



ROWAN COLLEGE AT BURLINGTON COUNTY

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SPECIAL PUBLIC MEETING**

Monday, October 13, 2025

**Host: Mount Laurel Campus, Student Success Center
Executive Conference Room 138
900 College Circle
Mount Laurel, NJ 08054**

MINUTES

Sean Kennedy:

All right. Good evening. We'll call this meeting to order. Thank you for everyone attending on short notice. A special meeting. Can we please stand for the flag salute?

All:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands. One nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Sean Kennedy:

Roll call please.

Jeanne Paulsen:

Mr. Thomas Braddock.

Thomas Braddock:

Here.

Jeanne Paulsen:

Mr. Kevin Brown.

Kevin Brown:

Here.

Jeanne Paulsen:

Dr. Darvis Holly.

Darvis Holley:
Here.

Jeanne Paulsen:
Ramesh Jayaram.

Ramesh Jayaram:
Here.

Jeanne Paulsen:
Mr. Sean Kennedy.

Sean Kennedy:
Present.

Jeanne Paulsen:
Ms. Patricia Kolodi.

Patty Kolodi:
Here.

Jeanne Paulsen:
Mr. Dorion Morgan.

Dorion Morgan:
Here.

Jeanne Paulsen:
Mr. Gino Pasqualone.

Gino Pasqualone:
Here.

Jeanne Paulsen:
Mr. Mickey Quinn.

[Silence]

Ms. Jannine Veasy.

Jannine Veasy:
Here.

Jeanne Paulsen:

Ms. Kershie Ambroise.

Kershie Ambroise:

Here.

Sean Kennedy:

Okay. Thank you. Statement of compliance with Open Public Meetings Act

Jeanne Paulsen:

In an effort to comply with the Open Public's Meeting Act, notice of this special meeting was sent to the Trenton Times and the Burlington County Times on Thursday, October 9th, 2025. The Trenton Times published the notice yesterday, October 12th, 2025. The Burlington County Times published the notice today, October 13th, 2025. Notice was sent to the Burlington County Clerk and posted on the website on Friday, October 10th, 2025.

Sean Kennedy:

Okay, thank you. All right. At this time I'm going to make a motion to make a slight amendment to the agenda since we have to go into executive session to discuss litigation involving the board. I'm going to entertain a motion to move the public comment before that so that the public is not here for the entire duration of the executive session.

Patty Kolodi:

I have a question first.

Sean Kennedy:

Sure, of course. Well, hold on. So I made a motion.

Gino Pasqualone:

Second.

Sean Kennedy:

Okay. Motion has been made and seconded.

Patty Kolodi:

How do we go into executive session without giving 48 hours notice? Wasn't that the rule that the last time we had such a fiasco about it? Am I right or wrong? Remember they said we had to have 48 hour notice? I think our attorney said that.

Dorion Morgan:

Do we?

Patty Kolodi:

I remember that. So how do we get into the executive session now?

Mark Tabakin:

My understanding, so I'm so sorry. My name is Mark Tabakin. I'm here kind of doing double duty a little bit. I was appointed by the insurance carrier for the purposes of addressing you this evening in executive session. Executive sessions could be moved at any public meeting of the body in which the executive session is being sought. I'm unaware that there is a 48 hour or actually any notice provision whatsoever embodied within the Open Public Meetings Act that requires 48 hours notice of an executive session. So I can't speak to what your prior attorney did or didn't do. I'm not second guessing anybody. I'm just simply saying that in my 30 years of representing public entities, I have not been constrained in calling an executive session at any meeting in which the public body is duly convened in order to discuss issues that are of importance and that meet the requirements of an exception to the Open Public Meeting Act, which clearly the situation does.

Patty Kolodi:

But I think so did the other one. And people know I'm angry, I'm a little upset and if we're going to play fair, if you want me to play fair or us to play fair, I think we have to play fair. And the last time we wanted an executive session, they said absolutely not. Even when some of us said we would be willing to go into it. They said by law we have to give 48 hours notice. This was an attorney for... Was he our board? The attorney. Mr. Crook.

