns and sustainability for the students and the community. Mr. Hespe who did the study could not make the meeting but the BOE and Superintendent will answer your questions to the best of their ability.

- *V. PUBLIC COMMENT (resolutions only; time limits: 20 min. total; 3 min. /person)**
At this time, comment is invited on any matter relating to the resolutions on tonight's agenda.

Anyone wishing to speak before the board concerning these resolutions may do so during this public commentary portion of the agenda. The presenter shall give his/her name and address and make the presentation as brief as possible. Unless an extension of time is given, each speaker shall be limited to 3 minutes.

Speakers may offer suggestions or express their concerns. However, in public session, the board will not discuss concerns about individual students or staff members. Other, more appropriate, channels are available for expressing concerns about individual students or staff members.

The Board President may terminate the remarks of any individual, when they do not adhere to the rules established above.

Public: Who started the process? The town is fuming over closing school. The town has always had small classes. The staff loves their jobs. After one bad experience, the community came back. A letter was read from a former student indicating that Califon provides a great education and lasting friendships are created. Does the BOE want to be the one who taints the school?

Public: The school does not foster social development and has experienced bullying, but it does provide a great learning experience.

Public: The data in the feasibility study does not support the conclusion and this is the beginning of the process. There needs to be outreach to the community to reach a consensus. The BOE should put together an advisory committee with all stakeholders represented, teachers, students, community organizations. Have the biggest skeptic at the table. Get out and ask people.

Public: Why does an accelerated decision have to be made?

Mr. Cantagallo: The BOE has been looking at many aspects of declining enrollment for one and a half years. The BOE is not taking action tonight. It is getting feedback from the community.

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Public: I excelled at the Califon School. For 9 years I received a quality education and am the person I am today from the small classes.

Public: I want to thank the BOE for doing what you do, thank the community for being here. We are in this together and thank you to the BOE for stepping up.

Public: Taxes continue to rise in Califon and that includes school tax. The cost to educate a student in Califon is approximately \$30,000. In the year 2025, the cost to educate a student will be \$60,000. The school offers less than other school districts. This is a public education at private school prices.

Public: Former BOE member serving 18 years, 16 as Finance chair. There was a community committee to determine if an additional was needed. Give the community a chance to decide the fate of Califon School. Califon does better than Lebanon Twp. Thomas Jefferson went to a small school and he grew up to be President.

Public: Former BOE member was on BOE during the time Califon offered School Choice and there was a "You Belong Here" campaign. During tenure as A BOE member, a five year study showed that 98% of Califon students made the honor roll all 4 years, 94% were accepted to a top 500 university and 898% were accepted to a top 100 university. Voorhees information needs to be part of the study.

Public: The feasibility study indicates that there would be one representative on the BOE from the sending district based on the percentage of sending pupils attending.

Mr. Kornegay: Will get clarification on this.

Public: Students in the middle, the average students fall under the radar. Up to the parents to teach diversity. Lebanon class sizes of 15-18, the students do not get a superior education.

Mr. Cantagallo: Diversity is not only race and ethnicity.

Dr. Furmanski: The Curriculum Committee has been studying the potential impact of small class sizes using studies from Rutgers. What are the challenges of student to student interaction and lack of ideas because of fewer students.

Public: Moved from a larger county due to son's special needs. The child is thriving because of the superior student to teacher ratio. Child has a family in the school.

Public: Was told by a BOE member that there will be no changes for the coming year. Keep the lines of communication open. Use the facts not emotions.

Public: What is the time table? Time is ticking and there are many individuals that have creative suggestions. What is the point of time when a decision has to be made?

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Mr. Cantagallo: Until the item is on the agenda, there is no vote taken.

Public: Can't ignore the finances. What would the budget look like if closing the school? What would the building be used for?

Mr. Cantagallo: There are other opportunities available for students. This is just not about class size and finances.

Public: The study mentions that the school would become a community center but the township committee was never approached. This should not be in the study.

