

PLUMSTED TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL PUBLIC MEETING
March 2, 2011
6:30 p.m. Executive Session
7:00 p.m. Public Session
NEW EGYPT HIGH SCHOOL

I. CALL TO ORDER

Harry Miller, President, called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

II. OPEN PUBLIC MEETING ACT

In compliance with the Open Public Meeting Act, this is to announce that adequate notice of this meeting has been disseminated to the Asbury Park Press on Wednesday, February 24, 2011, thereafter posted upon the bulletin board in the main office of all four schools and the Board Secretary's office and a copy of such resolution was filed with the Plumsted Township Clerk. No advance written notice of this meeting was requested and paid for by any person according to the record of the Secretary of the Board. I direct the Secretary of the Board to enter into the minutes of this meeting this public announcement.

III. ROLL CALL

Mr. Miller, President	Present
Mr. Hauge, Vice President	Present
Mr. Marinari	Present
Mr. Midgett	Absent
Mr. Probasco	Present
Mrs. Soles	Present
Mrs. Wig	Present
Dr. DeMareo, Superintendent	Present
Mr. Gately, Business Administrator/ Board Secretary	Present
Mr. Stein, Board Attorney	Present

Mrs. Soles moved that the board go into executive session at 6:37 PM for the purpose of discussing personnel - 2011-2012 Preliminary School Budget.
Seconded by Mrs. Wig, Passed unanimously.

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meeting Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 to 21) permits bodies to discuss certain matters in closed sessions, and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Open Public Meeting Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4 – 6-21), such a meeting may be held in private;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that:

1. The Board shall meet in closed session on these matters; and
2. The matters to be discussed in private may be shared with the public at such other time as the Board may determine that there is no longer any requirement for confidentiality.

Mr. Hauge made a motion to go out of executive session at 7:43 PM.
Seconded by Mr. Marinari, Passed unanimously.

V. FLAG SALUTE – Mr. Miller led all in the salute to the flag.

Mr. Miller informed everyone that Mr. Gately will be presenting the 2011-2012 preliminary budget presentation and at that point there will be a time for Board member comments and questions. He stated that after that there will be an opportunity for public comments and questions and then they will go to the motion.

Mr. Miller emphasized to everyone that this is a preliminary budget review and in the State of New Jersey the way school districts have to handle the budget procedures is that there needs to be a preliminary budget that is sent to the executive county superintendent's office by Friday so that the county superintendent can review the budget. At that point, he will probably approve the preliminary budget and from that point until April 9 is the duration that we have in order to review and present a final budget.

Mr. Miller informed everyone that this is not the final budget.

VI. PRESENTATION

A. Mr. Gately, Business Administrator presented the 2011-2012 Preliminary School Budget

Mr. Miller asked Mr. Gately to clarify what was included in the instructional technology and buildings and grounds maintenance repairs.

Mr. Gately explained they asked the building principals and other administrators what they identify as their technology needs so they put together a comprehensive list which includes computer replacements, laptops, smart boards, projectors, printers, digital cameras, so it is a wide range and far exceeded the \$100,000.00. He stated they are going to have to prioritize and get the technology committee involved.

Mr. Gately explained that the building and grounds replacements involves replacing some roofs, major boiler repairs, heat pumps and needs to be looked at comprehensively.

Mr. Gately stated we need the buildings and ground committee to get together and put together a comprehensive list and to prioritize.

Mr. Gately stated that certain districts have buildings deteriorating so badly that they now are putting public questions out there to bond to make these repairs.

Mr. Miller stated that the shared services with the Plumsted Township on the SRO and courtesy busing are in the budget.

Mr. Miller commented on the reoccurring and ongoing expenses and how we fund it versus the one time funding we have through impact aid and other means.

Mr. Miller commented on the 389,000 payroll grant received and stated it is part of the budget.

Mr. Gately stated it is very unlikely that we will see any other federal education job funds bills that will go through.

Mr. Gately stated another reason they came up with some areas in the budget that are one time in nature. He stated that the Finance Committee and administration recognized that we don't want to be going year to year to restore and cut programs.

Mr. Miller stated the situation we have this year is with the tax levy in the general fund versus the tax levy on debt services. He stated from a percentage basis that we are actually negative in raising taxes.

Mr. Miller stated that what drives the slight increase is the reassessment and the reduction of the base that you drive your funding off.

Mr. Gately explained that the tax rate has gone up due to lost ratables in the community primarily driven by tax appeals.

Mr. Gately stated we have three seats open for the Board of Education, Mrs. Soles, Mr. Miller and Mrs. Wig.

