

RIVER VALE BOARD OF EDUCATION
River Vale, New Jersey 07675
REGULAR MEETING
Roberge Elementary School Gym
February 1, 2022
MINUTES

Live Stream Can Be Found At: www.rivervaleschools.com/youtube

CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 P.M.

Mr. Rosini called the Meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, the Laws of 1975, notice of this meeting has been sent to all school offices, officially designated newspapers, filed with the Township Clerk and posted in the Board of Education Office, forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mrs. Berkowitz, Mrs. Pintarelli, Mr. Rosini,
Mrs. Senande, Mr. Schlereth, Mrs. Rothenberg

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. White

ALSO PRESENT: Ms. Signore, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Ippolito, Business Administrator/Board Secretary
Stephen R. Fogarty, Esq.
25 members of the public

FLAG SALUTE

BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Rosini thanked everyone for coming to the meetings and the Board appreciates the community's input. Extracurricular continue and remain popular, sports in full action. Still talking about school and the students are enjoying it. Mr. Fogarty here to provide board training on

COMMITTEE REPORTS – CHAIRPERSON

- **Buildings & Grounds – None**
- **Communications & Policies – Mrs. Senande stated that the Committee's next meeting was scheduled for the end of March.**
- **Curriculum & Technology – Mrs. Rothenberg stated that Ms. Dowling's student assessment report presented at the last meeting can be found on the district website.**
- **Finance – Mrs. Pintarelli indicated that the district budgets for 2022-2023 are still being formed and we are awaiting State Aid figures which would hopefully be out by the end of February, beginning of March.**

- **Negotiations – None**
- **Personnel – None**

COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE

Date	Time	Committee
February 8, 2022	6:00 PM	Buildings & Grounds
February 15, 2022	6:00 PM	Finance
March 1, 2022	6:00 PM	Finance
March 15, 2022	6:00 PM	Finance
March 29, 2022	6:00 PM	Communications & Policies Committee “Zoom” Meeting
April 5, 2022	6:00 PM	Buildings & Grounds
April 26, 2022	6:00 PM	Personnel
May 10, 2022	6:00 PM	Curriculum & Technology
September 6, 2022	6:00 PM	Buildings & Grounds “Walk Through” Meeting
September 20, 2022	6:00 PM	Curriculum & Technology
October 11, 2022	6:00 PM	Communications & Policies
November 15, 2022	6:00 PM	Negotiations
December 13, 2022	6:00 PM	Finance
January 3, 2023	6:00 PM	Finance

PUBLIC COMMENTS – AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

THE RIVER VALE BOARD OF EDUCATION IS committed to encouraging the citizens of River Vale and employees of the River Vale School District to speak directly to Board Trustees. In order to facilitate this communication, residents and employees are requested (1) to sign in before speaking; (2) to maintain an appropriate sense of decorum; and (3) to limit their remarks to no more than five minutes. The Board will also take under advisement the written comments and opinions of non-residents that are submitted to the Board Secretary. Being mindful of its responsibility to maintain the orderly conduct of meetings, the Board retains the right to rule on such matters as the speaker’s right to address the Board, as well as the appropriateness of the subject being presented. The Board’s decision in such matters is final.

The Board also reminds all members of the public that while it subscribes, without reservation, to the principle of keeping the community informed, by policy and law, it cannot allow public discussion of personnel matters nor can Trustees comment on any current or pending litigation. If a matter concerning an employee of the River Vale Public Schools is of interest or concern to a resident, the matter should be referred to the responsible building principal or the Superintendent of Schools by telephone, letter or email.

Meeting opened to public comments at 7:06 P.M.

Public comments:
None

Meeting closed to public comments at 7:06 P.M.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- Mrs. Signore introduced Mr. Steven Fogarty from the law firm of Fogarty and Hara, Esqs.
- Mr. Fogarty provided a Board presentation which can be viewed on the District's Youtube channel during the February 1st Board meeting.

BOARD SECRETARY'S REPORT

- Ms. Ippolito reminded Board Members to file their School Ethics Personal/Relative and Financial Disclosure Forms.

GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

G1. MOTION BY Mr. Schlereth SECONDED BY Mrs. Pintarelli
BE IT RESOLVED BY THE RIVER VALE BOARD OF EDUCATION that the Board, upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, **approves the following resolution:**

WHEREAS, NJAC 6A:23A-5.3 provides that a school district may request a waiver of compliance with respect to the district's participation in the Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) Program for the 2022-2023 school year, and

WHEREAS, the River Vale Board of Education desires to apply for this waiver due to the fact that it projects having fewer than 40 Medicaid eligible classified students and the participation in SEMI would not provide a cost benefit to the district based on the projection of the district's available SEMI reimbursement for the 2022-2023 budget year;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the River Vale Board of Education hereby authorizes the Chief School Administrator to submit to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools in the County of Bergen an appropriate waiver of the requirements of NJAC 6A23A-5.3 for the 2022-2023 school year.

	Mrs. Berkowitz	Mrs. Pintarelli	Mrs. Rothenberg	Mr. Schlereth	Mrs. Senande	Mr. White	Mr. Rosini
AYE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
NAY							
ABSENT						✓	
ABSTAINED							

BUSINESS RESOLUTIONS

B1. MOTION BY Mrs. Rothenberg SECONDED BY Mrs. Senande

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE RIVER VALE BOARD OF EDUCATION that the Board, upon recommendation of the School Business Administrator, **approves the following resolution:**

WHEREAS, the River Vale Board of Education advertised for bids for the Additions to the Holdrum Middle School, Contract 58.1(“Project”); and

WHEREAS, on January 26, 2022, the Board received and publicly opened sixteen bids for the Project; and

WHEREAS, APS Contracting, Inc., submitted the lowest responsible bid on the Project, with a base bid in the amount of \$5,990,000, together with Alternate 1 deducting \$130,000, Alternate 2 adding \$25,000, Alternate 3 deducting \$55,000, Alternate 4 deducting \$35,000, and Alternate 5 adding \$100,000; and

WHEREAS, APS Contracting, Inc.’s bid complied in all material respects;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board hereby awards the contract for the Project to APS Contracting, Inc., including Alternates No. 1, 3, 4, and 5, for a total of \$5,870,000; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this award is expressly conditioned upon APS Contracting, Inc. furnishing the requisite insurance certificate and labor and materials/performance bond as required in the project specifications, together with an AA201-Project Manning Report, an executed A-101-Standard Form of Agreement Between Owner and Contractor and an executed A-201-General Conditions of the Contract for Construction, as prepared by the Board Attorney and/or Architect, within ten days of the date hereof; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board hereby directs the Board Attorney and/or Architect to prepare the contract with APS Contracting, Inc., and authorizes the Board President and Board Secretary to execute such agreement and any other documents necessary to effectuate the terms of this Resolution.

CONTRACTOR	Base Bid	Alt #1 - Reduced Scope @ Courtyards	Alt #2 - New Fencing @ North Side of Site	Alt #3 - Delete Toilet Room @ Classroom 108	Alt #4 - Wide Flange Beams in lieu of Bar Joists	Alt #5 - Lgtwgt Insulating Concrete in lieu of Polyisocyanurate Roofing Insulation	Total - Base Bid plus Alt #1, Alt #3, Alt #4 & Alt #5
Bismark Construction Corp.	6,555,000	(55,000)	37,000	(37,000)	no change	170,000	6,633,000
M&M Construction Co., Inc.	7,490,000	(130,000)	30,000	(130,000)	15,000	185,000	7,430,000
Grove Contracting, LLC	6,689,000	(24,000)	28,000	(65,000)	(34,000)	130,000	6,696,000
Brockwell & Carrington Contractors	7,440,000	(89,000)	44,000	(34,000)	(40,000)	171,000	7,448,000
Northeastern Interior Services, LLC	7,111,289	(25,000)	39,800	(45,000)	(36,000)	198,000	7,203,289
GPC, Inc.	7,069,000	(305,000)	32,000	(64,000)	35,700	146,000	6,881,700
Tekcon Construction, Inc.	7,899,000	(200,000)	36,000	(53,500)	18,000	191,136	7,854,636
Belmont Construction Corp.	6,590,000	(125,000)	17,000	(60,000)	12,000	150,000	6,567,000
Paul Otto Building Co.	6,484,000	(50,000)	25,000	(50,000)	10,000	130,000	6,524,000
Vanas Construction Co., Inc.	7,317,000	(94,500)	27,300	(31,000)	11,600	146,900	7,350,000
The Bennett Company	6,640,000	(125,000)	40,000	(50,000)	(35,000)	130,000	6,560,000
Mark Construction, Inc.	6,198,000	(124,000)	23,000	(62,000)	362,000	151,000	6,525,000
LaRocca, Inc.	7,055,000	(82,000)	13,000	(40,000)	1,000	53,000	6,987,000
APS Contracting, Inc.	5,990,000	(130,000)	25,000	(55,000)	(35,000)	100,000	5,870,000
H&S Mechanical	6,588,000	(85,000)	35,000	(75,000)	(36,000)	110,000	6,502,000
Pal-Pro Builders LLC	6,780,000	(65,000)	27,000	(74,000)	(35,000)	76,000	6,682,000

