



**REGULAR SESSION
BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

DATE: September 21, 2023

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

PLACE: Commission Meeting Room, Two DeKorte Park Plaza, Lyndhurst

Members in Attendance:

John Ballantyne, Chairman

Paul Juliano, President and CEO

Joseph Buckelew, Vice Chairman (via phone)

Robert Dowd, Member

Armando Fontoura, Member

Michael H. Gluck, Esq., Member

Gail B. Gordon, Esq., Member

Michael Griffin, NJ State Treasurer's Representative (via phone)

Woody Knopf, Member

Tom Mullahey, Member

Eric S. Pennington, Esq., Member (via phone)

Steven Plofker, Esq., Member

Anthony Scardino, Member

Louis J. Stellato, Member

Absent:

Marguerite Schaffer, Esq., Member

Michael Gonnelli, Member

Also Attending:

Nicholas Mammano, Chief of Staff

Christine Sanz, Senior Vice President/Chief Operating Officer

Robert Davidow, Senior Vice President of Legal & Regulatory Affairs (via phone)

John Duffy, Senior Vice President of Sports Complex Operations & Facilities (via phone)

Adam Levy, Vice President of Legal & Regulatory Affairs

Sara Sundell, Director of Land Use Management and Chief Engineer

Anna Acanfora, Director of Finance and CFO

Monica Miannecki, Director of Solid Waste

Francisco Artigas, MRRI Co-Director and Chief Scientist

Teresa Doss, MRRI Co-Director and Chief Restoration Scientist

Michael Turso, MRRI Wildlife Biologist

Jamera Sirmans, Governor's Authorities Unit

Colleen Mercado, Executive Administrative Specialist

Chairman Ballantyne called the meeting to order.

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. OPENING STATEMENT – Chairman Ballantyne read the Notice of Meeting required under the Sunshine Law.

III. ROLL CALL

Chairman Ballantyne introduced Paul Juliano, President and CEO of the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority, and noted that this was his first Board meeting in his new capacity. He stated that Paul began working at the NJSEA as its Executive Vice President in March 2023 and began his tenure as President and CEO on August 1. He said that he had gotten to know Paul well over the past several months and that he was very confident in stating that the Authority was in more than good hands. He stated that Paul had the vision, leadership and experience to make a significant, positive impact on the NJSEA and Meadowlands District municipalities and residents and that he has been a dedicated public servant for nearly 30 years, serving the people of Bergen County and the Meadowlands. He highlighted President Juliano's resume which included:

- Bergen County Director of Public Works;
- Fairview Public Works Superintendent and Clean Communities Coordinator;
- Fairview Assistant to Administrator/Personnel;
- Member of the Fairview Board of Education and the Bergen County Technical School Board of Education;
- Commissioner on the Bergen County Board of Elections; and
- Commissioner for the Bergen County Board of Utilities Authority.

President Juliano thanked the Chairman for the warm welcome and said that he was humbled by the opportunity to serve the Authority with such a distinguished group of Commissioners. He said he appreciated the time and generosity of the Commissioners who had already begun sharing their insight and experience, and he looked forward to continuing the Authority's work together to benefit the residents and businesses of the Meadowlands region and the State of New Jersey. He acknowledged and thanked, the talented and dedicated staff that he had been given the privilege of leading. He stated that the staff is the engine that drives the Authority. He commented that staff had already done him a great service in growing his understanding of all aspects of the operation and assisting with a valuable transitional period leading to his current role. He said that he was committed to working tirelessly toward the preservation of the Meadowlands' natural resources, to support the maintenance and improvement of the magnificent parks and to ensure the ongoing management of the landfills. He said that the Authority will continue to deliver outstanding land use management for the District, transportation planning, and scientific research. He went on to say that the multitude of essential services that the Authority provides at the complex will continue to ensure that the Meadowlands region is the preeminent sports and entertainment destination in the country. He concluded by saying that together the NJSEA would advance the goals and objectives of the Authority and that he looked forward to the many interesting tasks ahead.

IV. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND CASH DISBURSEMENTS**

Chairman Ballantyne presented the minutes from the July 27, 2023 Regular Session Board meeting.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Fontoura and seconded by Commissioner Stellato the minutes of the Regular Session Board Meeting held on July 27, 2023 were approved with a vote of 13-0, with President Juliano abstaining.

