BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
280 ASBURY-WEST PORTAL ROAD
ASBURY, NEW JERSEY 08802
908-479-6336

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, March 19, 2025 at 7:00 p.m
Ethel Hoppock Middle School - Library/STEAM Room

I. CALL TO ORDER - President MacDonnell called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

II. PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act of New Jersey, adequate notice of this meeting was provided by sending notice to: The Hunterdon County Democrat, Bethlehem Township Clerk, email sent to school community and township residents, by posting on the bulletin boards in the Ethel Hoppock Middle School and Thomas B. Conley Schools and by posting notice on the Board of Education website at http://btschools.org/

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

IV. ROLL CALL

Board Members Present: Mr. Greg Glazar, Mr. Thomas Gregor, Mr. Michael Hale, Mr. Daniel MacDonnell, Ms. Jennifer Seibert and Ms. Stephanie Yager

District Administrators Present: Edward Abato - CSA and Kirby Hendershot - SBA/BS

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION #1

Motion by Ms. Yager, seconded by Mr. Glazar to enter closed session at 6:34 p.m. On a voice vote, all present were in favor.

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act authorizes a public body to exclude the public from that portion of a meeting at which the Board of Education discusses topics falling within certain specified exceptions to the requirement for open public meetings; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education wishes to discuss matters that fall within one or more of the statutory exceptions to open public meetings;

NOW BE IT RESOLVED that, pursuant to Section 7 of the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-12), that the Board shall adjourn from public session and enter into executive session for approximately 25 minutes to discuss the following: Student Matters

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Education will take action upon its return to public session; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the matters discussed in executive session should be made public as soon as the need for confidentiality no longer exists, but it is not known at this time when that may be.

Motion by Mr. Hale, seconded by Mr. Glazar to return to public session at 6:50 p.m.

Bethlehem Township School District
2024 - 2025 District Goals

1. Goal: Referendum Planning

Objective: To successfully prepare and promote a school district referendum in, securing essential funding for educational enhancements, infrastructure improvements, and building upgrades.

2. Goal: Enhance School Safety and Security with a Focus on Staff and Student Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Objective: To create a safe, secure, and supportive school environment in the Bethlehem Township School District by integrating comprehensive safety measures with robust Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programs for staff and students during the 2024-2025 school year.

3. Goal: Implement and Enhance the RTI Framework (Phase II) to Support Student Achievement

Objective: To fully integrate and enhance the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework within the Bethlehem Township School District during the 2024-2025 school year. This will include the identification of interventionists, development of new RTI action plans, and establishment of effective progress monitoring procedures to ensure all students receive the support they need to succeed.

4. Goal: Comprehensive Curriculum Rewriting for K-8 Science, Social Studies, Spanish, and STEAM

Objective: To develop and implement a rigorous, standards-aligned K-8 curriculum in Science, Social Studies, Spanish, and STEAM that fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and interdisciplinary connections, ensuring our students are prepared for a rapidly evolving global society.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

- **Email from Jessica Lynch**

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS - Agenda Items Only

Public participation at board meetings is intended to allow individual members of the public to address the Board of Education on issues of public concern. The public comment period is an opportunity for the Board to listen to citizen concerns, but not to debate issues or enter into a question-and-answer session or a "cross examination" between the public and individual members. While all comments made by the public will be taken under advisement, the Board will not respond to comments made by the public.

- Pursuant to Board Policy #0167:

- all statements from the public must be directed to the President or other presiding officer; no participant may address or question board members individually.
- members of the public who wish to make a statement during the Public Comments portion of the meeting may speak for no more than three (3) minutes.
- members of the public must identify themselves prior to speaking. Please state your name and address and group affiliation, if appropriate.

Motion by Mr. Hale to open public comments, seconded by Mr. Glazar. On a voice vote, all were in favor.

-A member of the public inquired how their email can be considered public correspondence. She sent an email applauding Ms. Vanessa O'Keefe and the time and energy she puts into the drama program.

Motion by Mr. Gregor, seconded by Mr. Hale to close public comment. On a voice vote, all were in favor.

VII. MINUTES - M1

A. BE IT RESOLVED that the minutes of the Board of Education meetings, held on the dates indicated, be approved and filed.