Account No. 30-000-400-450-20-11-117

	Mrs. Berkowitz	Mrs. Pintarelli	Mrs. Rothenberg	Mr. Schlereth	Mrs. Senande	Mr. White	Mr. Rosini
AYE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
NAY							
ABSENT						✓	
ABSTAINED							

B2. MOTION BY Mrs. Rothenberg SECONDED BY Mrs. Senande
BE IT RESOLVED BY THE RIVER VALE BOARD OF EDUCATION that the Board, upon recommendation of the School Business Administrator, **approves the following resolution:**

WHEREAS, the River Vale Board of Education advertised for bids for entrance canopy upgrades at various schools, Contract No. 54 (“Project”); and

WHEREAS, on January 19, 2022, the Board received and publicly opened two bids for the Project; and

WHEREAS, the bids received, in the amount of \$1,664,600.00 and \$1,740,000.00, both substantially exceed the cost estimates for the Project;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board hereby rejects all the bids in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-22.a; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Board hereby authorizes and directs the Business Administrator/Board Secretary to notify the bidders of the same and re-advertise the Project for bid.

	Mrs. Berkowitz	Mrs. Pintarelli	Mrs. Rothenberg	Mr. Schlereth	Mrs. Senande	Mr. White	Mr. Rosini
AYE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
NAY							
ABSENT						✓	
ABSTAINED							

PERSONNEL RESOLUTIONS

P1. **MOTION BY Mrs. Senande SECONDED BY Mrs. Pintarelli**
BE IT RESOLVED BY THE RIVER VALE BOARD OF EDUCATION that the Board, upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, **advises pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:16-17, 18A:16-17.1 and 52:14-17.46.14, that unless an employee waives health insurance coverage, the employee shall contribute to the cost of their health insurance coverage in the amounts required by law, or any applicable collective negotiations agreement, whether said contributions are a percentage of the health insurance premium based upon their salary range, or a percentage of their annual base salary, as determined by the health insurance plan in which the employee is enrolled.**

	Mrs. Berkowitz	Mrs. Pintarelli	Mrs. Rothenberg	Mr. Schlereth	Mrs. Senande	Mr. White	Mr. Rosini
AYE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
NAY							
ABSENT						✓	
ABSTAINED							

P2. **MOTION BY Mrs. Senande SECONDED BY Mrs. Pintarelli**
BE IT RESOLVED BY THE RIVER VALE BOARD OF EDUCATION that the Board, upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, **approves ESS Northeast, LLC, with all of their properly certified employees, to provide substitute teacher, secretary and substitute aide services to the district for the 2021-2022 school year.**

	Mrs. Berkowitz	Mrs. Pintarelli	Mrs. Rothenberg	Mr. Schlereth	Mrs. Senande	Mr. White	Mr. Rosini
AYE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
NAY							
ABSENT						✓	
ABSTAINED							

**P3. MOTION BY Mrs. Senande SECONDED BY Mrs. Pintarelli
BE IT RESOLVED BY THE RIVER VALE BOARD OF EDUCATION that the Board, upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, **approves Northern Region Educational Services Commission with all of their properly certified employees, to provide substitute aide services to the district for the 2021-2022 school year.****

