

At 7:35 p.m., Mr. Halik announced that due to a lack of a quorum, the Board meeting would be delayed until 7:55 p.m.

The Board of Education of the Borough of North Caldwell in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in executive session on December 15, 2020 via an online Zoom Meeting at 7:58 p.m.

Mr. Michael Halik, Business Administrator, indicated that in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this meeting had been properly advertised and the agenda had been posted at the appropriate locations.

In addition, a notice was posted on the Entrances of Grandview Elementary School and on the Board of Education Website, that December 15, 2020 meeting would be done via the Zoom Online Meeting Platform.

**ROLL CALL BY THE BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR**

Present:                Mr. Robert Projansky, President  
                             Mrs. Mary Mokris, Vice President  
                             Mrs. Mindy Opper  
                             Mr. Matt Atlas  
                             Mrs. Jordan Shumofsky

Also Present:        Dr. Linda Freda, Superintendent  
                             Mr. Michael Halik, Business Administrator / Board Secretary  
                             Mr. Chris Checchetto, Principal – Gould School  
                             Mr. Michael Stefanelli, Principal – Grandview School  
                             Mr. Ian Adlon, Computer Technician

**ACTION ITEM**

**ORGANIZATIONAL RESOLUTION**

**O1.    RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approve the use of the Zoom Online Meeting Platform, to conduct the December 15, 2020, Board Meeting in compliance with A-3850, which was signed by Governor Murphy on March 20, 2020, so that Board of Education business can continue during the State of Emergency for the COVID-19 crisis.

Moved:	Mrs. Mokris	Seconded:	Mrs. Shumofsky
Yes:	5	No:	0

**BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Mr. Projansky stated we have 172 zoom participants and a lot to discuss tonight. We have two (2) outgoing Board Members that will be missed greatly, Mary Mokris and Matt Atlas.

Mr. Projansky read the following resolution regarding Mrs. Mokris:

**RESOLUTION OF THE**  
**NORTH CALDWELL BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Whereas**, Mary Morkis was a member of the Board of Education of North Caldwell for just over six years from November 2014 through 2020 and served as Vice President for three of those years; and

**Whereas**, through her years of hard work and dedication Mary Mokris has made extraordinary contributions to the North Caldwell school system; and

**Whereas**, through her passion for our schools, Mary served as an effective liaison to the North Caldwell Partnership for Education and the Recreation and Advisory Board; and

**Whereas**, during her three years on the Transportation and Safety Committee, Mary worked diligently to improve the efficiency of the transportation system and to develop procedures and safeguards to protect the safety of students and school personnel; and

**Whereas**, during her five years on the Buildings and Grounds Committee, Mary helped plan for the future needs of the District in light of population growth in North Caldwell, as well as make important changes in our schools, especially construction of the Gould Art Room, the reroofing of Gould School, the Gould window project and the Gould Music Room; and

**Whereas**, during her six years on the Curriculum Committee, Mary oversaw the development of curriculum in a dynamic environment to ensure that resources needed for learning were available and being used effectively; and

**Whereas**, during her five years on the Policy Committee, Mary facilitated the adoption of sensible and legally compliant Board policies; and

**Whereas**, during her two years on the Finance Committee, Mary helped ensure that the District's financial practices were sound and provided for long term stability and future needs; and

**Whereas**, the North Caldwell school system, the children of North Caldwell and the entire community have benefited significantly from Mary's outstanding leadership and contributions to the Board of Education;

**Now Therefore Be It Resolved** that this Board of Education and the community express their gratitude to Mary Mokris for her over six years of unselfish service to the schools and children of North Caldwell.

Moved: Mrs. Oppen                      Seconded: Mr. Atlas

Yes: 5                                      No: 0

Mr. Projansky, Dr. Freda, Mr. Halik and the rest of the Board thanked her for her service and dedication to the North Caldwell Community.