Dorion Morgan:

Yeah, our solicitor.

Patty Kolodi:

Okay. So he was our board attorney and that's what he told us. So we couldn't go into executive session and I think did we make another meeting for the executive? We had another meeting. So I'm just asking, I don't mean to be a troublemaker, but I don't want this to come back to us because it was my understanding... I wanted to go into the executive session the last time because I thought it was important. But they said by law we couldn't. So now you're telling me because you... Not you, but now we want the executive session. It's okay. It has to be one way or the other, I think, to be fair and just to the way we run this board.

Now, if that attorney was wrong, okay, he's wrong. But he should be reprimanded or told about that. And we should have an attorney that

knows what they're doing because now we're saying this week we can do it, two weeks or two months ago we couldn't do it. I just want to know can we do it or can't we do it? And we should follow a certain protocol to do this. And I'm not being belligerent, please.

I'm concerned because as I read things and I get things, it's not always making sense to me being on the right path. And because of what you have to say to us, why you have to meet with us, I'm nervous about that and I want to make sure that everything is done properly so that we aren't in any way. And I know that meeting was very volatile and it was over and over again. 48 hours, 48 hours, 48 hours and now it's five minutes. So I mean I don't know. I'm just saying, Sean, I don't know what you want to do.

Sean Kennedy:

Are we able to discuss the litigation in the open session? If we are, then okay.

Mark Tabakin:

Well no, we are not going to do that. We're going to go into executive session and have the discussion that I need. I've spoken to the attorneys that represent both plaintiff as well as the other defendants in this matter. The court was very clear. Well, we were very clear with the court that in order for this college to move forward, I need to sit and meet with you guys. And so I'm unaware of what another attorney has said to you. I'm not being disrespectful to him, you or anyone else. I can just tell you what I know to be how I can work public meetings. I've been an attorney for nearly 30 years. I represent public bodies exclusively, whether it's county college, which I represent, school boards, towns, counties, sewage authorities, be that as it may. The Open Public Meeting Act is very clear, at least to me, that anytime during a public meeting that one of the exceptions, there's 11 of them or nine of them, I guess nine of them, that are met for purposes of going to executive session, you can go into executive session at any time if the needs of the public entity so require, whether that is litigation, personnel, the award of contracts, negotiation of the sale of property, the receipt of federal funds.

Dorion Morgan:

We've heard that before.

Mark Tabakin:

Blah, blah, blah. And so I know there are exceptions. So I'm not going to sit and say that someone didn't give you good advice or they gave bad advice or anything of the sort. I wasn't here. I don't know. I don't know any of you. Quite literally, I know none of you. So I'm feeling a little weird about the whole thing to be honest with you.

Patty Kolodi:

And I don't mean to be, I don't, but I just am very concerned because this is very serious.

Mark Tabakin:

I'm calling straight up the middle, ma'am. I'm calling it the way that I see it as the way that I've comported myself for my entire-

Patty Kolodi:

Yes. And I'm not questioning you. I'm questioning the other guy.

Mark Tabakin:

I know you're not. I'm not taking you as being belligerent in the slightest.

Dorion Morgan:

So the questioning along that same line, this meeting, it has been told to us over and over for years that we had to have a 48-hour notice even in the newspaper before we can have these meetings. Is that not true as well?

Mark Tabakin:

That is true. So with the law, the Open Public Meetings Act says that you need to have 48 hours advance notice of a meeting. You need to give two newspapers of record as well as whomever else is part of your notice. Whether you post it on your website or you send emails to unions for instance. Whether the paper can get your notice into... Not that there's any papers anymore, but whether the newspaper of record can get the publication done is up to them. You need to give it, the two newspapers of record, advance notice at least 48 hours in advance. Whether they can succeed or not in getting it published is up to them. We don't control the newspapers. And so as far as I am concerned, my understanding of this is that it was on Thursday around four o'clock or thereabouts, I don't know exactly the time that the notice was provided to the newspapers. If they couldn't get it into the newspaper under their schedule, that's on them. It's not on this institution.

