

APPROVED MINUTES

HARBORFIELDS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT GREENLAWN, NEW YORK 11740

Kind of Meeting	-	Special/Budget Meeting
Place of Meeting	-	OMS Auditorium
Date of Meeting	-	April 13, 2011
Board Members Present	-	Mr. Giuliano, Mrs. Boba, Mr. Banks, Mr. Mastroianni, Dr. McDonagh, Mr. Schoer
Board Members Absent	-	Mr. Toles
Others Present	-	Mr. Carasiti, Ms. Todaro, Mr. Nimmo, Dr. Koenig, Directors, Principals, and Community Members

Mr. Giuliano called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Schoer, seconded by Mr. Mastroianni, and carried (6-0), the Board, district clerk, and administration moved to Executive Session at 6:21 p.m. for the purpose of status report on collective bargaining matters, miscellaneous legal matter, and other personnel issues relating to budget.

The Board of Education reconvened the regular meeting at 7:48 p.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 also asked that all cell phones and beepers be silenced.

BUDGET ADOPTION PRESENTATION

Mr. Carasiti advised the Board that the building administrators agreed to a one year freeze which has saved one administrative position. He continued that there would be no guarantee of administrative positions for the 2012-13 school year.

At this time Mr. Carasiti introduced Mr. Giuliano to answer questions regarding the budget.

A resident asked why the district does not compel our teachers to take a freeze. Mr. Giuliano explained that contracts are considered Collective Bargaining Agreements governed by the Taylor Law and the Triborough Amendment. He then gave an in-depth explanation regarding teacher negotiations.

Mr. Carasiti then gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding the 2011-12 proposed budget which included a comparison of per pupil expenditures, possible tax rate scenarios, and the impact of each of the tax rate scenarios. Based on a 4.9% tax rate increase this would mean a double digit dollar increase. He continued that if this budget

is defeated it will be devastating to our programs. He further stated that the lack of revenue is killing us. Mr. Carasiti stated that regarding budget-related items, please note the following:

- The estimated salary cost for the reinstatement of the 0.2 technology is \$16,000.00
- The budget reduction for the elimination of co-curricular activities at Thomas J. Lahey Elementary School is \$20,000.00
- The budget reduction for the elimination of grade level coordinators at Washington Drive Primary School and Thomas J. Lahey Elementary School is \$16,500.00

At this time Mr. Carasiti introduced Ms. Todaro who explained the 4.95% budget scenario explaining the reduction in classroom teachers, reduction in supplies, clerical cost reductions, and district maintenance reductions. She also discussed class size stating it would remain the same as this current school year.

Mr. Schoer stated that if the district's reserves are depleted it affects your financial ratings. He continued stating that our district does not have excessive reserves.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A resident stated that she was glad to see that the Board is considering a partial reinstatement of the technology position. She continued that it is important that the district not give up on that area. She further stated that we need a diversity of technology courses. She asked that, for the sake of our children, please restore the technology program. Mr. Carasiti stated that there is some inaccurate information floating around the community and he read information from Dr. Bennardo regarding the technology program.

A resident stated that we are not talking about integrated technology. If our students want to be an engineer or architect we have no programs to address that.

A resident stated that she was glad to see the Board reinstated as much as they did. She continued that she understood the value of the technology program but that the needs of all students must be considered.

A resident stated that he was disappointed in the PTA as no one shows up at Board meetings.

A resident stated that he spoke to a Board member of another school district and was told that our teachers are not willing to take a freeze. He continued that the teachers are doing a great job but asked if the union is acting in good faith. Mr. Carasiti replied that the district is currently in negotiations with the teachers and that he could not discuss this issue.

A resident stated that according to an article in Newsday 1 in 10 homes in Suffolk County are now 3 months behind in paying their mortgage. He continued that he never

had to worry about personal finance until this year. He went on to say that he feared a mass exodus from the district. He further stated that there has to be other things that this district is looking for to reduce the budget.

A resident stated that he is concerned that the budget will not pass. He continued that we need to get the word out and urged administration and the Board to explain the difference between the proposed budget and contingency budget. Mr. Carasiti responded that if this budget does not pass the effects will be devastating. The resident replied that we need to get information out in a way people can understand it.

Mr. Banks spoke about the Get Out the Vote Committee and advised those present that they should become members of that committee.

