

**PUBLIC MEETING**

**October 26, 2021**

**The Verona Board of Education of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in regular session on October 26, 2021 at 7:06 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. Sara Drappi, Vice President, Mr. Timothy Alworth, Mrs. Pamela Priscoe and Mr. Day, Mrs. Lisa Freschi, President was absent. Also present was Dr. Rui Dionisio, Superintendent and Mr. Jorge Cruz, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary**

**There were 3 members of the public present. There were 0 members of the press present.**



CONFIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE SESSION – 5:30 pm  
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA – 7:00 pm  
VERONA HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM  
October 26, 2021

1. Call to order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Reading of Meeting Notice
4. Roll Call Attendance
5. Superintendent Report - Dr. Rui Dionisio, Superintendent of Schools
6. Business Administrator Report - Mr. Jorge Cruz, School Business Administrator
7. Committee Reports
  - Finance
8. Public Comments on Agenda Action Items
9. Discussion Items
10. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions
11. Public Comments

The Board meeting live stream will be available by clicking this link:

<https://youtu.be/OoWpGEnN9CM>

NOTE: The next scheduled Public Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, November 9, 2021** beginning with a Confidential Session at 5:30 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 5, 2021. 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. Alworth      X                        Mr. Day              X    
Mrs. Drappi      X                        Mrs. Freschi    Absent  
Mrs. Priscoe      X  

5. **Superintendent Report - Dr. Rui Dionisio, Superintendent of Schools -**  
Good evening everyone.

Over the past seven years, it has been an honor and privilege to have served as your Superintendent alongside our dedicated Board of Education with an exemplary leadership team and talented faculty in the best interests of all of our students. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of something bigger than myself in our partnership to strengthen and support our outstanding school system. I am grateful for the opportunity to lead this wonderful district and I am incredibly proud of the progress our learning community has made.

The past seven years have been a consistent period of time that has enabled us to guide meaningful change yielding measurable achievements for Verona in strategic planning, social-emotional learning, curriculum & instruction, technology, finance, and capital improvements. Our school community has come together to advance a vision for what is possible when all of the oars are paddling in the same direction. We have supported our staff to achieve their individual potential so they may in turn do their most important work to inspire our students.

Verona will always have a special place in my heart. It is with bittersweet emotions that I leave this wonderful school district to continue my professional journey and serve as Superintendent of Schools for the Ramapo Indian Hills Regional High School District.

Serving Verona has been a rewarding personal and professional experience for me. I will take with me the fondest memories and lifelong relationships we cultivated together as we played a pivotal role in the lives of our children. I have the utmost faith that the Verona Public Schools are poised to thrive with all of your efforts and commitment to making our school district one we can continue to be proud of.

This concludes my final Superintendent Report for the Verona Public Schools. I wish this Board of Education, our leadership team and staff, our students, and the Verona community much continued success. Be well.

Mrs. Drappi thanks Dr. Dionisio on behalf of the Board for his hard work and dedication to Verona Public Schools.

Mr. Day shared his gratitude for all of Dr. Dionisio's accomplishments in Verona.

Mr. Alworth shared his gratitude to Dr. Dionisio, wishing him success on his transition.

Mrs. Priscoe shared her gratitude for Dr. Dionisio's passion and dedication to Verona and all the improvements to our district.

**6. Business Administrator Report - Mr. Jorge Cruz, School Business Administrator**

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

With new staff members in the business office this past month we continue working on improving operational efficiencies and strengthening the support to our schools from the business office.

As mentioned last month, we're working closely with our auditors to prepare for our 2020-21 audit taking place next month. The audit will be finalized by the end of the calendar year and will look forward to reporting at the January meeting.

Lastly, on tonight's agenda we have Resolution #13 - Refunding Bond Ordinance. This is a refinance opportunity to reduce the interest rate on our 2014 and 2015 bonds.

Depending on how favorable the market is, the estimated annual savings will be \$63,866 and a total debt service savings of \$707,689. This is a significant savings on our debt service and we do hope that interest rates move downward in order to capture greater savings for our school district. Thank you.

## 7. Committee Reports

- Finance - Sara Drappi
  - i. Update on the status of the National School Lunch Program
  - ii. Debt Service Refinancing
  - iii. Legal Fees from Mediation
  - iv. Misinformation from Candidate Forum around Maintenance and Capital Reserve

## 8. Public Comments on Agenda Action Items - none

## 9. Discussion Items -

Mrs. Priscoe shared recent student events and breast cancer awareness events. She also shared information on the NJ School Boards Association Virtual Conference and the workshops she participated in. Mrs. Malespina, VHS Librarian, was one of the speakers. Mrs. Drappi shared the Battle of the Bands event, this past Saturday.

Dr. Mauriello reminded the audience about the upcoming mental health workshop (*Anxiety and How to Cope at Home*) taking place at the VHS auditorium on Thursday, October 28th at 7 pm.