And I just want to be super clear about one thing to all of you. At this point in time, I am the attorney that was appointed to represent the institution and the Board of Trustees. I'm not angry at anybody. I'm not on anybody's side. Well, I guess technically I'm on your side, but I'm not adverse. I know I'm sitting next to Dr. Cioce. This is not personal. There's no animus here. I'm just trying to call this right up the middle so that we protect the institution, that we move forward with business at hand, because I've made representations to the court that I can't do my job without speaking to you folks. It's impossible.

Patty Kolodi:

And I'm worried that because we didn't have the 48 hours, will this come back because - ?

Mark Tabakin:

So let me interrupt you, and I don't mean to be disrespectful, but to the extent that there's any procedural defect either in the notice of this meeting or in the conduct of this meeting, the cure period under the Open Public Meeting Law anticipates and allows for public institutions of every sort now to take curative action on any procedural defects. So it may be necessary at the next meeting frankly that this board ratify the actions done this evening.

We're under an extremely tight timeline instituted by the court. And I can't tell a federal judge "no". It is a problem. And so I need to do this as quickly as we can do this. And if we need to take a curative action at the next board meeting, we will do so, which I believe your next meeting is on the 21st. So if we need to ratify whatever is done this evening on the 21st, so be it. But I literally don't have the luxury of sitting and waiting. As it is, I know this was difficult to do and I appreciate everyone coming out on short notice. I do. But I have a job that I have to do and I take that extremely seriously.

Patty Kolodi:

So in the future, if we need an executive session, if we had a meeting like we did a couple of months ago, are we going to be able to have that executive session right then and there?

Mark Tabakin:

If we're sitting here, yes.

Patty Kolodi:

If you are sitting there, yes.

Mark Tabakin:

Ma'am, I can't make [inaudible 00:19:11].

Patty Kolodi:

Okay. I know. But you don't understand how it's not all going right and we'll do whatever because I'm only one person. But I am surprised that I was coming to a meeting, I didn't know I was coming to have an executive session. I'm surprised we can have an executive session on short notice. But if you say... I'm far from a lawyer, I understand. But I just want to point out that a couple of months ago we needed an executive session. We very much needed it and we didn't get it and we were told by law that we couldn't and now -

Mark Tabakin:

I accept that that's true. I just have no comment as to [inaudible 00:19:51].

Patty Kolodi:

Yeah, I know. I know, I know. I just want to maybe make that comment then.

President Cioce:

So just to sort of confirm what Patty's raising, both in the August and September board meetings, the board total was advised that any agenda amendment would require 48-hour notice. Mark is saying that that's not the case, but we were advised that proceeding would be violating the Open Public Meetings Act. The direction in the emails that were received by me at 3:30 on Thursday was that this meeting would be held for the sole purpose of appointing conflict counsel to the board in light of the recusal. So I followed up. This entire body was copied on that. I asked questions. There were no direct responses to those questions. So I just want the record to reflect, I don't necessarily agree. I mean, the Open Public Meetings Act says 48 hours notice. I did raise that, that the advertisement would not run in time for a 5:00 PM October 13th meeting. And that was not responded to by anybody on this board.

Mark Tabakin:

So again, not to be argumentative with you Dr. Cioce, the court has ordered an extremely tight timeline on how we proceed in order for us not to be in violation of the directive by Judge O'Hearn. If we're making a mistake or a misstep, we will curate whatever procedural defects are occurring this evening, if any. I'm not saying that there are any, but to the extent that there are, we will fix those procedural defects at the next meeting and ratify whatever action is taken this evening if that's the will of the board. But I kind of need to get with you.

Patty Kolodi:

I understand. I understand.

Mark Tabakin:

It's kind of like I'm stuck between a rock and a hard place here. And so I can't do my job, which is to represent the institution. Again, it's not any one of you. It's the institution that I've been assigned to represent. So I understand your point. Dr. Cioce. I get it. I understand your point. I understand it. But proceed, we are.

Dorion Morgan:

Your name again, sir?

