

**Bass River Elementary School
MEETING MINUTES
January 6, 2026**

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance led by the Board Secretary

Time: 6:00 pm

In accordance with Board Policy #0151 “The meeting shall be called to order by the Board Secretary/Business Administrator, who shall serve as presiding officer pro tempore until the election of a President and Vice President.”

2. ROLL CALL by Board Secretary Mrs. Van Tassel

PRESENT: Mr. Bush, Mr. Curtin, Mr. Swanseen

ABSENT:

Others Present: Katherine Van Tassel, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

3. Work Session - Executive Session

Voice Vote to enter executive work sessions for the purpose of budget matters. Time in: 6:02 p.m.

Ayes: (3) Mr. Bush, Mr. Curtin, Mr. Swanseen

Nays:

Abstain:

Motion carried

Voice Vote to exit executive session announced Time out: 6:08 p.m.

Ayes: (3) Mr. Bush, Mr. Curtin, Mr. Swanseen

Nays:

Abstain:

Motion carried

4. RECOGNITION

The notice was read aloud to the public by the Board Secretary Mrs. Van Tassel

“This is to advise those present at this meeting of the Board of Education of the Bass River School District, in the County of Burlington, that adequate notice of this meeting was provided in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act. The notice has been posted on the Board of Education Website. The notice was also mailed to the Press of Atlantic City and filed with the Municipal Clerk of Bass River Township.”

5. ELECTION RESULTS

The Business Administrator/Board Secretary certifies that the district received confirmation of following candidates as successful candidates for the open seats in the November 2025 election for the terms beginning January 2026.

<u>Board Members</u>	<u>Term Expires</u>
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Karl Swanssen	2028
Open Seat - unfilled	2028
Open seat - unfilled	2028

6. NEW BOARD MEMBERS OATH

Mrs. Van Tassel administered the oath of office to re-elected board member Mr. Swanssen.
(Attachment#1)

7. MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Mr. Curtin seconded by Mr. Bush to approve agenda as presented

Ayes: (3) Mr. Bush, Mr. Curtin, Mr. Swanssen

Nays:

Abstain:

Motion carried

8. NOMINATION FOR PRESIDENT

Motion to approve the following resolution:

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE BASS RIVER BOARD OF EDUCATION to open the floor for nominations for Board President.

Motion by Mr. Curtin to nominate Mr. Swanssen as President.

Second by Mr. Bush

No other nominations.

Floor closed

Ayes: (3) Mr. Bush, Mr. Curtin, Mr. Swanssen

Nays:

Abstain:

Motion carried

9. NOMINATION FOR VICE PRESIDENT

Motion to approve the following resolution:

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE BASS RIVER BOARD OF EDUCATION to open the floor for nominations for Vice President.

Motion by Mr. Swanssen to nominate Mr. Curtin as Vice- President.

Second by Mr. Bush

No other nominations.

Floor closed

Ayes: (3) Mr. Bush, Mr. Curtin, Mr. Swanssen

Nays:

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Abstain:

Motion carried

10. **THE BOARD PRESIDENT PRESIDES OVER THE MEETING**

1. **Motion by Mr. Curtin seconded by Mr. Bush to appoint the Board President as chair to conduct the meeting.**

Ayes: (3) Mr. Bush, Mr. Curtin, Mr. Swanseen

Nays:

Abstain:

Motion carried

11. **CODE OF ETHICS**

Motion by Mr. Curtin seconded by Mr. Bush to approve the following resolution:

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE BASS RIVER BOARD OF EDUCATION to adopt the following 18A:12-24.1 Code of Ethics for School Board Members as listed a through j:

- a) I will uphold and enforce all laws, state board rules and regulations, and court orders pertaining to schools. Desired changes should be brought about only through legal and ethical procedures.
- b) I will make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of children and will seek to develop and maintain public schools which meet the individual needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex or social standing.
- c) I will confine my Board action to policy-making, planning, and appraisal, and I will help to frame policies and plans only after the board has consulted those who will be affected by them.
- d) I will carry out my responsibility, not to administer the schools, but, together with my fellow Board members, to see that they are well run.
- e) I will recognize that authority rests with the Board of Education and will make no personal promises nor take any private action which may compromise the Board.
- f) I will refuse to surrender my independent judgment to special interest or partisan, political groups or to use the schools for personal gain or for the gain of friends.
- g) I will hold confidential all matters pertaining to the schools which, if disclosed, would needlessly injure individuals or the schools. But in all other matters, I will provide accurate information and, in concert with my fellow Board members, interpret to the staff the aspirations of the community for its schools.
- h) I will vote to appoint the best qualified personnel available after consideration of the recommendation of the chief administrative officer.
- i) I will support and protect school personnel in proper performance of their duties.
- j) I will refer all complaints to the chief administrative officer and will act on such complaints at public meetings only after failure of an administrative solution.

Ayes: (3) Mr. Bush, Mr. Curtin, Mr. Swanseen

Nays:

Abstain:

Motion carried

12. **ANNUAL BOARD RESOLUTIONS**

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Motion by Mr. Bush seconded by Mr. Curtin to motion to approve the following annual Board resolutions:

A. OPEN TO PUBLIC POLICY

The Board of Education recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues and the importance of allowing members of the public to express themselves on school matters of community interest as cited in Policy No. 0167

B. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, in order to conduct its meetings properly and efficiently, the Board shall require the following procedures pertaining to public participation at Board meetings:

- Any individual desiring to speak shall give his or her name, address, and the group, if any, that is represented.
- The presentation shall be as brief as possible but no more than three (3) minutes per individual.
- The Board vests in its president, or other presiding officer, authority to terminate the remarks of any individual if he/she deems it in the best interest of those present to do so.

C. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the purpose of the Regular Meetings shall be the normal conduct of business of the Board of Education and any other items brought to the Board’s attention by the Board Members, Board Attorney and Business Administrator/Board Secretary

D. BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE BASS RIVER BOARD OF EDUCATION to adopt Robert’s Rules of Order as the official parliamentary procedure manual to be used to conduct meetings and appoint the board secretary and board attorney to act as the parliamentarians for the year of 2024.

E. BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE BASS RIVER BOARD OF EDUCATION to accept and approve the policies and bylaws of the previous board.

F. BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE BASS RIVER BOARD OF EDUCATION to designate the following individuals as authorized signatories for the Board accounts:

Account	# Required Signature	Required Signatories
Warrant #18006001787	3	President, Business Administrator, Treasurer of School Monies
Unemployment #18006001811	1	Business Administrator

G. BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE BASS RIVER BOARD OF EDUCATION approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Bass River 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

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WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.1 et seq. 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 Business Administrator and a majority of the full voting membership of the Board; and

WHEREAS, a Board of Education may establish, for regular district business travel only, an annual school year threshold of \$5,000.00 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

WHEREAS, travel and related expenses not in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23B-1.1 et seq., 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; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education approves all travel not in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23-7.1 et seq. 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 approves travel and related expense reimbursements in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3, to a maximum expenditure of \$5,000.00 for all staff and board members.

The Board of Education recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues and the importance of allowing members of the public to express with each statement made by a participant limited to three minutes as cited in Policy No. 0167.

- H. **BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED**, the Board Of Education appoints Katherine Van Tassel, School Business Administrator, as the Public Agency Compliance Officer (P.A.C.O) for the Bass River School District, for school year 2023/2024 in accordance with NJAC 17:27-3.2.
- I. Motion to approve the Pinelands Tribune as the official newspaper for the 2026 school year.

Ayes: (3) Mr. Bush, Mr. Curtin, Mr. Swanseen

Nays:

Abstain:

Motion carried

15. **RESIDENT’S FORUM - AGENDA ITEMS ONLY**

The Board of Education recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues and the importance of allowing members of the public to comment. Each statement made by a participant is limited to three minutes as cited in Policy No. 0167. The public may comment on any item on the agenda at this time. General public comment will occur later in the meeting.
No public present.

16. **NEW BUSINESS**

Motion by Mr. Bush seconded by Mr. Curtin to motion to approve the following:

Appointment of Special Counsel to Review SEND Contract and Conduct Feasibility Study

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WHEREAS, the Board of Education of the **Bass River Board of Education** is a sending district responsible for ensuring appropriate and fiscally responsible educational services for its students; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education is currently a party to a SEND (sending–receiving) contract with the **Little Egg Harbor Township School District**; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has determined that a legal review of the existing SEND contract, as well as an analysis of alternative sending–receiving arrangements, is in the best interest of the District and its students; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education desires to retain Special Counsel with expertise in New Jersey school law and sending–receiving relationships to provide such review and analysis; and

WHEREAS, Special Counsel will also conduct a feasibility study regarding the potential transfer of Bass River students to an alternative SEND district, including legal, financial, educational, and operational considerations;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the **Bass River Board of Education** hereby appoints **Porzio, Bromberg, and Newman** as Special Counsel to review the District’s existing SEND contract with the Little Egg Harbor Township School District and to conduct a feasibility study concerning the possible reassignment of Bass River students to another SEND district; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Special Counsel shall be compensated at a rate not to exceed \$450 per hour for the review of the current SEND contract, with compensation for this portion of the services not to exceed sixty (60) hours or a maximum amount of \$27,000; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the feasibility study is considered necessary regarding the potential reassignment of Bass River students to another SEND district shall be performed for a total cost not to exceed \$74,000, inclusive of all professional fees and related expenses; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this appointment is made pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5(a)(1) and applicable provisions of the Public School Contracts Law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Business Administrator/Board Secretary is authorized to execute a professional services agreement consistent with this resolution and to take all actions necessary to effectuate the intent of this motion.

Ayes: (3) Mr. Bush, Mr. Curtin, Mr. Swanseen

Nays:

Abstain:

Motion carried

17. PUBLIC COMMENT

The floor is now open to members of the public. The Board of Education recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues and the importance of allowing members of the public to express with each statement made by a participant limited to three minutes as cited in Policy No. 0167.

Motion by Mr. Bush seconded by Mr. Curtin to open public comment

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Ayes: (3) Mr. Bush, Mr. Curtin, Mr. Swanseen

Nays:

Abstain:

Motion carried

Resident spoke regarding Aid in Lieu.

Motion by Mr. Curtin seconded by Mr. Bush to close public comment

Ayes: (3) Mr. Bush, Mr. Curtin, Mr. Swanseen

Nays:

Abstain:

Motion carried

18. **BOARD FORUM- no comments**

19. **ADJOURNMENT**

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE BASS RIVER BOARD OF EDUCATION to adjourn at
7:14 pm

Ayes: (3) Mr. Bush, Mr. Curtin, Mr. Swanseen

Nays:

Abstain:

Motion carried

MEETING SCHEDULE

Tentative scheduled for Feb 17, 2024 - Bass River Municipal Building located at:

3 North Maple Ave, New Gretna.