

RED BANK BOROUGH BOARD OF EDUCATION
RED BANK, NEW JERSEY
BOARD OF EDUCATION
PUBLIC MEETING
MAY 5, 2008

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Board President Peter Noble called the May 5, 2008 Board Meeting of the Red Bank Board of Education to order at 7:02 pm.

2. SUNSHINE STATEMENT

Pursuant to Section 5 of the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this meeting was advertised as directed by resolution adopted April 22, 2008. Notice of this meeting was published in the *Asbury Park Press*, *The Hub*, and the *Two River Times* newspapers per code and sent to the Municipal Clerk, Red Bank Borough, within 7 days per code.

Fire exits located in the direction indicated. In case of fire, you will be signaled by bell and/or public address system. If so alerted to fire, please move in a calm and orderly fashion to the nearest smoke-free exit.

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Ben Forest, Ann Goldman, Janet Jones (arrived 7:12 pm), Rosemarie Kopka (arrived 7:06 pm), Marjorie Lowe (arrived 7:04 pm), Mary-Ellen Mess, Ann Roseman, Juanita Lewis, Peter Noble.
Also present: Laura Morana, Superintendent of Schools; Richard McOmber, Esq.

4. FLAG SALUTE

Mr. Noble led the Pledge to the Flag.

5. RESOLUTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Forest motioned, seconded by Ms. Roseman, to convene to Executive Session.
AYES: Forest, Goldman, Jones, Kopka, Lowe, Mess, Roseman, Lewis, Noble
NAYS: None

6. PUBLIC SESSION

At 7:44 pm the Board returned to Public Session.
Present: Ben Forest, Ann Goldman, Janet Jones, Rosemarie Kopka, Marjorie Lowe, Mary-Ellen Mess, Ann Roseman, Juanita Lewis, Peter Noble.
Also present: Laura Morana, Superintendent of Schools; Richard McOmber, Esq.

7. HEARING OF PUBLIC

Bylaw #060 reads . . . “Any individual deciding to speak shall sign the speaker’s sheet before the business of the meeting has begun. Please include your name, address and group or organization you represent. All comments will be directed to the Chair. Speakers shall be limited to one (1) turn of five (5) minutes.”

- Ms. Anita Pecorelli, resident of Hazlet, NJ, Red Bank Middle School teacher; read a statement in support of Mr. Wilkins.
- Mr. John Tyler, 69 Leighton Avenue, Red Bank, NJ; spoke in support of Mr. Wilkins and indicated the actions have nothing to do with the schools but with Mr. Wilkins’ private life; and he hopes that people think about the good things that Mr. Wilkins has done.
- Mr. David Prown, Red Bank resident, echoed the sentiments of the previous two speakers; believes Mr. Wilkins is a “top shelf” individual. He hopes to see him back at the school. Mr. Prown expressed his wish that although executive session is private that the process was transparent.
- Ms. Ann Ciabattoni, Peters Place, Red Bank, NJ; expressed support of Mr. Wilkins. She was delighted to have him at the Middle School and hopes he will be judged by evidence.

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- o Ms. Gina Reid, resident of Red Bank, NJ; expressed her desire to give Mr. Wilkins the opportunity to return to the Middle School. States the children miss him and do not understand why he is no longer there. She stated that the children looked to him as more than a principal.
- o Ms. Mena Prown, 44 Hillside Avenue, Red Bank, NJ; stated that although she did not know him well she felt he was kind and cool and does not believe we should judge him. She hopes the board is doing the right thing.
- o Ms. Kim Patrick, South Pearl Street, Red Bank, NJ; stated she agreed with everyone. Mr. Wilkins has been a good role model and can tell that he cares.
- o Ronald Smith, Red Bank Middle School student, stated he wished to speak on Mr. Wilkins' behalf. He explained that Mr. Wilkins was a positive influence.
- o Dominique Martin, Red Bank Middle School student, stated she feels that Mr. Wilkins was a good person and helped her with problems.

HEARING OF PUBLIC: No further comments.

At 7:55 pm Ms. Kopka motioned, seconded by Ms. Roseman, to close Public Hearing.

AYES: Forest, Goldman, Jones, Kopka, Lowe, Mess, Roseman, Lewis, Noble

NAYS: None

8. ACTION AGENDA

Ms. Mess motioned, seconded by Ms. Roseman, to accept the following:

PERSONNEL - 4000

BE IT RESOLVED by the RED BANK BOROUGH BOARD OF EDUCATION that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following PERSONNEL resolution(s) are approved as indicated:

RECITALS:

4522. A. The Board of Education of the Borough of Red Bank, in the County of Monmouth ("Board of Education") is holding a Special Meeting this evening pursuant to written notice duly published and circulated in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Law.
- B. The purpose of this Special Meeting was to initially go into closed session to discuss a personnel action *i.e.* the suspension and resignation of Mr. Terence Wilkins ("Mr. Wilkins") and then to return to open session and possibly take action on these items.
- C. Mr. Wilkins has been given a "RICE Notice" of this meeting and he has advised that he does not wish to have the closed session conducted in public and it is not his intention to attend the meeting.
- D. The Board of Education has learned that Mr. Wilkins was indicted and charged with arson and insurance fraud in June of 2007. Neither the Department of Education nor Mr. Wilkins advised the school district of his indictment.
- E. Mr. Wilkins was again indicted in April of 2008 and the Board of Education was advised of this fact initially through a newspaper reporter. In consultation with Mr. Wilkins' individual attorney and the attorney for the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, it was confirmed that Mr. Wilkins had originally been indicted last year and was again indicted in April of this year.