February 19, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes
February 19, 2025 Executive Session Meeting Minutes

Motion by Ms. Yager, seconded by Ms. Seibert to approve Minutes item A. On a roll call vote, the minutes were approved as follows: 6-0-0 (aye Glazar, Gregor, Hale, Yager, MacDonnell, Seibert)

VIII. SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENT REPORT

Mr. MacDonnell informed the board that he signed the LRFP minor amendment to send to the DOE.

IX. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Mr. Abato applauded the 17 students that were selected for the Teens Art Festival. He also thanks the Art Teachers for all of the time they have put into the festival. Mr. Abato also gave a curriculum update as requested by Mr. Glazar. Finally, Mr. Abato noted that the final round of teacher observations were wrapping up.

A. Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) Report

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Bethlehem Township Board of Education reviewed the Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying case presented on February 19, 2025, and upheld the findings and/or consequences recommended by the Superintendent:

School	Date of Incident	Report #	Classified HIB Y/N	Additional Action Taken
Hoppock	January 25, 2025	2	Yes	Code of Conduct and restorative practice

Motion by Mr. Hale seconded by Mr. Gregor, to approve the Superintendent's HIB report. On a roll call vote, the HIB report was approved as follows: 6-0-0 (aye Glazar, Gregor, Hale, Seibert, Yager, MacDonnell)

X. BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR/BOARD SECRETARY REPORT

A. Presentation of the 2025-2026 Tentative Budget: Edward Abato and Kirby Hendershot

Before presenting the tentative budget, Ms. Hendershot noted that the Administrative Review for the cafeteria was complete and a perfect review was obtained. Ms. Hendershot also let the board know that the Bid for the security vestibule at EThel Hoppock would be published in the paper on March 20, 2025.

XI. FINANCE

Committee Members: Thomas Gregor, Mike Hale and Jennifer Seibert

A. Approval of Bills List - *(Attachment Bills List)*

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board approve the attached list of district bills for payment as presented by the School Business Administrator for the period February 20, 2025 through March 19, 2025 for a total amount of $882,032.86 which includes two payrolls:

February 28, 2025	$326,391.97
March 14, 2025	$254,803.94

B. Acceptance and Approval of Board Secretary's Report for the month of February, 2025 *(Attachment February Board Secretary Report and February Reconciliation Report)*

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board acknowledge receipt of the monthly certification of the Board Secretary for February 2025, and after review of the Board Secretary's and February 2025 Cash Reconciler's Reports, certify no major account or fund has been over-expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23A – 16.10 (c)4 and that sufficient funds are available to meet the District's financial obligation for the remainder of the fiscal year and that no budgetary line-item account has been exceeded pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:22-8.1, and that no line-item account has encumbrances and expenditure, which in total exceed the line-item appropriation in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.10 (a).

C. Approve Line Item Transfers for the month of February 2025 *(Attachment February Transfers)*

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board approve the line item transfers for February 1, 2025 through February 28, 2025 in the amount of $192,656.93

D. Approval of Withdrawal and Appropriation of Maintenance Reserve
BE IT RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent and the Board of Education, the Bethlehem Township School District authorizes to withdraw Maintenance reserve funds in the amount of $29,464.20 and appropriate funds for asbestos abatement by Guardian Contracting, Inc. and Carpet replacement by Direct Flooring in room 121 at Thomas B. Conley Elementary School.

Removal and disposal of 1280 sf of Asbestos, $11,800
Purchase, install and related services of carpet, $17,664.20

E. Approval of Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission (ESC) to provide Public School Services as needed for the 2025-2026 School Year *(Attachment 2025-2026 approval rates)*
BE IT RESOLVED that the Board, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approve retaining the services of Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission (ESC) on an as-needed basis for Public School Services during the 2025-2026 school year.

F. Approval of Paraprofessionals from Hunterdon County ESC for the Regular School Year and ESY 2025-2026 *(Attachment Hunterdon County Educational Services paraprofessionals)*
BE IT RESOLVED that the Board upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approve paraprofessionals (as needed) from Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission (HCESC) for the regular school year for 2025-2026 at the rate of $30.00 per hour, per paraprofessional. The district will be billed monthly. Effective July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

G. Approval of Board, staff workshop attendance and travel expenditures
BE IT RESOLVED that the Board, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, make the findings and approve attendance and travel for the following workshops/meetings.

- that travel is directly related to and within the scope of the employee or Board member's duties or responsibilities; and for employees, the school district's professional development plan;
- that travel is critical to the instructional needs of the district or furthers the efficient operation of the district;
- that the travel is in compliance with state and federal travel payment guidelines; and
- that the travel is in compliance with the District policy on travel.

