

August 15, 2019

SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA

The Scranton School Board of Directors held a Special Meeting for the specific purpose of Budget and Finance, Personnel and the Recovery Plan on Thursday, August 15, 2019 in the auditorium of Scranton High School, 63 Munchak Way, Scranton, PA.

President Dixon called the meeting to order at 6:50 PM with a Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Roll Call: By the Secretary.

Present: Directors Borthwick, Duffy, Gilmartin, Lesh (via teleconference) McAndrew, Norton, Popil, Schuster and President Dixon.

Absent: All Present.

President Dixon announced and read the purpose of the Special Meeting called for Budget and Finance, Personnel and the Recovery Plan.

Communications to the Board:

Virginia Orr, Secretary announced executive sessions were held on August 7, 2019 and this evening to discuss Personnel, Real Estate and Potential Litigation and Negotiations.

Public Comment:

Lee Morgan, city resident and taxpayer, spoke in favor of state receivership and against the recovery Plan. Mr. Morgan asked who the outside source is that funds Pre-K, commented that no one is investing in the city, people are moving out of the city, he is against a tax increase and it is time to make Mr. Blake, Mr. Flynn and all legislators in Harrisburg accountable for the 500 school districts, it is their obligation and time for the school board to have a back bone and stand up for what needs to be done.

Bob Neveroski, city resident and tax payer, spoke of the \$6600 in taxes he pays already, congratulated Rosemary Boland for the fine job she does as a tax payer for her constituents and urged the board to vote against the recovery plan and let the state come in and put the school district back in order.

Marie Schumacher, resident and taxpayer, spoke against the recovery plan, agreed with Mr. Morgan, and feels that with the state coming in the only difference is the state would be the one administering and not the board but a tax increase would still require a vote by the board.

Joan Hodowanitz, resident and taxpayer spoke in favor of receivership, commented about the district's long legacy of nepotism, cronyism and corruption. Ms. Hodowanitz feels we need to clean house and restore faith, confidence and integrity in the Scranton School District.

Ms. Hodowanitz further commented that there are excellent teachers in the district but year after year Scranton comes in last academically and she is fed up paying taxes to support a corrupt system.

Doug Miller, resident and taxpayer, spoke against the recovery plan and feels it is a suicide mission, the taxpayers cannot take anymore and the children and seniors are suffering. Mr. Miller feels it is time for residents to stand up as they are partially responsible as they are the ones that voted over and over for

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incompetent board members and it is time for them to get involved instead of coming out to complain only when this sort of thing happens.

Mr. Miller said people in this city have been overtaxed for decades and it is time for the people to vote for competent people who are intelligent and have common sense.

Carol Cleary, resident and taxpayer said she understands everyone's frustration and how overtaxed and overburdened they feel but we have to think about the children and she does not think going into receivership is the answer. Mrs. Cleary said that if the state comes in they make awful decisions, it's happened in other districts and it's horrible. Mrs. Cleary added that she supports Dr. Finan's plan, it may not be perfect but at least there is a plan and unfortunately taxes will increase but there are no other options.

Mrs. Cleary spoke of her experience in the district she works in, in Monroe County, and for six years they did not receive pay raises, there were 32-35 children in classes, sometimes students sat in two study periods because programs were cut, but they were able to turn it around.

Mrs. Cleary said you have to support Dr. Finan and do what she says, make the hard decisions and stick by her but just don't give up.

Jay Walsh, resident and taxpayer, presented the board with a handout and asked them to hold off on their vote for the recovery plan until next week and he believes they have been hoodwinked by Depasquale because they need to audit the state. Mr. Walsh said he has asked the Department of Justice to go after Depasquale for obstruction of justice, conspiracy and omission.

Rosemary Boland, SFT President, respectfully disagreed with fellow citizens and she kindly asked the board to please approve the recovery plan this evening. Ms. Boland said the plan gives us the opportunity to move the district forward and we need the chance to improve. Ms. Boland added that we can fix problems, we are capable of problem solving, we can't dwell on past mistakes and it's time to move forward. Ms. Boland said on behalf of her members and their families, and as a citizen and taxpayer, she asked the board to please pass the recovery plan.

