

February 11, 2013

The Work Session of the Board of Education of the Borough of New Providence was called to order at 7:30 p.m. on February 11, 2013, at the Allen W. Roberts School Media Center, 80 Jones Drive, by the Board President, Mr. Wolak.

Present on roll call were William Dibble, Robert Dinerman, Ira Krauss, Susan Vogel, and John Wolak. Also present were Dr. David Miceli, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Deborah Feinberg, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services; James E. Testa, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary; Sandra Searing, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Supervision; and 2 members of the public.

Mr. Wolak led in the salute to the flag.

Mr. Wolak read the following statement:

This is a public meeting of the Board of Education of the Borough of New Providence. Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with PL 1975, Chapter 231.

Whenever the business of the Board requires it to convene to Closed Session, the session will begin no later than 10:00 p.m. At the conclusion of the need for Closed Session, the Board will reconvene to the public portion of the meeting. At that time the Board will complete any other business that may be before it and the public will then be given an opportunity to be heard before the meeting is adjourned.

The following notice was posted on February 4, 2013:

The New Providence Board of Education Work Session scheduled for Monday, February 11, 2013, at 7:30 P.M. at the New Providence High School/Middle School Media Center, 35 Pioneer Drive, ***will now be held at the Allen W. Roberts School Media Center, 80 Jones Drive.***

Discussion Items

2013/2014 Proposed Budget Update

Mr. Krauss stated that the proposed budget was reviewed by the Finance Committee and a copy given to the Board for discussion tonight. Mr. Krauss reviewed the proposed budget with the Board, starting with the general fund budget of approximately \$33 million dollars, a school tax levy of approximately \$31 million dollars, and using \$976,000 surplus. The increase in the school tax levy will be approximately 1.1%, but because of declining Borough ratables, the tax of an average household will go up approximately 2%. We will not have state aid numbers until the end of February.

Mr. Hasenkopf entered the meeting at 7:36 p.m.

Mr. Krauss explained that special education tuition has gone up in part because of a budgeted decrease in IDEA grant funding. We will continue to support all programs that benefit the students, as well as the iPad initiative. We are adding one teacher in the high school, and four staff members to special education. We continue to purchase textbooks for the elementary schools and replacement technology. This is the second year the teachers and staff members

have contributed to their medical insurance. Capital expenses include upgrading the alarm system, new door and window unit, and replacement of fire alarm devices in Salt Brook School and Allen W. Roberts School for student safety. Mr. Krauss stated that there will be a special meeting on March 5th, and a public hearing is scheduled for March 21st.

Mr. Testa added that if the Borough ratables stayed flat, the tax levy would have been 1.1% with an increase in expenditures of .88%. He stated that since the District has not met or exceeded the 2% cap, there is a cap bank of approximately \$1 million dollars, which will not be used this year. Mr. Testa noted that the proposed budget and budget timeline has been given to all Board members. He would like to review the proposed budget with the Board again at the February 25th Board meeting. He expects to receive the state aid numbers on February 27th or 28th. There will be a special meeting on March 5th for the Board to review and approve the submission of the 2013/2014 tentative school budget. Once approved, it will be sent to the County Superintendent for review and approval.

Mr. Wolak noted that since the District has stayed under cap, the budget is not subject to a vote.

Mrs. Vogel commented that while she appreciates the .88% spending increase, she expressed concerns because of information she heard at the Union County School Boards meeting last month. They were projected that this is a political year and next year will be worse. She was concerned that the proposed budget was too lean, class sizes would increase, leaving concern.. Mr. Dibble asked for clarification about the State being tighter next year. Mrs. Vogel responded yes. Mr. Wolak commented that while Mrs. Vogel's points are well made, this Board has always budgeted to need. Anything between the 2% cap and our .88% increase goes to the cap bank and can be used in the next three years, whenever necessary. He does not recommend budgeting to expectations or rumors. We are aware of the increase in health costs and state and federal aid changes, as well as a \$12 million dollar ratable decrease this year. Mr. Dibble asked if the decrease in ratables is due to vacancies. Mr. Testa explained that he believes a major part is due to tax appeals being filed, by mostly commercial properties. Per Mr. Krauss and Mr. Testa, commercial properties are appealing assessments and winning. Also, there is no new construction scheduled in town for the near future. Mr. Dinerman asked if we have to use the \$976,400 of surplus. Mr. Testa responded that yes and there will be \$623,000 left in undesignated surplus for emergencies. Mr. Krauss added that we cannot keep more than 2% of our budget as surplus. Dr. Miceli commented that we are doing well considering we are keeping all programs. We are continuing our initiatives and are able to hire some new staff. The numbers in special education grew this year. We added a speech therapist and two more aids to accommodate the students. We continue to support technology across the District. Mr. Krauss noted that while we have a 2% cap, there are no cap restrictions for special education.

Mr. Wolak advised the Board members that if they have any budget questions, they should contact Mr. Testa. The budget will be discussed at the 2/25/13 Board meeting.