Mr. Hauge commented on the one line item that was actually a lost in last year's budget but added back this year was the auditorium lightning project. He stated we were still able to capitalize on the ROD grant which we are going to spend the money to do.

Mr. Miller stated that if we are proposing to move forward and we don't, we will lose the grant.

Mr. Gately explained there is an 18 month expiration date, so in order for the Board to accept the funding for the grant there has to be a local share approved by the Board of Education and the Board is very limited in terms of the ways that it can fund the program.

Mr. Gately explained it can allocate on a line item to fund that project and it will go through the entire budget approve process and if it is in the final approved budget, which can happen whether the budget is approved on the April 27 or not, there is a final budget. If that project is included in that final project, the board can accept that grant and go forward with it.

Mr. Gately explained that the only other way to fund that project would be to transfer money during the month of April, May or June. He stated the State of New Jersey permits Boards of Education to make a transfer of what they see as anticipated surplus to the capital reserve account. He also said there is a bond option.

Mr. Hauge stated the idea of using one time sources of revenue for non-recurring expenses is not new and for as long as he can recall, as a district, that has been kind of our outlook. He commented on weaning off of the impact aid.

Mr. Hauge stated that if we start putting back the reoccurring expenses we are going to be right back in the same boat that we were. He stated we have the opportunity now to actually take a look and prioritize where we are and try to get us back into a more financially stable position.

Mr. Marinari asked if Mr. Gately would define what the other expenses are on the \$186,000.

Mr. Gately stated they are general supplies, copier maintenance cost, per copy cost, staff travel outside the administration line, and is really spread throughout the budget so it wasn't one specific line item and that is why it is under other expenses.

Mr. Marinari commented on the way the government is looking at cost and trying to eliminate expenses and that at some point in the near future impact aid is either reduced or become something we have for that short period of time.

Mr. Probasco commented that this is a preliminary budget and would still like to hear a lot of feedback hopefully on things that people would want to save.

Mr. Probasco commented that he would like to take a look at pay to participate middle school sports and would like to hear comments on those types of things from the public. He wants to hear feedback on how successful the pay to participate is and do the kids enjoy it.

Mr. Probasco commented on discipline problems and kids not staying involved and thinks sports are just as important as history class and health classes. He also commented that kids look up to a coach and team.

Mr. Probasco commented on the libraries in the district and ½ person running four libraries. His thought is adding a helper to get the electronic system off the ground.

Mr. Probasco commented on the lighting in the auditorium and the grant to do it and if we don't use it we will have to return the money.

Mr. Probasco commented on adding one or two grade level field trips.

Mr. Probasco commented on the textbooks and was happy to see that \$100,000 in technology. He thinks we need to start funding back because we took a lot of it out in the last year and start thinking about modernizing those books.

Mr. Probasco commented that he feels strongly about the sports and happy about considering the freshman sports but he thinks they should consider the middle school sports even if it is pay to participate.

Mrs. Wig asked Mr. Stein to clarify what the ramifications for pay to participate for free and reduced lunch kids.

Mr. Stein stated we would have an obligation to subsidize that.

Mrs. Wig asked if free lunch kids will play for free and reduced would pay a reduced fee.

Mr. Stein stated that he thinks we have a legal obligation to do that.

Mrs. Wig stated that they need to refer to it as pay to participate and not pay to play because there is no guarantee that your child is going to play.

Mrs. Wig agreed that they need to do something with the librarian. She commented on the importance of the librarian because she sees it and stated they are the driving force for technology and research in the schools.

Mrs. Wig thanked everyone for getting involved in the budget process.

Mr. Miller stated the pay to participate factored in the free and reduced children so they would still be able to participate.

Mrs. Soles commented that the budget is not set in stone and they still have some work to do but they need input from the community and staff and it is an ongoing process. She stated that tonight is just the adoption of the preliminary budget.

Mrs. Soles commented that we cannot take and put back and give and take and that it is a constant roller coaster and it is a shame. She commented on not knowing what we are receiving in state aid and not knowing the impact aid so she gets that whole concept and with that being said, the frosh sports are being put back into the budget with a pay to participate fee and she is very adamant because children are dear to her heart and this needs to be equal. She stated that it is wonderful how we could offer it to the high school for grades 9 through 12 implementing the pay to participate however, it needs to drop down to the middle school and needs to go to grades 6 through 8 and they should be given the same opportunity. She stated the parents are going to pay a fee and we all know in the community what they charge us for Little League Baseball and Pop Warner Football and Cheer and it is an incredible fee, however, it is a fee that parents find a way in paying and those that can't, the leagues figure out a way to do it.