Mark Tabakin:

My name is Mark Tabakin. I'm the managing partner of the Wiener Law Group and I've been appointed as conflict counsel, one of three, to this institution. And I've also been appointed because I'm on the panel in Burlington County for your insurance. So you have an amendment that's been moved.

Sean Kennedy:

So, are you saying are we allowed or not allowed to discuss litigation?

Mark Tabakin:

We are allowed. Well, no. We're not going to discuss it publicly if I can get you into the executive session.

Patty Kolodi:

Kicking and scratching.

Mark Tabakin:

If you vote "no" on moving us into executive session when the moment comes, then we're going to do this the hard way. I'd much prefer being able to have an open and candid conversation without being in any way stigmatizing towards anyone or having discussions. The attorney-client privilege is real. It's something that we need to be respectful of.

Sean Kennedy:

So you're okay discussing litigation publicly?

Patty Kolodi:

No, we can't. He said we can't, we cannot. So we have to go into the executive session. I'm not okay with the executive session.

Mark Tabakin:

But you could wave it. I'm just suggesting that it should not be.

Patty Kolodi:

Only because of what happened last time. But I'll go into executive session. I just want it on record, I just don't think it's fair.

Sean Kennedy:

So the only thing I would say is I would argue that the fact that we are facing litigation, this entire board, in rather short order is different from having somebody appear before the board that didn't necessarily have to happen at that time. Not necessarily [inaudible 00:23:35]

Patty Kolodi:

I think there should be a rule. 48 hours, no or yes.

Mark Tabakin:

So to the extent that you have a validating, if you're RICEing somebody in order to speak about them or to have them come before you or whatever it is that you wish, then you need 48 hours.

Sean Kennedy:

They have to take this [inaudible 00:23:52]

Mark Tabakin:

Then that is absolutely clear. I'm very clear about that. This is not a RICE issue at all. This has nothing to do with RICE rights. It has nothing to do with RICE versus Union County Board of Education. It has nothing to do with anything. This is a discussion under attorney-client privilege, under the litigation exception of the Open Public Meetings Act. Plain and simple. And that is the scope of what that is.

President Cioce:

And Mark, I mean the sole purpose of the email. As secretary to the board, I was instructed to set this meeting up and I did with the sole purpose quote, "Of appointing conflict counsel to the board." So I think the point that just needs to be on the record was that if there was going to be a need for a closed session or executive session, that could have been sought in advance, the agenda would be reflective of that. And whether the 48 hours was satisfied or not, it would've been-

Mark Tabakin:

Fair point. And so duly noted. So you have a motion to take things out of order to move the public session first so that these folks could either stay or not stay as they see fit. And so this motion is on the table, it's been moved, it's been seconded. That's to move to public participation next before going into executive session.

Patty Kolodi:

Just for questions and answers from the public?

Mark Tabakin:

So public session is a time dedicated for every public body-

Patty Kolodi:

Anybody to say.

Mark Tabakin:

... to say any matter that is of importance to them as it relates to the [inaudible 00:25:25].

Patty Kolodi:

Not this particularly, but anything.

Mark Tabakin:

Well this, that, the other, whatever they wish to say within the bounds of good taste and decorum. They can say whatever they wish, again in the bounds of good taste and decorum. But it's time for them to make whoever wishes to speak, to speak. We need to roll call or even a voice [inaudible 00:25:46].

Sean Kennedy:

Roll call.

Mark Tabakin:

Roll call is good enough for me.

Sean Kennedy:

All right. So roll call on vote, please.

Jeanne Paulsen:

Thomas Braddock.

Thomas Braddock:

Yes.

Jeanne Paulsen:

Kevin Brown.

Kevin Brown:

Yes.

Jeanne Paulsen:

Darvis Holley.

Darvis Holley:

Yes.

Jeanne Paulsen:

Ramesh Jayaram.

Ramesh Jayaram:

Yes.

Jeanne Paulsen:

Sean Kennedy.

Sean Kennedy:

Yes.