Chairman Ballantyne presented the minutes from the July 27, 2023 Executive Session.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Dowd and seconded by Commissioner Plofker the minutes of the Executive Session held on July 27, 2023 were approved with a vote of 13-0, with President Juliano abstaining.

Chairman Ballantyne presented the report of cash disbursements over \$100,000 for the months of July and August, 2023.

Upon motion by Commissioner Fontoura and seconded by Commissioner Dowd the cash disbursements over \$100,000 for the months of July and August 2023 were unanimously approved, with President Juliano and Vice Chairman Buckelew recusing .

V. COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Committee Chair Scardino provided the Board with an update of the Committee's work over the past several months and stated that the mission was to fulfill the mandate given the Authority by statute; to protect, enhance and preserve the delicate balance of nature in the District. He said that to achieve this mission the Committee's efforts were dedicated to:

- support, oversee, and highlight the work of the NJSEA's Meadowlands Research & Restoration Institute (MRRI) as they research the unique nature of the remaining wetlands, a vital environmental asset;
- protect the wetlands and open spaces of the Meadowlands for future generations;
- develop innovative approaches and solutions to environmental issues that are based in science; and
- continue, as the Authority has for the last forty years, to prove that mankind and nature can work together for survival.

He also highlighted staff's recent work:

The Berry's Creek Study Area (BCSA). He explained that the BCSA was part of the Ventron/Velsicol Superfund Site located in the near center of the District and was an approximately 6.5-mile-long tributary of the Hackensack River. He said that this was the largest superfund site in the state. He noted that Phase One would commence in the spring of 2024.

EPA Funded Research Grant. He stated that MRRI Co-Director Francisco Artigas explained that the grant was funding a study on edge erosion and on "measurements of marsh resilience under future sea-level rise conditions. He noted that the Committee received briefings on new methodologies that include the use of GIS and digital terrain models to determine if wetlands erode or accrete over time. He noted that there was concern in the increasing erosion rate of the wetlands.

Sawmill Creek Wildlife Management Area (SCWMA) He noted that a study was being conducted under an EPA Wetland Program Development grant of this area to better understand current conditions and to determine whether or not the wetlands can and should be restored He said that MRRI Co-Director Teresa Doss noted that recently, the two dimensional Hydrodynamic Model of the study area was completed and would help as MRRI continues to make observations about tidal elevations, wildlife use and general conditions.

Fish Survey He said that MRRI received a small grant from the NY-NJ Harbor and Estuary program to conduct eel migration monitoring, which had never been part of the fish survey in the past. He said that another new addition to the fish survey was the use of environmental DNA (EDNA) that MRRI scientists would explain more about to the Board in the future.

Portal Bridge Restoration. He explained that the Committee was informed that during construction of the five year, 2 billion dollar Portal Bridge project, over the Hackensack River, the Authority was concerned about the potential impacts to the habitats around the construction site and the species of concern that use this area. He said that it included Riverbend Marsh, a 54-acre site purchased by the Authority for preservation in 1996. He noted that MRRI received funding from the NY-NJ Harbor & Estuary program to monitor the species of concern in the area and potentially undertake restoration activities.

Floating Least Tern Island with Remote Camera. He said that staff shared some amazing photos of the floating Least Tern Island pilot project that MRRI scientists constructed and installed in Kearny Freshwater Marsh. He pointed out that Least Terns were also on the endangered species list up to 1985 and the Least Tern populations have been in decline, due in part to a loss of breeding habitat and yet they are often observed in the Meadowlands, but there are no known breeding areas. He explained that the floating islands include tern decoys and nesting shelters constructed by volunteers, and a remote camera which is monitored by MRRI. He said that staff will also be installing a sound box to assist in attracting the terns to the site and provide a small island habitat where least tern might breed.

Edge Morphology Study. He said that MRRI Co. Director Dr. Artigas briefed the Committee on the progress of the EPA-funded Edge Morphology study. He explained that the Edge Morphology entails measuring the landform or profiles of mud flats and how mud flat profiles are used to determine whether wetlands are eroding or accreting. He said that the study was a baseline for the long-term monitoring of erosion and accretion using drones and digital terrain models from 33 locations. He stated that the results of the study will indicate which marshes in District are the most resilient to, and those that are most vulnerable to erosion.

