

HARBORFIELDS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
GREENLAWN, NEW YORK 11740

Kind of Meeting	-	Special Budget Meeting
Date of Meeting	-	March 5, 2011
Place of Meeting	-	WDPS Cafetorium
Board Members Present	-	Mr. Giuliano, Mrs. Boba, Mr. Banks, Mr. Mastroianni, Dr. McDonagh, Mr. Schoer, Mr. Toles
Board Members Absent	-	None
Others Present	-	Mr. Carasiti, Ms. Todaro, Mr. Nimmo, Dr. Koenig, Ms. Muller, Principals, Directors, Community Members

Mr. Giuliano called the meeting to order at 8:20 a.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Schoer, seconded by Mr. Banks, and carried (6-0), the Board moved into Executive Session at 8:21 a.m. for the purpose of employment history of a particular individual and contract negotiations.

Mrs. Boba entered the meeting at 8:40 a.m.

The Board reconvened the special meeting at 9 a.m.

Mr. Giuliano led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and instructed those in attendance where to exit the building in case of an emergency. He requested that all cell phones and beepers be silenced during the meeting.

Budget Presentation

Mr. Carasiti gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting several budget scenarios including a 5.0%, 4.5%, 4.0%, and 3.5% tax rate increase. Mr. Carasiti discussed the estimated reductions for each of these percentages. He also stated that a contingency budget would produce a tax rate of 3.2% which would cause further reductions of staff at OMS and HHS. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is on file in the office of the Superintendent.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A resident asked whether the high school will go from 9 periods to 8 periods a day. Mr. Carasiti responded that right now it's not something that is going to happen, but in all probability that will be the case.

A resident asked why the high school has the highest number of teachers eliminated. Mr. Carasiti responded that this year that is the case but over the last three years the high school has been the least affected.

A resident asked if we can look at having only one assistant principal at OMS. Mr. Carasiti advised that everything is being looked at. He continued that there are 900+ students at OMS and looking at other schools that size they have two assistant principals. The resident continued that Elwood Middle School and Finley Middle School only have one assistant principal. She continued that our class sizes cannot continue to increase.

A resident questioned the amount the district pays to ERS and TRS. Mr. Nimmo advised that currently the district contributes 12% to 15% of our payroll to the teacher retirement system and employee retirement system.

A resident stated that we need to collaborate together and also trust the experts in our district to redesign our educational program. She continued that we have some very talented people in our administration and teaching staff. She further stated that she encouraged the Board, administration, and community to work together to try to design programs going forward to maintain the excellence in our district.

A resident asked with all the possible cuts what will be left when my child enters school. She asked if parents can volunteer. Mr. Carasiti advised that there are legal issues involving parents volunteering.

A resident stated that the financial people have squandered our money. He continued that he didn't mind spending money on an excellent educational system. He asked how much money we would save by moving from 9 periods a day to 8 periods a day. Mr. Carasiti advised that Dr. Bennardo will work on these figures.

A resident suggested privatizing kindergarten. She continued that she would be willing to do that. She further stated that many people would consider that.

A resident asked how the Board will decide what percentage they will go with. She further asked what the Board is doing regarding settling teacher negotiations. Mr. Carasiti stated that we are involved with teacher negotiations at this time and have not been involved with any other units at this time. She continued that she thought residents would be willing to pay a higher tax rate rather than lose staff and programs.

A resident expressed concern regarding class size. She continued that raising class size will affect the quality of education in the classroom.

A resident stated that she felt a lot of doom and gloom was expressed at this meeting. She stated that there was too much negativity.

A resident asked when the current transportation contract expired if we could stagger the times for WDPS and TJJL to help reduce transportation fuel costs. Mr. Carasiti stated that we will explore the start and finishing times at TJJL and WDPS. The resident asked if we could expand mileage at the high school. Mr. Carasiti stated that this is something the Board will take into consideration. Mr. Carasiti advised that

transportation is an expensive item; however, we also have to take into consideration safety factors.

A resident stated that parents should be responsible for paying for arts and athletics. Mr. Carasiti stated that it is not legal to pay to play.

A resident stated that there is no crossing guard on Pulaski Road at the high school. Mr. Nimmo responded that the second precinct needs to be contacted as it is their responsibility to provide crossing guards.

The president of the UTH urged residents to contact their legislators regarding the state budget. He continued that the state budget affects the district budget.

A resident suggested lowering the heat at HHS and OMS.

Many residents stated that they would be supportive of a 5% tax rate increase.

A resident asked what the long-range plan is for the district.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Mastroianni, seconded by Mr. Banks, and carried unanimously, the Board adjourned the special meeting of March 5, 2011 at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Muller
District Clerk