



REGULAR SESSION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

DATE: May 28, 2026

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

PLACE: Two DeKorte Park Plaza, Lyndhurst, NJ

Members in Attendance:

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

Absent:

Tom Mullahey, Member
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
Sara Sundell, Senior Director of Land Use Management and Chief Engineer
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. **SWEARING IN**
President Hirsch introduced new NJSEA Commissioner Anthony Abrantes. She noted that

he was currently serving as the Assistant Executive Secretary-Treasurer for the Eastern Atlantic State Regional Council of Carpenters. She provided professional background information regarding the Commissioner. President Hirsch administered the Oath of Office to Commissioner Abrantes, who duly recited the Oath.

IV. **ROLL CALL** - Ms. Mercado took roll call.

Chairman Ballantyne reported that the Committee on Science and the Environment held their first meeting of the year aboard one of the Authority's pontoon boats. He thanked Francisco Artigas, Terry Doss and Drew McQuade for a very informative and enlightening tour. He recognized Brian Wlodawski, MRRI GIS Specialist, for his work in rebuilding an abandoned pontoon boat into a research vessel. He also recognized Tim Spiegel, Marina and Field Operations Specialist, for his assistance in the rebuild.

Chairman Ballantyne reminded everyone of Native Plant Day scheduled for Sunday, May 31, 2026 at DeKorte Park.

Chairman Ballantyne recognized Commissioner Schaffer for receiving the Loretta Weinberg Lifetime Achievement Award in honor of her decades of service, mentorship, and dedication to advancing women in public and political life.

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

Chairman Ballantyne presented the minutes from the April 23, 2026 Regular Session Board meeting.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Pennington and seconded by Commissioner Stellato, the minutes of the Regular Session Board Meeting held on April 23, 2026, were approved by a vote of 15-0.

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

Upon motion by Commissioner Fontoura and seconded by Commissioner Duthie, the cash disbursements over \$100,000 for the month of April, 2026 were approved by a vote of 15-0.

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

VII. **APPROVALS**

<u>Resolution 2026-21</u>	Consideration of a Resolution Issuing a Decision on the Bulk Variance Application Submitted as part of File No. 26-034 NJ Transit/2600 Penhorn Ave - Billboard (Variances) Block 451.04, Lot 22.1325 in the Township of North Bergen.
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Ms. Sundell stated that NJ Transit Corp. requested two bulk variances to permit the installation of a free-standing digital billboard at its bus garage and maintenance facility on Penhorn Avenue in North Bergen. She explained that the variances seek relief from District regulations requiring billboards to be located along roadways with posted speed limits of at least 55 mph and limiting billboard height to 30 feet above the adjacent roadway surface. She said that the proposed sign would be located along Route 3 West, which has a posted speed limit of 50 mph, and would have a height of 75 feet above the roadway. She noted that the applicant contends that the location remains consistent with the intent of the District's regulations. She indicated that NJDOT had issued a permit for the billboard, and that the applicant submitted a traffic and

safety evaluation concluding that motorists can safely view the sign's placement and height. She pointed out that as part of the installation, vegetation trimming, and removal of one tree were proposed and that NJSEA staff recommended, as a condition of approval, that any removed trees be replaced with similar species at locations and sizes determined in consultation with the NJSEA Chief Engineer. She stated that during the public hearing, Mark Leonard, Esq., Assistant General Counsel for Hartz Mountain Industries, questioned the applicant regarding the NJDOT outdoor advertising permit but stated there was no objection to the application. Ms. Sundell concluded by saying that NJSEA staff recommended conditional approval of the requested variances for the reasons detailed in the recommendation report.

Chairman Ballantyne presented Resolution 2026-21. Upon motion by Commissioner Fontoura and seconded by Commissioner Stellato Resolution 2026-21 was approved by a vote of 14-0, with Commissioner Abrantes recusing.

VIII. SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Resolution 2026-22 Consideration of a Resolution Honoring Robert J. Dowd for Outstanding Public Service to the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority, the People of the Meadowlands District and the State of New Jersey.

Chairman Ballantyne recognized former Commissioner Robert J. Dowd for his dedicated public service and contributions to the NJSEA. He noted that Commissioner Dowd served on the NJSEA Board from 2018 through May 8, 2026, and also served on the former New Jersey Meadowlands Commission Board from 2012 to 2015. He highlighted Commissioner Dowd's support for environmental initiatives through his service on the NJSEA Committee on Science and the Environment and made note of his 25 + years in law enforcement. He extended his best wishes on behalf of himself and the Board.

Chairman Ballantyne presented Resolution 2026-22. Upon motion by Commissioner Duthie and seconded by Commissioner Fontoura, Resolution 2026-22 was approved by a vote of 15-0.

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Kevin O'Brien, NJ Legislative Director of Local 632 IATSE Theatrical Stagehands. Mr. O'Brien highlighted the tremendous amount of work that his members are currently doing for the FIFA 2026 World Cup events. He extended his appreciation to Governor Sherill and the Authority for their continued support.

Mr. Donald Smith, Gloversville, NY.

Mr. Smith made the following comments:

- He commented on the need for Carlstadt to enforce no overnight truck parking on Commerce Boulevard in Carlstadt.
- He commented that the Russo Development on Valley Brook Avenue should have included native plantings in their landscaping.
- He commented on illegal hunting that is occurring on the Sawmill Creek Wildlife Management Area and the need for this to be addressed for both safety and environmental concerns. He commented on the need to re-install no hunting signs.
- He commented on the parking lot that Russo Development is planning to construct on top of the old Avon Landfill. He indicated that there was a bird species native to North America for which the northernmost nest found and recorded on the East Coast is located precisely where the parking lot is planned to be constructed. He suggested that as part of the

mitigation process, the Authority should consider requiring Russo turn over another portion of land, possibly the old Rutherford Landfill, which he believed could then be developed into a wildlife area.

X. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

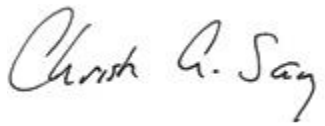
Chairman Ballantyne noted that there was no need for Executive Session.

XI. **ADJOURNMENT**

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

Meeting adjourned at 10:32 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 May 28, 2026.



Christine Sanz
Secretary

May 28, 2026

Commissioner	Roll Call	2026-21	2026-22
Ballantyne, Chairman	P	Y	Y
Buckelew, Vice Chair	P	Y	Y
Hirsch	P	Y	Y
Abrantes	P	R	Y
Duthie	P	Y	Y
Fontoura	P	Y	Y
Gonnelli	--	--	--
Gordon	P	Y	Y
Gumble	P	Y	Y
Knopf	P	Y	Y
Mullahey	--	--	--
Parker	P	Y	Y
Pennington	P	Y	Y
Schaffer	P	Y	Y
Stellato	P	Y	Y
Treasury Rep Griffin - via phone	P	Y	Y

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