

PARK RIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES – Public Hearing on the Budget

Date: May 3, 2016

Public Started: 8:00 P.M.

Public Ended: 9:20 P.M.

Park Ridge High School – Little Theater

I. Roll Call

F. Church	P. Montalbano	B. von Bradsky	R. Sileo	D. Browne	P. Moran	J. Bruno
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A

Also Present:

R. Gamper	R. Wright
Y	Y

II. Pledge of Allegiance was led by Board Vice-President Daniel Browne

III. Open Public Meetings Statement was read by Vice-President Daniel Browne

This is to advise the general public and to instruct that it be recorded in the minutes that in compliance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, entitled the “Open Public Meetings Act,” the Park Ridge Board of Education on April 25, 2016 caused to be posted at the Office of the Board of Education located at 85 Pascack Road, Park Ridge, New Jersey and on April 25, 2016 sent to The Record, 1 Garret Mountain Plaza, P.O. Box 471, Woodland Park, NJ 07424-0471 and The Ridgewood News, 41 Oak Street, Ridgewood, NJ 07450-3805 and on April 25, 2016 delivered to the Office of the Municipal Clerk of Park Ridge and the Park Ridge Public Library a meeting notice setting forth the time, date and location of this meeting.

IV. 2016/2017 Budget Hearing

V. FINANCE RESOLUTIONS

Dr. Gamper and Mr. Wright gave a PowerPoint presentation on the 2016-17 budget. Dr. Gamper reviewed a chart showing the enrollment history of the District. He indicated that enrollment at the elementary levels were dropping while the Middle School/High School enrollments were about the same. Dr. Gamper then gave a brief review of the budget preparation process and reviewed the history of State Aid the District has received. The 2016/17 State Aid increased slightly by \$14,990 over the prior year. Dr. Gamper then discussed the accomplishments of the previous year as well as areas where funding would be used in the upcoming year. He also explained that this budget

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maintained the initiatives begun in previous years such as the 1:1 laptop program and full-day kindergarten. Dr. Gamper then reviewed new items in this year's budget, including expanding the 1:1 laptop initiative to the 4th grade, additional basic skills support and new elective offerings at the High School. Dr. Gamper thanked the PTO for all its contributions to the District throughout the year and shared a list of them with the public. Dr. Gamper reviewed a list of projects undertaken in the 2015/16 school year and projects that were budgeted for the 2016-17 fiscal year. Dr. Gamper then gave a brief overview of the OWL house, a special education program to provide life skills to 18-21 year olds. Dr. Gamper concluded with a review of the college acceptances for this year. Upon the conclusion of his presentation, Mr. Wright discussed the financial impact. He explained where and why the budget was increasing. Mr. Wright reviewed the five main areas of increase. He noted that salaries were only going up by 1.46% over the previous year. Benefit increases were up 5.22% due to a large worker's compensation increase and increases in medical costs. Special education was also seeing its first significant increase in six years (3.47%) while school supplies largely remained flat. The only increase in building operations came from increased premium costs for multi-peril and student accident insurance. From the revenue side, Mr. Wright noted that there was a \$14,990 increase in State Aid and \$181,000 transfer from a dormant enterprise account, which were being used to offset taxes. Mr. Wright explained how the tax CAP worked and reported that the District would be using a health benefit waiver allowed by the State. Mr. Wright then reviewed several cost savings initiatives, including shared-service agreements and employees contributing to their health benefits. Overall, the tax levy will be increasing 2.56%. Mr. Wright explained that the impact to homeowners would be going up more than normal due to a decrease in town ratables of approximately 21 million. To illustrate the impact of the ratables, Mr. Wright showed that the tax increase, due to the increase in the budget, would normally be \$219 but because of the ratable change, it would actually be \$324 to the average homeowner assessed at \$470,000.

