

MINUTES OF MEETING
NEW JERSEY PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS COMMISSION
August 26, 2021
10:00 a.m. by Phone
495 West State Street
Trenton, New Jersey

The meeting was called to order by Chair Joel M. Weisblatt.

Present were:

Commissioners:

John Bonanni
Craig Ford
David Jones
Pasquale Papero
Paula Voos

Also present were:

Christine Lucarelli-Carneiro, General Counsel
John Boppert, Deputy General Counsel
Frank Kanther, Deputy General Counsel
Ramiro Perez, Deputy General Counsel
Grace Xanthacos, who acted as Stenographer

At the commencement of the meeting, Chair Weisblatt, pursuant to Section 5 of the Open Public Meetings Act, entered this announcement into the minutes of the meeting:

Adequate notice has been provided by the dissemination of a written "Annual Notice of Meeting." On December 10, 2020 a copy of such notice was:

- (a) prominently posted in a public place at the offices of the Public Employment Relations Commission;
- (b) e-mailed to the business offices of the Trenton Times and the Courier Post;
- (c) posted on the agency's web site.

Furthermore on August 20, 2021, copies of an additional written "Notice of Meeting" were posted and sent in a similar manner.

The first item for consideration was the minutes of the June 24, 2021 meeting. Commissioner Papero moved the minutes and Commissioner Ford seconded the motion. The motion to adopt the minutes was unanimously approved (Chair Weisblatt, Commissioners Bonanni, Ford, Jones, Papero and Voos).

The Chair reported that, as anticipated, the Agency is becoming inundated with disputes related to COVID-19. These include issues related to safety inspections, mask mandates, vaccination requirements and COVID testing. Most of these cases are being presented in the interim relief forum which is most taxing on Agency staff. These virus-related disputes are also found in scope cases, bargaining impasses and in the courts. We are committed to the steady and timely processing of these disputes even under the time pressures they demand.

The Chair also reported that the Agency has been focusing on some needed staff adjustments including the hiring of Lourdes Ciervo who will handle many of the tasks previously performed by Annette Thompson, who retired at the beginning of this month after a career of dedicated service to the Agency. Lourdes comes to us with excellent work experience and an outstanding educational background; we have very high expectations for her as the newest member of our team. Melissa Chu and Grace Xanthacos have each adapted to some changes in their responsibilities to enable us to meet the demands presented by current caseloads; the

Agency has benefitted greatly from their contributions. There will be more new hiring in the near future as we identify candidates to fill staff needs. In the meantime, our staff merits appreciation for its ability to produce great neutral work under trying times. He thanked them all and expect that we will continue to perform at an even higher level.

General Counsel Lucarelli-Carneiro commented that a Third Circuit appeal has been filed in Lutter, the remaining federal case addressing WDEA-related litigation. She also commented on three enforcement actions that are pending in the Appellate Division and the Agency.

The first case for consideration was Borough of Old Tappan and PBA Local 206, Docket No. IA-2021-001. Commissioner Bonanni moved the draft decision and Commissioner Voos seconded the motion. The motion to adopt the draft decision was unanimously approved (Chair Weisblatt, Commissioners Bonanni, Ford, Jones, Papero and Voos).

The next case for consideration was Pinelands Regional Board of Education and Pinelands Educational Association, Docket No. SN-2021-032. Commissioner Voos moved the draft decision and Commissioner Bonanni seconded the motion. The motion to adopt the draft decision was approved by a vote of four in favor (Chair Weisblatt, Commissioners Bonanni, Ford, and Voos) and two opposed (Commissioners Papero and Jones).

The next case for consideration was County of Cumberland and FOP Lodge 194 and PBA Local 231, Docket No. CO-2021-207.

Commissioner Bonanni moved the draft decision and Commissioner Voos seconded the motion. The motion to adopt the draft decision resulted in a tie vote with three in favor (Chair Weisblatt, Commissioners Bonanni and Voos) and three opposed (Commissioners Ford, Jones and Papero).

The next case for consideration was Linden Board of Education and Linden Education Association, Docket No. SN-2021-029. Commissioner Voos moved the draft decision and Commissioner Bonanni seconded the motion. Commissioner Ford was recused from voting on this matter because Oxfeld Cohen represents the union. The motion to adopt the draft decision was unanimously approved (Chair Weisblatt, Commissioners Bonanni, Jones, Papero and Voos).

The next case for consideration was Rockway and FOP Lodge 31; FOP Lodge SOP, Docket Nos. SN-2021-025 and SN-2021-031. Commissioner Bonanni moved the draft decision and Commissioner Voos seconded the motion. The motion to adopt the draft decision was approved by a vote of four in favor (Chair Weisblatt, Commissioners Bonanni, Papero and Voos) and two opposed (Commissioners Ford and Jones).

The next case for consideration was North Hudson Regional Fire and Rescue Lodge 31, Docket No. CO-2021-221. Commissioner Bonanni moved the draft decision and Commissioner Voos seconded

the motion. The motion to adopt the draft decision resulted in a tie vote with three in favor (Chair Weisblatt, Commissioners Bonanni and Voos) and three opposed (Commissioners Ford, Jones and Papero).

The next case for consideration was Verona Board of Education and Verona Education Association, Docket No. SN-2021-035. Commissioner Papero moved the draft decision and Commissioner Bonanni seconded the motion. Commissioner Ford was recused from voting on this matter because Oxfeld Cohen represents the union. Commissioner Jones made a motion to adopt the decision as modified on the record by the General Counsel and Commissioner Bonanni seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (Chair Weisblatt, Commissioners Bonanni, Jones, Papero and Voos). The motion to adopt the draft decision was unanimously approved (Chair Weisblatt, Commissioners Bonanni, Jones, Papero and Voos).

Commissioner Bonanni left the meeting at this time.

The next case for consideration was Warren Hills Regional School District and Warren Hills Regional Education Association, Docket No. SN-2021-034. Commissioner Jones moved the draft decision and Commissioner Voos seconded the motion. Commissioner Bonanni was recused from voting on this matter because Schenck, Price, Smith and King law firm represents the employer. Commissioner Ford was recused from voting on this matter because

Oxford Cohen represents the union. The motion to adopt the draft decision was unanimously approved (Chair Weisblatt, Commissioners Jones, Papero and Voos).

The Chair asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Ford made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Voos seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (Chair Weisblatt, Commissioners Ford, Jones, Papero and Voos). The meeting was then adjourned.

The next meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday, September 30, 2021.