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BOARD OF EDUCATION  
BALTIMORE COUNTY

PUBLIC MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
BROADCAST VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

January 17, 2023

Transcribed by:  
CRC Salomon, Inc.

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1 **BOARD MEMBERS:**  
 2 **Jane Lichter, Board Chair**  
 3 **Robin Harvey, Vice Chair**  
 4 **Erin R. Hager (Absent)**  
 5 **Julie C. Henn**  
 6 **Moalie S. Jose (Absent)**  
 7 **Russell T. Kuehn (Absent)**  
 8 **Rodney R. McMillion**  
 9 **John H. Offerman, Jr. (Absent)**  
 10 **Maggie Domanowski**  
 11 **Christina Pumphrey**  
 12 **Brenda Savoy**  
 13 **Darryl Williams**  
 14 **Roah Hassan, Student Commissioner**  
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1 **PROCEEDINGS**  
 2 **CHAIRWOMAN LICHTER:** Each speaker will be  
 3 given three minutes to speak on the Superintendent's  
 4 proposed FY2024 operating budget. This public hearing  
 5 is not the forum to speak on any other topics. I ask  
 6 speakers to observe the three-minute limit and  
 7 conclude remarks when time has expired and you hear  
 8 the tone. Okay.  
 9 The first speaker tonight is Ms. Simkins.  
 10 **MS. SIMKINS:** Any of these?  
 11 **CHAIRWOMAN LICHTER:** Sure. Right there is  
 12 good. Good evening.  
 13 **MS. SIMKINS:** Good evening. Can you hear  
 14 me?  
 15 **CHAIRWOMAN LICHTER:** Yes.  
 16 **MS. SIMKINS:** Okay. Thank you. Good  
 17 evening, Chairwoman Lichter, Board members, Dr.  
 18 Williams, and the DCPS community. My name is Zamira  
 19 Simkins, and I'm here today as Chair of the Citizen's  
 20 Advisory Committee for Gifted and Talented Education.  
 21 Some of you may also remember me from four years ago

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1 **I N D E X**  
 2 Call to Order . . . . . 4  
 3 Opening Remarks by Chairwoman Lichter . . . . . 4  
 4 Public Comment on FY2024 Proposed Budget . . . . . 4  
 5 Zamira Simkins . . . . . 4  
 6 Jessica Paffenbarger . . . . . 7  
 7 Cindy Sexton . . . . . 10  
 8 Erica Mah . . . . . 12  
 9 Darren Badillo . . . . . 16  
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1 when I appealed to you a grade acceleration for my  
 2 son. And I cannot tell you how much of a difference  
 3 you made in his life by approving his request. He is  
 4 continuing to excel, and just recently ranked number  
 5 one percentile in the PSATs. And I could not be more  
 6 proud of him, but it's also thanks to you.  
 7 As you are starting to work on next year's  
 8 budget, I would like to stress the importance of  
 9 supporting gifted and talented education in Baltimore  
 10 County. Code of Maryland Regulations COMAR Chapter  
 11 13A.04.07 requires that all Maryland schools identify  
 12 and serve gifted and talented students. BCPS Policy  
 13 and Rules 6401 also recognize the GT students, require  
 14 appropriately differentiated programs and services  
 15 beyond those normally provided by schools.  
 16 Currently around 30,000 students, or 27  
 17 percent of BCPS population, in grades 4 through 12 are  
 18 taking various GT or advanced academics programs. The  
 19 current budget proposes only one resource teacher, one  
 20 staff member, and one coordinator to stay in that  
 21 office. Currently that office is responsible for