Mr. Projansky then read the following resolution for Mr. Atlas:

**RESOLUTION OF THE**  
**NORTH CALDWELL BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Whereas**, Matt Atlas was a member of the Board of Education of North Caldwell for two years from 2019 through 2020; and

**Whereas**, through his years of hard work and dedication Matt Atlas has made extraordinary contributions to the North Caldwell school system; and

**Whereas**, through his passion for our schools, Matt served as an effective liaison to the North Caldwell Partnership for Education, the Boy Scouts/Cub Scouts and the Mayor, Council, Planning Board and Police; and

**Whereas**, during his two years on the Community Relations Committee, Matt worked diligently to continue to improve the communication and relationship with parents, the North Caldwell Community, and the press, resulting in greater transparency and improvement in all aspects of our relationship with the same; and

**Whereas**, during his two years on the Curriculum Committee, Matt oversaw the development of curriculum in a dynamic environment to ensure that resources needed for learning were available and being used effectively; and

**Whereas**, as Chairperson of the COVID-19 Committee, Matt oversaw from a policy perspective the development and implementation of the District's carefully developed response to the pandemic, ensuring that students had an effective educational experience and that the health and safety of students and staff was prioritized; and

**Whereas**, the North Caldwell school system, the children of North Caldwell and the entire community have benefited significantly from Matt's outstanding leadership and contributions to the Board of Education;

**Now Therefore Be It Resolved** that this Board of Education and the community express their gratitude to Matt Atlas for his two years of unselfish service to the schools and children of North Caldwell.

Moved: Mrs. Shumofsky Seconded: Mrs. Oppen

Yes: 5 No: 0

Mr. Projansky, Dr. Freda, Mr. Halik and the rest of the Board thanked him for his service and dedication to the North Caldwell Community and wished him good luck on the Town Council.

Mr. Projansky noted that later on the board will discuss next year's school calendar regarding the beginning of the school year.

He then again thanked the outgoing members and welcomed the newest member Sapna Malige who will be sworn in at the January 5, 2021 Board Meeting.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Freda reported with the pending snowstorm we are planning on using the snow days that have been allotted in the calendar rather than going to remote learning due to potential issues with electrical power.

### **PUBLIC RECOGNITION**

The following comments were e-mailed in:

Andrea Lever - 8 Knollwood Drive

This is Andrea Lever, hope you are well. Kudos to you and your hard work during this crazy time.

I just have a question regarding 4th and 5th grade (I don't speak live or on microphones lol).

While I completely understood the reasoning for 4th and 5th staying hybrid in the beginning of the school year, I'm wondering and hoping that there is a plan for the second half of the year. Unfortunately, it doesn't seem like much is changing in regards to the pandemic, I'm hoping that more in person instruction for 4th and 5th grade is a possibility.

I'm not sure if you will respond now, or share my concerns with the rest of the board/covid committee or read the question during the meeting, whichever way, if there is any way I can be of help please don't hesitate to let me know.

Thank you again,  
Andrea Lever

Mrs. Anne Burg - North Caldwell Teacher

I hope you are well. If you could let the board know that I would feel much safer if we are full remote for the first two weeks after break. I would still want to come into the

Gould Artroom to Zoom with all of my classes. I thought seriously about requesting being remote for the week after Thanksgiving, but as a specialist, I knew that would make it very challenging for administrators and teachers at both schools to have proper preps if I was remote. This is the only reason I didn't request the accommodation. My family was very worried about me and would be even more so if we are not full remote for two weeks after the winter break. While I can only speak for myself, I know there are many teachers who feel the same way.

I thank the board for taking this into consideration.

Anne Burg, Art teacher for Gould School and 8 Friday Art classes at Grandview. I live in West Caldwell.

Thank you and All the best,

Anne

Bari Larner - 13 Sheffield Rd.

I am writing this email as a concerned parent of a 5th grader. First and foremost, Dr. Freda, Dr. Stefanelli, Mr. Checchetto, all the teachers as well as the covid committee has done an outstanding job of allowing our children to attend school throughout this pandemic. That being said, I was hoping the situation can change with regard to attending school everyday. The beauty of North Caldwell is that it is a small community. As such, great emphasis is put on the education of our children. The 4th and 5th grade students should have the same opportunity that pre-k through 6th grade has. They are separated from their friends as it is. Can't we find a way to get them in everyday as well-perhaps switching which grade attends at a time? The gymnasium and the cafeteria as well as Town hall can be a learning environment as well. Some of the kids are really struggling with the hybrid schedule and really need in person instruction to succeed. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to help this situation, as it is clearly not changing anytime soon.

