

**FLEMINGTON-RARITAN REGIONAL BOARD OF EDUCATION
BUDGET WORK SESSION/REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 22, 2010
MINUTES**

The budget work session/regular session of the Flemington-Raritan Regional Board of Education was called to order in conformance with the "Sunshine Law" by Julie Bell at 7:00 p.m. in the theatre of the J. P. Case Middle School.

Members Present

Michael Bonieski Janine Foreman
Patrick Larmore* Laurie Markowski
Doris McGivney Christopher Murdock
Joseph Zarish* Julie Bell

Members Absent

Dennis Copeland

*Mr. Larmore arrived at 7:02 p.m.

*Mr. Zarish arrived at 7:03 p.m.

CITIZENS ADDRESS THE BOARD

No citizens addressed the Board.

PERSONNEL

THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTIONS FOR APPROVAL:

Certified Staff – Appointments, Resignations and Leaves of Absence

On motion of Dr. Bonieski, seconded by Ms. Foreman, approval was given to employ Elizabeth **Balliano** as leave replacement for Carl Cimino, Resource Center Teacher at J.P. Case Middle School, effective March 23, 2010 through May 17, 2010 and as needed through June 30, 2010. Salary to be \$49,898 based on Step 3 of the 2009-2010 teachers' salary guide with a master's degree and 2 years of public school experience. Ms. Balliano is a graduate of Nazareth College of Rochester and holds a Teacher of the Handicapped certification. Ms. Balliano is highly qualified for this position. Fingerprinting and health exam required.

Aye: Dr. Bonieski Ms. Foreman Nay: 0 Abstain: 0
 Mr. Larmore Ms. Markowski
 Ms. McGivney Dr. Murdock
 Mr. Zarish Ms. Bell

Non-Certified Staff – Appointments, Resignations and Leaves of Absence

On motion of Dr. Bonieski, seconded by Ms. Foreman, approval was given to accept the resignation of Kelly **Ambrose**, Cafeteria Aide at Robert Hunter School, effective March 30, 2010.

Aye: Dr. Bonieski Ms. Foreman Nay: 0 Abstain: 0
 Mr. Larmore Ms. Markowski
 Ms. McGivney Dr. Murdock
 Mr. Zarish Ms. Bell

MISCELLANEOUS

On motion of Ms. McGivney, seconded by Ms. Markowski, approval was given for J.P. Case MS to apply for a \$750 Grant from ExxonMobil Educational Alliance to be used by team 7-3 for technology supplies to enhance the Math and Science curriculum.

Aye: Dr. Bonieski Ms. Foreman Nay: 0 Abstain: 0
 Mr. Larmore Ms. Markowski
 Ms. McGivney Dr. Murdock
 Mr. Zarish Ms. Bell

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Nolan gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding the 2010-2011 district budget.

BUDGET WORK SESSION

Dr. Bonieski asked about slide 16. He asked for clarification regarding the difference between improvement of instruction and instructional staff training. Ms. Hope responded.

Dr. Murdock asked about slide 11. He wanted to know the breakdown of the Francis A. Desmares roof and ventilation project. He asked if a delay will result in additional costs. Dr. Murdock also asked about safety concerns if the Board eliminates the sidewalk project. Mr. Nolan responded that the sidewalk is to be removed and grass will be planted. He also noted that the roof is estimated at \$400,000 and the ventilation is estimated at \$50,000.

Dr. Murdock asked, regarding slide 13, which elementary teacher positions are being eliminated. Mr. Nolan responded that Robert Hunter, Barley Sheaf and Copper Hill will all be losing one position. Dr. Murdock asked if retirement breakage is the savings if that position is not refilled or is it the savings gained from filling the position at a lower salary. Mr. Nolan responded that the positions will not be lost but will be filled at a lower salary.

Dr. Murdock questioned slide 14 asking if parents will pay for every extra-curricular activity their child participates in. The answer was that the district will review the payment procedure and no one will be denied for hardship purposes.

Dr. Murdock asked, regarding slide 15, what is made up of the special revenue fund. Ms. Hope responded with a list of inclusions.

Dr. Murdock asked, regarding slide 19, if Robert Hunter class sizes will be reduced due to the additional teacher. Mr. Nolan responded.

CITIZENS ADDRESS THE BOARD

Alicia Stevenson, Raritan Township, said she is very concerned with the elimination of the Substance Abuse Coordinator position. She feels his role is very different from a Guidance Counselor position. She is concerned about the need for a confidential resource for our students. Mental illness in our community is a concern and we cannot lose a viable resource to help our children.

Mark Legato, Flemington Borough, said he is concerned that front line teachers are being sacrificed while Central Office staff is being left intact.

Chris Voss, Raritan Township, questioned the library clerks' loss of salary and benefits. He asked if any other positions were losing benefits. He asked if the loss of 17.5 hours of library clerk time will result in a shift of that work load to the librarians. Mr. Voss also asked what the salary and benefit increase was for next year and the response to him was that those numbers are under negotiation and cannot be shared with the public. Mr. Voss also asked if the numbers come in lower than anticipated will the board reconsider the proposed cuts. He also does not feel that Central Office administration is being proportionately impacted.

Bruce Davidson, Raritan Township, is concerned about the Robert Hunter grade level enrollment which appears higher than other schools. He also noted that some of the classrooms are smaller at this school. He asked if larger classes will be put in larger rooms. Mr. Davidson also expressed concern about the full impact of cuts already proposed such as the curriculum supervisor and the technology person.