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1 serving 30,000 students and maintaining BCPS's  
 2 compliance with state and local laws, and the office  
 3 has four resource teachers. Back in 2019 it had eight  
 4 resource teachers, and then in 2020 it was cut to  
 5 four. So if you cut it to one resource teacher, here  
 6 is what we will find in terms of the implications.  
 7 The resource teachers are primarily responsible for  
 8 developing gifted and talented curriculum and training  
 9 teachers at schools on how to implement the GT  
 10 curriculum.  
 11 Their role today is more important than  
 12 ever, because recently BCPS has adopted so-called  
 13 canned curriculum packages from different commercial  
 14 publishers. For example, Bridges is now used in  
 15 elementary schools; Illustrative Math is used in  
 16 middle schools. Neither of these packages have  
 17 appropriately differentiated instruction for GT  
 18 students.  
 19 For this year, the Office of Advanced  
 20 Academics made a makeshift plan, and was planning to  
 21 develop true curriculum for the future. But if you

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1 cut the staff to just one resource teacher, they will  
 2 not be able to do it. So we appeal to you to increase  
 3 our resource teachers to five instead of one. Thank  
 4 you for your time.  
 5 CHAIRWOMAN LICHTER: Thank you. Our next  
 6 speaker is Jessica Paffenbarger? Did I get that  
 7 right.  
 8 MS. PAFFENBARGER: Okay.  
 9 CHAIRWOMAN LICHTER: Did I get --  
 10 MS. PAFFENBARGER: Paffenbarger.  
 11 CHAIRWOMAN LICHTER: Okay. Thank you.  
 12 MS. PAFFENBARGER: Okay. You can hear me?  
 13 CHAIRWOMAN LICHTER: Yes.  
 14 MS. PAFFENBARGER: Okay. Okay. Good  
 15 evening, Chairwoman Lichter, Board members, Dr.  
 16 Williams, and the BCPS community. My name is Jessica  
 17 Paffenbarger, Vice Chair of the Citizens' Advisory  
 18 Committee for Gifted and Talented Education, a BCPS  
 19 advisory group.  
 20 The BCPS budget must meet the needs of all  
 21 110,000 students. But this proposed budget shows BCPS

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1 ignoring almost one-third of its students, the 30,000  
 2 GT, twice-exceptional and advanced learners who  
 3 participate in advanced academic programs. BCPS has  
 4 purchased curricula for mathematics and language arts  
 5 for elementary and middle schools that do not include  
 6 adequately differentiated GT or advanced content.  
 7 How can the Office of Advanced Academics  
 8 create advanced curricula for students with the  
 9 proposed budget only providing for one resource  
 10 teacher instead of four --and this follows a 2020 cut  
 11 from eight resource teachers -- and fulfill their  
 12 other obligations? This shows BCPS continuing a  
 13 recent trend to not support appropriate advanced  
 14 educational services. The OAA supports on-site staff  
 15 at all 178 BCPS schools: helping identify who requires  
 16 advanced curricula; writing curricula; training staff  
 17 in the nuances of educating GT learners, since most  
 18 colleges don't offer a course for teachers in  
 19 training; and more. OAA staff are experts in these  
 20 areas, and their expertise is leveraged throughout the  
 21 school system to assist educators and families.

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1 Code of Maryland regulations require all  
 2 Maryland schools to identify and serve GT students.  
 3 BCPS and the Board's Policy and Rules 6401 state that  
 4 GT students require appropriately differentiated  
 5 programs and service beyond those normally provided by  
 6 the regular school program. So this proposed budget  
 7 will also undermine BCPS's implementation of state law  
 8 and BCPS's own policy and rule regarding GT students.  
 9 Without advanced curricula, students may  
 10 become bored in class, tune out, or get into mischief.  
 11 Often test scores go down below ability level because  
 12 students are not engaged and challenged. In  
 13 elementary school my oldest daughter was well known  
 14 for reading a book under her desk because she finished  
 15 her assignments early and had no advanced work to  
 16 continue with.  
 17 Currently BCPS has a catchphrase on the  
 18 Board of Education property sign and on the website,  
 19 "Raising the bar, closing gaps, and preparing every  
 20 student for the future." And the budget video current  
 21 content states, "Student learning is our main priority

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1 and at the core of all of our work." The proposed  
 2 budget cuts to the OAA speak a lot louder than these  
 3 words on the sign and on the website.