Mrs. Soles commented that studies have shown that children who participate in extra-curricular have better test scores, stronger academically, take pride in their school and take a ownership in where they are and it is an all around positive influence on their education. She also commented that she would like to see the Board and Rich Carroll all come together and figure out if we really need to close that door this year for the grades 6 through 8. Mrs. Soles commented that maybe there is a way to up the fee at the high school.

Mrs. Soles commented on no one in the libraries and that staff members had to move their classes in there to man the libraries so the library stays open and this takes away from their instructional day. She said it needs to happen whether we share a librarian or share services, but we have to open these doors. Mrs. Soles commented that when you get to college they are looking for book references not just website references.

Mr. Miller commented that the middle school sports did have the opportunity to meet with Rich Carroll so he is aware and has an idea of a structure on how to set-up a pay to participate in the middle school, and given his association with the different schools and high schools from his perspective that the pay to participate is inevitable as we move forward.

Mr. Probasco commented that he spoke with Rich Carroll to try and get underneath the numbers a little bit for what it would cost to put it back assuming we kept the pay to participate fee that

we currently have, that it would cost about \$45,000 - \$47,000 to add back in the middle school sports.

Mrs. Soles asked that they just look at it again.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT ON 2011-2012 PRELIMINARY SCHOOL BUDGET

Luisa Erich-Carr thanked the Board for this meeting and commented that it was not done last year. She asked if the Board was aware that the municipality is having a meeting today and said the first Wednesday of every month they have a meeting, yet the Board chose to have a meeting today and thinks it is unfair and that this meeting should have been done yesterday or tomorrow. Mr. Miller responded that they are aware the Township has a meeting on the first Wednesday. He explained that everyone has schedules and commitments and they had to look at what day was the best for the most Board participation.

Luisa Erich-Carr asked what the \$220,000 of state aid will be used for.

Mr. Gately stated the money is for next year.

Luisa Erich-Carr asked if the last meeting is on 3/29 or 3/30.

Mr. Gately stated the public hearing on the budget is on 3/29.

Luisa Erich-Carr asked in this budget for this school year how much money is there for legal.

Mr. Gately stated there is \$260,000.

Luisa Erich-Carr asked if they were aware they are going to be short about \$200,000 this year.

Mr. Gately stated yes.

Luisa Erich-Carr asked how they were going to cover that.

Mr. Gately stated they will be covered through budget transfers.

Luisa Erich-Carr asked where the money is coming from.

Mr. Gately stated it is coming from various line items throughout the budget which still have to be identified.

Luisa Erich-Carr commented that there are line items in some areas that were overstated or not used and now going to move it to cover legal fees.

Mr. Gately said that is correct.

Luisa Erich-Carr commented that do you think it is fair to not represent our budget correctly.

Mr. Gately commented that going into last year's July 1st they didn't know what the exact cost of legal fees would be.

Luisa Erich-Carr commented that in the prior year it was 136,000 and it cost them 350,000.

Luisa Erich-Carr asked how many students are in the school district.

Mr. Gately stated about 1,730.

Luisa Erich-Carr asked how much does it cost for a student to get educated.

Mr. Gately stated he does not have that number. He also stated that cost per pupil is one of the lowest according to the comparable spending guide for under 1,800 students.

Luisa Erich-Carr asked what it is per student.

Mr. Gately stated the cost per student is around \$10,000 to \$11,000.

Luisa commented that the average tax per household after rebate is \$4,488.00 and we only have 2,400 residents in town.

Mr. Gately stated that the addition of one student to the school district does not add the cost per pupil to the school district's budget because we have children move in to the school district or move out of the school district in any given year so there could be some sort of variance of what we budget verses the actual number of students who attend each year. He stated it is a per pupil cost, so if we add one more student the per pupil cost decreases.

Luisa Erich-Carr asked if the budget is going to be available if she wants a copy.

Mr. Gately stated the budget is a working document right now and has not been approved by the county superintendent so this is just to approve the submission to the county superintendent. He stated after the county approves the budget they can post the budget on the website.

Luisa Erich-Carr asked about the ROD grant that was received.

Mr. Gately responded that between all the projects, the security grants were about a couple hundred thousand dollars and the one security upgrade was approved last month to move forward and that they are waiting for pricing on the second of those two projects and should be available by the March 30th meeting so we are moving forward with those projects.

Luisa Erich-Carr asked if they were thinking about increasing the size of the classrooms.

Mr. Hauge responded yes and it is always a possibility and it is depending upon where our revenue sources come in.

Mr. Marinari commented that this is an administrative decision as well and they work with their administrators.

Luisa Erich-Carr asked if the high school pays to participate in sports.