Date(s)	Admin./ Staff Member	Program/Location	Cost	Mileage	Lodging	Meals and Incidentals
March 21, 2025	Angela Kelly	Uncommon Thread, TUT: Best Practices For ABA Sterling, NJ	n/a	$30.08	n/a	n/a
March 26, 2025	Bree Brace	Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission Conference, Califon, NJ	n/a	$11.28	n/a	n/a

March 28, 2025	Rebecca Billera	Hunterdon County School Counselor's Spring Conference Flemington, NJ	n/a	$14.10	n/a	n/a
April 10, 2025	Sally Klemm	Montclair State Uni. Center for Autism & Early Childhood Mental Health Leadership Conference West Windsor Twp. NJ	$45.00	n/a	n/a	n/a
April 10, 2025	Bree Brace	Montclair State Uni. Center for Autism & Early Childhood Mental Health Leadership Conference West Windsor Twp. NJ	$45.00	$39.48	n/a	n/a
April 11, 2025	Rebecca Billera	NJ School Spring 2025 Counselor Conference Kean University, Union, NJ	$45.00	$40.70	n/a	n/a

H . Adoption of Tentative Budget for the 2025-2026 School Year
BE IT RESOLVED that the tentative budget be approved for the 2025-2026 School Year using the 2025-2026 state aid figures and the Secretary to the Board of Education be authorized to submit the following tentative budget to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools for approval in accordance with with N.J.S.A.18A:7F-5 and 18A:7F-6

And, to advertise said tentative budget in The Star Ledger in accordance with the form suggested by the New Jersey Department of Education and according to law.

AND a public hearing on the budget for the 2025-2026 school year will be held at Ethel Hoppock Middle School on April 30, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

Bethlehem Township Board of Education
Adoption of the Tentative Budget for School Year 2025-2026

	General Fund	Special Revenue Fund	Debt Service Fund	Total
2025-2026 Total Expenditures	$9,953,424	$110,852	$364,375	$10,428,651
Less: Anticipated Revenues	$1,892,310	$110,852	$0	$2,003,162
Taxes to be Raised	$8,061,114	$0	$364,375	$8,425,489

HEALTH CARE COST ADJUSTMENT
BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education desires to apply for the Health Care

Adjustment generated in the 2025/2026 budget for increased costs of health benefits in the amount of $40,317 which is included in the tentative budget. The additional funds will be used to pay for the additional increases in health benefit premiums.

ENROLLMENT ADJUSTMENT
**Did not qualify for*

USE OF BANKED CAP
BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education includes in the proposed tentative budget the adjustment for banked cap in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-10.3(b). The district has fully exhausted all eligible statutory spending authority and must increase the base budget in the amount of $100,000 for the purposes of funding educational needs within the 2025-2026 budget. The district intends to complete said purposes by June 2026 and they cannot be deferred or incrementally completed over a longer period of time.

MAINTENANCE RESERVE
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Bethlehem Township Board of Education includes in the budget a maintenance reserve withdrawal in the amount of $100,000 pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-14.2(d) for the purpose of supporting required maintenance services such as boiler and HVAC service and a Sanitary line replacement.

CAPITAL RESERVE
WHEREAS, the facility needs identified are eligible to be funded with Capital Reserve, and as such are required to be in the Long Range Facility Plan,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Bethlehem Township Board of Education approves the following capital projects and the withdrawal of $107,800 from the Capital Reserve account to support funding for the following projects for the 2025-2026 school year

- Ethel Hoppock Security Vestibule- $107,800

MAXIMUM TRAVEL
Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3, a board of education must establish a maximum dollar limit for travel expenditure, as defined in N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.1 et seq.,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Education includes in the tentative budget a maximum travel expenditure in the amount of $24,075 for the 2025-2026 school year. The maximum travel expenditure amount for the 2024-2025 school year is $21,375, of which, $8,873.90 has been spent and $4,664.70 is encumbered to date.