4 Please amend the proposed budget to remove  
 5 the cuts to the Office of Advanced Academics and to  
 6 increase the resource teachers to five -- two for  
 7 elementary, two for middle, and one for high school --  
 8 to get GT education moving in a more positive  
 9 direction to meet the needs of our students. Thank  
 10 you for your time.

11 CHAIRWOMAN LICHTER: Thank you. Our next  
 12 speaker is Cindy Sexton.

13 MS. SEXTON: Good evening, Chair Lichter,  
 14 Vice Chair Harvey, Dr. Williams, and members of the  
 15 Board.

16 Way back in Dr. Williams' report on the 100-  
 17 day entry plan he stated that our priorities must  
 18 squarely focus on what is best for our students in  
 19 every neighborhood and school across the county.  
 20 Those words are still applicable. You've heard me say  
 21 that effective teachers are the most important factor

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1 in contributing to student achievement, and that  
 2 statement is also a BCPS core value. And you have  
 3 heard me speak countless times about the need to  
 4 recruit and retain educators. This must be a  
 5 priority.

6 While overall enrollment has declined, our  
 7 ELL and special education students have increased, and  
 8 we need to make sure there are educators in place to  
 9 meet the needs of those students. But certainly not  
 10 just those students. Our students living in poverty  
 11 has also risen. Community schools can help address  
 12 some of those concerns and needs around poverty if the  
 13 program is properly and effectively implemented, but  
 14 those students need teachers. Because they may be  
 15 coming with gaps in readiness to learn, we need  
 16 teachers to fill in those gaps. It keeps coming back  
 17 to recruiting and retaining educators.

18 I often speak of career earnings. BCPS has  
 19 made strides in moving up the ladder in Maryland, but  
 20 we still aren't where we need to be. As the third  
 21 largest school system, that isn't okay. While we are

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1 still in negotiations for salary for next year, I urge  
 2 this Board to include the salary compression that was  
 3 agreed to but not funded last year. I want to be sure  
 4 the system has in place a plan for attracting,  
 5 recruiting and retaining educators. Properly staffed  
 6 schools will help improve learning outcomes and help  
 7 address discipline concerns.

8 TABCO, as always, stands at the ready to  
 9 work with the system so we can get the educators our  
 10 students need and deserve. We continue to be in new,  
 11 unprecedented situations where the goal posts keep  
 12 moving. Through it all our educators are there for  
 13 our students, doing all they can to meet all their  
 14 needs; social, emotional and mental health, physical,  
 15 and yes, academic as well. Now more than ever we need  
 16 to make sure our focus is on the people who make a  
 17 difference in the lives of our students: our  
 18 educators. Thank you.

19 CHAIRWOMAN LICHTER: Thank you. Our next  
 20 speaker is Erica Mah.

21 MS. MAH: Good evening. My name is Erica

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1 Mah, and I'm a parent and a teacher in Baltimore  
 2 County.

3 I'd like to start with asking for a second  
 4 public hearing about the budget. While it is  
 5 wonderful that you've given time for public comment  
 6 tonight, the notice was less than a week an over a  
 7 holiday weekend. With the budget released just last  
 8 week, the quick turnaround for public comment does not  
 9 give the public adequate time to thoroughly understand  
 10 and process this very large and complex budget.

11 To start off, according to a TABCO analysis  
 12 of the budget, there are a number of items that are  
 13 inaccurate in their calculations. There are a number  
 14 of discrepancies where the districts' reported 2023  
 15 adjusted percentage change was lower than the actual  
 16 percent change for the '24 proposed budget.