Suzanne Furey, Armstrong teacher, realizes something needs to be done to move the district forward and she is deeply concerned about the closings of neighborhood schools because of the poverty levels and families who don't have vehicles.

Mrs. Furey also expressed concern of the issues happening at Armstrong and they have been directed not to return to the school until Monday the 19th which does not leave them enough time to prepare their classrooms.

Mrs. Furey concluded by asking the board for more communication in the future.

Catherine Fox, parent, resident, taxpayer and school board candidate, expressed she is very committed to the school district, the school board and the city of Scranton. Ms. Fox is disheartened to hear the people against the recovery plan and while she understands their frustration she hopes minds will change to see that we're in a positive time and she as well as the other future board members present this evening, they stepped up for good reasons and they believe in the city, their fellow board members and the children's future. Ms. Fox understands the hard times and they all decided to come together and work together because Scranton has so much to offer.

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Ms. Fox spoke of receivership and explained that if the district goes into receivership, you will no longer have a school board or the opportunity to voice their concerns; there will be no one to turn to if school days are extended or class sizes increase or schools closed; you will have a receiver who doesn't care and they're just going to look at the numbers and cut programs and will not have their heart in it like Dr. Finan and this school board does.

Ms. Fox continued to say that everything cannot be blamed on this school board and that they are here to work together and she hopes the citizens understand that. Ms. Fox said that if you believe in the children then you should not believe in receivership.

Ms. Fox said that as an incoming board member they will do everything they possibly can to lift the burden off taxpayers and this recovery plan does not include a definite tax increase, it says it is a possibility and also the plan can be amended. Ms. Fox said they are going to work together and continue to fight for fair funding.

Ro Hume, city resident and incoming board member, echoed Catherine Fox and how we got here doesn't matter, we have a choice to either vote for the plan and have control locally of what is going to happen or handing it over to the state receiver who does not have any investment in the city or the children, only to get the problem solved as quickly and as brutally as they can so if you vote no, we have no control and by voting yes, we will be able to work with the plan or amend the plan and work on things.

Ms. Hume spoke of fair funding and that it is a huge issue that has been going on for quite a while but the reality is we have to work with what we have and with the help of her fellow incoming board members, Ms. Cruz, Mrs. Yanni and Ms. Fox, they are drawing together information of all school boards that represent underfunded districts and they are working on getting contact details for all board presidents and then would like to form a coalition of fellow school boards and together put up a good fight. Ms. Hume said that any board member who is considering voting against the plan because of the fair funding issue, it is not part of the fight and fair funding is separate of the plan; it is the only plan we've got so let's work with it.

Jerry Healey asked the board if they knew what a Local Services Tax is. Mr. Audi explained to Mr. Healy that public comment is for comment and questions will not be answered at this time. Mr. Healey spoke of the Local Services Tax and wondered why his local services tax is diverted to the school district.

Col. Joseph Albert, said he is here to help, to close the door but the horse is gone. Mr. Albert said that when you vote tonight you want to do something for the community and there is 40 years of disgrace that the board represents, that they've inherited and to resign. Mr. Albert concluded by saying if they were in his unit it wouldn't be Article 15, it would be an Article 32.

Sarah Cruz, city resident and incoming board member spoke of the negativity and frustration that she has heard at various meetings she has attended and all of those anxieties and feelings are justified because of decisions made by past and current board members as well as legislators in Harrisburg. Ms. Cruz asked that you think about the present situation with the lack of funding, with the buildings that are in need of multiple repairs and of the students that are in need of different services that they may not be getting because the district is unable to provide to the best of its ability and asked for a vote for the future of this district and to give the city residents something positive to think about, give them hope because there are many citizens who are very bitter and very jaded and something needs to be done so that hope is born in their heart and they are able to confidently live in the city, confidently work in the city and confidently educate their children in the city and in this district.