Update: Personalized Learning Initiative

Dr. Miceli reported today we launched the iPad initiative. We spent the past month fine tuning the infrastructure to accommodate all iPads, covering all bases on the technology front. There are on-going pilots in various classes. Dr. Miceli thanked Mr. Hasenkopf for his time at the evening presentation to the juniors, sophomores, and freshman. The students are very excited. The staff has been working diligently with the students. Mr. Casarico informed Dr. Miceli that today's launching of the iPads was a great success. There will be some tweaking in the future,

as this is an on-going process. The District has come a long way since September 1, 2012. Everyone is excited about moving forward.

Mr. Testa noted that a new fire wall and content filtering on the wireless networks have been installed and are working well. There is enough bandwidth to handle the load. The Technology Department is monitoring the sites the students are using. The Committee will continue to oversee the bandwidth load. All devices on the MDM are being monitored. Regarding software, parts of Gaggle, which include teacher and student emails, goes through a monitoring website and appropriate trigger words go directory to the school administrators, who will investigate. In terms of security, our infrastructure is all set.

Mr. Wolak inquired about the website monitoring. He asked if additional content filters are imposed to block heavier bandwidth sites. Mr. Testa responded they are not blocking any of these sites yet. We want to monitor usage, then cut back in order to keep the bandwidth from crashing. MDM, has a hardware tracking device.

Mrs. Searing commented that she observed a classroom with all students using the iPads. It was a natural transition for them. There was no hesitation by the students. They adapted to using the iPad very easily.

Dr. Feinberg commented that the special education students at the high school had a wonderful reaction to using the iPad. Continued learning through the iPad, even with the most challenged students in the schools, is successful.

February 25, 2013 Agenda Review

The Board reviewed the 2/25/13 Agenda.

Mr. Krauss noted that the Finance and Facilities items were all straight forward.

Mr. Testa noted that he received approval for the Clean Energy Audit. He sent the RFP results to the State. It was reviewed by the Finance Committee, and now on the Agenda for Board approval. Once Board approved, the firm will start within a month of the approval, and complete the audit by the end of the school year. He noted that the Salt Brook School boilers were not replaced in the last round of projects, and the windows and ventilators will need replacement in the near future. This should all show up in the energy audit. Mr. Wolak added that we can then make a decision and determine improvement needs based on the audit results. Mr. Testa noted that the State could allow use of the potential savings from the energy audit to pay for the project. Also, there is a bond come due in 2016. This will prepare us in the next bond referendum.

Mr. Hasenkopf noted that the three items under Education are self explanatory..

Mr. Dibble noted that the Personnel items were straight forward. He added that he was happy to see that we are hiring a former student.

Mrs. Vogel noted that the policies are reviewed before and are straight forward.

Public Hearing

Mr. Wolak opened the meeting to the public at 8:04 p.m. for comments.

Pat Moschetti
50 Sherwood Dr.

Commended the administrators, Board members, teachers, and students for the fine job they are doing this school year.

He asked how the 2% cap equated to the average taxpayer in dollars.

Mr. Testa responded \$145.00 per household.

Mr. Moschetti asked how many retirements are projected in this budget.

Messrs. Krauss and Testa responded one retirement is projected for the 2013/2014 school year.

Mr. Moschetti asked how many classes will have ten or less students. He also asked if there are enough teachers to accommodate the students.

Mr. Wolak responded that while we do not have that information upfront, we will know once we have the actual enrollment numbers. Regardless, there will be enough teachers to accommodate the students. Dr. Miceli commented that we project enrollment numbers at the high school and elementary schools. We anticipate a minor increase in students next year. We will be prepared to accommodate the students.

Mr. Moschetti asked for an update on the progress of the Teachers' Association contract.

Mr. Testa responded that a Memorandum of Agreement was done last summer and the contract was signed this week. We can now disseminate it to the State for all to access.

Mr. Moschetti proposed that for the next contract, the Board consider phasing out longevity pay over time, then eliminating it altogether, as this affects the taxpayers.

Mr. Wolak thanked Mr. Moschetti for his comments.

Marina Kennedy
Alternative Press

Asked the Board if all the students received iPads.

Dr. Miceli responded that the freshman through juniors will receive the iPads this year. The seniors will not, due to launching initiative mid-year.

There being no other comments from the public, Mr. Wolak declared the public portion of the meeting closed at 8:09 p.m.

Closed Session

Mr. Krauss moved to adopt the following resolution:

1. This body shall on February 11, 2013 at 8:10 p.m. in the New Providence High/Middle School Media Center, discuss in closed session, pursuant to Section 7 of the Open Public Meetings Act, specific matters which may generally be described as follows:

Student Matters relating to Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying

2. The minutes of the discussion in closed session of the aforementioned matters may be disclosed to the public after final determination of action has been reached.

Mr. Hasenkopf seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Return to Public Session

The Board reconvened to public session at 10:40 p.m. Mr. Wolak called the Board to order.

Members present were Mr. Dibble, Mr. Dinerman, Mr. Hasenkopf, Mr. Krauss, Mrs. Vogel, and Mr. Wolak.

Adjournment

There being no other business before the Board, on a motion by Mr. Dibble, seconded by Mr. Krauss, and carried unanimously, Mr. Wolak declared the meeting adjourned at 10:41 p.m.

James E. Testa, Board Secretary
2/11/13