Janine McGill, Flemington Borough, asked if the board is voting for the full budget or for listed reductions. She also wanted to know if the reductions will be reconsidered after tonight's vote. Ms. Hope responded by explaining the process.

Pat Mitchko, Raritan Township, said she is upset that her child's education will be affected by these cuts. She asked what the Board has done to pressure the state regarding its new mandates. She stressed the importance of the Substance Awareness Coordinator position. She is concerned about overloading the secretaries at Reading-Fleming Intermediate and J.P. Case schools. She is also concerned about the reduction of the library clerks and feels this will have an impact on children. She

also asked if the district has refinanced its debt. Ms. Hope replied that this has already been done and that there are no callable bonds at this time.

Marie Corfield, Raritan Township and teacher, asked if the district has considered offering summer programs that would employ teachers and generate revenue. Mr. Nolan responded that he is putting together a task force to look at options.

Diana Kelly, Raritan Township, asked what two cuts are being made to administration. Mr. Nolan responded with the two positions. Ms. Kelly is concerned that we are cutting more teachers when we should be cutting administration. She would like to see a breakdown of the cuts. She also spoke in support of the SAC position and feels more cuts should be made in central office, specifically the Assistant to the BA position. She asked what other districts have this position. Mr. Nolan responded that both Hunterdon Central High School and Readington School District have this position. Ms. Kelly also asked if it is true we are paying a Vice Principal to teach classes when a teacher salary is lower.

Deborah Luccaro, Raritan Township and teacher, is concerned that the library volunteers may not be as dependable as paid employees. She noted that there is confidential material in the library. She is concerned about the impact of the G & T program on the library, art and music programs.

Joanne Legato, Raritan Township, asked when the final decisions will be made regarding the art and music reductions. She wants every teacher in these areas consulted about their schedule for next year. She also wants to know what will be cut next and believes central office should be looked at again. She complimented Laura Bruhn on her great job communicating information. Mr. Nolan agreed about Laura's work and he explained that this budget process has not been taken lightly. He mentioned that all areas have been researched in depth, we have good people in every position and the process and decisions have been extremely difficult. He also feels that this preliminary budget has been crafted with the future in mind and represents that, in this district, children come first.

Alicia Stevenson, Raritan Township, is concerned about the added work load on the school Guidance Counselors when the SAC position is eliminated. She also believes that the SAC is the only position that guarantees confidentiality. She is concerned about the high rate of substance abuse.

Jim O'Donnell, Raritan Township, asked why the tax assessment is going down but the taxes are going up. He sees no choice but to go bankrupt or move.

Lisa Klemens, Raritan Township, asked if the district has a resolution regarding the YMCA controversy and also asked about the charter school. The response was that both issues are being looked into.

Diana Kelly, Raritan Township, asked if there will be a facility use cost for the YMCA and will other groups be invited to offer their programs. Mr. Larmore responded that the facility use policy is generated through the board. He said that no one has ever told other groups that they may not use our facility. He also said that usage fees will apply to all users.

Stacy Colon, Raritan Township, asked who has the final say over who will use our facility if more than one group sends proposals. She also asked for a description of Educational Foundation. Mr. Nolan briefly explained the Foundations. Ms. Colon expressed her concern about school security and the important role Principals and Vice Principals play in guaranteeing security and the safety of our children.

FINANCE

On the motion of Ms. Foreman, seconded by Mr. Larmore, approval was given of the following resolution:

Resolution to adopt the tentative 2010-2011 budget

The Board of Education of Flemington-Raritan Regional Schools hereby adopts the following tentative budget for the 2010-2011 school year:

The proposed budget includes sufficient funds to provide curriculum and instruction which will enable all students to achieve the Core Curriculum Content Standards, and is in compliance with N.J.S.A. 18A and N.J.A.C. Title 6 and 6A.

<u>Expenditures</u>		<u>Revenue</u>	
		Fund 10	
General Current Expense	50,232,897	Budgeted Fund Balance	1,416,560
Capital Outlay	308,543	Local Tax Levy	44,315,256
Special Revenue Fund	789,868	Misc Revenue	225,000
Repayment of Debt	4,240,463	Tuition	0
		State Aid	4,584,624
		Fund 20	
		Est. Special Revenue	789,868
		Fund 40	
		Repayment of Debt	\$ 4,240,463
Total Expenditures	<u>\$55,571,771</u>	Total Revenue	<u>\$55,571,771</u>

As per N.J.A.C. 6A:23B-1.2(b), the supporting documentation of this budget also contains an itemization of certain expenditures required under administrative regulations.

Aye: Dr. Bonieski Ms. Foreman Nay: 0 Abstain: 0
 Mr. Larmore Ms. Markowski
 Ms. McGivney Dr. Murdock
 Mr. Zarish Ms. Bell

CORRESPONDENCE

Twelve emails were received by the Board of Education relating to the budget. Ms. Bell thanked the citizens for their input at the meetings as well as their correspondence. Dr. Murdock received an email from a resident and will forward it to the Board of Education. Ms. McGivney noted this is a tentative budget.

OLD BUSINESS

The Board of Education met on March 18 to discuss the Superintendent evaluation process. Ms. Bell briefly reviewed the process.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was discussed.

ADJOURN

On motion of Ms. McGivney, seconded by Ms. Markowski, the meeting was adjourned, unanimously viva voce, at 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Hope

Upcoming Board Meetings – J. P. Case Middle School

March 29 - Budget Work Session/Regular Meeting

 QSAC Resolution

April 12 - Budget Work Session/Regular Meeting

April 20 - School Elections