17 Strikingly, those include an instructional textbook  
 18 and supplies listed as a 42.7 increase while actually  
 19 being 74.5, and other instructional costs listed as a  
 20 41.6 while being 71.2 percent. So my second comment  
 21 is to please check the math so that folks can

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1 accurately analyze the budget.  
 2 Doing my best to understand and look through  
 3 the budget, my first comment -- my next comment is  
 4 about the magical 700 number that is still being used  
 5 to decide administrative staffing for elementary  
 6 schools. 700 is a lot of students. However, the  
 7 workload for school administration does not just  
 8 magically double once the school population hits 700.  
 9 It's not halved when a school then drops down to 697.  
 10 It's not so cut and dry. Some schools have  
 11 significantly higher farms rates and all the issues  
 12 that come with poverty, and those schools may not have  
 13 700 students. Some schools have regional programs  
 14 that demand additional support, and those schools may  
 15 not have 700 students. Some schools have higher ESSA  
 16 populations, more staff turnover that leads to new  
 17 teachers needing more support. Some schools do not  
 18 have SDT teachers or other resource staff. And some  
 19 schools may not qualify for free or reduced lunch but  
 20 are just below that threshold, but those schools may  
 21 also not have 700 students.

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1 There needs to be other considerations when  
 2 staffing, beyond student number, in order to be truly  
 3 equitable to the needs of schools and students. We  
 4 have stuck to the 700 number for far too long and to  
 5 the detriment of our children and staff.  
 6 It is also my understanding that we are here  
 7 for comment, but also to ask questions. I have not  
 8 spent much time watching BOE decisions on curriculum,  
 9 but I have worked on national curriculum development  
 10 in the past and do see and hear what is being used and  
 11 not in the classrooms. So my question is, why are we  
 12 spending money on curriculum materials and the more  
 13 money on the development of curriculum? There are  
 14 curriculums out there that are -- that work based on  
 15 national standards and have been fully piloted. We  
 16 are buying them, and then only using bits and pieces  
 17 of them. And then we have in-house curriculum that is  
 18 also based on national standards and piloted, and  
 19 we're using them to supplement or take place some of  
 20 the purchased curriculum. Why are we doing both?  
 21 Perhaps the money would be better spent on

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1 raising teachers' salary in anticipation of the  
 2 blueprint requiring higher salaries, but also track  
 3 teachers so that if we do need to write curriculum,  
 4 the resource teachers can actually do that job instead  
 5 of being pulled into classrooms.  
 6 Finally, in my last 10 seconds, as an ESOL  
 7 teacher, thank you very much for the additional 36  
 8 teachers allotted for ESOL next year, and I hope that  
 9 will be fully funded by the county executive and  
 10 counsel. Thank you very much.  
 11 CHAIRWOMAN LICHTER: Thank you. Our next  
 12 speaker is Darren Badillo. Good evening.  
 13 MR. BADILLO: Good evening, Board and Dr.  
 14 Williams. My name is Darren Badillo. I'm a concerned  
 15 father of two children who attend BCPS, but also the  
 16 Outreach Coordinator for the Baltimore County Parent  
 17 and Student Coalition. Thank you for this time today.  
 18 We need to start having real conversations.  
 19 We need to stop funding failing programs. We are two  
 20 and a half years into Dr. Williams' eight-year plan  
 21 called The Compass. Dr. Williams' vision was

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1 implemented in the 2020-2021 through 2028. We want to  
 2 believe in our leadership. It is very hard when we  
 3 see little to if any positive results.  
 4 What justifies funding this long-term  
 5 Compass plan when we not have -- have not seen  
 6 positive impact in our students' reading, math and  
 7 proficiency rates in the past two years? Actually,  
 8 scores worsened. It appears if we continue to fund  
 9 this program we will continue to lower the bar and  
 10 fail our children. The Compass plan is failing. We  
 11 have not seen improvement in test scores here in  
 12 Baltimore County, but also here in Baltimore County we  
 13 have seen an increase in suspensions, the most in  
 14 Maryland.  
 15 Shouldn't we be looking at performance  
 16 measures identified in The Compass? On page 127, "And  
 17 make adjustments to ensure success, moving the needle  
 18 in the right direction," here's the page 127. In  
 19 reference, notice how blank it is and goals are for  
 20 2023-2024. We need to fund programs, staffing and  
 21 training. Without good programs, qualified staff, and

