

PLUMSTED TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
May 18, 2011
7:00 p.m.
NEW EGYPT HIGH SCHOOL

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Miller, President, called the meeting to order at 7:08 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 and The Trenton Times on Wednesday, May 11, 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

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

IV. FLAG SALUTE – Mayor Dancer led all in the salute to the flag.

V. OPENING STATEMENT ON SCHOOL BUDGET/TAX LEVY

Mayor Dancer commended the Board of Education for their outstanding job on the budget presentation and soliciting public input.

Mayor Dancer stated we are here because of the rejected budget.

Mayor Dancer discussed the capped tax levy.

Mayor Dancer explained the oversight of the school resource officer.

Mayor Dancer stated they try to work with the schools and try to achieve any cost efficiencies through shared services.

Mayor Dancer stated they are trying to make the least amount of impact on the schools.

Mayor Dancer commented on the Energy Efficient Community Block Grants (EECBG) by the BPU.

Mayor Dancer commented on the shared services agreements for curbs and sidewalks.

Mayor Dancer stated that the sidewalk fund is not taxpayer generated.

Mr. Miller thanked Mayor Dancer for his comments on the budget presentation.
Mr. Miller explained that the conscious effort was made by the Board to fund programs that are sustainable year over year but also to use the one time funding such as the ARRA funding.
Mr. Miller asked Mr. Gately to explain the difference between proposed budget presented to voters and proposed reduction.
Mr. Miller stated they are willing to discuss any shared services agreements with the Township that would benefit the district and township.
Mr. Gately explained the proposed budget and proposed reduction.
Mayor Dancer clarified that the school tax rate of last year was 1.003 and this year would be 1.006 with an increase on the average home of \$11.00 a year.
Mr. Midgett asked if the total increase in the proposed budget was about \$45.00.
Mr. Gately responded that it was about \$45.00.

Mayor Dancer asked the meeting to be opened to the public at 7:33 PM.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Glen Jacobus asked if the Township gives the district more money, how will the township monitor the money that is going to be used.

Glen Jacobus commented on the septic tank, repairs and solar panels at the school.

Mayor Dancer commented on previous shared agreements with the school district and stated that there are terms and conditions of shared service agreements which are reviewed by the Board and committee, as well as attorneys.

Mr. Miller explained that the DEP takes random samples and at that time the sample exceeded its level and there could be something that impacted the system. He stated that the system is running good.

Mr. Gately commented on the DEP notice they received and stated he had responded to the DEP.

Glen Jacobus stated that he has a copy of the letter from the DEP and he doesn't see anyone planning to do anything.

Mr. Gately responded that what he has is the settlement agreement.

Glenn Jacobus stated that nothing is getting done.

Mr. Gately responded they are in the process of correcting the issues and this will be ongoing for the next couple of years and DEP has been notified.

Mr. Miller responded that the treatment plant is the property and the responsible of the district and there are plans to make repairs and/or upgrades over the next couple of years.

Mr. Midgett stated we had problems getting a budget passed and cannot see getting a solar project passed.

Luisa Erich-Carr stated she went to EPA to review the files. She stated that a letter was issued to Frank Gripp back in September 2009 and another letter November 2010 was issued to Mr. Gately and whoever was on the board back in 2009 did not follow up to make sure Frank Gripp was doing his job and that she has nothing else to do but monitor the Board of Education.

John Brody asked if what they are presenting is the net increase to the taxpayers.

Mr. Gately explained the net increase and debt service decrease.

Mr. Midgett responded that if you take the assessed value of your home and multiply it by 1.006 that will be the new taxes you will pay for the school on your property tax bill.

Mr. Gately responded that the general fund would be 9,613,840.00.

Tony O'Donnell commented on the Abbott Burke funding.

Tony O'Donnell stated that cutting \$97,000 is not good enough and there should be no tax levy increase.

Tony O'Donnell stated that 80% of school districts passed their budget but not Plumsted.

Tony O'Donnell stated he doesn't believe the district did a good job.

Mayor Dancer explained the pending Supreme Court decision on whether the NJ State Legislature will need to appropriate anywhere between 1.6 and 1.7 billion dollars more to have that constitutional thorough and efficient system for education and explained that it would not be good for the township.

Alexis stated she just became aware that the kindergarten program changed to ½ day program. Mr. Miller responded that the kindergarten program was changed to ½ day this current school year.

Alexis asked if they were going to look at bringing the kindergarten back to a full day program.

Mr. Miller responded that the funding for the lights and security were budgeted and taken from a onetime source of income.

Mr. Gately explained the kindergarten compliment program.

Debbie Tereszczyn asked for clarification on the student activities in the middle school and high school.

Mr. Gately responded that the proposed reductions they are making tonight do not affect any extra-curricular activity for grades 6th – 8th but still plan on instituting a pay to participate fee.

Debbie Tereszczyn stated she supported both budgets and she appreciates what the school district has done and is disappointed that it did not pass.

Mr. Midgett stated they did not increase the expenditures for extra curricula's in the sports programs district wide and that they reallocated monies.

Toni Barnett stated she supported both budgets and requested to Mayor Dancer that we honor what the Board has put together which was a comprehensive thoroughly complete budget.

