

**PUBLIC MEETING**

**January 24, 2023**

**The Verona Board of Education of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in regular session on January 24, 2023 at 7:03 p.m.**

**The meeting was called to order by Jorge Cruz, Board Secretary.**

**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. Pamela Priscoe, President, Mrs. Diana Ferrera, Vice President, Mr. Christopher Wacha, Mrs. Lisa Freschi and Mrs. Denise Verzella. Also present was Diane DiGiuseppe, Superintendent and Mr. Jorge Cruz, School Business Administrator.**

**There were 7 members of the public present. There were 0 members of the press present.**

**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 3, 2023. 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. Copies of tonight's agenda and resolutions have been made available to the public and press.

**4. Roll Call Attendance**

Mr. Wacha   X  

Mrs. Verzella   X  

Mrs. Ferrera   X  

Mrs. Priscoe   X  

Mrs. Freschi   X  

**5. Presentation - Raymond Sarinelli, - Nisivoccia LLC - FY audit 2022**

Charlene Peterson - Ethics Training

Public Question from Palma Quagliata, 71 Newman Avenue:

Can you explain what a board member can and can't do when running for office?

Mrs. Peterson shared that a candidate is not held to the ethics tenets but board members are and must follow the 10 Code of Ethics for School Board Members.

**6. Superintendent Report - Diane DiGiuseppe**

**7. Board Secretary Report - Jorge Cruz**

Good evening everyone. I have a few updates for my report tonight.

Thank you to Mr. Sarinelli for the 2021-22 Audit presentation. This is my first completed audit year in Verona and I feel really good about our fiscal pulse and the direction we're heading. I also want to thank the board and our superintendent for entrusting me as a public steward of our \$46M operations, which I hold to high standards to ensure we are giving our students and staff the best experience and opportunities we can provide.

There are four resolutions related to the audit tonight. Resolution #5 is the approval of the audit followed by #6, the Corrected Action Plan on three audit recommendations related to the procurement, the reconciliation of proprietary funds and opening balances. The business office quickly addressed these findings and we look forward to not seeing these recommendations in the 22-23 audit year. Resolutions 7 and 8 are transactional entries needed to close the books on completed projects with remaining balances.

Lastly, we also have Resolutions 1, 2, and 3 for the approval of our November and December 2022 Board Secretary, Treasurer's, and Budget Transfers Report, and they're all in agreement. At this time my office along with the Superintendent is working closely with each principal and department head to develop our preliminary budget for 2023-24 fiscal year. We look forward to sharing the presentation with everyone at our February 28th board meeting.

This concludes my report for tonight. Thank you.

**8. Student Representative Report - Ms. Reese Sahadow**

**I. Student Report**

- A. Reese published a summary of the DEI report to the school newspaper, which was then shared on the grade level google classrooms.
- B. Reese presented to the GSA on the DEI report's findings and LGBTQ policies within the school district.
- C. Next week, will present to GLI on the DEI report findings and Title IX in the school district.
- D. Student Council: Planning a candy-gram fundraiser for next week. Students will be able to purchase candy with a note attached, which can be sent to another student at VHS and delivered by student council members on Valentine's Day. The event was successful last year and proceeds will go towards a winter formal, which will

be held in late winter-early spring.

E. On January 28, the winter guard has a competition in West Orange. This is the first

Board of Education  
Minutes  
January 24, 2023

time in years that VHS has had enough student interest to create a winter guard team.

The team and their parents have worked hard to fundraise for costumes,

Verona Public Schools

busing costs, and other expenses this season. Wishing them good luck this weekend!

F. Next week, February 3, the Avant-Garde literary magazine will host an open mic night in the LC. Students are encouraged to share poetry, short stories, or music (written by themselves or others), as well as any other kind of performance, or just come and enjoy.

Mrs. Priscoe asked if the event on February 3rd is open to the public. Ms. Sahadow confirmed that it will be open to the public at the VHS Learning Commons.

## 9. Committee Reports

- Education & Student Achievement

- Mrs. Verzella shared an update on curriculum and the migration of a new system called Atlas to organize our curriculum available and New curriculum are on the resolution tonight to be approved mid-year. DEI Committee meeting dates are scheduled. Students are welcomed to attend the student session with a parent permission slip. Life Skills program for grades 9-12 students with IEP.

- Athletics

- Mrs. Priscoe shared the athletics update regarding the new audio system in the VHS gym. Softball fence was ordered and will be installed in time for the season.
- Mr. Wacha asked if we can obtain the short term and long term goals of each booster sports club.