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1 training and support, it will never reach the kids.  
 2 These are the top concerns of BCPS parents.  
 3 Safety. We need additional resources and  
 4 security in those schools who continue to have issues  
 5 with fights. We know the knife attack last week in  
 6 BCPS.  
 7 We have a top-heavy -- how do we have so  
 8 many high-paid administrators, with failing grades and  
 9 low proficiency rates? The money is not trickling  
 10 down to where it needs to be, and that's in the  
 11 classroom.  
 12 There is a perception of lack of urgency  
 13 regarding these two issues. If we fail the kids year  
 14 after year, the reason is because adults are not --  
 15 are doing something wrong. How does this budget fund  
 16 programs, staffing and training that will show  
 17 measurable improvements in academic outcomes and hold  
 18 the system accountable to do better?  
 19 Also, parents are -- say there's lack of  
 20 resources for children who are behind and lost  
 21 learning due to the pandemic, but also parents want

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1 more resources and funds towards higher education,  
 2 trade school, and connecting children with jobs and  
 3 opportunities after school.  
 4 Let's continue to make adjustments to ensure  
 5 each BCPS student has a safe and quality education.  
 6 Thank you.  
 7 CHAIRWOMAN LICHTER: Thank you. Our next  
 8 speaker is Lloyd Allen.  
 9 MR. ALLEN: Good evening, Chair Lichter,  
 10 Vice Chair Harvey, Superintendent Williams, and  
 11 members of the Board. Thank you for your time  
 12 tonight. I'm Lloyd Allen, special educator in  
 13 mathematics, speaking as an individual.  
 14 Ratios and subs. Ratios. Comparing FY23  
 15 adopted budget page 143 to FY24 proposed budget page  
 16 127, I'm noticing that the student-teacher ratios  
 17 indicate a proposed increase in class size for  
 18 elementary and high schools while remaining steady for  
 19 middle school. In particular, for FY24 high school  
 20 class size aspires to an average of 29.2 students. If  
 21 we want teachers to learn their students, give timely

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1 feedback, identify learning gaps, and notice changes  
 2 in behavior, then 29 is too high.  
 3 Curricula are expected to move at a fixed  
 4 rapid pace. When class size is too high, each student  
 5 has a smaller share of teacher attention. The teacher  
 6 has less chance to recognize that the student missed a  
 7 concept from two years, much less give the student a  
 8 new way to approach that concept that might work for  
 9 them and make today's lesson attainable. When class  
 10 size is too high, there is less of a chance that they  
 11 will hear their name from a teacher used in a positive  
 12 way during the course of the lesson. Their share of  
 13 teacher attention during independent practice is  
 14 smaller. This has impacts on academics, and even SEL,  
 15 which leads to impacts on school safety.  
 16 In that same chart I see that in FY23  
 17 adopted, high schools have 40 department chairs for  
 18 each teacher, and in FY24 both middle and high schools  
 19 are allocated 2.1 department chairs per school. The  
 20 verbiage indicates that these positions are  
 21 specifically for the math, science, English and social

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1 studies to be able to have reduced teaching loads in  
 2 order to support the teachers in those departments,  
 3 the tested content areas.  
 4 Typically, each department, even non-tested,  
 5 has a chair, and these chairs have significant  
 6 responsibilities both in leading PD and with the daily  
 7 operation of the building. With or without the  
 8 allocation chairs are overworked, whether general ed,  
 9 special ed, tested area, or other.  
 10 FY24 page 9 suggests that enrollment is  
 11 growing. Help me understand why page 12 has a  
 12 reduction in instructional salaries and wages, the  
 13 only general fund category with a reduction, and  
 14 directly following an increase in both of levels of  
 15 administration.  
 16 Substitutes. I see that there is a \$2  
 17 million line item in the F23 adopted on page 22. In  
 18 FY24 proposed on page 290, I hope that I'm reading  
 19 incorrectly with a \$22.8 million item for contracted  
 20 services. That would be exponential growth. I hope  
 21 that I misunderstand something.