TRAVEL AND RELATED EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT
The Board of Education recognizes school staff and Board members will incur travel expenses related to and within the scope of their current responsibilities and for travel that promotes the delivery of instruction or furthers the efficient operation of the school district;

AND, N.J.A.C. 6A:23A Subchapter 7 requires Board members to receive approval of these expenses by a majority of the full voting membership of the Board and staff members to receive prior approval of these expenses by the Superintendent of Schools and a majority of the full voting membership of the Board;

AND, a board of education may establish, for regular district business travel only, an annual school year threshold of $150 per staff member where prior Board approval shall not be required unless this annual threshold for a staff member is exceeded in a given school year (July 1 through June 30);

AND, travel and related expenses not in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A Subchapter 7 but deemed by the board of education to be necessary and unavoidable as noted on the approved Board of Education Out of District Travel and Reimbursement Forms;

BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education approves all travel not in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A Subchapter 7 as being necessary and unavoidable as noted on the approved Board of Education Out of District Travel and Reimbursement Forms; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board of Education includes in the tentative budget travel and related expense reimbursements in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A Subchapter 7, to a maximum expenditure of $24,075 for all staff and board members for the 2025-2026 school year. The School Business Administrator/Board Secretary shall track and record these costs to ensure that the maximum amount is not exceeded.

I. Approval of Class Trips for the 2024-2025 School Year
BE IT RESOLVED that the Board upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following class trips:

Date(s)	Grades	Where	Bus provided by/cost
April, 2025	Grades 6-8	Teen Arts Festival, Flemington, NJ	Del Val Transportation - $480.00 (1 bus)
May 2025	Grade 7	DaVinci Science Center Allentown, PA	Bus quotes being obtained
June 2025	Grade 8	Dorney Park Allentown, PA	Bus quotes being obtained

J. Approval of an Additional Tax Sheltered Annuity Company
BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following company to provide 403B Tax Sheltered Annuity salary reduction agreements for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year: Security Benefit

K. BE IT RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent the Board of Education authorizes and delegates Parette Somjen Architects on their behalf with the responsibility to prepare and submit all necessary documentation to the Department of Education to serve as a standard Project Application to the Office of School Facilities for the aforementioned project:

Security Vestibule Upgrades at Ethel Hoppock Middle School

In addition, the Board authorizes and delegates Parette Somjen Architects with the responsibility to prepare and submit a minor amendment to the District's Long Range Facility Plan in accordance with the NJDOE and Office of School Facilities guidelines and requirements.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the aforementioned project application will be pursued through the District's Capital Reserve Account.

L. FY 2024 Extraordinary Aid Appropriations
BE IT RESOLVED, upon recommendation of the Superintendent the Board of Education approves the following:
WHEREAS, N.J.S.C. 6A:23A-13.3 authorizes procedures, under the authority of the Commissioner of Education, which permit a Board of Education to transfer funds during the budget year, and

WHEREAS, NJ.A.C. 6A:C:23A-13.3(d)6 provides that a District Board of Education may at any time, without Commissioner approval, appropriate surplus generated from State revenue, such as Extraordinary Aid, that has been excluded from the excess surplus calculation, in the prior year, and

WHEREAS, the Bethlehem Township Board of Education has received $27, 192 of Extraordinary Aid FY24, and

WHEREAS, the Bethlehem Township Board of Education has determined that the following transfers are needed to cover unanticipated costs and to increase the efficiency of district operations:

11-190-100-640-xxx-xxx	K-5 Math Curriculum
11-000-266-610-xxx-xxx	School Security Supplies

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Bethlehem Township Board of Education that it hereby authorizes the District's School Business Administrator to make the transfers consistent with all applicable laws and regulations.

The Finance Committee met on March 13 and reviewed the Tentative Budget. There was no report.

Motion by Mr. Glazar, seconded by Mr. Gregor to approve Finance Items A-L. On a roll call vote, items A-L (except for H) were approved as follows: 6-0-0 (aye Glazar, Gregor, Hale, Seibert, Yager, MacDonnell). Item H., Adoption of Tentative Budget for the 2025-2026 School Year was approved as follows 5-0-1 (aye Glazar, Gregor, Hale, Yager, MacDonnell ; Abstain Seibert)

XII. PERSONNEL

Committee Members: Thomas Gregor, *Mike Hale (*Temporary committee appointment), and Jennifer Seibert

A. Acceptance of Letter of Resignation for Purposes of Retirement
BE IT RESOLVED that the Board upon recommendation of the Superintendent, accept the resignation of the following staff member for purposes of retirement:

Name	Effective Date
Debra Williams-Baumann	June 30, 2025

B. Acceptance of Letter of Resignation
BE IT RESOLVED that the Board upon recommendation of the Superintendent, accept the resignation of the following staff member::

Name	Effective Date
Mark Tapio	June 30, 2025

C. Approval of Leave of Absence Request
BE IT RESOLVED that the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following leave of absence request:

Employee ID	Type of Leave	Paid Leave Dates (sick/ vacation)	Unpaid Leave with Benefits if Applicable	Unpaid Leave without Benefits	Return Date
8113	FMLA/NJFLA/ Medical	N/A	3/21/2025 - 3/31/2026 (intermittent)	N/A	4/1/2026

Discussion: The Board of Education would like to wish Ms. Debra Williams-Baumann well and thank her for her years of service.

