



**REGULAR SESSION  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

DATE: February 26, 2026

TIME: 10:05 a.m.

PLACE: Two DeKorte Park Plaza, Lyndhurst, NJ

**Members in Attendance:**

John Ballantyne, Chairman  
Joseph Buckelew, Vice Chairman (via phone)  
Jill Hirsch, President and CEO  
Robert Dowd, Member  
John Duthie, Member  
Armando Fontoura, Member  
Gail B. Gordon, Esq., Member (via phone)  
Daniel Gumble, Member  
Woody Knopf, Member  
Tom Mullahey, Member  
Sam Parker, Member  
Eric Pennington, Esq., Member  
Marguerite Schaffer, Esq., Member  
Louis J. Stellato, Member (via phone)

**Absent:**

Michael Griffin, NJ State Treasurer's Representative  
Michael Gonnelli, Member

**Also Attending:**

Christine Sanz, Executive Vice President  
Laurie Ewing, Chief of Staff  
John Duffy, Senior Vice President of Sports Complex Operations & Facilities  
Robert Davidow, Senior Vice President of Legal & Regulatory Affairs  
Adam Levy, Vice President of Legal & Regulatory Affairs  
Anna Acanfora, Vice President of Finance and Human Resources  
Michael Eleneski, 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** - Ms. Mercado took roll call.

Chairman Ballantyne welcomed President Hirsch to her first Board meeting as NJSEA President and CEO, noting that since joining on January 23, she had quickly engaged with the Authority's operations and regional stakeholders. He noted that in her first month, she hosted the Lieutenant Governor, and this morning was welcoming Governor Mikie Sherrill. He praised Hirsch's leadership and experience as well-aligned with NJSEA's mission, particularly as the region prepared for the 2026 FIFA World Cup. He concluded by stating that the Board expressed full confidence in her ability to advance the Authority's goals and serve the Meadowlands region and the State.

President Hirsch introduced new NJSEA Commissioner Sam Parker and extended a warm welcome on behalf of the Board. She provided professional background information regarding the Commissioner.

President Hirsch recognized the new staff members of the executive office: Laurie Ewing, Chief of Staff and Alexa Willbergh, Special Assistant to the President.

President Hirsch welcomed New Jersey Governor Mikie Sherrill and expressed how meaningful it was to have her visit, meet the staff, and connect with the Board of Commissioners. She reflected on their long-standing friendship, noting that she helped launch the Governor's first congressional campaign and later served as her District Director, witnessing firsthand her strong work ethic, composure under pressure, and deep commitment to serving New Jersey residents. Hirsch emphasized that public service requires vision and the ability to turn ideas into reality—qualities she believes the Governor exemplifies. She highlighted NJSEA's responsibility for managing major venues and global events, including the upcoming World Cup in New Jersey, calling it a significant opportunity to showcase the state. She praised the Governor's leadership as grounded integrity, courage, and ambition, and concluded by expressing gratitude for her friendship, leadership, and trust.

Governor Sherrill expressed her honor in being present at Hirsch's first board meeting as Present and CEO of the Authority. She praised Hirsch as someone she trusted from the very beginning of her congressional campaign. She noted Hirsch's exceptional skills and dedication. She shared an anecdote about their early days as kindergarten moms. She highlighted Hirsch's confidence, empathy, and commitment to serving others. Looking ahead, the Governor expressed confidence in Hirsch's ability to manage one of the state's most complicated sporting events, believing Hirsch would ensure that everything ran smoothly and benefited both the people and small businesses of New Jersey. She stated that there was no one that she would have more faith and confidence in than Hirsch to take over the leadership at the Authority, noting her vision for the future and her dedication to the state's success. Governor Sherrill concluded by expressing her pride in Hirsch's leadership and her unwavering faith in her abilities.

President Hirsch was then sworn in on the State Constitution as President and CEO of the NJSEA by Governor Sherrill. The Governor exited the meeting after Hirsch's swearing in.

Commissioner Mullahey read a congratulatory statement for Hirsch from Senator Paul Sarlo.

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

Chairman Ballantyne presented the minutes from the January 22, 2026 Regular Session Board meeting.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Dowd and seconded by Commissioner Duthie the minutes of the Regular Session Board Meeting held on January 22, 2026, were approved by a vote of 14-0.

Chairman Ballantyne presented the Executive Session minutes from the January 22, 2026 Executive Session Board Meeting.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Dowd and seconded by Commissioner Fontoura, the minutes of the Executive Session Board Meeting held on January 22, 2026, were approved by a vote of 14-0.

Chairman Ballantyne presented the report of cash disbursements over \$100,000 for the month of January 2026.

Upon motion by Commissioner Fontoura and seconded by Commissioner Dowd, the cash disbursements over \$100,000 for the month of January 2026 were approved by a vote of 14-0.

V. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON RESOLUTIONS** - none.

VI. **APPROVALS**

Resolution 2026-10            Consideration of a Resolution Authorizing Changes to the Official Signatories for NJSEA Accounts.

Ms. Acanfora explained that this resolution authorizes President Hirsch to be added as an authorized signer to certain bank accounts and financial documents. She noted that Christine Sanz, Sarina DosSantos, and herself were currently additional authorized signers and would remain as such.

Chairman Ballantyne presented Resolution 2026-10. Upon motion by Commissioner Fontoura and seconded by Commissioner Mullahey, Resolution 2026-10 was approved by a vote of 14-0.

Resolution 2026-11            Consideration of a Resolution Authorizing the Amendment and Subsequent Termination of the Corebridge 457(B) Deferred Compensation Plan.

Ms. Acanfora stated that the NJSEA currently maintains two 457(B) Deferred Compensation plans; the State Plan and a Corebridge Plan. The NJSEA intends to eliminate the Corebridge Plan and offer only the State Plan, however since the current Corebridge Plan documents include legacy references to the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission as the employer, the NJSEA must update the Plan documents, prior to termination to reflect NJSEA as the current employer. She noted that all benefits accrued by the participants under the Corebridge Plan would remain fully vested until the participants choose to have their benefits distributed, and that they may move their funds into the remaining 457(B) plan.

Ms. Acanfora responded to a question from Commissioner Schaffer.

Chairman Ballantyne presented Resolution 2026-11. Upon motion by Commissioner Pennington and seconded by Commissioner Dowd, Resolution 2026-11 was approved by a vote of 14-0.

VII. **CONTRACTS AND AWARDS**

**Resolution 2026-12** Consideration of a Resolution Authorizing the President and CEO to enter into a Contract with Spartan Construction Inc. of New Jersey for the Envelope Improvements for the Administration Building in Lyndhurst.

Mr. Duffy stated that a public bid was prepared for improvements to the building envelope of the Lyndhurst administration building. He said that four bids were received in response to the bid. He explained that based on the evaluation and scoring of the submitted bids, staff recommended award of a contract to Spartan Construction, Inc. for a total amount of \$2,138,792.00, which included an owner-controlled 5% contingency.

Chairman Ballantyne presented Resolution 2026-12. Upon motion by Commissioner Dowd and seconded by Commissioner Fontoura, Resolution 2026-12 was approved by a vote of 14-0.

**Resolution 2026-13** Consideration of a Resolution Authorizing the President and CEO to enter into a Contract for the Purchase of a Mini Pumper Fire Truck for the NJSEA Fire Department.

Mr. Duffy stated that the Meadowlands Fire Department was in need of a new mini-pumper fire truck. He said that in response to a public bid prepared by staff, the Authority received three proposals. He explained that based on the review and evaluation of the submitted proposals, NJSEA staff determined that Absolute Fire Protection Co., Inc., was the lowest responsible bidder and staff recommended award of a contract for the purchase of an E-ONE mini pumper fire truck, at a total project cost of \$406,694.00.

Chairman Ballantyne presented Resolution 2026-13. Upon motion by Commissioner Mullahey and seconded by Commissioner Fontoura, Resolution 2026-13 was approved by a vote of 14-0.

VIII. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr. Kevin O'Brien, President, Local 632 Internation Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees. Mr. O'Brien commented on the upcoming World Cup 2026. He commented on the Arena, saying that it has been financially beneficial and a source of income for the IATSE members, the stagehands, the Screen Actors Guild and many others. He expressed appreciation to the Authority for its support of its membership.

James Kirkos, President, Meadowlands Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Kirkos commented that the work the Authority and Chamber do together changes people's lives. He commented on the future vision of building a Convention Center at the Sports Complex.

Amy Herbold, SVP, Corporate and Regulatory Affairs, American Dream.

Ms. Herbold commented on the relationship between the Authority and American Dream. She reaffirmed American Dream's commitment to its partnership with the Authority and to working closely with President Hirsch, the Board and the Governor to ensure the continued economic success of the Meadowlands.

IX. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**


Chairman Ballantyne noted that there was no need for Executive Session.

X. **ADJOURNMENT**

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

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 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 February 26, 2026.**



**Christine Sanz**  
Secretary

February 26, 2026

Commissioner	Roll Call	2026-10	2026-11	2026-12	2026-13
Ballantyne, Chairman	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Buckelew, Vice Chair - via phone	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Hirsch	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Dowd	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Duthie	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Fontoura	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Gonnelli	--	--	--	--	--
Gordon - via phone	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Gumble	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Knopf	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mullahey	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Parker	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Pennington	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Schaffer	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Stellato - via phone	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Treasury Rep Griffin	--	--	--	--	--

P = Present A = Abstain -- Absent R = Recuse Y = Affirmative N = Negative