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 22</p> <p>1 I'm hearing middle school teachers say that                  2 they are still doing coverage because there are still                  3 aren't subs. Hiring a contractor is not a silver                  4 bullet, but it is certainly expensive. Please help me                  5 to understand that we are not increasing the                  6 substitute budget by tenfold each year over the last                  7 two years. Thank you.</p> <p>8 CHAIRWOMAN LICHTER: Thank you. Our next                  9 speaker is Pandora Jones. Okay. Pandora Jones? And                  10 our last speaker is Ms. Kathleen Causey. Hello.</p> <p>11 MS. CAUSEY: Hello. My name is Kathleen                  12 Causey, and I'm a former member of the Board of                  13 Education of Baltimore County. It's great to see you                  14 all, and thank you for your service.</p> <p>15 Before I talk specifically about the                  16 proposed fiscal year 2024 operating budget that was                  17 presented to the Board and the public on January 10, I                  18 would like to make two points. The Board's review of                  19 any proposed budget, asking questions about proposed                  20 spending, projected spending versus actual spending,                  21 and making motions to make changes to the budget if</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 24</p> <p>1 implementation of the Public Works recommendations                  2 around this topic. Note that the Board did not have                  3 additional dedicated staff to assist with this effort.</p> <p>4 Regarding ELA curriculum, page 21 references                  5 a one-time expense of \$10.4 million for a new ELA                  6 curriculum. Multiple presentations to the Board                  7 indicated that the new curriculum to allow all                  8 students to see themselves in books, yet recently                  9 released findings from a well-respected education                  10 justice research and organizing collaborative at NYU                  11 Steinhardt assert that BCPS's proposed new curriculum                  12 was one of three K-5 curriculums found to be                  13 culturally insufficient, or worse, culturally                  14 destructive. And there are specific statements about                  15 proposed new curriculum being one that uses language                  16 and tone that demeans and dehumanizes black,                  17 indigenous, and characters of color while unevenly                  18 encouraging empathy. These assertions are troubling                  19 and should be investigated and considered before any                  20 new contract is signed or any new monies are allocated                  21 in this budget. I will send the Board and the</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 23</p> <p>1 applicable, are very much a part of the governance                  2 role of education. The other general point is that                  3 oftentimes how money is spent is just as important as                  4 how much money there is to spend.</p> <p>5 On page 6 of the January 10th presentation,                  6 it includes a footnote clarifying that the \$3.6                  7 million of cost reduction associated with the                  8 reduction of central office resource teachers excludes                  9 additional cuts to central office management. The                  10 most recent data published by marylandpublicschool.org                  11 shows that BCPS has the highest number of non-                  12 instructional directors, coordinators and supervisors                  13 of any LEA in Maryland. In fact, BCPS has 163 more                  14 positions in this category than Montgomery County,                  15 even though Montgomery County has 50,000 more students                  16 than BCPS.</p> <p>17 These issues of central office positions                  18 versus school house positions was addressed in the                  19 Public Works report commissioned by the County                  20 Executive. It would behoove the Board, the County                  21 Council, and the County Executive to review the</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 25</p> <p>1 Superintendent the full report tomorrow.</p> <p>2 Regarding support personnel. While I                  3 appreciate the FTE increases shown on slides 17 and                  4 18, I remain very concerned that this proposed budget                  5 does not include an increase in critical support staff                  6 (inaudible).</p> <p>7 CHAIRWOMAN LICHTER: Thank you.</p> <p>8 MS. CAUSEY: Thank you. And I wish you all                  9 the best. Thank you for your service.</p> <p>10 CHAIRWOMAN LICHTER: Thank you. That ends                  11 our public speakers for the Board hearing. Wait one                  12 second.</p> <p>13 And next item on the agenda is                  14 announcements. The Board's next meeting will be held                  15 on Tuesday, January 24, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. Thank you                  16 for joining us this evening. This hearing is now                  17 concluded. At this time the Board will go into closed                  18 session.</p> <p>19 (Meeting adjourned.)                  20                  21</p>

TRANSCRIBER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Vivian Saxe, hereby certify that I transcribed from audio file the proceedings to the best of my ability in the foregoing-entitled matter; and I further certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct transcript of the audio files produced.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have subscribed my name on January 31, 2023.

Vivian Saxe



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