

The special meeting of the Board of Education of the Borough of New Providence was called to order at 6:00 p.m. on February 18, 2016, in the New Providence High School/Middle School Media Center, 35 Pioneer Drive, by Mr. Hasenkopf.

Present on roll call were Bernadette Cuccaro, William Dibble, Robert Dinerman, David Hasenkopf, Ira Krauss, Mary Misiukiewicz and Mr. Smith. Also present were Dr. David Miceli, Superintendent of Schools; Scott Hough, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services; James Testa, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary; Sandra Searing, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Supervision and 16 members of the public.

Mr. Hasenkopf led in the salute to the flag.

Mr. Hasenkopf read the following statement:

This is a special 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 10, 2016:

The New Providence Board of Education will hold a **Special Meeting** on Thursday, February 18, 2016 beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the New Providence High School/Middle School Media Center, 35 Pioneer Drive, to discuss the September 2016 Proposed Bond Referendum.

Mr. Hasenkopf asked Dr. Miceli to give an overview of the incident at Salt Brook School.

Dr. Miceli commented that a number of correspondences were sent out today with respect to the bomb threat received at Salt Brook School. It occurred at 11:30 a.m. and the building principal immediately contacted the New Providence Police Department. Police were extremely responsive, as well as the Union County Canine Sheriff's unit. The building was searched and was determined to be all clear in a short period of time. By 12:30 p.m., the building was deemed safe and cleared. Correspondence was put out to the community to share the information, and the building came out of lock down at that point. We continued to have school for the rest of the day, with a regular dismissal. He wanted to commend the staff and administration at Salt Brook School as well as the Police Department for all their efforts. He commented that clearly the relationship between the District and Police Department in moments like these shines through. The training sessions and professional development that we go through together, reflect all the efforts that go into developing the plans for times like these and in moments like this. He thanked Chief Buccelli and his entire Police Department for their work today and is glad that all is safe and we had a good outcome. He thanked the entire community for their support and patience during this time.

Mr. Hasenkopf thanked and commended Dr. Miceli and his staff. He commented that unfortunately these are the times we live in and we need to be prepared for this kind of event.

Mr. Dibble asked if the investigation is still going on.

Dr. Miceli commented that Police Department and the Prosecutor's office are looking into the origin of this call.

Mr. Smith commented that thirteen districts received a similar taped threat about a month ago. He commented that they might have tracked down who was responsible.

DISCUSSION ITEM

September 2016 Proposed Bond Referendum

Mr. Smith commented that at the last board meeting, the Facilities Committee reviewed the plans for certain construction projects in the schools. He commented the committee agreed to have a second meeting tonight to:

1. Follow up conversations with the board.
2. Provide the public as much details as we could and to give them an opportunity to digest what we presented at the last meeting.
3. Have another presentation tonight and talk about the plans before we give further instructions to our architect.

Mr. Smith commented we have a significant amount of debt coming of the books, due to bonds that will be paid off in full. The way we finance significant construction projects in the District is by way of borrowing money through purchasing bonds. In order to use this type of financing, we must go to the public and they must approve the additional debt. He commented that this is the only way to finance significant projects.

Mr. Smith commented that the committee and administration have been reviewing construction needs for some time. He commented that the Long Range Facilities Plan is our starting point. Last year, we went through strategic planning sessions with the public to get some ideas and feedback from the community. We are also monitoring the live birth rates and the security needs in our District.

Dr. Miceli commented that some of the elements of the projects came from the strategic planning sessions. The driving factors at each buildings were Long Range Facilities Plan, security, programs and enrollment.

Dr. Miceli presented the plans as he did at the last board meeting. He explained in detail some of the renovations and new additions. The projects were as a result of the needs of the District, with regards to enrollment, security, programs and Long Range Facilities Plans.

Mr. Testa commented on the renovation items at each building.

Mr. Smith commented that these are just conceptual drawings and the figures are estimates. The actual cost will be based on the interest rate, state aid, and the costs when we go out to bid. The State will cover approximately 40% of renovations and new construction at \$143.00/sq.ft. No state aid will cover furnishings and the money will not be up front. It will be an annual payment each budget year. The State had always provided debt service aid in the past, so we estimate that the District should receive approximately 34% or \$5,500,000 over the life of the bonds. \$10,300,000 will be borrowed by the District. The local share for an average home is estimated at \$60.00/year over the length of the bonds.

Mr. Smith commented that if we have consensus tonight from the Board, we will direct the architect to have a more detail proposal to submit to the State at the end of March. Once the State reviews and approves this plan, we can propose a more detail plan to the public, therefore, the public will know what the District is planning on completing.

Mr. Dibble asked how much debt is being retired.

Mr. Testa commented that we have approximately \$480,000 of debt service appropriation coming off the books next year, which is a 1999 bond referendum that we refinanced in 2006. The net impact to an average home, when you take the retired debt into account, is approximately \$60.00/year.

Mr. Krauss commented we originally had a higher interest, so when we refinanced, we got a lower rate.