- Facilities

- Mrs. Freschi shared an update regarding water damage to a classroom at Laning. An abatement was required prior to repairs. Mr. Naturile created a transition document of all open projects to ensure our new facilities director can continue the work. HVAC grant application and bidding is ongoing. Mrs. Freschi shared an update on the playground repairs, which is an ongoing issue that is being addressed with our architects and Director of Facilities. We

meet with Chief Kiernan and Mr. D'Arco regarding early discussion on a proposal to relocate the Police Headquarters to a section of BOE property at HBW.

- Mr. Wacha shared that we should look more closely at the proposal. He agreed that our Police department is in desperate need of a newspace but we need to make sure that the board is not in a disadvantage for our future needs.
- Mrs. Verzella raised concerns that HBW is going to need the space as we begin receiving more students and will require the need to expand.
- Finance
  - Mrs. Ferrera thanked Mr. Cruz for a thorough Finance Committee meeting. Also, our old school bus finally sold for \$8100. Mrs. Ferrera shared the results of our residency audit.

## **10. Public Comments on Agenda Action Items - none**

### **11. Discussion Items**

- Mrs. Ferrera asked if free/reduced lunch families receive a reduced VSEA tuition rate for the summer program and can the district post that opportunity to the public.

### **12. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions**

### **13. Public Comments**

Please note that the public participation portion of the meeting affords an opportunity for the public to share thoughts and comments about school related topics. By law, administrators and Board of Education members are not permitted to publicly discuss personnel matters, student discipline, or other issues requiring confidentiality. While we may not respond to comments during the meeting, all input that is shared with the Board of Education is taken very seriously, and helps inform future deliberations and work by the Board and its committees. Answers appear in many forms including, but not limited to: email, Superintendent/ Committee reports, Board statements, FAQs on website, or after public comment is closed. We appreciate and thank all members of the public for your input.

**VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**RESOLUTIONS**

**January 24, 2023**

**I. ROUTINE MATTERS**

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

**#1 RESOLVED** that the Board, upon on the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the minutes of the following meetings:

Regular Public Meeting January 3, 2023

**Motion by:**     Mrs. Freschi    

**Seconded by:**     Mrs. Verzella    

**Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1**

Mr. Wacha   X   Mrs. Verzella   X  

Mrs. Fererra   X   Mrs. Priscoe   X  

Mrs. Freschi   X  

**III. PERSONNEL**

**#1 RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following:

**1.1 New Hires** -pending successful completion of pre-employment paperwork.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Salary</b>	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Term of Employment on or about</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Tara Barrow</b>	FNB	MLOA 1st Grade	\$235/per diem	Education	Nov. 15, 2022 - Jun. 22, 2022	RESCIND

<b>Tara Barrow</b>	FNB	MLOA 1st Grade	\$235/per diem	Education	Nov. 15, 2022 - Jun. 22, 2023	APPROVE
<b>Joseph DeRosa</b>	District	Sub Teacher	\$110/per diem	Education	SY 22-23	
<b>Maribeth Persad</b>	District	Sub Teacher	\$110/per diem	Education	SY 22-23	
<b>Maribeth Persad</b>	District	Sub Secretary	\$110/per diem	Education	SY 22-23	
<b>Alice Sanchez-Vinci</b>	Board Office	Admin. Asst. - Human Resource	\$71,000 (prorated) Degree stipend \$1,160	Education	Feb. 9 - Jun. 30, 2023	
<b>Catherine Kane</b>	FOR/FNB	Part Time Nurse	\$40 per hr./ 13.5 hrs./wk.	Education	Mar. 27 - Jun. 30, 2023	

### 1.2 Leave of Absence

Name	Reason	Begin Date	Estimated Return Date on or about
#105210	Extension of Maternity Leave of Absence	Jan. 26, 2023	Apr. 4, 2023
#102814	Maternity Leave of Absence	Mar. 13, 2023	Jan. 1, 2024

### 1.3 Permanent Substitute

Name	Location	Position	Salary	Committee	Term of Employment on or about
<b>Sally McIntyre</b>	LAN	Permanent Sub Teacher	\$125/per diem	Education	Dec. 7, 2022 - Jun. 22, 2023
<b>Joni Jasterzbski</b>	BRK	Permanent Sub Teacher	\$125/per diem	Education	Feb. 1, 2023 - Jun. 22, 2023