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Tom Kern, city resident, is one of the home owners paying over \$6000 in taxes, does not envy the decision the board has to make this evening and doesn't like either option the board has but if this goes to receivership then all residents lose control and it is at a point now that we're about to kill the goose that lays the golden egg, which is the tax payers. Mr. Kern thinks 6.7% tax increase is extreme, his 90 year old in-laws have a hard time paying their real estate taxes and people like himself who are working and living in the city are already paying 3.4% income tax which is a burden of itself and asked the board to please consider the working people that are paying that 3.4% income tax,

The following was submitted by Director Popil.

The Budget and Finance Committee presents the following resolution for your consideration:

Whereas, the Scranton School District is the true and legal owner of the Lincoln Jackson School-Annex 14 (pin #145 17-060-048) and the Samuel Morse Vacant Lot (pin #14506020016);

And Whereas, the aforementioned properties are unused and unnecessary lands and buildings;

And Whereas, the School District of the City of Scranton intends to sell the aforementioned properties by way of Sealed Bid;

And Whereas, the School District of the City of Scranton will publicize the sale of the aforementioned properties commencing the week of August 18, 2019 for a period of three (3) successive weeks;

And Whereas, the School District of the City of Scranton will offer the Lincoln Jackson School-Annex14 (pin #145 17-060-048) for sale by way of Sealed Bid on the date of September 16, 2019;

And Whereas, the School District of the City of Scranton will offer the Lincoln Jackson School-Annex 14 (pin #145 17-060-048) for a sale price of \$25,000;

And Whereas, the School District of the City of Scranton will offer the Samuel Morse Vacant Lot (pin #14506020016) for a sale price of \$50,000;

And Whereas, the Lincoln Jackson School-Annex 14 (pin #145 17-060-048) and the Samuel Morse Vacant Lot (pin #14506060016) will both be sold in "AS-IS" condition, with no warranties either express or implied;

And Whereas, the School District of the City of Scranton makes no representations as to the size of the property, marketability of the title, general conditions, or any other matters affecting the Lincoln Jackson School-Annex 14 (pin #145 17-060-048) or the Samuel Morse Vacant Lot (pin #14506020016):

And Whereas, formal purchase contracts must be executed within 45 days following the selection of a purchaser for the Lincoln Jackson School-Annex 14 (pin #145 17-060-048 or the Samuel Morse Vacant Lot (pin #14506020016);

And Whereas, the terms of the purchase contracts shall provide that the School District of the City of Scranton shall receive a hand payment of no less than ten percent (10%) of the balance; and

And Whereas, the School District of the City of Scranton will comply with all of its obligations pursuant to Section 7-707 of the Public School Code;

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Therefore be it resolved the School District of the City of Scranton does hereby approve the Lincoln Jackson School-Annex (pin #145 17-060-048) and the Samuel Morse Vacant Lot (pin #14506020016) for advertising and sale by way of Sealed Bid pursuant to Section 7-707 of the Public School Code.

The resolution was seconded by Director Duffy and passed unanimously on roll call.

ON THE QUESTION:

Director Gilmartin said that she understands it is sold "AS IS", but asked if this includes the contents of the building and if so, has anyone with knowledge, perhaps anyone in maintenance, know if there could be anything of value inside the building, it seems like things are turning up in unexpected places.

Solicitor Audi responded that his best answer is that the appraiser did in fact consider the contents of the building but that does not mean they cannot go in to see what is of value before it is put up for sale and confirmed that there is an option to double check.

ALSO

The following was submitted by Director Borthwick.

F-1

It is the recommendation of the Superintendent and the Personnel Committee that the attached list of Appointments, Assignments, Resignations and Leaves of Absences is approved.

Appointments are effective upon receipt of proper criminal records, immigration and medical and child abuse reports.

Salaries are in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreements.

The resolution was seconded by Director Popil and passed unanimously on roll call.