Hurricane Season and Tide Gates. He said that Dr. Artigas reported on the status of the NJSEA's tide gate monitoring system. He explained that the Committee was informed that there are eight (8) critical tide gates in the Meadowlands District instrumented and configured to report water elevation every 15 minutes on landside and seaside. He said that a log is maintained on their operational status and that the tide gate monitoring system is 100% operational.

Proposed Study Measuring Tidal Movements of Contaminants. He explained that according to the Army Corps of Engineers, the levels of contaminants in the main channel of the Hackensack River are twice as high when compared to connecting marsh surfaces. He said that Dr. Artigas proposed that the NJSEA conduct a study using a time-integrated sediment sampler to verify if contaminants from the river are accumulating on the marsh surfaces from the natural movement of the tides.

Other Initiatives. MRRI staff are monitoring and tackling conservation issues such as illegal dumping, trespassing, property damage, invasive species management, and misuse of ATV's on sensitive sites. Additionally, staff continues its successful efforts to provide educational and recreational activities at NJSEA's parks including Native Plant Day, the Eagle Festival, Butterfly Day and the Birding Festival. You will hear more about this in the Chairman's upcoming report. These programs are a collaborative effort between the Authority and our partners at the Bergen County Audubon Society. They are provided free of charge. We also acknowledge the support of the Hackensack Riverkeeper and our educational partners from Ramapo College.

Committee Chair Scardino concluded by saying that the sampling of projects that he reported on were just some of the exciting and essential work that was being done by the Authority and carried out by MRRI. He thanked the entire NJSEA staff, in every facet of the Authority, who were working together to fulfill the Authority's mission to preserve, protect and enhance our natural environment. He thanked his Committee members and all of his fellow board members for supporting the efforts of NJSEA's amazing staff.

V. SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Mr. Michael Turso, MRRI Wildlife Biologist provided the Board with a video presentation that highlighted some of the research projects MRRI focused on this summer, specifically mentioning the Saltmarsh sparrow survey, and their new bat survey on bat activity in specific sites. He also touched on a couple of public outreach events.

Chairman Ballantyne spoke about the Meadowlands Birding Festival scheduled to be held on Sunday, October 1, in DeKorte Park and hosted by NJSEA and the Bergen County Audubon Society. He provided some highlights of the event.

President Juliano said that the Meadowlands Birding Festival provides a valuable opportunity for people of all ages to learn about birds and how to help them thrive. He commented that he had the opportunity soon after arriving at the Authority to take a guided walk of the Marsh Discovery Trail and witness many species up close.

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON RESOLUTIONS - None

VII. APPROVALS

Resolution 2023-37 Consideration of a Resolution Electing the Secretary and Appointing an Assistant Secretary of the Authority.

Chairman Ballantyne presented Resolution 2023-37. Upon motion by Commissioner Scardino and seconded by Commissioner Fontoura, Resolution 2023-37 was approved by a vote of 14-0.

VII. CONTRACTS/AWARDS

Resolution 2023-38 Consideration of a Resolution Authorizing a Contract with Triumvirate Environmental Company/Emilcott Environmental, Health & Safety Experts for Hydrogen Sulfide Monitoring Services at the Keegan Landfill.

Ms. Mianeki stated that the hydrogen sulfide monitoring at Keegan Landfill was an ongoing requirement of a NJDEP Administrative Consent Order. She provided the Board with an overview of the existing customized system. She said that the current contract was set to expire on October 28, 2023 and explained that in order to comply with the Administrative Consent Order and applicable NJDEP permits, staff was recommending an extension of the current contract with Triumvirate Environmental at a proposed cost of \$486,000.00 for a 2-year contract.

Chairman Ballantyne presented Resolution 2023-38. Upon motion by Commissioner Dowd and seconded by Commissioner Fontoura, Resolution 2023-38 was unanimously approved by a vote of 14-0.

Resolution 2023-39 Consideration of a Resolution Authorizing a Contract with Joseph M. Sanzari, Inc. of New Jersey for Installation of a New Oil Water Separator Vehicle Wash Pad for the Meadowlands Maintenance Building in East Rutherford.