Public: Did the budget take into account the send/receive relationship.

Mr. Kornegay: The budget is status quo.

Public: There should be a community outreach. Look at other alternatives.

Public: Califon students are not deprived in regards to opportunities. When the school is gone, it's not coming back. Why are 2 teacher contracts not being renewed?

Public: Not every child in Califon has two parents and has the same opportunities. With dwindling enrollment, the school can't have opportunities to expose a student's raw talent. There are not enough opportunities for students in Califon. Move on-it's called life.

Public: Extra-curricular activities are lacking.

Public: Lebanon Township seems to have more information than Califon.

Mr. Kornegay: The study was conducted to determine what is in the best interest of the students.

Public: What is the time line? It appears that the BOE is ill prepared. Don't make a rash decision. Something of this magnitude should be taken on by the community.

Public: Former student. Every student gets an award at graduation. My teacher knew about me as a person.

Mr. Cantagallo: No one is questioning how great an education Califon students receive.

Public: Former student. Overcome obstacles because of Califon and its class sizes. Califon teaches life skills.

Public: When is small to small? 7.5 to 1 is ideal ratio. Think about real data.

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Public: Went to school in Califon, taught in Califon, children attend Califon. Mad at BOE for telling me what you are going to do with my children. My children are happy. We have a community, place is a family, love each other and we trust each other.

Public: A crossing guard who sees the children every day. Concerned about their Welfare like they were my own children. This is a community concerned about each other. I am for a small school. I have lived in the community all my life.

Mr. Cantagallo: Thank you for what you do for our children.

Public: Think outside the box for what students are lacking. Ask teachers where the problems lie. Ask parents where problems lie. There are solutions outside the box

Mr. Cantagallo: We are always interested in what is best for the students. We have to evaluate and imagine the what ifs.

Public: Thank the BOE, you are doing the best you can with the information you have right now. The education in Califon is one of the best kept secrets. Get the word out.

Public: The education is the best in Califon, but is it feasible down the road? Are the taxes going up and the education doing down? Are students going to get a good education with all the technology?

Mr. Kornegay: The district has phenomenal teachers. Califon has an equivalent one to one initiative with Chromebooks. With state funding flat, the district has less spending power each year. There is a concern about sustainability. The major funding source of the budget is from local taxes.

Mr. Cantagallo: There was a meeting of sending districts, Hampton and High Bridge were not interested after the first meeting. Tewksbury walked away.

Public: The Superintendent of Tewksbury said she had 2 meetings and she said yes to a send/receive relationship. Is it documented that Tewksbury was not interested?

Mrs. DeCoster: On Aug 2 there was a meeting and Tewksbury indicated that it has never had a conversation with the BOE or the community.

Public: Child attends Kindergarten in Lebanon Twp. Parents made the decision to send child there due to the kindergarten class of four boys. It is better for social experiences for their daughter. When does it become socially inappropriate to maintain small classes? Daughter loves Valley View. She has girl friends. If Califon residents feel they are not being represented, don't forget that both districts have Mr. Kornegay as Superintendent.

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Public: Mom of one of the 4 boys in Kindergarten who doesn't want her son to be with 4 boys through 8th grade. She appreciates that the BOE is looking into this. It feels like if you, as a parent, don't like Califon the way it is, then move.

Public: Califon resident whose children attend Lebanon as School Choice students having good experiences. The good education in Califon raised property value. Keep Califon open because the nature of Califon changes if school closes.

Public: What next? When is this going to happen so there are no surprises?

Mr. Kornegay: More research needs to be done, there is no urgency to close the school, however, the BOE is reviewing particular situations.

Public: Child did not have a positive experience, was bullied, sat alone at lunch. Mr. Weber sat with her at lunch every day.

Public: How many students have choiced out vs how many choiced in? Is there an interest from other district?

Mr. Kornegay: There were 29, 24 out, 5 in. Since then we have taken in a total of 4. He does receive phone calls about school choice but there are not openings.