Thank you, as always,

Bari Larner (5th grade parent)

Kimberly Clift - 3 Amelia Street

Hello, my name is Kimberly Clift of 3 Amelia Street. I just wanted to weigh in with my opinion on the idea of closing the schools and going remote after the holiday break. In my opinion, I believe this may do the opposite of its intention and instead actually encourage people to travel since essentially they are now getting closer to four weeks "off". This allows trips to further destinations, most of which are on the restricted list. Suddenly driving to Florida, Vermont or even Colorado doesn't seem so bad if you are not turning around in a week. I realize this would still require them to quarantine for two weeks after returning, however, I fear people will not be honest about it.

I believe our teachers and staff (and students!) have done an amazing job following protocol and safety guidelines to ensure a safe environment for them within the schools. In my opinion, there is no safer place for them to be' And in fact, I fear the repercussions of allowing people more time to travel.

Thank you for your time.  
Kimberly Clift

Talia Del Vescovo - 3 Hamilton Drive South

I understand there has been some talks regarding getting 4th and 5th back in person full time. This is important to a lot of parents and just because you don't hear from us all doesn't mean we condone the decision to exclude 4th and 5th from daily in person instruction. I have heard about of several options that may help facilitate this. Can you please tell us in more detail what plans are being made to get these kids back in person to mirror all other grades in both Gould and Grandview. We would like the same opportunity. There are several reasons we can say why in person learning is imperative for each grade but one is not more important than the other. I feel 4th and 5th have certainly been slighted (though obviously not intentional nor viciously) and they deserve better. I appreciate all the board has done and feel everyone has done an excellent job navigating these uncharted waters. The request I'm making today exists only because we are now going into the second half of the year. It was understood we had to move fast and make decisions on the fly earlier in the year, but these kids have been "out" too long now and it just doesn't seem right.

Thank you.

Monika Fiore - 6 Allen Road

I understand there has been some talks regarding getting 4th and 5th back in person full time. This is important to us and my kids miss going to school every day, they struggle at home and as of now bc of all the holidays and days off go to school only 2 times a week. I have heard about of several options that may help facilitate this. Can you please tell us in more detail what plans are being made to get these kids back in person to mirror all other grades in both Gould and Grandview. ONLY 4th and 5th grade doesnt go full time. We would like the same opportunity. There are several reasons we can say why in person learning is imperative for each grade but one is not more important than the other. I feel 4th and 5th have certainly been slighted (though obviously not intentional nor viciously) and they deserve better. I appreciate all the board has done and feel everyone has done an excellent job navigating these uncharted waters. The request I'm making today exists only because we are now going into the second half of the year. It was understood we had to move fast and make decisions on the fly earlier in the year, but these kids have been "out" too long now and it just doesn't seem right.

Thank you.

Monika Fiore

Mom of Vivienne & Luka, 5th grade

Anthony Prinzo, 2 Hickory Drive – asked about Mr. Atlas's remaining term on the Board. Mr. Projansky said the Board will advertise his open seat and then have interviews.

Mrs. Troiano, 4 Skyline Drive – resident and co-president of the NCEA Teachers’ Union with Mr. Pierro she stated that they surveyed the staff on teaching remote and 74% prefer remote after the holidays, 25% prefer in-person, 79% of staff said they would not be traveling over the holidays while 20% said they would be traveling.

Kaitlyn Philips, 8 Timber Drive - stated she would prefer the schools to stay open after the December break.

Catherine Carfi, 4 Oxford Road – said she agreed with staying open after the Holidays being a Pediatric Physician she would be willing to offer help to the Board if they needed.

Grace Cordovano, 28 Cambridge Drive – asked what the definition of travel would be as we can be at risk anywhere. She asked that everyone travel responsibly.

