

EAST ROCKAWAY UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
East Rockaway, New York
Meeting of Board of Education and Budget Hearing
7:00 p.m., May 10, 2016 – East Rockaway Jr./Sr. High School Auditorium

MINUTES

Present: Members of the Board of Education: Kristin Ochtera, Patricia Nicoletti, John Giannotti, Jr., Keith Gamache; Superintendent, Lisa J. Ruiz; Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, James P. Robinson; Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Technology, John Piccarella, District Clerk, Vitina Fazi

Absent: Neil R. Schloth

1. The meeting was called to order by Kristin Ochtera at 7:10 p.m. and John Giannotti, Jr., led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Action Agenda

A. Personnel – None

B. Other Items

Upon motion made by John Giannotti, Jr., and seconded by Keith Gamache, the following Item 1 was unanimously approved.

1. Approve the Memorandum of Agreement with the Nassau County Board of Elections for use of the optical scan voting systems on May 17, 2016, and authorize the President of the Board of Education to execute the Memorandum of Agreement on behalf of the East Rockaway Board of Education.

3. Budget Hearing was presented by James P. Robinson. At the conclusion of the presentation, Mr. Robinson asked the Board if there were any questions.

4. Privilege of the Floor

After Mr. Robinson's presentation, Ms. Ochtera continued with the "Privilege of the Floor" part and opened the meeting up for questions and comments.

Dr. Richard Meagher questioned what the current estimate is for the unappropriated fund balance. Mr. Robinson responded indicating that the current forecast shows us being closer to 4%. Dr. Meagher also stated that he did not receive the budget newsletter again this year. He claimed that a portion of the 11563 Lynbrook zip code is not receiving school publications. Mr. Robinson replied that additional steps were taken this year with the mail house to avoid the issue. He will visit the Lynbrook Post Office himself since the six-day notice is going out tomorrow.

Ms. Vickie Cordova did receive the budget newsletter timely. She suggested that in the future the budget hearing date be included in the newsletter.

Ms. Tina Lewald did receive the newsletter and asked Mr. Robinson to further detail the items in the Administrative section of the budget. She also asked what would happen in the event the budget failed. Mr. Robinson responded and a dialogue ensued regarding various scenarios of what could happen.

Mr. Carmine Abruzzo questioned whether any surplus amounts were carried over to the 2016/17 school year. Mr. Robinson replied to his question.

Ms. Lewald asked for clarification of new windows at Rhame Avenue School and bathroom replacement at Centre Avenue School. Mr. Robinson explained both improvement projects.

5. Board of Education Comments:

Keith Gamache: Mr. Gamache thanked Mr. Robinson, Mr. Piccarella, Ms. Ruiz for their guidance, as well as his fellow board members and the community for their input in preparing and presenting this year's budget. He is very proud of the work that has been accomplished.

John Giannotti, Jr.: Mr. Giannotti, Jr. reminded the community to get out and vote next week and to make it a point to tell their neighbors to get out and vote. He thanked the board trustees and administration for their work in preparing this year's budget.

Patricia Nicoletti: Ms. Nicoletti shared the sentiments of her fellow board members. She is in zip code 11563 and did get her newsletter, although a day later. The proposed budget was a community effort and she thanked all administrative staff and community members. She believes it is a fair budget and encourages everyone to vote and to bring your neighbors.

Kristin Ochtera: Ms. Ochtera echoed the comments of her fellow trustees who remain true to the nature of their work. She is very happy about the work that has been done this year. She stated that we have reached a wonderful milestone and is proud of the work that went into the budget. Everyone understands the economic climate we are living in and we are balancing the needs of our students, staff, and community in proposing the budget. She thanked everyone for coming and hopes to see everyone back next week for the budget vote. Ms. Ochtera then introduced Ms. Ruiz.

Lisa Ruiz: Ms. Ruiz thanked everyone for coming out tonight. She also thanked Mr. Robinson and all her colleagues. It is not easy to build the budget. She is very happy with the increases that are being planned with the budget. It is very difficult to add items into the budget and it speaks to the fiscal management of the district. Programs and services are continuously being re-evaluated and funds reallocated as services are needed. Thank you also to the Board of Education for supporting everything we do for our students.

Ms. Cordova asked, from her seat, if any "merger" talk at Meet the Candidates Night was true. Ms. Ochtera replied that one of the important jobs the Board has is to remain focused

on accurate and good information; and that was not accurate. Ms. Ruiz also responded that if any community member has any questions, to please call her. Ms. Nicoletti also responded that people who are involved know that there is no reason to rebut the statement of any merger.

Ms. Cordova also asked about FEMA/Sandy reimbursement. Ms. Ruiz and Ms. Ochtera responded with brief details, but indicated that a full status report will be provided to the community at the June 14th Board of Education meeting.

6. Upon motion made by John Giannotti, Jr., and seconded by Patricia Nicoletti, and unanimously passed, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m. The agenda planning portion of the meeting continued in the Superintendent's office.

Respectfully submitted,

Vitina Fazi
District Clerk