Professional Appointments

NAME	POSITION	LOCATION	EFFECTIVE DATE	REPLACED	NEW
Amelia Waibel	Emotional Support	Northeast Intermediate	8/26/2019	L. Filipkoski	
Joshua Watters	Behavior Specialist	Lincoln Jackson Academy	8/26/2019	J. Honushefski	

Professional Resignations

Lauryn Filipkoski	Emotional Support	Northeast Intermediate	8/7/2019
Katie Cappelloni	Special Ed	Scranton High School	8/13/2019
Christina Gibson	Kindergarten	Charles Sumner	8/15/2019
Mary Brennan	Biology	West Scranton High School	8/10/2019
Neena Hurley	Learning Support	John Adams	8/13/2019
Allison Mendola	Life Skills K-5	McNichols Plaza	8/26/2019
Steve Shumbres	Social Studies	Scranton High School	8/14/2019
Nicole Pizzola	Biology	West Scranton High School	8/14/2019

Leave of Absence-Professional

Kathryn Cawley	Spanish	Scranton High School	8/26/19-1/17/2020-ROH
Marja Litwin Robbins	Grade 5	Frances Willard	FMLA 8/26/19-11/15/2019

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Jenifer Brotherton	Drama 9-12	Scranton High School	2019/2020-ROH
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Non-Professional Leave of Absence

Ellen Pocius	Paraprofessional	Morris Elementary	FMLA 8/26/19-11/15/2019
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Non-Professional Rescinded Appointment

Julia Pawluk	PCA	T.B.D.	8/8/2019
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Coaching Appointments

John Ray	Tennis Coach	Scranton High School	8/26/2019	J. McNulty
James Cicchillo	7 th /8 th Grade Girls Basketball	SSIS	8/26/2019	K. Richards

Recommendation for Permanent Substitute Teaching Assignment

Kyle Coslett	Social Studies	Scranton High School	2019/2020 School Year	P. Duffy
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Recommendation for Long Term Substitute Teaching Assignment

Kayla Harrington	Grade 5	Frances Willard	8/26/19-11/15/2019	M. Robbins
Lauren Coggins	Spanish	Scranton High	8/26/19-1/17/2020	K. Cawley

Rescind of Long Term Substitute Assignment

Olivia Patane	Grade 1	McNichols Plaza	8/13/2019	C. Evans
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Rescind of Leave of Absence

Lindsay Whalen	Speech/Language Pathologist	Whittier	8/28/19-12/8/2019
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Coaching Resignation

Robert Butka	7/8 Softball Coach	West Intermediate	8/5/2019
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ASSIGNMENTS

Acting Assistant Superintendent – Missy McTiernan
Acting Director of Secondary Education/Technology Director – Paul Dougherty
Acting West Scranton Intermediate School Principal – Danielle Boyce
Acting West Scranton Intermediate School Assistant Principal – Shannon Rucker
Acting Director of Operations – Jeff Kelly
Acting Director of Elementary Education/Director of Federal Programs – Ann Grebeck

ALSO

The following was submitted by Director Borthwick.

F-2

Be it resolved the Personnel Committee hereby recommends the acceptance of the resignation of Superintendent Alexis Kirijan effective August 15, 2019 in accordance with the terms of the attached Agreement and Release.

The resolution was seconded by Director Schuster and passed unanimously on roll call.

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ON THE QUESTION:

President Dixon thanked Dr. Kirijan for her contributions and service to the Scranton School District and wished her well.

ALSO

The following was submitted by Director Borthwick.

F-3

RESOLUTION TO FILE OF SOLICITOR

SUBJECT: ELECTION OF AN ACTING ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

WHEREAS, PURSUANT TO SECTION 10-1079 OF TITLE 24 OF THE PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL CODE, A SCHOOL DISTRICT MAY PROPERLY ELECT A QUALIFIED PERSON AS AN ACTING ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT BY MEANS OF A MAJORITY VOTE; AND

WHEREAS, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF SCRANTON IN APPOINTING AN ACTING ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS HAS DELIBERATED UPON THE SAME AND HAVE BY CONSENSUS COME TO A TIME AT WHICH AN ELECTION TO DECIDE WHETHER TO APPOINT AN ACTING ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS OF THE CITY OF SCRANTON SHOULD TAKE PLACE. ALL MEMBERS OF THE BOARD HAVE BEEN DULY NOTIFIED OF SAID ELECTION, THE SAME MAY NOW PROPERLY OCCUR.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF SCRANTON DOES HEREBY NOMINATE FOR ELECTION MELISSA MCTIERNAN EFFECTIVE AUGUST 15, 2019.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT SAID MELISSA MCTIERNAN IS HEREBY APPROVED FOR ELECTION AND IS SO ELECTED AS ACTING ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, THAT THE ACTING ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS DESIGNATE, MELISSA MCTIERNAN, UPON THE EXPIRATION OF HER TERM OF ELECTION, RETURN TO A PROFESSIONAL TENURED POSITION EQUAL IN STATUS TO HER CURRENT POSITION AS OF AUGUST 2019.

