

MEETING MINUTES

TOWNSHIP OF OCEAN COUNTY OF OCEAN REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING April 29, 2010

Flag Salute

ROLL CALL: X CHRISTINA WETTER X DENNIS TREDY X JOSEPH LACHAWIEC

STATEMENT: Pursuant to the provisions of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, adequate notice of this meeting was properly provided by sending copies of the Notice of Meeting to two newspapers, The Press of Atlantic City and the Asbury Park Press. The Notice was posted at the office of the Township Clerk and on the bulletin board in the Administration Building.

This is a joint meeting of the Township of Ocean Township Committee and the Board of Education

Mayor Lachawiec stated the Township Attorney is arriving late. The School Board Attorney will be acting as Township Attorney in cases necessary. When a school budget is defeated, pursuant to New Jersey Law, the School District Administration prepares defeated budget information. One of the items is a complete line item budget, listing each item by code and line description, including actual expenditures for the previous school year, actual budgeted amounts for the current school year and proposed budget amounts for the ensuing school year as proposed to the voters, the advertised budget for the ensuing school year and all supportive documentation and narrative explanations. The Township Committee needs a copy of the districts most recent annual audit, explanations of actions to reallocate direct additional expenditures taken by the Commissioner of Education or the Executive County Superintendent on behalf of the Commissioner, pursuant to NJ Law or statement to the effect that no such actions were taken, the numbers of professional and non-professional staff during the current school year and projected staff for the ensuing school year, with reasons for any increase or decrease, pupil enrollment by grade for the district as of the preceding June 30th, the last school day prior to the preceding October 16th, and as projected for the ensuing school year, salary schedules by employee, current and budget year accounting salary for all employees, number of schools and classrooms for each school, tuition received or paid during the previous school year, anticipated for the current school year, and projected for the ensuing school year, a substantiation of need for any proposed capital projects and or deposits into the capital reserve, including documentation of the projects inclusion in the LRFP and any information required for submission to the Executive County Superintendent.

Township Administrator Breeden stated the township has received those items and the Ocean Township Board of Education has been very forthcoming with furnishing information and has satisfied and exceeded the information requirements as mandated by the defeated budget process. The town has

received the State Department of Education information, benchmarking the schools and comparing to other districts in the state.

Township Administrator Breeden stated all information on employees making more than \$75,000 per year has been given in great detail to the Township of Ocean. The Township received a letter from the County Superintendent outlining the defeated budget process indicating that if there are any issues or questions, they are available.

Mayor Lachawiec stated the district administration should establish a meeting date with municipal officials as soon as possible to review and explain budget detail and rationale. The executive County Superintendent should be notified of the meeting date. April 29th and May 6th are the established meeting dates. The agenda should include a review of the defeated budget information. The final determined budget must be sufficient to provide a thorough and efficient education or maintain a stability of the district under the terms of the law. The amount of tax levy appropriated for this purpose must be sufficient to meet the local share required by law.

The first rule of a Township Committee Meeting is a five-minute time limit for public comment, per person. No booing or calling out is allowed. Any person speaking should state their name and address for the record.

In 1823, Thomas Jefferson said to the Compt at Lafayette, "The force of public opinion cannot be resisted when permitted to freely be expressed. The agitation it produces must be submitted to. It is necessary to keep the waters pure".

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Motion to open to the public was moved by Committeewoman Wetter, seconded by Deputy Mayor Tredy. Roll Call: Wetter: Yes, Tredy: Yes, Lachawiec: Yes.

Penny Golinski, 135 Admiral Way, stated if this budget is not passed, the town is telling her child that she does not deserve the best. As a parent, resident and taxpayer, the children do deserve the best. The schools already do so much with so little. Why would the town take more from them? This is about the children, not the fight that is happening in Trenton.

Basil Shehady, 99 Railroad Avenue, stated he has an autistic child that needs help. With this budget cut, the child is not going to get the help he needs and the child will have to be shipped out of district. It will cost the public more money to obtain a system the town already has. A lot of families come to this town for the school district. That increases the income and taxes. It's up to the Township Committee and School Board to make it happen.

Chris West, 18 Bayview Drive, stated the school taxes have remained the same for the past four years. The municipal taxes have gone up. The school did not raise municipal taxes for the past four years. The increase would have been about \$29 per house. Mr. West works nights and weekends grading and planning. Teachers work a lot more than people think. Teachers have to work a second job in the summer. Mr. West inquired if the taxes from Shop Rite would have covered the teachers' increase and would the town put money back towards the school. The taxes would have been school money.

7:53pm Township Attorney Greg McGuckin joined the meeting.

Mary Maglia, 43 Sweet Gum Road, Howell, 4th Grade Teacher, stated having a bigger class may not be that detrimental but having a small class allows students to learn in individual ways. Ms. Maglia can focus on students who need help while the rest of the students work on their own. The smaller class sizes are so much better.

Mary Elizabeth Reick, 362 Route 9, stated the Board of Education notified the public that if the budget was not passed, items might be eliminated, half-day kindergarten and courtesy bussing would be stopped in a two-mile radius. Mrs. Reick's son is fourth-generation Waretown and is proud. That is where his father and grandfather went and wants to keep the tradition going.