Upon conclusion of the presentation, Mr. Heller addressed the Board with a series of comments and questions. He asked why the Extraordinary Aid was not included with the other State Aid figures presented by Dr. Gamper. Mr. Wright explained that the Extraordinary Aid was a competitive grant application and was not a guarantee like the other State Aid numbers were. Mr. Heller asked for clarification on the fire alarm wiring project. Mr. Wright explained that there was a one million dollar budget for all three schools. Mr. Heller then reviewed the district letter in the budget brochure and questioned whether it was relevant to mention the district passed monitoring. Dr. Gamper indicated that it was. Mr. Heller then commented on the wrestling team's achievement stating that they were the first public school in Bergen County to win the title. Mr. Heller asked Dr. Gamper about the success of full-day kindergarten. Dr. Gamper stated that it was going into the fourth year and students were getting more time on task. Students are better prepared for first grades, and math skills have improved. Mr. Heller asked whether money should be spent on pre-school. Dr. Gamper indicated that there is not enough information like there is on full-day kindergarten to make that decision. He noted that many students do attend a private pre-school program. Mr. Heller then asked about the advanced marketing program. Dr. Gamper indicated that this had been a request from students. There had been growing interest

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in the program thanks to the success of DECA. Dr. Gamper reported that there were currently 16 students enrolled in the program for next year and there are 72 students involved in DECA.

Mr. Heller asked about the varsity lacrosse program. Dr. Gamper indicated that the last two years it was a JV program but the plan was to advance it to varsity. It is now a varsity program. Mr. Heller asked if there was any concern that the program would detract from other sports. Dr. Gamper indicated that this had been a topic of discussion.

Mr. Heller took issue with the Board not mailing flyers to residents. He indicated that the Borough mails theirs and believes the Board should as well. Mr. Heller then inquired as to why Park Ridge had such high "cost per pupil" numbers compared to its counterparts in the area. He chose Cresskill as an example. He questioned the Board as to why this was. Mr. Moran responded that the makeup of the two districts is not the same. He also indicated that the Board looks at what its' needs are and does not compare itself to other districts. Mr. Heller accused the Board of being a "closed club" and commented that there should be changes. Mr. Montalbano stated that decisions are made based on instructional need, not per pupil cost. Several other board members echoed that sentiment. Dr. Gamper asked Mr. Heller if he had ever attended a Cresskill board meeting. Mr. Heller responded that he had not. Mr. Heller concluded by stating that the Board should know more about why there are differences in the per pupil spending.

Vice President Browne thanked Mr. Heller for his comments.

With no more further questions/comments, Mr. Wright read the resolution to approve the 2016-17 budget. The motion(s) passed as follows

M: BVB S: RS
FC PM BVB RS DB PatM JB
Y Y Y Y Y Y A

F1. The Park Ridge Board of Education approves the following:

RESOLUTION FOR THE 2016/17 SCHOOL YEAR BUDGET

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Park Ridge Board of Education, County of Bergen, approves the 2016/17 school year budget as follows:

Current General Expense (Funds 11)	\$28,689,745
Capital Outlay (Fund 12)	\$ 1,211,151
TOTAL GENERAL FUND	\$29,900,896
Special Revenue (Fund 20)	\$ 489,452
TOTAL EXPENDITURES/APPROPRIATIONS and	\$30,390,348

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the GENERAL FUND tax levy \$27,153,268 is approved to support Current General Expense and \$787,213 to support Debt Service, for the 2016/17 school year budget; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the 2016/17 school year budget includes automatic adjustments in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-39(e), in the amount of \$154,280 as an adjustment for health care costs.

F2. The Park Ridge Board of Education approves:

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING WITHDRAWALS FROM CAPITAL RESERVE
FOR PROJECTS IN THE 2016/17 SCHOOL YEAR BUDGET**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Park Ridge Board of Education authorizes the withdrawal of \$1,200,000 from the District’s Capital Reserves to fund other projects/expenditures in the 2016/17 fiscal year.

VI. Hearing of Citizens - None

VII. Adjournment – 9:20 P.M.

M: RS S: BVB
FC PM BVB RS DB PatM JB
Y Y Y Y Y Y A

Robert Wright
Business Administrator/Board Secretary