VIRGINIA ORR, SECRETARY IS HEREBY DIRECTED TO IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, SCHOOL SERVICES UNIT, AND HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA OF THIS APPOINTMENT.

The resolution was seconded by Director Duffy and passed unanimously on roll call.

ALSO

The following was submitted by Director Popil.

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B-2

Whereas on February 1st, 2019 the School District of the City of Scranton was placed in Financial Recovery Status as defined in section 621-A of the Public School Code of 1949 and section 18.5 of the Pennsylvania Code, 24 P.S. § 6-621-A; 22 Pa. code § 18.5 and is subject to provisions of Article VI-A that apply to Moderate Financial Recovery School Districts as defined in section 651-a, 24 P.S. § 6-651-A;

And Whereas on February 4th, 2019 the School Directors of the School District of the City of Scranton passed unanimously resolution to accept the Declaration of Recovery Status;

And Whereas on February 5th, 2019 Dr Candis Finan was appointed to serve as the Chief Recovery Officer for the School District of the City of Scranton and assigned the responsibility to oversee the implementation and administration of a financial recovery plan in coordination with the Department of Education;

And Whereas on July 25th, 2019 Dr Finan, Chief Recovery Officer presented a Recovery Plan for the School District of the City of Scranton under the provisions of Section 663-A of Act 141 of 2012;

And Whereas Act 141 of 2012 state the Board of School Directors of the School District of the City of Scranton within 30 days of being presented with the plan shall approve or disapprove the plan by majority vote at a public meeting of the Board of School Directors;

Therefore be it resolved the Board of School Directors of the School District of the City of Scranton hereby approves the Scranton School Districts Recovery Plan.

The resolution was seconded by Director Duffy.

ON THE QUESTION:

Director Gilmartin reiterated and confirmed with Dr. Finan that taxes do not increase with the vote this evening, that is a choice made annually when the budget is passed and the work will continue to keep that increase as low as possible.

President Dixon repeated that the budget is not passed until December.

Director Gilmartin asked Dr. Finan to once again explain what happens if this plan is denied this evening.

Dr. Candis Finan replied that if this plan is not approved tonight, she would bid us all farewell and she would be leaving the district. Dr. Finan explained that she is an asset here, placed here by the Department of Education to assist the district in financial recovery as well as academic improvement of the school district and if this plan is not passed then her work here is done and the district would be in the hands of the state.

Director Gilmartin added that the analysts of the team that have been working with Dr. Finan would also leave.

Dr. Finan added to that, that we currently have analysts working in the district at this point in the areas of transportation and also helping with facilities and as there is an issue at Armstrong, we have access to engineers and architects who are helping to determine the root cause of some of the issues but they will not be at our disposal because they come as a package from the state and the state has been expending resources and money in the district for the last 2 ½ years and that is what would happen.

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Director Duffy commented that he does not think there is ever a bad time to start advocating for fair funding, he has been working on it for the past few years and he thinks it is something he has worked very hard on to try to accomplish, he thinks they have been successful in many areas and would like to thank everyone for their comments whether for or against the plan.

Mr. Duffy added that it seems to him there is a lot of agreement in how we got here and a lot of agreement in ways to make it better but a disagreement in the decision. Mr. Duffy said what he likes most about the recovery plan is the fact that it is not final, it can be changed. Mr. Duffy mentioned Ms. Fox and is in agreement that there can be a silver lining in all of this and since he is and has been the only one with kids in the district, they will be affected by this decision tonight.

Mr. Duffy said he spent most of the day going through 19/20 fair funding disbursements and he thinks we have gotten even worse. Mr. Duffy said he knows Dr. Finan can't specifically advocate for fair funding but he knows that she realizes how drastically inadequate the district is and she could be one of the key proponents in making this district better and he will be voting yes to this plan tonight because he thinks it is the right thing to do.