Mr. Miller responded no.

Luisa Erich-Carr asked if the high school will be paying to participate next year.

Mr. Miller stated that what is being proposed at the moment is a pay to participate fee of \$50.00 for sports and co-curricular.

Mr. Gately stated that according to the presentation tonight, it was just the high school and is \$50.00 per student, \$25.00 if they were reduced lunch and exempt if they were free.

Joanne Dempsey commented that she is happy they are proposing to put in the freshman sports and looking at the middle school sports.

Joanne Dempsey comment on the intramural sports program at the middle school and stated that if you play one sport it is \$75.00 and two sports is \$100.00, so if you play two sports three times a year it will cost \$300.00 for the year per child.

Mr. Hauge commented that it is also a self sustaining program with no transportation.

Joanne Dempsey stated she would like to see the Board put middle school sports back. She also stated that last year they were told all these schools were going to cut sports and what happened was those schools did not cut the sports at the high school and middle school level. She stated that if you go out and look at the teams we would have played this year, most of those schools are still having the sports and it is New Egypt missing from who their competing against.

Mr. Miller stated those schools are pay to participate.

Joanne Dempsey asked if we are renewing Study Island which is up in March.

Mr. Gately stated that it has been renewed.

Joanne Dempsey asked if it was under the instructional technology.

Mr. Gately stated Study Island is in next year's budget.

Joanne Dempsey asked how much it is costing us.

Mr. Gately stated it is between \$5,000 and \$6,000.

Joanne Dempsey asked if they are looking at how many teachers are utilizing Study Island and this is something that needs to be looked at. She stated some teachers are using it and some teachers are not using it at all.

Joanne Dempsey commented on tablet class and that we are at the end of that program.

Dr. DeMareo stated that it was a two year program.

Joanne Dempsey asked if we are looking into tablet class.

Dr. DeMareo stated that Mrs. Caldes has not indicated that she has budgeted for it.

Dr. DeMareo stated that the special education department has budgeted for the Study Island for special education students.

Joanne Dempsey commented on the current internet problems and the upgrades that are to take place sometime in April.

Mr. Gately responded that the schedule with Comcast is that we will be on the new service by the end of April.

CarolAnn Miller commented that she is very disappointed that there are no administrators in the audience and they should be required to attend all meetings, especially the budget meetings.

CarolAnn Miller agreed with everyone that librarians are needed and thinks we need at least two and then have aides, helpers or volunteers in the library.

CarolAnn Miller asked if there are any plus' or minus' anticipated in any teaching positions.

Mr. Miller responded the staff is going to remain the same.

Mr. Probasco responded the plan is to keep the staff levels the same.

CarolAnn Miller commented that we need to bring in a technology level teacher in the middle school.

CarolAnn Miller commented that we need to enhance the curriculum at the high school.

CarolAnn Miller stated that she would like to look at the line items in the budget and asked Mr. Gately when that would be available.

Mr. Gately responded that it will be after the submission to the county.

Mr. Miller commented that he thinks CarolAnn Miller is looking for the final budget that will be brought to the public hearing.

Mr. Gately responded that they are going to approve a budget tonight that will go to the county and that budget possibly will be revised for the public hearing.

Mr. Hauge responded that when we have our public hearing on what they think is the final budget, that she wants to see the line items in that and unfortunately it is not going to be ready until probably days if not hours right before.

Mr. Gately stated they will make this budget available as soon as it is submitted to the county.

CarolAnn Miller asked about the one at the public hearing.

Mr. Gately responded that this version can change.

Mr. Hauge commented that this is a working document up until the time it is adopted so anything can be changed.

Rich Brevogel commented that he appreciates the information that was put on the website and asked for an explanation on the 2% cap.

Mr. Miller responded that the only way to go above the cap would be to go with questions.

Rich Brevogel commented that any modifications we are talking about wouldn't exceed the figures that they presented in terms of the tax impact on a house.

Mr. Gately responded that is correct.

Rich Brevogel suggested having a booster club for middle school because it is important to keep them out of trouble and keep them involved.

Rich Brevogel commented that if we don't give freshman the opportunity in high school to participate and play, they are going to lose interest and go do other things that we don't want them to do.

Rich Brevogel commented on legal fees and stated that litigation today is not like it was twenty years ago and for Mr. Gately or anyone who has to put a number in there of what they anticipate their legal fees to be and can do that, we should keep you for a hundred thousand years because legal fees unfortunately are a way of life today.

Rich Brevogel commented on classroom sizes and how the educational system has changed. He commented 30 kids or even 25 kids in a classroom and teachers not having the time to spend with all the children.