### 1.4 Without Pay

Name	Date/s	No. of Days/Reason
#105701	Jan. 6, 13, 18, 2023	3 day/Unpaid Sick
#105528	Jan. 13, 2023	1 day/Unpaid Personal
#105089	Jan. 9, 10, 12, 2023	3 days/Unpaid Personal

**1.5 Extra Class**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Term of Employment on or about</b>
<b>Mark Edgerton</b>	VHS	Introduction to Business	\$8,955.45	Feb. 1 - Jun. 22, 2023

**1.6 Extra Pay**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Dates From/To</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Pay rate</b>
Matt Cross	Apr. 22, 2023	ACT Proctor	\$285.90/per diem

**#2 RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve **Henry Bottiglierie** as the Director of Facilities at a prorated salary of \$117,00 effective on or about February 27, 2023 to June 30, 2023 pending successful completion of pre-employment paperwork.

**#3 RESOLVED** that the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the Retirement Proclamations for the following retirees:

Joan Petronico  
 Gina Venezia

**Motion by:**       Mrs. Freschi      

**Seconded by:**       Mrs. Verzella      

**Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1 - 3**

Mr. Wacha   X                        Mrs. Verzella   X  

Mrs. Fererra   X                        Mrs. Priscoe   X  

Mrs. Freschi   X

#### **IV. EDUCATION**

**#1 RESOLVED** that the Board, upon on the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the minutes of the following meetings:

##### **1.1 Mentor**

<b>Novice Teacher</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Mentor</b>	<b>Stipend</b>	<b># of mentoring weeks</b>
<b>Tara Barrow</b>	FNB	Michelle Staranka	\$550	30 weeks

##### **1.2 Attendance at Conference**

<b>Name</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Event/Location</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Vasiliki Givas</b>	LAN	Clinical Assessment & Practical Interventions for Praxis/ Live webinar	Jan. 30-31, 2023	\$375.00

##### **1.3 Student Internship**

<b>Name</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>School/Teacher/ Grade</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
<b>Yasmin Pego</b>	Montclair State	FOR/LAN/Varuolo/Art	25 - 30 Hrs. observation/ Jan. 25 - May 15, 2023	Student Intern

**#2 RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the attached District Statistical Report for the month of December 2022.

**#3 RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the attached strategic plan proposal from NJSBA at a cost of \$4,000.

**#4 RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the 2023 [VSEA Business Plan](#)

**#5 RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following for the 2022-2023 school year:

**5.1 VSEA**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Stipend</b>
<b>Jeffrey Monacelli</b>	Program Director	\$9,046
<b>Howard Freund</b>	Assistant Program Director	\$6,688
<b>Debra Lawrence</b>	Administrative Assistant	\$2,910

#6 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon on the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the attached revised Board of Education meeting dates for January 2023 – January 2024.

#7 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Ellen Bass, Esq. of Rubin Law, to provide training in Title IX processes for the Title IX Team at a cost of \$195 per hour.

#8 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following curriculum:

- Advanced Graphics (revised)
- Digital Photography I (revised)
- Digital Photography II (revised) - <https://www.veronaschools.org/Page/1864> ;
- Introduction to Film Studies (SE) - <https://www.veronaschools.org/Page/50>;
- Introduction to Business (SE)
- Social Media Marketing (revised)
- Introduction to Financial Literacy (revised) - <https://www.veronaschools.org/Page/2116>;

**Motion by:**     Mrs. Ferrera    

**Seconded by:**     Mrs. Freschi    

**Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1 - 8**

Mr. Wacha     X                          Mrs. Priscoe     X    

Ms. Verzella     X                          Ms. Ferrera     X    

Mrs. Freschi     X

**V. SPECIAL EDUCATION**

#1 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following:

**1.1 Student Home Instruction**

Student #	School	Grade	Hrs./Week/Duration	Beginning on or about
#230597	VHS	12	10 hrs./wk./4-6 wks.	Jan. 9, 2023
#271631	HBW	8	10 hrs./wk./6 wks.	Jan. 12, 2023

Motion by: Mrs. Fererra

Seconded by: Mrs. Verzella

**Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1 - 1.1**

Mr. Wacha X Mrs. Verzella X

Mrs. Fererra X Mrs. Priscoe X

Mrs. Freschi X

**VI. ATHLETICS/CO-CURRICULAR**

#1 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following:

**1.1 Coach**

Name	Location	Position	Stipend	Committee	Employment Date/s	Notes
Steven Kroeger	VHS	Volunteer Girls Basketball	\$3,500	Athletics	Winter 2022	paid for by Girls Basketball Parents
Chloe Jones	VHS	Asst. Girls Lacrosse Coach	\$4,219	Athletics	SY 22-23	