Mr. Testa commented that the estimates are based on twenty year bonds. If approved by the voters and we borrow the money, the debt schedules are sent to the State and recorded in the State database. Each year the State calculates the amount of debt service aid the District will receive based on approved percentage, which is estimated at 34%.

Mr. Dinerman commented that this was a new process for him. He commented that the committee went through a large number of projects and estimates from the Administration. He commented that it was an incredible process to come up with what the school system really needs.

COMMENTS

Vanessa, Resident

Vanessa asked two questions, 1- Detail on security vestibule, 2- Was there any consideration for the administration and secretaries to be moved at AWR, similar to the other schools.

Mr. Smith reviewed the security vestibule at AWR and commented that there will be a camera for the secretaries to identify the person at the entrance door. Once they visually identify you, you move through the second door and then buzzed into the school. They considered moving the office, but the cost was prohibited.

Dr. Miceli commented that by having the second set of doors in the interior, the principals can have a drop off area for parents to leave items for their children without entering the buildings.

Mr. Hasenkopf commented that with the visit from the Sandy Hook Elementary School's Superintendent, they gave us good guidance of what we can do and features we need to make school as safe as possible for our kids.

Resident

Resident commented that she thinks it is a really good plan, which minimizes the destruction to the school, and adds only minimal new construction while renovates old spaces. She asked to give a breakdown of the new construction, renovation, and roof costs. She questioned if there is some way to bid out pieces, so we can get more competitive pricing especially from small business owners.

Mr. Testa commented that based on prevailing wages, the estimate for roofs is much larger than if estimating for a private company. He commented that he will develop a spreadsheet that will list each project and the estimated price for each individual amount with regards to what we are submitting to the State. No state aid figures will be included because we don't know what the State will approve for debt service aid. The list includes the debt service aid figures and available as soon as the District receives approval from the State.

Mr. Testa commented as with the last bond issue, we did prepare different bid packages and will follow the same process for these projects.

Dr. Miceli commented that in terms of time frame, the goal is to start these projects in summer of 2017. Some smaller projects will start before the school ends and will continue through the summer. The hope is to complete all projects before school starts.

Susan Silva, Resident

Mrs. Silva commented on the STEM classroom. She asked if there are upgrades and considerations in the vent system for these classrooms.

Dr. Miceli commented that every location, that's identified as STEM as well as a universal science lab classrooms will accommodate any safety issues including venting requirements.

Mrs. Silva asked if the locker rooms in the middle school will be expanded.

Mr. Testa commented that the middle school principal will review the layout and possibly change the size and location of the lockers. The rooms will not be expanded.

Cecile Seth, Resident

Mrs. Seth commented on the STEM programs. She commented on the Industrial Arts room being in the same wing as the new STEM classrooms.

Dr. Miceli commented that the Industrial Arts teacher is heavily involved in the collaborative environment with STEM programs, especially regarding STEM competitions.

Pat Moschetti, Resident

Mr. Moschetti commented he had two questions, 1- Are HS/MS in-school detentions still held in the media center? 2- If so, with that area being renovated, will it still exist?

Mr. Hough commented that in-school detentions are not held in the media center. Students will move to different rooms based on the school schedule or can be housed in the main office.

Mr. Moschetti suggested to have the bond referendum vote be in November during the general election for two reasons: 1- lower cost; 2- higher voter participation.

He suggested that the Board partner with the Athletic Foundation for the track restriping and the NPEF to partner for the replacement of stage curtains. He also commented that should look at surplus to defray the costs for the projects.

Alexander Perrera, NPHS Student

Mr. Perrera asked if the gifted and talented program will still exist. He asked about the asbestos running throughout the school, do we have safety precautions?

Dr. Miceli commented that the program will still exist.

Mr. Testa commented that the District contracts with a company that handles the asbestos management on a yearly basis. They make sure that we follow the plan if we are removing asbestos and identify areas that have asbestos. The District follows the state's requirements related to asbestos management and removal.

Donna Zane, Resident

Mrs. Zane commented on the media center entrance as she is concerned that it might be another security hazard. She wanted to know why this is a goal. She commented on air conditioning in the auditorium, was that considered and why is it not included in the plans?

Mr. Smith commented that the cost prohibited it from making the plans. As far as the entrance in the media center, he commented that the doors will be locked during the day and will only be open for meetings after school. He commented that he hopes that it can be a community resource, and the rest of the school can be locked.

Mrs. Zane commented on the music wing, is there a way to lock it down in a way that you can only go through the music room and not going through the whole school. She commented that more organizations use the schools more often, are more restricted to use today?

Mr. Testa commented that we never turn away any community based organizations. One of the requirements is the submission of a certificate of insurance and some of the local groups that want to use our facilities do not have one. Another reason is scheduling as the MS/HS facility is used tremendously.

Meg Gilbertson, Resident

Mrs. Gilbertson commented that the programs that are run in the District are very successful, her concern is enrollment. What is the plan to accommodate 25+ class sizes.