Mr. Day school calendar for 2022-23 is updated and presented tonight in resolution #7.

Mrs. Priscoe and Mr. Day wished Mrs. Torchia well on her retirement and thanked her for her years of service to our school community.

## 10. Roll Call Vote on Resolutions

## 11. Public Comments

**Kristen Donohue - 31 S. Prospect St.** - When will a decision be made on the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)? Also, the 2021-22 budgeted Capital Reserves is estimated to be much lower than where we ended the year on June 30, 2020, why?

Dr. Dionisio provided an update of NSLP. Mr. Cruz provided details on the budget and offered to provide clarification on budgeted amounts used by the prior Acting Board Secretary.

**Monica Vincent - 36 Montclair Ave** - Thanked the Board for their dedication. Mentioned that the Board Candidate Forum was not the best questions that should be presented to the candidates. Raised concern about public meeting accessibility. Wished the superintendent well in his new career journey. What is your organization structure for that administration?

Motion by:  Mrs. Priscoe

Seconded by:  Mr. Alworth

**Be it RESOLVED the approval of Resolutions #1 - 14.**

Mr. Alworth  X                       Mr. Day  X

Mrs. Drappi  X                       Mrs. Freschi  Absent

Mrs. Priscoe  X

**VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**RESOLUTIONS**  
**October 26, 2021**

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:

Confidential & Regular Public Meeting      October 12, 2021  
 Special Meeting    October 20, 2021

**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
<b>Deborah Skowronski</b>	FNB	Paraprofessional	\$16,899.96	Education	Nov. 1, 2021 - Jun. 23, 2022
<b>Dana Mehalaris</b>	FNB	Sub Teacher	\$100/per diem	Education	SY 21-22
<b>Hector Cortes</b>	BRK	Part Time Custodian	\$18.00/hr.	Facilities	SY 21-22
<b>Stephanie Verdi</b>	District	Sub Teacher	\$100/per diem	Education	SY 21-22

<b>Carol Storms</b>	District	Sub Nurse	\$175/per diem	Education	SY 21-22
<b>Maria Barone</b>	BRK	Paraprofessional	\$16,899.96	Education	Oct. 27, 2021 - Jun. 23, 2022
<b>Ryan Morik</b>	District	Sub Teacher	\$100/per diem	Education	SY 21-22

**2.2 Resignation**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Effective on or About</b>
<b>Steven Gemma</b>	HBW	Paraprofessional	Resignation	Oct. 15, 2021

**2.3 Reallocation of Days**

<b>Employee #</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>#105262</b>	3 Personal Illness days to 3 Family Illness days

**2.4 Without Pay**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date/s</b>	<b>No. of Days/Reason</b>
<b>#102642</b>	Feb. 2,3,4,7,8, 2022	5 days/Personal without pay

**2.5 Leave of Absence**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Begin Date</b>	<b>Estimated Return Date on or about</b>
<b>#101142</b>	Medical Leave of Absence	Oct. 20, 2021	Nov. 8, 2021

**EDUCATION**

**#3 RESOLVED** that the Board approve the second reading of the following policy:

Policy 2425 - Emergency Virtual or Remote Instruction Program

**#4 RESOLVED** that the Board approves the Superintendent's presentation of HIB report as follows:

<b>HIB Case</b>
HBWC-222348

HBWO-222362
VHS-222469
VHS-222768

#5 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the following:

**5.1 Attendance at Conference**

Name	School	Event/Location	Date	Cost
Steven Munoz	VHS	Theatre Day for Teachers/ Montclair State Univ.	Jan. 7, 2022	\$175.00
Jason Calo	VHS	EATA Athletic Training Convention/Foxwoods Casino, CT	Jan. 7, 2022 - Jan. 10, 2022	Hotel \$631.35 Mileage \$109.90 Meals \$185.25 Registration \$340.00 Total \$1,266.50

**5.2 Movement on the Guide**

NAME	CURRENT LEVEL/STEP	SALARY	NEW LEVEL/STEP	SALARY
Catherine King	MA/Step 8	\$61,183	MA+30/Step 8	\$65,801
Amy Heckel	MA+30/Step 17	\$98,818	MA+45/Step 17	\$100,272
Christine Garson	BA/Step 13	\$68,122	BA+30/Step 13	\$71,763
Christopher Haines	BA/Step 3	\$52,097	MA/Step 3	\$57,589
Steven Munoz	BA/Step 5	\$52,597	BA+30/Step 5	\$57,200
Joan Weiss	MA/Step 18	\$96,154	MA+30/Step 18	\$104,119