### **GENERAL RESOLUTIONS**

None

### **BUSINESS RESOLUTIONS**

- B1. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approve the **Public and Confidential Minutes of November 24, 2020.**

Moved:	Mrs. Mokris	Seconded:	Mr. Atlas
Yes:	5	No:	0

- B2. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approve the following **Payroll(s):**

<b>November 30, 2020</b>	<b>\$345,655.82</b>
<b>December 15, 2020</b>	<b>\$372,359.73</b>

Moved:	Mrs. Mokris	Seconded:	Mr. Atlas
Yes:	5	No:	0

- B3. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approve the following **Hand Check Register(s):**

<b>November 25, 2020</b>	<b>\$23,995.09</b>
<b>November 25, 2020</b>	<b>\$25,345.71</b>

Moved:	Mrs. Mokris	Seconded:	Mr. Atlas
--------	-------------	-----------	-----------

Yes: 5 No: 0

- B4. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approve the following **Bills and Claims:**

<b>December 1, 2020</b>	<b>\$47,686.43</b>
<b>December 15, 2020</b>	<b>\$218,137.25</b>

Moved: Mrs. Mokris Seconded: Mr. Atlas

Yes: 5 No: 0

- B5. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approve the following Title 1 Tutoring:

<b>October, 2020</b>	<b>\$1,725.00</b>
<b>November, 2020</b>	<b>\$8,425.00</b>

Moved: Mrs. Mokris Seconded: Mr. Atlas

Yes: 5 No: 0

- B6. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approve the attached Board Secretary's and Treasurer's **Monthly Financial Reports** for October 2020.

Moved: Mrs. Mokris Seconded: Mr. Atlas

Yes: 5 No: 0

- B7. WHEREAS** pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(c) 3, the Board Secretary does certify that as of **October 2020**, no budgetary line item account has encumbrances and expenditures which in total exceed the amount appropriated by the district board of education pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:22-8 and 18A:22-8.1; therefore be it

**RESOLVED** that pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(c) 4, the Board of Education does certify that as of **October 2020**, the Board Secretary Monthly Financial Report, did not reflect an over expenditure in any Major Account or Fund, and based on the Appropriation Balances reflected on this report and on the advice of District Officials, that sufficient funds are available to meet the District's financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Moved: Mrs. Mokris Seconded: Mr. Atlas



Yes: 5 No: 0

**PERSONNEL RESOLUTIONS**

**P1. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approve Erin Rondi as a substitute pending certification.

Moved: Mrs. Mokris Seconded: Mr. Atlas

Yes: 5 No: 0

**P2. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approve Dina Kolesar as a substitute pending certification.

Moved: Mrs. Mokris Seconded: Mr. Atlas

Yes: 5 No: 0

**OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Atlas reported that the COVID Committee met and discussed implementing voluntary weekly rapid COVID testing by Riverside Medical Group. The district will be sending out a survey to the community to determine interest.

Dr. Freda reported that the school would switch from in-person to remote instruction from January 4<sup>th</sup> to January 8<sup>th</sup> based on the results of both community and staff surveys which indicated a preference for remote instruction following the holiday break.

Dr. Freda gave an update on the fourth and fifth grades and expressed that she would continue to work with the Administration and COVID Committee to determine if we could move safely from a hybrid to daily in-person instruction in the coming months.

**NEW BUSINESS**

The Town Council approached the district as to possibly adding a sidewalk on Mountain Avenue from Smull Ave to Gould Ave, the Board discussed and felt it was in everyone's best interest to have more sidewalks in town.

The Board meetings calendar for 2021 was discussed. The Board is trying to not conflict with the Town Council meetings, but at times that is not possible. However, some meetings may be held on Wednesday nights to help reduce conflicts.

Next year's school calendar was discussed with a question as to the first day of school due to the religious holidays. The calendar will be approved at the January 5, 2021 Board meeting.

The following resolution was called at approximately 9:44 p.m.

**RESOLVED** that in accordance with section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, Public Law 1975, the Board has the authority to adjourn to closed session to discuss matters pertaining to: a Personnel/Legal and negotiations. Said matters will be made public upon their disposition.

Moved:        Mr. Atlas                      Seconded:    Mrs. Shumofsky

Yes:            5    No:            0

As there was no further business to discuss, the Board adjourned at 9:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael W. Halik  
Business Administrator / Board Secretary