Vince Anepete, 85 Clearwater Drive, inquired if the Township Committee is taking questions from the public and negotiating in front of the public tonight.

Mayor Lachawiec stated tonight's meeting is a fact-finding mission. The Township Committee is here to listen to the public.

Mr. Anepete stated tonight's comments are pro-budget. The budget was defeated. No one speaking against the budget tonight.

Elena Bruno, 181 Royal Oaks Drive, four out of five districts passed the budget. That is parents, taxpayers and residents telling the town they believe in the budget for educating the children. The district that voted the budget down did so by 40 votes. Please leave the school the way it is.

Jessica Mottershead, 103 7th Street, supports the Waretown school teachers. Her child's teacher is non-tenured and could lose her job. It is very upsetting. The Township Committee should think about that.

Patty Gerety, Barnegat Beach Drive, would like the town to accept the budget the way it is. Ms. Gerety has seven years experience with the Child Study Team and never once was the bottom line looked at when making decisions. It was always what is best for the children. If any more cuts are made, the bottom line is what the town is supporting, not the child.

Jenna Ridsen, 13 Sands Point Road, discussed the programs she is involved with for the children. The children of this town are the future. As the Township Committee reviews the budget for the 2010-2011 school year, please think of the teachers not as positions but as dedicated educators. At an economical time when many have failed us, I would like to invest in something that would guarantee a return, and that is the education of the children.

Francine DiGiovanna, Lacey Twp., 5th Grade Teacher, has been teaching since 1973. Large classes are not the answer. Teachers, children and money have always been an issue. Teachers' salaries have always been an issue. Teachers make a difference. If an education system is destroyed, it is a destroyed institute that is so vital to society. Do not fail this education system and take it out on teachers. Teachers are being targeted.

Kathy Ebert, 235 Walter Horner Corner, discussed her children's progress at this school. Be careful when negotiating the budget.

Debbie Williams, 12 Maple Street, stated the school has already made cuts. A lot of cuts are being made if the budget goes through as proposed. The community can give up \$29 per home for the students. The children are worth more than \$29.

Melissa Larson, 206 4th Street, please pass the budget. Thank you.

Lisa Bourgeois, 55 Main Street, is willing to pay the \$29. The teachers are all wonderful. The people who voted the budget down, can afford it. The teachers are dedicated.

Motion to close to the public was moved by Committeewoman Wetter, seconded by Deputy Mayor Tredy.

Roll Call: Wetter: Yes, Tredy: Yes, Lachawiec: Yes

SCHOOL BOARD COMMENTS

Mrs. Sweeney stated the School Board has given the Township Committee what is needed to make a decision. The School Board has cut as much as it can.

Dr. Lommerin stated next week is Teacher Appreciation Week. Dr. Lommerin sees the quality and dedication of the educators in this district. The two biggest factors are parents and teachers. Letting anymore go would seriously jeopardize individual futures. Dr. Lommerin's job is to make sure every individual child is taken care of and every need is satisfied for a thorough and efficient education. \$1.5 million has already been cut out of \$8 million-plus. Now there is another \$220,000+ to be cut. Where is that going to come from? The ultimate losers are the children.

Mrs. Stride is very impressed with what this school district offers for the amount that is spent.

Mr. Tomczuk stated if the school board had gone to CAP, with the reduction of state aid and the loss of the surplus, the tax rate would have went up 15 1/3 cents or \$444 per the average assessed home. If \$29 is subtracted from that, taxes have been cut by \$415 per average household. Twenty-eight percent of the children are on free or reduced lunches. That means there is poverty here in Waretown. Ways to climb out of poverty is education. The equalizer is education. It is the town's obligation to give these students the opportunity to rise up to whatever status they can by giving them a thorough and good education.

Mr. Cort stated a thorough and efficient education cannot be determined by a number of charts in a room in a building in Trenton. A thorough and efficient education is developed through hard work, dedication, sacrifices and the overall will and want to see children exceed. Please keep that in mind when making this decision.

Mrs. Von Schmidt realizes the Township Committee is in a difficult position. This township consists of a lot of busy parents. Please do not look solely at the numbers and remember there are caring parents out there who are not able to get out and vote. The Township Committee has the power to keep the budget exactly as it is. Please consider that.

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Deputy Mayor Tredy stated his granddaughter goes to the Waretown Elementary School and is in the gifted and talented program. Deputy Mayor Tredy's goal is that every child gets a quality education. That is how the budget will be decided.

Committeewoman Wetter stated the Township Committee will do its very best to make sure a fair decision is made for the teachers and the children. Thank you for coming tonight.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn meeting was moved by Deputy Mayor Tredy, seconded by Committeewoman Wetter.
Roll Call: Wetter: Yes, Tredy: Yes, Lachawiec: Yes

The next scheduled Township Committee meeting with the Board of Education regarding the School Budget is May 6, 2010 at 7:00 pm in the Fredric A. Priff School – Multipurpose Room

Signed and Submitted:

Diane B. Ambrosio, RMC
Township Clerk

Date