Jeanne Paulsen:

Patty Kolodi.

Patty Kolodi:

Yes.

Jeanne Paulsen:

Dorion Morgan.

Dorion Morgan:

Yes.

Jeanne Paulsen:

Gino Pasqualone.

Gino Pasqualone:

Yes.

Jeanne Paulsen:

Jannine Veasy.

Jannine Veasy:

Yes.

Sean Kennedy:

Okay. All right. Thank you. So given the vote, we will open the meeting to the public. Any public wishes to come forward? Any online? If there's anybody online too. Okay. Seeing none, we'll close the public meeting session and we will move into the executive session.

Mark Tabakin:

We need a motion to go into executive session for the purposes of discussing the matter captioned Michael Cioce versus Rowan College at Burlington County. Forgive me for a moment, I apologize. Docket number 1:25-CV-16106.

Sean Kennedy:

So moved.

Gino Pasqualone:

Second.

Sean Kennedy:

All those in favor?

Board Members:

Aye.

Sean Kennedy:

Executive session please.

Mark Tabakin:

Any action that will be taken will be done at the conclusion of the executive session. All actions will be done publicly.

Sean Kennedy:

All right. Thank you. So anybody who's not a member of the board, thank you.

Jeanne Paulsen:

For the record. We spoke earlier; you'll take minutes.

Mark Tabakin:

I'm on it.

Jeanne Paulsen:

Thank you.

Mark Tabakin:

You're welcome.

Jannine Veasy:

You're fine. Thank you.

Dan Egan:

I apologize.

Mark Tabakin:

You can take your time.

Jannine Veasy:

No, you're fine.

Mark Tabakin:

I just want to make sure that the two trustees stay.

Dan Egan:

Ambroise is the other one, correct?

Mark Tabakin:

Yes.

Patty Kolodi:

Correct.

Dan:

Sorry. [inaudible 00:28:40] They only let me do this one at a time.

Jannine Veasy:

I think Darvis got -

Dan:

I apologize. I'll let him back in. I apologize.

Jannine Veasy:

That's okay.

Patty Kolodi:

It's amazing that you can do that.

Jannine Veasy:

I know.

Dan Egan:

There he is. There. You should only see the two trustees. Everyone else is in the lobby. The meeting is locked, which means no one can get in at this point.

Sean Kennedy:

Thank you.

Patty Kolodi:

Thank you, thank you.

Mark Tabakin:

Thank you. [inaudible 00:30:07] So Dr. Cioce, excuse yourself.

President Cioce:

I will. The only question is related to the topics to be discussed, right? If this is a legal strategy, I obviously need to excuse myself. There's no opportunity or desire for me to be in the room because I don't think that makes a whole lot of sense for [inaudible 00:30:35] The follow up question though, and I remind everybody, if an interim appointment is going to be made related to a... So Evan [Crook] recused himself. You were on the conflict list, Hartman Duff's on the conflict list as is Madden and Madden. If a fourth or fifth firm is going to be appointed to serve in any capacity, that would be a violation of policy 10 that we've had a whole sort of conversation on over the last year.

Mark Tabakin:

That is not the case. I mean, we have representation for you, sir.

President Cioce:

Perfect. So I will excuse myself and see most of you tomorrow at committee meetings.

Mark Tabakin:

Thank you very much.

President Cioce:

All right.

Sean Kennedy:

And then that's not recording, right?

Mark Tabakin:

I have not a clue in the world whether that's recording.

Jannine Veasy:

I was going to ask that before the guy walked out.

Mark Tabakin:

Say again?

Darvis Holley:

Is everyone here who's still online, I see there's myself, Dan Egan and then Kershie.

Mark Tabakin:

It should only be Kershie.

Jannine Veasy:

What's the gentleman's name?

Mark Tabakin:

His name. I have his name. Hang on. His name is Dan.

Dorion Morgan:

He's running the thing.

Mark Tabakin:

So he may be Dan [inaudible 00:32:14]

Darvis Holley:

So it's Dan and Kershie.

Mark Tabakin:

No. So Dan, please come in.