**5.3 Professional Development Presenters**

Presenter	School	Date	Hrs./Stipend	Total
Jen Kleinknecht	HBW	Sept. 1, 2021	1 hr/\$60 per hr.	\$60.00
Andor Kish	HBW	Sept. 1, 2021	1 hr/\$60 per hr.	\$60.00
Rich Wertz	VHS	Sept. 1, 2021	1 hr/\$60 per hr.	\$60.00
Amy Heckel	HBW	Sept. 1, 2021	1 hr/\$60 per hr.	\$60.00
Victoria Cirigliano	BRK	Sept. 1, 2021	1 hr/\$60 per hr.	\$60.00
Elissa Malespina	VHS	Sept. 1, 2021	1 hr/\$60 per hr.	\$60.00

**5.4 Student Observer**

<b>Name</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>School/Teacher/ Grade</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
Alyssa Colavito	St. John's Univ.	HBW/Smith/English	Oct. 27 - Dec. 15, 2021	Student Observer
Tara Barrow	Cald. Univ.	BRK/Cirigliano/1st Grade	Jan. 4 - May 15, 2022	Student Observer

#6 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the attached Monthly Statistical Report for the month of September 2021.

#7 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the attached 2022-2023 Verona Public Schools District School Calendar.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

#8 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the following:

**8.1 Student Home Instruction**

<b>Student #</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Hrs./Week/Duration</b>	<b>Beginning on or about</b>
#251003	VHS	9	total of 5 hrs.	Oct. 13, 2021

#9 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve **Luisa Hirsch** 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 \$54.31 per hour. This rate will be adjusted upon ratification of the VEA contract.

#10 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve Kate Carlson eligibility to swim for Verona High School for the 2021-2022 season in pursuant to NJSIAA Constitution CL7.

**REFERENDUM**

#11 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the Proposal for Extended Construction Management Services from Legacy Construction.

**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>
\$1,123,638.66	Vendor Checks	October 26, 2021
\$ 100,054.32	Referendum Checks	October 22, 2021

#13 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the first reading of the attached proposed Refunding Bond Ordinance McManimon-Scotland-Baumann.

#11 **Public Comments**

**CONFIDENTIAL SESSION IF NECESSARY**

**RESOLUTION TO ADJOURN**

#14 **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 by: Mr. Day

Seconded by: Mrs. Priscoe

Mr. Alworth   X                        Mr. Day   X  

Mrs. Drappi   X                        Mrs. Freschi  Absent 

Mrs. Priscoe   X  

All in Favor:   AYE  

All Opposed:   None  

**This meeting is adjourned at 8:05 P.M.**

**VERONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**ADDENDUM RESOLUTIONS**  
**October 26, 2021**

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

**Motion by:** Mr. Day

**Seconded by:** Mrs. Priscoe

**Be it RESOLVED the approval of Addenda Resolution #1 -12.**

Mr. Alworth   X                        Mr. Day   X  

Mrs. Drappi   X                        Mrs. Freschi   Absent  

Mrs. Priscoe   X  

**PERSONNEL**

**#1 RESOLVED** that the Board approve the following:

**1.1 Retirement**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Effective Date of Retirement</b>
<b>Lisa Torchia</b>	Admin Assistant Guidance	VHS	Retirement	Jan. 28, 2022

**1.2 Leave of Absence**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Begin Date</b>	<b>Estimated Return Date on or about</b>
<b>#102789</b>	Extension of Maternity Leave	Sept. 1, 2021	Dec. 2, 2021
<b>#100998</b>	Medical Leave of Absence	Oct. 26, 2021	Jan. 14, 2022

**EDUCATION**

- #2 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the attached revised District Organizational Chart for the 2021-2022 school year.
- #3 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the attached job description for an Executive Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools and Business Administrator / Board Secretary.
- #4 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve Cheryl Sluberski as Executive Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools and Business Administrator / Board Secretary at a prorated salary of \$67,899.
- #5 **RESOLVED** that the Board approves the attached job description for IT Technician.
- #6 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the attached job description for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee Facilitator.
- #7 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve Dr. Charles Miller as District Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coordinator for a stipend amount of \$7,500 for the 2021-22 academic year.
- #8 **RESOLVED** that the Board approves payment of unused vacation days for Dr. Rui Dionisio at the per diem rate per contract in the amount of \$12,047.83.
- #9 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the attached 2021-2022 QSAC Statement of Assurance.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

- #10 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve to enter into a contract for the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year for student transportation with the parents of Student #221761, who is an out-of-district placement.
- #11 **RESOLVED** that the Board approve the following:

**11.1 Student Home Instruction**

<b>Student #</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Hrs./Week/Duration</b>
#261366	HBW	8	10 hrs. per wk./4-6 wks.
#220123	VHS	12	total of 5 hrs.

**FINANCE**

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

<b><u>Amount</u></b>	<b><u>Description</u></b>	<b><u>Check Register Date</u></b>
\$28,723.05	Vendor Checks	October 26, 2021