Dr. Miceli commented that based on the information that we have today, through the live birth rates, in 2015/2016 we have 1262 students at the elementary levels, in 2016/2017 we will have approximately 1269 students and then the trend will be on a downward trend; in 2017/2018 at approximately 1253 students, 2018/2019 at approximately 1226 students and 2019/2020 at

approximately 1202 students. After five years, it will be difficult to predict, but we will continue to evaluate.

Mrs. Gilbertson commented on the math classes being at a maximum capacity, she does not feel that the teachers receive enough support.

Dr. Miceli commented that when we looked at the content areas, our strength is in math, and weakness in language arts. Reading has been critical not only in language arts, but in math. That is why the additional reading specialists were hired to assist our first, second and third grade teachers.

Mrs. Silva commented that she saw the results as they went through each grade.

Mrs. Gilbertson commented that she has young children so that was her concern.

Mrs. Zane commented on the amazing response in the middle school algebra. She asked if there is a way the six graders have can have an option to transition up to advance math.

Mr. Hasenkopf commented on his family's experience with deciding on each child what to do as far as the advancement in math, and in each case, it was challenging but it worked out.

Mr. Smith asked the board if they have the consensus for the architect to move forward.

The Board all agreed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Hasenkopf opened the meeting to the public at 7:20 p.m. for comments.

Resident commented that she is new in the District, she asked if AWR and the MS/HS were locked down as well.

Dr. Miceli commented that with the collaboration of the Police Department, the other facilities were not deemed at risk so it was not locked down today.

Tara Murphy, Resident

Mrs. Murphy asked why the students were kept in the building if it was a bomb threat, and commented that in Rahway and Cranford unless there was an active shooter, they were escorted out. She commented that she saw on face book that six graders were locked in the classroom, why were they still in there.

Dr. Miceli commented that for many years now, in terms of protocol, we have routinely engaged in professional development with the police department, attending workshops throughout the state that are specific for law enforcement as opposed to school officials as well as specific school presentations that law enforcement comes with us. We are very collaborative and in constant communication with the police department, and that is a unique situation. Many communities are not like that, the Police Department has a constant presence in our schools. It may seem like

common sense to leave, it is not always the safest practice. We review our protocols often. The District's emergency plan is reviewed by officials throughout the state.

Mrs. Murphy commented that in the next meeting he should talk about closing off the streets to help with the traffic and panic.

Dr. Miceli commented that the Police Department evaluated the situations. He commented that with respect to communicating with the parents about what is transpiring, our first priority is to ensure the safety of the students, so the police and staff will react to safety first. Once we have more information and know exactly what is transpiring, what to do next and when it's safe, then we will communicate with the parents. Beginning of each year we send out an emergency management letter that outline the procedures in place and guidelines for all parents, so we can appropriately address the students' safety. Once we were all clear, we provided the community with the information about the incident.

Mrs. Gilbertson asked if there are any sessions as a group that you can share with us to understand and what you can share with us to give the children the best care possible.

Dr. Miceli commented that we have strategic planning sessions, PTA meetings, and Superintendent Forums to talk about any concerns. He is also happy to meet with individuals as well.

Mrs. Zane asked if the students get notified or should they be informed?

Dr. Miceli commented that the communication was sent to the parents and not the students.

Mrs. Silva asked where the threat was received.

Dr. Miceli commented at Salt Brook School.

Mr. Hasenkopf commented on the procedures that we have in the District. All were done well based on protocol.

Mr. Perrera asked if the call was a warning? and is it being traced ?

Mr. Hasenkopf commented that they could not comment on the investigation.

Mrs. Silva thanked and commended the District for their procedures and fast action.

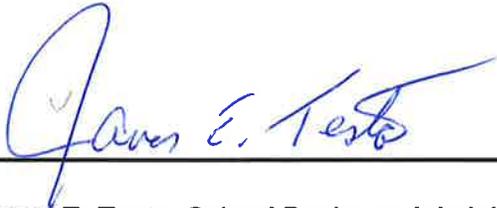
Mr. Peterson commented that he wanted to update the Board on the HIB law. He commented that a group of parents along with the help of Mayor Al Morgan, met with Assemblyman Jon Bramnick along with three members of the state commission on education as well as aides to several members of the assembly, to share our concerns about the NJ Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act. We spent over an hour together discussing proposals to amend the law, providing feedback from a variety of voices in our community, including comments from Dr. Miceli. Thank you, Dr. Miceli, for those, as well. As a next step, Assemblyman Bramnick will be drafting language to propose to the state assembly, and we are hopeful that actions will be taken to address weaknesses on the current law.

Mr. Hasenkopf thanked Mr. Peterson for his update.

Mr. Hasenkopf declared the public portion of the meeting closed at 7:36 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no other business before the Board, on a motion by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mrs. Cuccaro, and carried unanimously, Mr. Hasenkopf declared the meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.



James E. Testa, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary
2/18/16 Special Board Meeting