

PUBLIC MEETING

January 25, 2022

The Verona Board of Education of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in regular session on January 25, 2022 at 7:03 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Jorge Cruz. A statement was made that the meeting had been properly advertised in the designated newspapers and the agendas were posted at the appropriate locations.

The following members of the Board were present: Mrs. Lisa Freschi, President, Mrs. Pamela Priscoe, Vice President, Mrs. Sara Drappi, Mr. Christopher Wacha, and Mr. Day. Also present was Dr. Lydia Furnari, Interim Superintendent and Mr. Jorge Cruz, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

There were 12 members of the public present. There were 0 members of the press present.



CONFIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE SESSION – 6:00 pm
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA – 7:00 pm
VERONA HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
January 25, 2022

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1. Call to order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Reading of Meeting Notice
4. Roll Call Attendance
5. Superintendent Report - Dr. Lydia E. Furnari, Interim Superintendent of Schools
6. Business Administrator Report - Mr. Jorge Cruz, School Business Administrator
7. Presentations - 2020-21 Audit Report - Mr. Ray Saranelli Jr., NISIVOCCIA
8. Committee Reports
 - Facilities
 - Community Resources
 - Education/Special Education
 - Finance
9. Public Comments on Agenda Action Items
10. Discussion Items
11. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions
12. Public Comments

Live streaming link: <https://youtu.be/zbrsU1fB724>

The next scheduled Public Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, February 8, 2022** beginning with a Confidential Session at 6:00 pm and 7:00 pm Public Session in the Verona High School Auditorium.

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Reading of Meeting Notice**

This meeting is being conducted in compliance with the open meeting session that the Verona Board of Education passed a resolution at its annual reorganization meeting held on January 4, 2022. The meeting set forth the schedule of its regular meetings which resolution was within 7 days of passage. The schedule was sent to the Verona Cedar Grove Times, the Star Ledger, the Township of Verona and the VEA. Postings of this meeting setting forth the time location and agenda were posted at the Verona Board of Education Office and on the Verona Public Schools district website. The Verona Board of Education operates under a consent agenda format, any board member has the right to have an item pulled to be voted upon or discussed separately. Copies of tonight's agenda and resolutions have been made available to the public and press.

4. Roll Call Attendance

Mr. Wacha	<u> X </u>	Mr. Day	<u> X </u>
Mrs. Drappi	<u> X </u>	Mrs. Priscoe	<u> X </u>
Mrs. Freschi <u> X </u>			

- 5. Superintendent Report** - Dr. Lydia E. Furnari, Interim Superintendent of Schools
- 6. Business Administrator Report** - Mr. Jorge Cruz, School Business

Administrator

Good evening everyone. I have a few updates for the Business Administrator Report.

First, I would like to provide an update on Finance; in tonight's meeting, we have the November and December Board Secretary, along with their respective Treasurer's, and Budget Transfers Report, and they're all in agreement.

The months of December and January were quite busy for the district office. I would like to thank each member of our business team, central office staff and our IT Manager for all their hard work. In the midst of transitioning to a new financial system which is now live, we're also in the process of preparing the 2022-23 Preliminary Budget, which we look forward to presenting to the Board on February 22nd. As Dr. Furnari previously stated, we're happy to report that our

auditors Nisivoccia completed our 2020-21 audit last month and tonight we have Mr. Ray Saranelli, Jr. who will present the report. Thank you.

Mrs. Drappi asked about the status of the Budget 101 presentation. Mr. Cruz confirmed that the presentation is scheduled for February 8, 2022.

7. Presentations - 2020-21 Audit Report - Mr. Ray Saranelli Jr., Nisivoccia, LLP.

Mr. Wacha asked about the potential impact of increased enrollment and the Long Range Facilities Plan.

Mrs. Drappi noted that the increased enrollment impact will affect class sizes and the need to hire additional teachers.

Mr. Day asked about the recommendations on the four findings.

Mr. Wacha asked when the audit report will be available to the public. Mr. Cruz confirmed that it will be posted on the website after the Feb 8, 2022 board meeting.