Mr. Kornegay: Every district goes through a mid-year budget review and the county Superintendent asks that every BOE look at options for consolidation and regionalization.

Public: There should be other options looked at for small classes.

Public: Teachers do the best job in creating experiences and enriching the students. What other options can be looked at to mitigate the problem?

Mr. Kornegay: Some experiences you can't manufacture. There is a dramatic difference in curriculum and development of students.

Public: Use the study as a starting point, get everyone engaged. Don't take the students from the school. Review strategies dealing with small classes. Report the data to the public. Let the community vote on what to do with the school. Thank you for your volunteerism.

Public: Thank you for holding the special meeting. There are other paths we can go down. Not closing the school can be an option.

Public: I support every person on the school board. People in the community care about each other. This is a divided community. We need to be a model for the children on how to act and be appropriate. Be respectful for everyone involved.

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***VI. PERSONNEL**

Tenured Teachers 2018-2019

- *1. Motion made by Mr. Keiser, seconded by Mrs. DeCoster, to approve, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, the re-appointment of the tenured professional staff shown below for the 2018-2019 School Year, salary guide and step to be determined pending ratification of a new Negotiated Agreement between the Califon Board of Education and the Califon Education Association.

Motion approved on a unanimous roll call vote.

NAME	POSITION	FTE	SALARY STEP
Charleston, Kristen	MS/LAL 6-8	1.00	TBD
Cutshaw, Glenn T.	PE/Health	1.00	TBD
Heuneman, Robin	Math	0.56	TBD
Heyduke, Marie	Math/SE	1.00	TBD
Hoitsma, Kyle	Elementary	1.00	TBD
Hubiak, Kelly	Elementary	1.00	TBD
Kooger, Lisa	MS/SS 6-8	1.00	TBD
Madson, Lisa	Art	0.40	TBD
Maginnis, Isabel	Spanish	0.50	TBD
Medea, MaryJane	Elementary	1.00	TBD
Montesion, Loretta	SE/Preschool	1.00	TBD
Patterson, Linda	Nurse	1.00	TBD
Weiss, Leslie	SE	1.00	TBD
Zimmerman, Matthew	Media	1.00	TBD
Edsall, Kelly	Psychologist	0.20	n/a – per diem

Non-Tenured Staff 2018-2019

- *2. Motion made by Mr. Keiser, seconded by Dr. Furmanski, to approve, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, the re-appointment of the non-tenured professional staff shown below for the 2018-2019 School Year, salary and step to be determined pending ratification of a new Negotiated Agreement between the Califon Board of Education and the Califon Education Association.

Motion approved on a unanimous roll call vote.

NAME	POSITION	FTE	SALARY STEP
Blondina, Bryce	SE	1.0	TBD
DeAngelo, Ann Marie	MS/Science 6-8	1.0	TBD

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DeMarco, Alison	Elementary	1.0	TBD
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Non-CEA Staff

- *3. Motion made by Dr. Furmanski, seconded by Mr. Keiser, to approve the following staffing for the 2018-2019 School Year.

Motion approved on a unanimous roll call vote.

10 Months

Susan Annunziata	Instructional Aide	1.00 FTE
Susan French-Gonzalez	Instructional Aide	1.00 FTE
Edward Belenguer	Night Custodian	0.50 FTE
Dawn Hup	Preschool Aide	0.50 FTE

12 Months

Susan Dyer	Executive Secretary	1.00 FTE
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Head Custodian

As recommended by the Superintendent, a motion to appoint Steven Weber as Head Custodian for the 2018-2019 school year, terms and conditions to be determined.

Principal

As recommended by the Superintendent, a motion to appoint Daniel Patton as Principal for the 2018-2019 school year, terms and conditions to be determined.

***XI. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion made by Mr. Cantagallo, seconded by Mr. Keiser, to adjourn the meeting. The time was 10:45 PM.

Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Karin Laraway
Interim Board Secretary

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