

# PAULSBORO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Board of Education Meeting  
PAULSBORO, NEW JERSEY

## EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES

### MONDAY, JUNE 24, 2024

The executive Session was called to order at 6:04 pm on June 24, 2024 in the Paulsboro Public School's High School Cafeteria. The following members were present:

Theresa Cooper	Markee Robinson
Kyana Evans	Joseph Lisa
Larry Haynes (Arrived 6:36 PM)	Roseanne Lombardo
Tyesha Scott (Arrived 6:42 PM)	Danielle Scott

Also in attendance were:

Dr. Phil Neff, Superintendent  
Doug McGarry, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary  
Frank Cavallo, Board Attorney

*Rice Notices were served to the following people prior to this meeting.*

1. Joshua Farley - Paulsboro Public School Custodian - Employee #2284

#### **Action Items – Upon Return to Open Public Session**

- A. Recommend immediate termination of the contract between the Paulsboro Board of Education and Paulsboro Public School Custodian Joshua Farley - Employee #2284.

#### **Brief Summary of the Incident**

Custodian Joshua Farley has been absent 53.75 days since July 2023. For each time he was absent for medical reasons, his immediate supervisor requested a physician note. Physician notes tendered by Mr. Farley to cover illness in April and May 2024 appeared suspicious. The notes were not on official letterhead and were missing a signature. The notes claim to originate from Inspira Medical Center Mullica Hill.

I discussed the matter with Business Administrator Doug McGarry, who recommended that I contact Inspira directly. Before doing so, I conducted an online search of the physicians listed on the notes and neither one was affiliated with Inspira. On 4/23/2024, I contacted Inspira to inquire about the notes. They provided me with a fax number to which I sent the notes. I was contacted by Kim @ Inspira on 4/24/2024. She confirmed that the notes I sent via fax were fraudulent. She also confirmed that Josh was last seen in January 2024. She also stated that she would be “noting his file” regarding the fraudulent notes. This information was not shared with Mr. Farley, but with Acting Superintendent Dr. Phillip Neff and Director of Facilities Derek Gieschen.

Mr. Farley has been out of work with undocumented illnesses since Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, except for May 7<sup>th</sup>. He has since tendered two (2) more fraudulent physician notes.

On May 9<sup>th</sup>, Derek Gieschen responded to Josh's call-out text by stating that he must provide physician notes to account for his absence since May 8<sup>th</sup> and that the physician notes must be on official letterhead and contain a "wet" signature. Mr. Farley claimed to have his next physician appointment on Friday, May 24<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Farley sent a text to Derek Gieschen on the evening of Memorial Day Monday 5/27 claiming that he needs to see another physician that specializes in diabetic management. Derek texted him back on 5/28 and told him to produce an official physician note for the 5/24 visit by EOD 5/28/2024. Nothing was sent. Derek called Mr. Farley on 5/29/24 and left him a voicemail at 8:30am.

Despite our repeated requests, Mr. Farley has not furnished any official physician documentation to substantiate his absences since January 25, 2024. The amount of fraudulent physician notes furnished total six (6).

Because Mr. Farley has exhausted all paid time and can no longer pay for his medical and dental expenses, the district's attorney recommended that he be offered COBRA benefits. A letter to this effect was issued to Mr. Farley on 5/29/2024. The letter was sent via certified mail, regular mail, email, and text message from his immediate supervisor Derek Gieschen. Before issuance, the letter was reviewed and approved by Acting Superintendent Dr. Phillip Neff and Business Administrator Douglas McGarry.

On the afternoon of 5/29/2024, after the letter was issued, we were furnished with a doctor's note via fax directly from Inspira. The letter excused Mr. Farley from work on 5/24/2024 only. It did not excuse him from the start of his absence (5/8/2024), nor did it provide a return-to-work date.

On 5/29/2024, I emailed Hailey Bruno @ Inspira for clarification on his return-to-work status. At 4:18pm, Hailey called me and left a message.

On 5/30/2024 at 8:10am, I returned Hailey's call. I explained that Mr. Farley has been out of work since 5/8 claiming diabetic complications and we have no documentation to substantiate his absence. I also advised Hailey that Mr. Farley told us that he must see a new doctor that specializes in diabetic care because his doctor is unable to treat him. Hailey will review this matter with Dr. Sussman and get back to me.

On 5/30/2024 at 3:46pm, having heard nothing back, I called again. I spoke with Bianca. Bianca advised that she was working on this matter with Hailey, who had left for the day. Bianca was able to confirm that Josh visited their facility on 2/5/2024 and 5/24/2024. She also confirmed that his issuance of fraudulent doctor notes was noted in his file. She was only able to confirm that Dr. Sussman sees no reason why Mr. Farley cannot return to work. She will review our conversation with Dr. Sussman, who will get back to me on 5/31/2024.

On 5/31/2024, I was contacted by Tanya in Dr. Sussman's office @ 10:42am. Without violating HIPAA, she did state that Dr. Sussman cannot issue a note for any day other than

5/24/24 because it is not needed. She also stated that Dr. Sussman can treat diabetes among many other conditions.

6/10/2024 Dr. Neff, Douglas McGarry, Derek Gieschen and PEA President Krista Lange met with Joshua Farley at the Administration Building Conference Room. He was giving a letter stating the following:

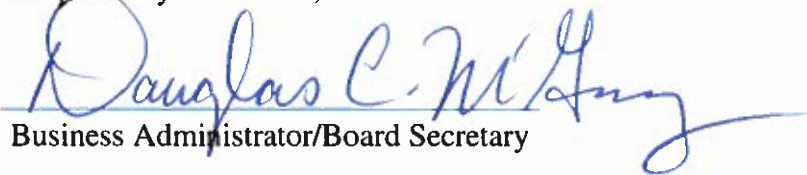
This letter will confirm our recent communication regarding your employment with the Paulsboro School District (“District”). At the current time you have exhausted all paid and unpaid leave available to you. Based on your attendance, your continued absences and your falsified doctor’s notes, the Board of Education has not and will not grant an unpaid leave of absence beyond that which you have already been provided by the District. As such, your continued absences are evidence that you have abandoned your position.

Accordingly, this letter serves as formal notification that you are being placed on administrative leave and I will be recommending to the Board of Education at the June 24, 2024, meeting that your employment be terminated. We appreciate your service to the District and wish you well.

- B. Grievance 2324-02 SK**
- C. Weapon Offense**
- D. Teacher Assault**
- E. Evaluation Of The Superintendent Of Schools**
- F. Board of Education Self-Evaluation**

The executive session was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

*The mission of the Paulsboro School District is to work with students, parents, educators, and community to develop excellence in education while preparing each student to be viable and productive citizens in society. Our goal is to develop the unique potential of the whole student by creating a challenging and diverse learning climate that prepares students for the 21st Century and is rich in tradition and pride.*