8. Committee Reports

- Facilities - Jim Day/Sara Drappi
 - Mrs. Drappi provided an update on the Referendum project and the status of the work at FNB. Goal is to finalize the project by the end of spring break.
 - Mr. Wacha shared that all classrooms will have functioning air conditioning before the warm weather.
- Community Resources - Lisa Freschi/Pamela Priscoe
 - Mrs. Priscoe provided an update on staff training. Also shared an update on communication, Friday Folder, and Twitter feed.
 - Mrs. Freschi provided an update on the Superintendent search with HYA. The board was able to vet and narrow the pool down to 10 candidates and selected five candidates for in-person interviews.
- Education/Special Education - Sara Drappi/ Christopher Wacha
 - Mrs. Drappi - provided an update on the RFP for the DEI work. Edmentum now has the math growth data for teachers to utilize to support student achievement.
 - Mr. Wacha - shared that the ESSER funding for the math coach is great for our district but we shouldn't rely on the funding solely since it will expire in two years.

- Finance - Jim Day/Christopher Wacha
 - Mr. Day - Finance Committee provided an update on the invoice payment review process. Also spoke on the financial system implementation and training and the stipend for the Italian & Design Club at VHS.

9. Public Comments on Agenda Action Items

10. Discussion Items

Mrs. Freschi took a moment to thank Mr. Joe Higgins for his work and dedication to Verona.

Mr. Wacha shared a audit resource with NJ School Boards.

Mrs. Priscoe shared an athletics update for the recent boys basketball game.

Mrs. Drappi thanked HBW staff for the hard work in the recent concert and student performance. Dr. Furnari also thanks students and staff for all their work and effort in the performance.

Mrs. Priscoe acknowledged Investors Bank for their grant to the Model UN student trip to Washington, DC.

Mrs. Drappi asked about resolution #11 clarifying that the club has the student demand before making it eligible for a paid stipend.

11. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions

12. Public Comments

Jackie Fricke - 65 Grove Ave. - requested rational and criteria to cancel snacks and operate on a half day schedule. When will we see a plan with documented milestones?

Megan Gutknecht - 37 Valley View Rd - requested solutions to ensure schools are able to eat in the cafeteria and have snacks with some suggestions.

Gina Signorelli - 26 Valley View Rd - raises the importance of art and access to the art room. Also asked about the test to stay option, travel guidelines and return to school protocol after spring break.

Laura Siligato - 31 Grove Ave. - acknowledged Verona staff for all their hard work. Requested the Board to consider a virtual or hybrid option for board meetings.

Derrick Czupak - 7 Durrell St. - Raised concern about masks and student consequences for not wearing them which is difficult for some students with health

issues. Mentioned the difficulty students are having to be excused to use the bathroom. Also asked about DEI and why the English class name was changed at VHS.

George Kozachuk - 100 Morningside Rd. - asked about previous resolutions, when public comments changed from five minutes to three. Asked about the firm hired to conduct the superintendent search, the prior superintendent contract and salary increase.

Maria Squilanti - 6 Belleclaire Pl. - suggested that the board provide a transcript with the response to all public comments and also requested to increase the limit on public comments.

Nancy Ziebert - 40 Birdseye Glen - shares comments on the policy around the live audience for the HBW concert. Ask that performance policy should have parity and be treated the same as athletic events.

Motion by: Mrs. Priscoe

Seconded by: Mr. Day

Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1- 17.

Mr. Wacha Abstain. (4,13,14,15) Mr. Day X

Mrs. Drappi X Mrs. Priscoe X

Mrs. Freschi X

VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – BOARD OF EDUCATION
RESOLUTIONS
January 25, 2022

The following resolutions have been recommended by the Superintendent to the Board of Education.

#1 RESOLVED that the Board approve the minutes of the following meetings:

2022 Confidential & Regular Public Meeting January 4,

PERSONNEL

#2 RESOLVED that the Board approve the following pending pre-employment paperwork:

2.1 New Hires

Name	Location	Position	Salary	Committee	Term of Employment on or about
Roberta Schoenebaum	VHS	LTS - Business Teacher	\$265/per diem	Education	Jan. 17 - Feb. 9, 2022
Jennifer Grutta	District	Sub Teacher	\$100/per diem	Education	Jan. 18 - Jun. 30, 2022
Danielle DeRuyter	Forest	Permanent Sub Teacher	\$125/per diem	Education	Jan. 26 - Jun. 23, 2022
Donna DiNorcia	HBW	Permanent Sub Teacher	\$125/per diem	Education	Jan. 26 - Jun. 23, 2022
Kaitlyn Heun	HBW	Permanent Sub Teacher	\$125/per diem	Education	Jan. 26 - Jun. 23, 2022
Tom Reid	VHS	Permanent Sub Teacher	\$125/per diem	Education	Jan. 26 - Jun. 23, 2022
Roberta Schoenebaum	VHS	Permanent Sub Teacher	\$125/per diem	Education	Feb. 10 - Jun. 23, 2022
Andrew Vogel	VHS	Business Teacher	BA+30/Step 1/ \$57,124	Education	Feb. 10 - Jun. 30, 2022
Tricia Davis	District	Sub Teacher	\$100/per diem	Education	SY 21-22
William Walker	Forest	Lunch Aide	\$14.50/hr.	Education	SY 21-22
Gabriella Montagna	District	Sub Teacher	\$100/per diem	Education	SY 21-22
Simone Stinson	VHS	Admin. Asst. to Principal	Step 10/ \$54,497 Head Admin. Asst. Stipend \$1,132 Degree Stipend \$1,132	Education	Feb. 10 - Jun. 30, 2022

2.2 Retirement

Name	Position	Location	Reason	Effective Date of Retirement	Notes
Elaine Gizzi	Admin. Assist.	HBW	Retirement	Jan. 31, 2022	RESCIND
Elaine Gizzi	Admin. Assist.	HBW	Retirement	Feb. 28, 2022	APPROVE

2.3 Resignation

Name	Location	Position	Reason	Effective on or About
Joseph Higgins	District	Director of Facilities	Resignation	Mar. 21, 2022

2.4 Staff Changes

Name	Current Location/ Position/Salary	New Location/ Position/Salary	Effective Date on or about	Notes
Craig Leotta	FOR/Head Custodian/ Step 7/\$49,272/ Head Custodian Stipend \$4,592	VHS/Head Custodian/ Step 7/\$49,272/ Head Custodian Stipend \$13,480/ VHS Custodian Stipend/\$937	Jan. 5, 2022	RESCIND
Craig Leotta	FOR/Head Custodian/ Step 9/\$52,272/ Head Custodian Stipend \$4,592	VHS/Head Custodian/Step 9/ \$52,272/ Head Custodian Stipend \$13,480/ VHS Custodian Stipend/\$937	Jan. 5, 2022	APPROVE
Katina Pena	HBW	Part Time Custodian/\$18 per hr.	Dec. 14, 2021 - Feb. 6, 2022	
Katina Pena	VHS	Night Custodian/Step 2 \$44,222 / Night Differential \$2,993/ VHS Custodian stipend \$937	Feb. 7 - Jun. 30, 2022	
Gina Ballinger	VHS/12 Month Admin. Asst./ Step 15/ \$66,133	HBW/12 Month Admin. Asst./ Step 15/\$66,133	Feb. 1, 2022	RESCIND

Gina Ballinger	VHS/12 Month Admin. Asst./ Step 15/ \$66,133 Degree Stipend \$1,132	HBW/12 Month Admin. Asst./ Step 15/\$66,133 Degree Stipend \$1,132	Feb. 10, 2022	APPROVE
Jayson Harris	District/Part Time Custodian/\$18.00/hr.	District/Full Time/Custodian Step 4/\$45,222	Jan. 26 - Jun. 30, 2022	

2.5 Stipends

Name	School	Stipend	Position	Committee	Employment Date
Kaitlyn Kober	Elementary Schools	\$60 per session/ up to 5 sessions per week	Academic Learning Teacher - Mathematics	Education	Feb. 9 - Jun. 23, 2022

EDUCATION

#3 RESOLVED that the Board approve the Superintendent's presentation of HIB first reading report as follows:

1st Readings
VHS226774
VHS226111

#4 RESOLVED that the Board approve the Superintendent's presentation of HIB second

reading report as follows:

2nd Readings
VHS225817
HWO225422
FBS225488
HWO226060
HWO225778
HWO225967

#5 RESOLVED that the Board approve the following:

5.1 Out of District Tuition Student

Student ID No.	School	Grade
273113	HBW	7

#6 RESOLVED that the Board approve the attached District Statistical Report for the month of December 2021.