Mr. Duffy explained that the Authority was required to update the vehicle wash pad for the maintenance building in order to be in compliance with the NJDEP storm water regulations. He stated that a bid was issued in July 2023 and that two firms submitted pricing. He said that Joseph M. Sanzari was the lowest responsible bidder at a cost of \$190,000.00.

Chairman Ballantyne presented Resolution 2023-39. Upon motion by Commissioner Dowd and seconded by Commissioner Fontoura Resolution 2023-39 was unanimously approved by a vote of 12-0, with President Juliano and Vice Chairman Buckelew recusing.

VIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. James Kirkos, Meadowlands Regional Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Kirkos made the following comments:

- He congratulated President Juliano.
- He commented that he wanted to remind the Board and the entity of the importance that they play in positively affecting the outcomes of the many people of the region.
- He commented that the Authority and the Chamber have worked as great collaborators over the years and he pledged the continued support of the Chamber of Commerce.
- He commented that there was a lot of work still to be done but the important work that the Authority does in creating that balance between economic development and environmental protection the Chamber has always been an equal partner in both of those.
- He commented that seeing the beauty of the Meadowlands and the wildlife from a pontoon boat or nature walk changes your entire perspective and he agreed with the Authority that more people should do this.
- He commented that the Chamber would continue to support all of the environmental events that are run by the Authority.

Mr. Bill Sheehan, Hackensack Riverkeeper. Mr. Sheehan made the following comments:

- He congratulated President Juliano and said that he looked forward to working with him in the coming years. He addressed the Board and said to keep up the good work.
- He complimented Commissioner Scardino on his Committee report and said that he was glad to see his committee was taking an interest in the future of the area's natural resources.
- He commented that for too many years there was a push to develop most of the Meadowlands. He commented that people now realize how important it is for flood control and the community and how important it is to have outdoor areas and a sense of place.
- He commented that too many people around the county do not know about this area and we are going to continue to teach them.

Mr. Marvin Donadic, Cliffside Park, NJ made the following comments:

- He commented on President Prieto's retirement.
- Mr. Donadic addressed President Juliano and commented that he and nine million other people were his boss.
- Mr. Donadic commented that the Board needs to make decisions in the best interest of the people of New Jersey.
- Mr. Donadic commented that he had previously asked why the NJSEA would not consider reaching out to the owners of the Philadelphia 76'ers to relocate their franchise to Newark. He asked if anyone from the Board would like to explain that to him.
- He commented on the 2026 World Cup and asked the Board if they could provide him with any information on how much New York would be compensating New Jersey for the cost of police, traffic, and the cleanup of the mess that he believes will be generated at the Meadowlands.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution 2023-40

Consideration of a Resolution Authorizing the Authorizing the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority to conduct a meeting to which the general public shall not be admitted for the purposes of discussing:

- Legal Advice Concerning Lease Negotiations on Development at Monmouth Park Racetrack.

Chairman Ballantyne presented Resolution 2023-40. Upon motion by Commissioner Fontoura and seconded by Commissioner Scardino, Resolution 2023-40 was unanimously approved by a vote of 14-0.

Executive Session commenced at 10:48 a.m.

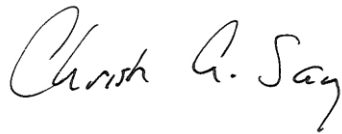
Regular Session recommenced at 11:30 am.

X. **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business, motion was made to adjourn by Commissioner Dowd and seconded by Commissioner Fontoura followed by all in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 11.32 a.m.

I certify that on information and belief this is a true and accurate transcript of the Minutes of the Regular Session of the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority Board Meeting held on September 21, 2023.



Christine A. Sanz
Assistant Secretary

September 21, 2023

Commissioner	Roll Call	2023-37	2023-38	2023-39	2023-40
Ballantyne, Chairman	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Buckelew, Vice Chairman -via phone	P	Y	Y	R	Y
Juliano	P	Y	Y	R	Y
Dowd	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Fontoura	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Gluck	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Gonnelli	--	--	--	--	--
Gordon	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Knopf	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mullahey	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Pennington - via phone	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Plofker	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Scardino	p	Y	Y	Y	Y
Schaffer	--	--	--	--	--
Stellato	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Treasury Rep Griffin - via phone	P	Y	Y	Y	Y

P = Present A = Abstain -- Absent

R = Recuse Y = Affirmative N = Negative