	Mrs. Berkowitz	Mrs. Pintarelli	Mrs. Rothenberg	Mr. Schlereth	Mrs. Senande	Mr. White	Mr. Rosini
AYE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
NAY							
ABSENT						✓	
ABSTAINED							

PUBLIC COMMENTS – GENERAL ITEMS

THE RIVER VALE BOARD OF EDUCATION IS committed to encouraging the citizens of River Vale and employees of the River Vale School District to speak directly to Board Trustees. In order to facilitate this communication, residents and employees are requested (1) to sign in before speaking; (2) to maintain an appropriate sense of decorum; and (3) to limit their remarks to no more than five minutes. The Board will also take under advisement the written comments and opinions of non-residents that are submitted to the Board Secretary. Being mindful of its responsibility to maintain the orderly conduct of meetings, the Board retains the right to rule on such matters as the speaker’s right to address the Board, as well as the appropriateness of the subject being presented. The Board’s decision in such matters is final.

The Board also reminds all members of the public that while it subscribes, without reservation, to the principle of keeping the community informed, by policy and law, it cannot allow public discussion of personnel matters, nor can trustees comment on any current or pending litigation. If a matter concerning an employee of the River Vale School District principal or the Superintendent of Schools by either telephone, letter or email.

Meeting opened to public comments at 7:48 P.M.

Public comments:

Ms. Dana Apostol, 626 Stanley Place: Thanked the Woodside School staff and Mr. Jasper for their hard work and dedication to the students. Ms. Apostol read a statement and urged that when the mask mandate expires can we move forward.

Mr. Rosini, Board President, thanked Ms. Apostol for her statement.

Ms. Megan Fullam, 180 Doretta Street: Thanked the Board for doing good work and is grateful for the decisions they are making. Ms. Fullam read a statement regarding policies on close contact, social distancing and quarantines and keeping children at home. Ms. Fullam asked if there have been discussions to end these rules.

Ms. Signore, Superintendent of Schools, replied that there is not specific data the school districts follow. The schools follow the official guidance and recommendations of the Department of Health and some of the practices in place are actually mandated policies not only Executive mandates.

Ms. Fullam asked if the Board can decide which requirements to follow.

Ms. Signore encouraged the public to read The Road Forward policy which is a mandated policy to assist in explaining our procedures.

Ms. Fullam made an additional statement regarding the long-term effects on children during the pandemic and making mask-wearing a choice.

Ms. Signore replied that the Board is always having discussions on this matter and recognizes the frustration of the community and will communicate with the community as soon as possible.

Ms. Holly Schepisi, 754 Tiffany Avenue: Stated that as a mother and member of the Senate she thanked the Board for their service to the community. She also stated that she wanted to be a resource and seek to legislatively assist in providing school district's immunity from liability issues if insurance companies deny coverage.

Mr. Thomas Moloney, 619 Charles Court: Stated that his son suffers from hearing loss and wearing a mask is frustrating to his son. He stated that the Westwood school district is changing their policies regarding masks.

Ms. Signore responded the district won't be making a statement to the community before Governor Murphy's decision on February 10, 2022, but will communicate as soon as possible.

Mr. Robert Burns, 808 Blauvelt Street: Thanked the teachers, administrators and the Board and then read a prepared statement.

Mr. Rosini thanked Mr. Burns for his comments.

Ms. Avery Mendez, 600 Echo Glen Avenue: An 8th grader at Holdrum Middle School, spoke about the perspective of a student and read a statement regarding the wearing of masks in schools and quarantining.

Mr. Rosini thanked Ms. Mendez and appreciated her opinion.

Ms. Katie Cunningham, 648 Orangeburgh Road: Has the same concerns as prior speakers. She has two children in district schools and the mask mandate is very hard on her son. Ms. Cunningham asked when making decision on masks if a petition would be helpful?

Ms. Signore responded that she receives many emails and phone calls on this subject and welcomes the public to create a petition if they are inclined but doesn't think it would persuade the Board as they do feel they understand the pulse of the community and have other factors to consider and many stakeholders and they have taken everything into consideration and consult with health officials, attorneys, and anyone else involved in the process, in addition to parents and students.