#7 RESOLVED that the Board approved the first reading of the following policies:

P0151 Organization Meeting
P0164 Conduct of Board Meeting
P0171 Duties of Board President and Vice President
P2200 Curriculum Content
P9400 News Media Relations

#8 RESOLVED that the Board approve the following:

8.1 Attendance at Conference

Name	School	Event/Location	Date	Cost
Vasiliki Givas	LAN	Primitive Reflex/ Webinar	Mar. 9, 16 and 23, 2022	\$369.00

8.2 Home Instructors

Name
Michele Staranka

SPECIAL EDUCATION

#9 RESOLVED that the Board approve **Sonia Valerie Useche** to provide up to 10 hours of

interpretation services as needed for IEP meetings, etc., for the 2021-2022

school year at the rate of \$65.62 per hour.

#10 RESOLVED that the Board approve the following:

10.1 Student Home Instruction

Student #	School	Grade	Hrs./Week/Duration	Beginning on or about
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#323362	LAN	2	10 hrs./wk/6-8 wks.	Jan. 14, 2022
#333230	FNB	1	10 hrs./wk./6-8 wks.	Jan. 21, 2022

CO-CURRICULAR

#11 RESOLVED that the Board approve the following:

11.1 Clubs

Advisor	Location	Club Name	Stipend	Term of Employment
Brian Wenzel	VHS	History Club	Volunteer	SY 21-22

FINANCE

#12 RESOLVED that the Board approve the enclosed checklist(s) in the following amounts:

<u>Amount</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Check Register Date</u>
\$586,612.60	Vendor Checks	January 21, 2022

#13 RESOLVED that the Report of the Secretary for the period(s) as follows be approved:

November 2021
December 2021

#14 RESOLVED that the Board approve the Report of the Treasurer of School Monies for the following month:

November 2021
December 2021

#15 RESOLVED that the Board approve the attached list of individual transfers of line items in the 2021-2022 budget for:

November 2021
December 2021

#16 RESOLVED that the Board approve OneRiver School to advertise on the District

Folder at a cost of \$300 per month.

#17 RESOLVED that the Board accept a \$2,500 grant from Investors Foundation to

High School in support of the organization's "Model United Nations
Georgetown University Conference".

#12 Public comments

CONFIDENTIAL SESSION IF NECESSARY

RESOLUTION TO ADJOURN

#18 RESOLVED that the Board meet in private session, from which the public shall be excluded, to discuss the topics of negotiations and personnel or potential litigation which private discussion is being held pursuant to Section 7b and 8 of the Open Public Meeting Act. The matters under discussion will be disclosed to the public as soon as final decisions are made and voted upon.

Motion to adjourn the meeting:

Motion by: ____Mr. Day____

Second by: ____Mrs. Priscoe____

All in Favor: ____AYE____

All Opposed: ____None____

This meeting is adjourned at (TIME) 8:43 P.M.

The following resolutions have been recommended by the Superintendent to the Board of Education.

Motion by: Mrs. Priscoe

Seconded by: Mr. Day

Be it RESOLVED the approval of Addenda Resolution #1 - 3.

Mr. Wacha X

Mr. Day X

Mrs. Drappi X

Mrs. Priscoe X

Mrs. Freschi X

PERSONNEL

#1 RESOLVED that the Board approve the following pending pre-employment paperwork:

1.1 New Hire

Name	Location	Position	Salary	Committee	Term of Employment on or about
Carla Carrillo	HBW	Paraprofessional	\$17,832.75	Education	Feb. 1 - Jun. 23, 2022
Carol Thomas	District	Sub Teacher	\$100/per diem	Education	SY 21-22

1.2 Resignation

Name	Location	Position	Reason	Effective on or About
Diane Jacob	BRK	Lunch aide	resignation	Jan. 24, 2022

EDUCATION

#2 RESOLVED that the Board approve the following:

2.1 VFEE Grant

Grant Recipients	School	Name of Grant	Grant #	Amount of Grant
Alexander Cali	Verona High School	Esports Start-up	2022-02	\$3,000.00

2.2 Extra Class

Name	Location	Course	Amount	Term of Employment on or about
Karolina Siwek	HBW	Math	\$1,138.77	Feb. 1 - Mar. 31, 2022
Lisa Sarett	HBW	Math	\$1,386.58	Feb. 1 - Mar. 31, 2022
Julianne Curro	HBW	Math	\$1,094.53	Feb. 1 - Mar. 31, 2022
Nadia Domenick	HBW	Math	\$5,166.82	Feb. 1 - Mar. 31, 2022

2.3 Home Instructor

Name
Carol Thomas

FINANCE

#3 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the enclosed checklist(s) in the following amounts:

<u>Amount</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Check Register Date</u>
\$125,336.83	Vendor Checks	January 25, 2022