Luisa Erich-Carr asked if the general fund budget of \$22 million is already included in the 2% increase.

Mr. Gately responded that the amount is \$22,553,508 and the 2% is on the tax levy not on the total budget. He also commented that the tax levy can go up 2%, which is regulated by law.

Joanne Dempsey said there are about 30 kids who are participating for each block and 30 times \$100 is \$3,000 so if we are doing that three times we are collecting \$9,000 for intramural sports. She stated if we are adding back freshman sports for \$9,000 how are the intramural sports costing us \$9,000 when we are not having referees, uniforms and there is no transportation cost so the district is getting about \$9,000 to add freshman sports which is going to include bussing and referees and asked what is happening with the extra money we are getting now.

Mr. Gately responded that he would have to look at that and said we are paying that out at an hourly rate for whoever is running the program.

Joanne Dempsey asked if the \$9,000 would be a stipend.

Mr. Gately responded that the stipend for the freshman sports is already in the budget and there will not be additional coaches added.

Joanne Dempsey commented that she would like to see a comparison between the money collected and the money the program is costing us.

Mr. Gately responded that they will make that available.

Joanne Dempsey commented that the savings for Mr. Osmond is the \$37,000, which is his prorated salary of what he wouldn't be paid out for the remainder of this year.

Mr. Gately responded that it is salary only.

Tim Hagar suggested getting high school students to work in the elementary and primary school libraries.

Mrs. Soles commented that there are already students within the library.

Mr. Hauge commented that there needs to be a certified teacher with them and there are not many teachers going into the library

Tim Hagar asked if intramural sports were costing the town or school district anything.

Mr. Miller responded that it is being funded through community education.

Tim Hagar commented that the pay to participate could become a problem because you will get parents who will say why should I have to pay if their kid is not participating, because some kids are not as good as others.

Tim Hager questioned the board about shared services with the township and asked what if the town comes back and says they are not giving us anything.

Mr. Miller stated that they have thought about it and the response they received from Mayor Dancer tonight was he is there.

Glen Jacobus commented that the last time he was at the meeting to speak with the Board he was very dishearten by the distilled intention he had gotten from one particular Board member with some of the comments that some of the individuals make with regards to the Board and it is our right to come and speak and with that being said, the issue was over the hot water in the middle school nurse's office. He stated that he doesn't know if the Board is aware of this or not but before the Board went into executive session the issue was addressed by an unnamed individual and it was corrected before opening bell the next day. He thanked the Board for listening and having the issue corrected immediately.

VIII. SUPERINTENDENT'S AGENDA

A. Finance Motions

Mr. Hauge moved with a second by Mr. Marinari that the following be approved:

1. Recommend approval of the preliminary budget for the 2011-2012 for the submission to the voters as follows:

General Fund Budget:	\$ 22,398,364.00
General Fund Tax levy:	\$ 9,711,151.00
Special Revenue Fund Budget:	\$ 459,000.00
Debt Service Fund budget:	\$ 2,513,219.63
Debt Service Fund Tax Levy:	\$ 1,409,147.24

There should be raised for General Funds \$22,553,508.00 for the ensuing school year (2011-2012).

2. Recommend approval of the travel expense for the 2011-2012 school year not to exceed \$110,000 and that the maximum amount established in the pre-budget year (2010-2011) was \$75,000.

Discussion: Mr. Gately read agenda item A1 and A.2 to the Board and Public.

Mrs. Soles reminded everyone that this is the preliminary budget and not set in stone.

Roll Call

Yes

Mr. Hauge, Mr. Marinari,
Mr. Probasco, Mrs. Soles,
Mrs. Wig, Mr. Miller

No

None

Absent

Mr. Midgett

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

Glen Jacobus stated that the township has an outstanding issue with builders and sidewalks and asked if it was possible to get into joint services with them on the sidewalk issues.

Mr. Gately responded that he doesn't know if they would be doing the work for us for nothing but he thinks if they have a good contractor who has a good rate for getting the work done.

Glen Jacobus said they have a fund put aside and maybe we could do joint services with them.

Mr. Miller responded that if the township builders fund can do repairs on sidewalks and curbing on school district property and that needs to be clarified.

Mr. Marinari responded that it is internal rather than primary.

Mr. Miller thanked everyone for coming to the meeting tonight and for their comments and questions.

Mr. Miller stated they will revise and post the public hearings later in March and keep everyone updated.

Mr. Marinari made a motion to adjourn at 9:31 PM.

Seconded by Mr. Hauge, Passed unanimously.

Sean Gately
Business Administrator/Board Secretary