Mr. Rosini added that the Board members are also community members as well and are aware of the concerns of the community.

Ms. Louana Lustberg, 221 Rockland Avenue: Addressed a number of concerns beginning with the mask mandates. Ms. Lustberg stated that children were permitted to not wear masks during gym last week. She inquired again about the Test to Stay approach and the measures the schools are taking. Ms. Lustberg opined that virtual learning is not working and asked if the Board intended to do away with quarantines and close contact tracing?

Ms. Signore responded we would love to get rid of contact tracing, as would our nurses. She agrees that virtual learning cannot replace in-person learning. Just had a conversation with local public health authorities about contact tracing and have shortened quarantine time to 5-days and responded immediately and recently about relaxing tracing and when that can begin. Hopeful things will start to relax soon. It is a complicated issue and would be happy to discuss this individually.

Ms. Jennifer Falkoff, 558 Wittich Terrace: Thanked the Board for everything they are doing. She stated she works in a middle school/high school and wearing masks is hard on older students too. They are hiding behind their masks and she is concerned. She asked if the Board would consider unmasking the students and she is having difficulty following voices of the Board behind the masks as well.

Ms. Signore responded that regardless of their personal opinions, the Board is also bound to mandates and cannot unmask at this time.

Ms. Trica Touey, 722 Westwood Avenue: Ms. Touey stated her daughter has not been in district as of last year. Inquired as to whether the Road Forward Policy and the Safe Return Plan were the same.

Ms. Signore indicated they were two separate policies and were mandated. Strauss Esmay provides assistance with the district's policies and the policy is accessible on the district website.

Ms. Touey inquired about the Safe Return Plan and funding.

Ms. Signore indicated the district did not receive any federal funding directly related to the Safe Return Plan. Ms. Signore asked that more specific questions be directed to her outside of the meeting and stated that these meetings are held publicly for the Board and for public comments. However, she tries to be responsive to general comments but specific or detailed questions or concerns should be addressed outside of the meeting.

Ms. Touey remarked that she feels she is not getting answers or clarity about the mask mandate and about public input on revisions to the Safe Return Plan regarding the mask mandate. She feels that decisions are being made by the Board without hearing from the public.

Ms. Signore indicated there was a public presentation made at the June 22, 2021 Board meeting on this matter.

Ms. Mariel Lennon, 808 Arcadia Place: Ms. Lennon was a parent who attended the June 22nd meeting stated that the minutes were incorrect regarding the public comments and inquired if meeting Minutes are incorrect do we change the Minutes.

Mr. Rosini stated that he would look into it.

Ms. Lennon also thanked the district for acting quickly and purchasing the bi-polar ionization machines last year and wondered if that would be taken into consideration when making a decision with regard to removing masks.

Meeting closed to public comments at 8:50 P.M.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

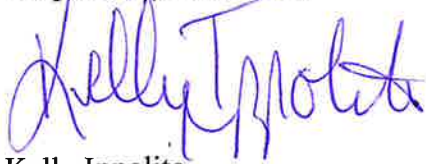
Mrs. Pintarelli stated she was happy to share with everyone that she had recently received from a Holdrum and Roberge alumni, Dan Lewer, a signed copy of his newly published book entitled, “Spies in the Civil War for Kids – a History Book.” This book was named a #1 new release on Amazon for Children’s American History in the Civil War Era. It is for 8-12 year olds. Ms. Pintarelli told that Mr. Lewer addressed a letter to Ms. Signore and he also mentioned that he would be interested in doing a virtual class with the author any teacher interested. Mr. Lewer is currently a teacher in Hawaii.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY Mr. Schlereth SECONDED BY Mrs. Senande that the February 1, 2022 Regular Meeting be adjourned at 9:51 P.M.

	Mrs. Berkowitz	Mrs. Pintarelli	Mrs. Rothenberg	Mr. Schlereth	Mrs. Senande	Mr. White	Mr. Rosini
AYE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
NAY							
ABSENT						✓	
ABSTAINED							

Respectfully submitted,



Kelly Ippolito
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