Mr. Schoer stated that the Board cannot promote the budget, we can only provide information. As Board members we cannot ask residents to vote "yes" so it falls on the community. Mr. Schoer continued by stating that we have only a small percentage of the community who come out to vote.

Mrs. Boba stated that we need to do a better job in putting out information so that people understand what they are voting on.

President of the UTH stated that we have always considered jobs. We are bargaining in good faith on both sides. We are currently in negotiations.

A parent read a letter from her son who is a guitar player and asked the Board to restore funding for the BOCES Arts program.

Comments from Board of Education Regarding the Budget

Dr. McDonagh thanked Mr. Carasiti and the cabinet for all the work they did in preparing this budget. He continued that he agreed with all three items that were recommended by Mr. Carasiti and stated that he hoped we could find a way to continue clubs at Lahey in another fashion if we decide to eliminate the stipend for teachers to run the clubs.

Mr. Banks thanked Mr. Carasiti and the staff for the preparation of the budget. He stated that it pained him to cut anything from this budget, but in this financial situation we have no choice. Teachers and administrators have done a wonderful job with before school programs that occur once a month. We need to look at other items that give us a better bang for the buck.

Mr. Mastroianni advised that he supported the changes that were outlined earlier this evening. He stated that he would like to thank everyone for doing the best job under the circumstances and asking our community to really step up. There is a significant increase this year in the tax rate. He applauded the central office and building administrators for taking a freeze in salary this year. It truly shows that they are leaders of our district. There is a 4.95% tax rate increase which is of grave concern. He continued that he felt a need to address a number of our staff members who are losing their jobs. They have families, homes, and bills to pay. We spoke about elimination of 12.9 positions and now we are speaking about the elimination of 11.9 positions. Each

one of these individuals is going to face a very tough work environment. My heart goes out to each of them. I would like to reach out to all of our staff, especially our teachers. I think the world of the job that they all collectively do for our district. We all have to come together. No one wants to see class size increase 30-40%.

Mrs. Boba stated that we need to look at our technology increase. She continued that she wished we could do something about transportation, overtime, user fees. She thanked Mr. Carasiti and the staff for all the hard work they did on this budget.

Mr. Schoer stated that he did not have a lot to add to what his colleagues already stated. He added that he has been on the Board for 16 years. When times were good we were able to have a lot of good programs. We were able to send our students to Long Island School for the Arts. The reality is that the money is just not there. We are attempting to preserve what we have to the best of our ability. He went on to say that he supported the items that were added and cut based on a discussion which took place last week. Mr. Schoer thanked his fellow Board members and stated that the Board, as well as administration, works very hard to get an educational program to support our children. Mr. Schoer concluded by advising that he supported this budget and hoped that the community would as well.

Mr. Giuliano advised that he had very little to add. Our administrators lead by what they say and what they do. He continued that he agreed with what Mr. Mastroianni said that there is a concern of unease and even fear as to what is happening economically. Twelve dollars a month doesn't sound like a lot to some people, but to others it is a lot. Mr. Giuliano stated that this is a fantastic budget but it is not a done deal, not by a long shot. You are going to have to pay more for less. Unemployment is high. Mr. Giuliano concluded by stating that he has a sense of unease that this budget will not be a pushover this year.

Mr. Carasiti asked that the Board look at these adjustments and asked for a motion to approve them.

Reinstatement and Reduction in Budget Items

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Mastroianni, seconded by Mr. Banks, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approved the estimated salary cost for the reinstatement of the 0.2 technology at \$16,000.00

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Schoer, seconded by Dr. McDonagh, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the budget reduction for the elimination of co-curricular activities at Thomas J. Lahey Elementary School will be \$20,000.00

Upon motion duly made by Mrs. Boba, seconded by Mr. Schoer, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the budget reduction for the elimination of grade level coordinators at Washington Drive Primary School and Thomas J. Lahey Elementary School will be \$16,500.00.

2011-12 Budget Adoption

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Schoer, seconded by Mrs. Boba, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education adopted the 2011-12 school district budget in the amount of \$73,975,620 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 27, 2011.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Mastroianni, seconded by Mr. Schoer, and carried (6-0), the Board of Education adjourned the special meeting of April 13, 2011 at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Muller
District Clerk