Mr. Duffy thanked everyone for coming out tonight and hopefully everyone can push forward the fair funding fight and take it to Harrisburg and give the next board the chance to continue to lead locally.

Director McAndrew said that the district started under watch, they are still under watch for a reason and now we're under recovery for a reason. Mr. McAndrew said the next step is receivership which he doesn't believe anyone wants and this decision is one of the hardest he's ever had to make because he too is a taxpayer, a stakeholder, but this is the only plan they have so if you fail to plan then you plan to fail.

Mr. McAndrew said the plan is amendable and that needs to be stressed and it is not written in stone that taxes will increase to 6.7%. Mr. McAndrew is voting yes, it is a work in progress and he believes it is the road to solvency.

Director Dixon said it is a very difficult decision and echo her colleagues, thanked everyone for giving their thoughts and explained that it is like a pendulum with the plan on one side and receivership on the other. Mrs. Dixon said she will be voting in favor of the plan because first, for the kids. Mrs. Dixon said she was an educator for 30 years and the kids have to come first, and she truly believes the kids will have a better chance of keeping their programs, keeping their teachers, we have to go through this recovery plan to try to make it right as opposed to receivership where classes will be cut, class sizes will increase and we will be cut to the bare minimum.

Mrs. Dixon said we have great teachers and we're going to have a mass exodus as it is with all of this rockiness going on and she thinks it is only fair to give the kids the great teachers as opposed to the state coming in and trimming everything down and thinks the plan addresses all of that and as for taxes, as everyone said, it is not set in stone what the percentage will be and thinks she can speak for everyone that they are working very hard to minimize whatever hit is going to be with taxes versus the receiver coming in and making that decision.

Director Popil said he will be voting against the plan because he thinks the entire process is skewed, the district is in receivership because of the state of Pennsylvania; they have historically and drastically underfunded urban school districts but none as drastically as the City of Scranton's school district. Mr. Popil said more local effort is provided to our budgets than any other urban school district, 41% of our budget comes from the citizens out here who pay taxes and every year we seem to be raising taxes because we can't keep up with the growth and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has sat back and hurt

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us financially for a long, long period of time and now they put us in a recovery plan and want to tax the City of Scranton at a higher rate and he can't put up with that, cannot put up with penalizing the taxpayers of the City of Scranton who for years and years have been overtaxed because of the lack of state funding and now the state wants to do more of that and he is voting against the plan.

Director Schuster said what he likes about the plan is it does give us solvency within five years and he thinks if this board starts to take some of these positive actions that will get the district into a better place and he thinks the one thing he dislikes is it doesn't take into account the 41% taxes that the citizens put forth and he would like as one of the first things is to urge the board and Dr. Finan to look into that, if we could address the tax base and amending that portion first because it is something that definitely needs to be done.

Director Gilmartin took this time to thank and acknowledge the hard work of the recovery committee and applauds Dr. Finan in the beautiful way she led the meetings and it was always an open discussion, a great deal of information was shared and many people dedicated several nights over the past few months, did their homework and were well prepared for the conversations.

The resolution passed with seven (7) affirmative and two (2) negative votes. Directors Lesh and Popil voted in the negative.

At this time Dr. Finan thanked the board for all of their time and cooperation, she will guarantee you that they will work hard and continue to support the residents and get every penny spent in this district to try to not raise taxes as high as we have to only to accommodate what is needed in this district. Dr. Finan said work will begin tomorrow on the next budget that has to be passed in December and what she will tell you is she will be transparent and walk them through this plan and update them and the residents every time they meet to let them know where they are.

Dr. Finan thanked everyone who came out to all of the meetings the recovery committee had, she appreciates their time and effort and assured parents that they're going to do absolutely the best they can for the community and their children, as they are the ones that count, and they have her word that she will give it every ounce of energy she has to make it the best possible place for children and for our educational programs.

A motion to adjourn was made by Director Borthwick, seconded by Director Popil and the meeting adjourned at 7:52PM.

By: _____
Secretary