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- F. On April 29, 2008, Laura C. Morana, Superintendent of Schools, forwarded a letter to Mr. Wilkins advising him that with the consent of the President of the Board of Education, he was suspended from his duties effective that date.
- G. By letter dated May 1, 2008, Mr. Wilkins irrevocably resigned from his position as Middle School Principal and all other tenured and non-tenured positions in the schools operated by the Board of Education effective June 30, 2008, and agreed he would not be entitled to any additional payment for unused sick, vacation or personal days. The Board of Education agreed to pay Mr. Wilkins his regular rate of pay through June 30, 2008, and to continue his family health care benefits.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

1. Mr. Wilkins' irrevocable resignation as principal in the Red Bank Middle School and all other tenured and non-tenured positions in the schools operated by the Board of Education of the Borough of Red Bank, in the County of Monmouth effective June 30, 2008, is hereby accepted effective this date.
2. Mr. Wilkins will not be paid for any unused sick, vacation days or personal days.
3. Mr. Wilkins will receive his current salary through June 30, 2008, and his present family health care benefits through the same date.
4. The Board of Education confirms the action of the Superintendent of Schools in suspending Mr. Wilkins as Middle School Principal effective April 29, 2008, based on both the indictments of June, 2007 and April, 2008.

AYES: Forest (with sadness), Goldman, Jones (with regret), Kopka, Lowe, Mess, Roseman, Lewis (with regret), Noble (with regret).

NAYS: None

Ms. Jones motioned, seconded by Ms. Mess, to accept the following:

4523. That the Board approves Maria Iozzi, Supervisor of ESL/Bilingual/World Programs, as Interim Middle School Principal, effective May 6, 2008 through June 30, 2008, with a stipend of \$3,000.00.

COMMENT: There was a question about Mrs. Iozzi's certification. Mrs. Morana advised the board that she holds a Principal's Certificate.

AYES: Forest, Goldman, Jones, Kopka, Lowe, Mess, Roseman, Lewis, Noble

NAYS: None

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Ms. Kopka motioned, seconded by Ms. Roseman, to accept the following:

BUSINESS – 3000

BE IT RESOLVED by the RED BANK BOROUGH BOARD OF EDUCATION that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent the following FINANCE resolution(s) are approved as indicated:

3267. TRAVEL

Name	Date/Time	Location	Fee	Theme	Account #
Michael Melton	05/07/08 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Monmouth University, Long Branch, NJ	\$175.00	Stars Challenge Science Workshop	11-000-240-800- 002

AYES: Forest, Goldman, Jones, Kopka, Lowe, Mess, Roseman, Lewis, Noble

NAYS: None

COMMENT: Miss Lowe left the meeting at 8:00 pm and returned at 8:05 pm.

9. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

- o Mr. John Tyler, 69 Leighton Avenue, Red Bank, NJ; had a question about the terms of Mr. Wilkins' resignation in relation to his salary and benefits and concerns that his salary and benefits end June 30, 2008. Mr. Richard McOmer, District Attorney, explained that Mr. Wilkins resigned effective June 30, 2008. He is being represented by his criminal attorney and the New Jersey Principals' State Association attorneys. His decision was made with their advice.
- o A request was made from the Board for Mr. McOmer to please explain the distinction between school law versus criminal law. Mr. McOmer explained the Board has different rights and where they do not need to act on the issue with Mr. Wilkins, he has resigned with the advice of his two attorneys.
- o Mrs. Krishna Tyler, 69 Leighton Avenue, Red Bank, NJ; expressed concerns that some students may need counseling. Mrs. Morana explained that she met with staff and students and all will have the opportunity to speak of the matter through the school counselors.
- o Mr. Prown stated he would like to dovetail on a previous comment indicating that Red Bank Regional school district can assist.
- o Mrs. Tyler expressed the students need to be told what happened.
- o Ms. Lily Prown, student, stated that the students need to get the correct information about the situation.
- o Mr. and Mrs. Tyler both suggested that students be allowed to meet in groups to discuss the issue.
- o Ms. Gina Reid expressed concern that teachers are not allowed to speak with anyone about the incident.

Mrs. Morana stated she does not know where that came from.

- o Ms. Reid felt testing should have been set aside due to the incident.

Hearing no more comments, the Board thanked everyone for coming and for their comments and support.

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10. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Mess motioned, seconded by Ms. Kopka, to adjourn the meeting.

AYES: Forest, Goldman, Jones, Kopka, Lowe, Mess, Roseman, Lewis, Noble

NAYS: None

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne E. Darrow
Board Secretary/School Business Administrator