Sean Kennedy:

Just make sure it's not recording.

Mark Tabakin:

So we just want to make sure that this is not recording.

Dan Egan:

This is a recording. I can turn it off.

Mark Tabakin:

Please.

Dan Egan:

If the team asks, I'll gladly stop recording.

Jannine Veasy:

For that part of it.

BREAK FOR CLOSED SESSION

Sean Kennedy:

All right, I'll entertain a motion to reconvene the public session.

Gino Pasqualone:

Motion.

Dorion Morgan:

Second.

Sean Kennedy:

All in favor?

Board:

Aye.

Sean Kennedy:

All right. All right, new business.

Dorion Morgan:

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a motion to approve Weiner Law Group LLP, which is already one of our conflict counsels, to serve as interim solicitor [inaudible 00:00:50] litigation caption Cioce versus RCBC.

Thomas Braddock:

Second.

Sean Kennedy:

Okay, motion made and seconded. Roll call?

Jeanne Paulsen:

Thomas Braddock?

Thomas Braddock:

Yes.

Jeanne Paulsen:

Kevin Brown?

Kevin Brown:

Yes.

Jeanne Paulsen:

Darvis Holley?

Jannine Veasy:

Are you muted?

Sean Kennedy:

He may be muted.

Darvis, can you hear us?

Jannine Veasy:

I saw his mouth. He's giving a thumbs up. Does that count?

Sean Kennedy:

No, no, we gotta...

Thomas Braddock:

He gave a thumbs up.

Mark Tabakin:

He's muted.

Sean Kennedy:

Darvis, you good?

Gino Pasqualone:

Is there a volume problem?

Patty Kolodi:

Maybe he's muted. His issues.

Dorion Morgan:

He keeps shaking his head yes and putting his thumbs up.

Sean Kennedy:

Are you guys okay to accept that? Is that acceptable or not?

Darvis Holley:

Can you hear me?

Sean Kennedy:

There you are.

Darvis Holley:

I'm sorry. Yes.

Sean Kennedy:

Okay. Thanks, Darvis.

Jeanne Paulsen:

Ramesh Jayaram?

Ramesh Jayaram:
Yes.

Jeanne Paulsen:
Sean Kennedy?

Sean Kennedy:
Yes.

Jeanne Paulsen:
Patty Kolodi?

Patty Kolodi:
Yes.

Jeanne Paulsen:
Dorion Morgan?

Dorion Morgan:
Yes.

Jeanne Paulsen:
Gino Pasqualone?

Dorion Morgan:
Yes.

Jeanne Paulsen:
Jannine Veasy.

Jannine Veasy:
Yes.

Sean Kennedy:
All right, motion carries. Thank you.
Okay. Any other new business?

Kevin Brown:
Yeah, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a motion to place employee
number 1-10/13/2025 on paid administrative leave.

Gino Pasqualone:

Second.

Sean Kennedy:

Motion made second. Roll call?

Jeanne Paulsen:

Thomas Braddock.

Thomas Braddock:

Yes.

Jeanne Paulsen:

Kevin Brown.

Kevin Brown:

Yes.

Jeanne Paulsen:

Darvis Holley.

Darvis Holley:

Yes.

Jeanne Paulsen:

Ramesh Jayaram.

Ramesh Jayaram:

Yes.

Jeanne Paulsen:

Sean Kennedy.

Sean Kennedy:

Yes.

Jeanne Paulsen:

Patty Kolodi.

Patty Kolodi:

Abstain.

Jeanne Paulsen:

Dorion Morgan.

Dorion Morgan:
Abstain.

Jeanne Paulsen:
Gino Pasqualone.

Gino Pasqualone:
Yes.

Jeanne Paulsen:
Jannine Veasy.

Jannine Veasy:
Yes.

Sean Kennedy:
Okay, thank you. Motion passes. Entertaining a motion to adjourn?

Dorion Morgan:
So moved.

Gino Pasqualone:
Second.

Sean Kennedy:
All in favor?

Board:
Aye.

END OF RECORDING