

APPROVED MINUTES

HARBORFIELDS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT GREENLAWN, NEW YORK 11740

Kind of Meeting	-	Special Meeting
Date of Meeting	-	April 15, 2009
Place of Meeting	-	OMS Auditorium
Board Members Present	-	Mr. Mastroianni, Mr. Banks, Mrs. Boba, Mr. Giuliano, Mr. Schoer, Mr. Toles
Board Members Absent	-	Mr. Brennan
Others Present	-	Mr. Carasiti, Ms. Todaro, Mr. Nimmo, Mr. Hartner, Principals, Assistant Principals, Directors, Community Members

Mr. Mastroianni called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

APPOINTMENT OF DISTRICT CLERK PRO-TEM

Upon motion duly made by Mrs. Boba, seconded by Mr. Giuliano, and carried (6-0), Diana Todaro was appointed District Clerk Pro-Tem for this portion of the meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Schoer, seconded by Mr. Toles, and carried (6-0), the Board moved into Executive Session at 7:06 p.m. for the purpose of discussing a matter related to legal action brought against the district and employment history of particular individuals.

David Shaw, Esq. joined the meeting at 7:07 p.m. to discuss these matters with the Board.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Giuliano, seconded by Mr. Toles and carried (6-0), the Board returned to the special meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Mr. Mastroianni led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and instructed those in attendance where to exit the building in case of an emergency.

Mr. Mastroianni advised that Mr. Brennan would not be at the meeting due to health issues and stated that we all extend our best wishes to Jim. Mrs. Boba stated that there was a card on an easel in front of the room and asked if everyone would sign the card for Jim.

Superintendent's Statement

Mr. Carasiti advised that it is the Superintendent's responsibility to present a recommended budget to the Board for adoption. The Board may accept it or modify it. It is my recommendation that a 3.89% tax rate increase and a budget increase of 1.64% with a proposed budget amount of \$69,781,514 be adopted by the Board of Education. This would mean an estimated tax cost of \$7.53 per \$100 of assessed valuation. On a

home assessed at \$4,000 this would mean an annual increase of \$301.32. The following programs explored as possible reductions during the budget development will be maintained: HHS Science Research, HHS AP Art, Music and French, HHS Student Assistant Liaison, Reorganization of HHS music lesson program, TJJ SAIL program, OMS, TJJ and WDPS funds to support school based programs, Arts-in-Education (partial reduction), School-to-Career program and contingent staff. Mr. Carasiti stated that music lessons would be every other week and not every week. He went on to say that we are not totally out of the woods. We have next year to think about. This budget has substantial reductions in staff. Mr. Carasiti discussed the 2nd proposition for the reconstruction of the roof at TJJ. The proposed project cost is \$2,341,677, capital reserve funds \$1,584,593, EXCEL Aid Funds \$747,084, Budgetary funds – none, State Aid based on project proposal \$1,198,938 (to be provided over 15 years). Mr. Carasiti stated that this would be a no cost item to the tax rate.

Mr. Mastroianni commended Mr. Carasiti for the efforts he put forth in putting this budget together stating that it was educationally sound and fiscally responsible. He continued that he thought Mr. Carasiti has done a fantastic job. Mr. Mastroianni asked Mr. Carasiti to explain a contingency budget. Mr. Carasiti stated that this budget is less than a contingency budget. A contingency budget would increase the tax rate to 6.8% which would be \$13.11 per \$100 of assessed valuation. We would have to strip certain items out of the budget such as equipment, student supplies, and the use of our facilities by outside groups.

It was the consensus of the Board that Mr. Carasiti has recommended an educationally sound and fiscally responsible budget for the 2009-10 school year. Mr. Schoer stated that this is a budget we hope will pass. We think it is best for all our kids and best for our community. We would urge all of you to make sure to get out and vote.

Mr. Toles advised that he attended the National School Boards Convention conference and stated that the future does not look bright. We need to look at the budget in terms of 3 years out and the picture does not look good. The stimulus money is limited.

Mr. Carasiti stated that this is a point well-taken. The state of New York is in a precarious position. We cannot look forward to any additional state aid next year. The minute this budget is approved, we will be working on next year's budget. If we are successful, we have only completed half the battle.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A resident thanked administration for taking freezes and for retaining some programs that are important. He asked about class size increase and Mr. Carasiti stated that the increase would be 2 students per grade. He asked about contingency. Mr. Carasiti stated that it is our duty to present an educationally sound budget within fiscal constraints in this economy. He then asked if the budget is not supported by the community what are the mandatory cuts. Mr. Carasiti stated that equipment, student supplies, use of our facilities by outside groups are the mandatory cuts. We would still have to make decisions on other cuts.

A resident asked where the money came from to restore these programs. Mr. Carasiti stated that there was a brighter picture regarding state aid as well as the administrative reorganization, salary freeze of central office and building administrators, the stimulus program and IDEA funds. She then asked if money from our current reserve fund is being used to offset the budget. Mr. Carasiti responded that approximately \$200,000 is being used from the retirement reserve.

A resident questioned the cultural arts program. Mr. Carasiti stated that existing students in the program will remain, but we will not be taking any more students into the program from this time on.

A resident asked if the Board had a strategy for letting the community know about the budget and contingency. Many people do not understand this. Mr. Carasiti stated that we have an obligation to let the community know how we arrived at this budget and we will get this information to them.

A resident asked how many sections the district has allotted for K-5. Mr. Carasiti stated that K has 10 sections, grade 1 has 11 sections, grade 2 has 10 sections, grade 3, 4, and 5 each have 11 sections. She then asked the total number of staff members cut. Mr. Carasiti responded that 29.3 staff members were cut including 19.8 teachers, 6 teaching assistants, 1 central office administrator, 2 buildings and grounds personnel, and ½ clerical position.

A resident suggested that when information is sent to residents it should be explained in very simple terms so that people will understand what has happened. The district should also include all the programs that have been reinstated.

2009-10 BUDGET ADOPTION

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Toles, seconded by Mr. Giuliano, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education adopted the 2009-10 school district budget in the amount of \$69,781,514 to be presented to the eligible voters of the Harborfields Central School District at the Annual Election and Budget Vote to be held on May 19, 2009.

Mr. Schoer thanked central office administration as well as building administration for taking a salary freeze. He stated, "I believe this had an impact on the budget and I urge all parents and the community to support this budget because it is fiscally and educationally sound."

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Schoer, seconded by Mr. Giuliano, and carried (6-0), the Board adjourned the special meeting of April 15, 2009 at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Muller, District Clerk