The Personnel Committee met on March 13 and reviewed the Tentative Budget. Motion by Mr. Gregor, seconded by Mr. Hale to approve Personnel items A-C. On a roll call vote, items A-C were approved as follows: 6-0-0 (aye Glazar, Gregor, Hale, Seibert, Yager, MacDonnell).

XIII. SCHOOL OPERATIONS

Committee Members: Michael Hale, Daniel MacDonnell and Greg Glazar

A. Approval of the 2025-2026 School Calendar - *Attachment*
BE IT RESOLVED that the Board upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the 2025-2026 School Calendar with 181 student days. Teachers will report for the first day on Monday, August 18, 2025 and the first day of school for students will be Thursday, August 21, 2025 (early dismissal day). The last day of school is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, June 10, 2026 which includes three (3) emergency/snow days.

B. Approval of Take Your Child to Work Day on April 16, 2025
BE IT RESOLVED that the Board upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Wednesday, April 16, 2025, for Take Your Child to Work Day for our district. The official date (April 24, 2025) is scheduled during our Spring Recess, therefore, the date needs to be rearranged for April 16, 2025.

C. Acceptance of Fire and Security Drill Reports for the month of February 2025
BE IT RESOLVED that the Board upon recommendation of the Superintendent, accept the Fire Security and Bus Evacuations Drills for the month of February for the Thomas B. Conley School and Ethel Hoppock Middle School:

MONTH	SCHOOL	FIRE DRILL	SECURITY DRILL
February 2025	TBC	02/04/2025	02/27/2025
February 2025	EHMS	02/25/2025	02/27/2025

D. Approve Warren County Special Services for coordinated transportation contracts *(attachment Resolution for participation in coordinated transportation 2025-2026 school year)*

WHEREAS, the Bethlehem Township Board of Education desires to transport special education, non-public, public and vocational school students to specific destinations; and

WHEREAS, the Warren County Special Services School District, hereinafter referred to as WCSSD, offers coordinated transportation services; and

WHEREAS, the WCSSSD will organize and schedule routes to achieve the maximum cost effectiveness:

NOW THEREFORE, it is agreed that in consideration of prorated contract costs, plus an administration fee of 4.5% as presented to the Bethlehem Township School District Board of Education as calculated by the billing formula adopted by WCSSD's Board of Education

This agreement and obligations and requirements therein shall be in effect between July 1, 2025 and June 30, 2026.

The School Operations Committee met on March 13 and reviewed the Tentative Budget. There was no report but Mr. Hale did want to thank Ms. Hendershot for all of her work and time.

Motion by Mr. Glazar, seconded by Mr. Gregor to approve School Operations Items A-D. On a roll call vote, items A-D were approved as follows: 6-0-0 (aye Glazar, Gregor, Hale, Seibert, Yager, MacDonnell).

XIV. EDUCATION & POLICY

Committee Members: Stephanie Yager, Tom Gregor, & *Jen Seibert (*Temporary committee appointment)

No items on the agenda but the committee did meet on March 13 and reviewed the Tentative Budget

XV. OLD BUSINESS
NONE

XVI. NEW BUSINESS
NONE

XVII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Motion by Mr. Hale, seconded by Ms. Yager to open public comment. On a voice vote, all were in favor.

No public comments

Motion by Mr. Hale, seconded by Mr. Glazar to close public comment. On a voice vote all were in favor.

XIX. GOOD OF THE ORDER

Bethlehem Township Alumni freshman, Owen Fol, made it to Wrestling States in Atlantic City-Congrats!

XX. NOTEWORTHY DATES:

1. April 30, 2025 - Regular Meeting of the Board of Education - EHMS Library/STEAM RM. - Public meeting begins at 7:00 p.m.

XXI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Hale, seconded by Mr. Gregor. On a voice vote, all were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kirby Hendershot
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary
Approved on 4/30/2025