**1.2 Club**

<b>Advisor</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Club Name</b>	<b>Stipend</b>	<b>Term of Employment</b>
<b>Juliet Carvajal</b>	VHS	Art Club (Trial Basis)	Volunteer	SY 22-23

**1.3 Field Trip**

<b>Name</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Club/Destination</b>	<b>Date of Field Trip</b>
<b>Eugene Mordkovich/ Jia-Pei Hou/ Christine Garson</b>	VHS	French/Mandarin/Spanish/ United Nations, New York, NY	Mar. 23, 2023
<b>Christine Garson</b>	VHS	Spanish/Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY	Mar. 10, 2023
<b>Sam Coe</b>	VHS	Boys Lacrosse/Hunt Valley, MD	Mar. 24-26, 2023

**Motion by:**  Mrs. Verzella

**Seconded by:**  Mrs. Priscoe

**Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1 - 1.3**

Mr. Wacha  X                       Mrs. Verzella  X

Mrs. Fererra  X                       Mrs. Priscoe  X

Mrs. Freschi  X

**VII. FINANCE**

**#1 RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the enclosed checklist(s) in the following amounts based on the recommendation of the Superintendent:

<u>Amount</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Check Register Date</u>
\$ 10,760.00	Athletics	January 20, 2023
\$ 25,470.09	Cafeteria	January 20, 2023
\$ 2,788.64	Chromebooks	January 20, 2023
\$ 557.53	VHS	January 20, 2023
<b>\$1,148,726.06</b>	<b>General</b>	<b>January 20, 2023</b>

- #2 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the Report of the Secretary for the period(s) as follows

November 2022  
December 2022

- #3 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the Report of the Treasurer of School Monies for the following month:

November 2022  
December 2022

- #4 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the attached list of individual transfers of line items in the 2022-2023 budget for:

November 2022  
December 2022

- #5 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve 2021-22 ACFR Report ending June 30, 2022 as prepared by Nisivoccia LLP.

- #6 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the Corrective Action Plan for the audit year ending June 30, 2022 as attached.

- #7 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the cancelation of the remaining \$2 of capital funds for Chromebooks, which will be realized as a miscellaneous revenue.

- #8 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the cancelation of the remaining \$5,086 of capital funds for District-wide Improvements, which will be added to our Capital Reserves.

- #9 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the public bid purchase of School Bus #5 on the GovDeals.com, Online Government Surplus Auctions site, and accept the highest bid offer of \$8,100.00 from Mr. Wil Allen.

- #10 **RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Verita Neutral Workplace Investigations as Special Counsel to investigate an Affirmative Action Complaint at the cost of \$275 per hour.

**Motion by:**  Mrs. Verzella

**Seconded by:**  Mrs. Freschi

**Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1 - 10**

Mr. Wacha  X

Mrs. Verzella  X

Mrs. Fererra  X

Mrs. Priscoe  X

Mrs. Freschi  X

**VIII. POLICY**

**#1 RESOLVED** that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve to accept the HIB report for January 2023.

**Motion by:**  Mrs. Fererra

**Seconded by:**  Mrs. Freschi

**Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1**

Mr. Wacha  X

Mrs. Verzella  X

Mrs. Fererra  X

Mrs. Priscoe  X

Mrs. Freschi  X

**IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Please note that the public participation portion of the meeting affords an opportunity for the public to share thoughts and comments about school related topics. By law, administrators and Board of Education members are not permitted to publicly discuss personnel matters, student discipline, or other issues requiring confidentiality. While we may not respond to comments during the meeting, all input that is shared with the Board of Education is taken very seriously, and helps inform future deliberations and work by the Board and its committees. Answers appear in many forms including, but not limited to: email, Superintendent/ Committee reports, Board statements, FAQs on website, or after public comment is closed. We appreciate and thank all members of the public for your input.

**Mike Boone** - 24 Mountainview Road - Asked about the co-op agreement between Verona and Glen Ridge. What is the percentage of the cost that is covered by Verona?

**CONFIDENTIAL SESSION IF NECESSARY**

**RESOLUTION TO ADJOURN**

**#1 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:**   Mrs. Freschi  

**Second by:**   Mr. Wacha  

**All in Favor:**   AYE  

**All Opposed:**   None  

**This meeting is adjourned at (TIME)   9:27   P.M.**