Tony O'Donnell stated that the school should absorb courtesy bussing not the township.

Mayor Dancer stated the township share is \$70,000 and they could spread that over two years.

Tony O'Donnell asked why the school cannot pay all of it.

Mr. Midgett responded that it was a shared service agreement.

Tony O'Donnell stated that they could save a police officer's salary.

Tony O'Donnell commented on the kindergarten compliment program.

Tony O'Donnell commented on staff that lost their jobs last year.

Tony O'Donnell stated we need police officers more than we need some other things in the district.

Mr. Hauge responded that the school district lost \$1 million dollars in state aid last year and the district was forced to do things that were not financially sound.

Mr. Midgett commented on the Comparative Spending Guide and stated that we are 19th lowest in the state for total cost per pupil.

Mr. Probasco stated that if you look at the budget they are fixed costs.

Mr. Probasco commented on having kids involved in extracurricular activities.

Glen Jacobus agreed that extracurricular activities are good for the kids but there are ways to make cuts in other areas.

John Brody stated he is retired and on a fixed income and stated the Board could roll their budget back two years.

Mr. Probasco responded that expenses are going up.

Mr. Hauge responded that our income was reduced by \$1 million dollars and they are trying to do their best for the kids, district and town.

Jay Corby asked Mr. Midgett to repeat statistics.

Mr. Midgett repeated the statistics from the Comparative Spending Guide.

Jay Corby stated that we are about 35% over spending compared to other schools in extracurricular activities.

Mr. Midgett responded that we are about 30% to 35% higher than the average.

Mrs. Wig stated we have a higher percentage of students involved in one or more sports and activities which also correlates to grades and doing well in school.

Jay Corby stated they received about \$1 million dollars in athletic scholarship money for the seniors who are going to college.

Luisa Erich-Carr stated that we are the second highest in spending in legal fees.

Mr. Midgett stated they are aware of the legal fees and they are going to do something about them and it will change within the next twelve to eighteen months.

Luisa Erich-Carr commented on other districts and their per pupil cost.

Mrs. Wig stated it is the lawsuits and they don't have a choice in controlling that.

Luisa Erich-Carr stated that maybe we should learn why we are having lawsuits.

Luisa Erich-Carr commented on lowering cost for the election.

Mr. Gately responded that last year the cost was about \$8,500.00 in election costs and this year was about \$11,000.00.

Luisa Erich-Carr commented on the 4% increase in salaries.

Mr. Gately responded they budgeted across the board for all non-guide staff members.

Luisa Erich-Carr commented on the teachers contributed 1.5% on health coverage.

Mr. Gately responded that there is no additional state aid.

Mr. Gately stated that when the PTEA contract expires, all those employees will pay at a minimum 1.5% and there is no additional state aid for any school district for having a higher percentage of an employee contribution towards their health benefits.

Luisa Erich-Carr commented on the bussing costs.

Mr. Gately explained the transportation costs for the district.

Luisa Erich-Carr commented on parents buying school supplies for their children.

Mr. Gately explained they have pay to participate in sports and extracurricular activities.

Luisa Erich-Carr commented that kids need books not computers and internet.

Mrs. Soles responded that every Board member is a parent and they are a parent first before they are a Board member so any decision made on any child in this district their children as well as any other child is thought about first.

Mrs. Wig responded that they need to increase their technology in the schools.

Toni Barnett read an essay her son wrote regarding Rich Carroll.

Joanne Dempsey stated she supported both budgets and that we are still lacking in freshman sports.

Joanne Dempsey stated that if we had a community center the children would have other places to go so we need the sports here.

Joanne Dempsey commented on the lack of technology in the district and the need for the children to have more technology.

Carolann Miller applauded the Board and municipality for their hard work to keep the budget bare bone and taxes low.

Tom Buffa stated he voted yes on both budgets and feels the two most important things are that his kids are well educated and safe. He thanked the Board, administration and teachers and everyone else who worked on the budget.

Mayor Dancer closed the public hearing at 8:52 PM.

Mrs. Soles commented on her concern of shared services.

Mayor Dancer commented on the expanding of shared services.

Mr. Probasco stated that we are below cap.

Mr. Hauge stated he is not sure where the shared services come into the \$97,000.00.

Mayor Dancer explained the Energy Efficiency program.

VII. Finance Motions

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

1. Recommend approval of Resolution #2011-5, Approve/Certify the Amount to be Raised by Taxation for the Plumsted Township School district for the 2011-2012 School Year Budget (Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A) Which Consists of a Reduction to the original Budget in the Amount of \$97,311.00.

Discussion: Mr. Hauge asked if account 10-604 is the sidewalk fund. Mr. Gately responded it is the capital reserve account which consists of the sidewalk fund.

Mr. Marinari asked if this does not pass, where does the school district go from there.

Mr. Gately explained the process if they would not reach a resolution tonight.

Mr. Probasco stated that he cannot be supportive of this.

Mr. Miller stated that what it comes down to is the level of trust that we have with the Township and the Township with us.

Roll Call

Yes

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

No

Mr. Probasco

Mr. Midgett made a motion to adjourn at 9:22 PM.

Seconded by Mr. Probasco, Passed unanimously.

Sean Gately
Business Administrator/Board Secretary