

**SPECIAL MEETING  
OF THE  
PITMAN BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MAY 6, 2020**

Regular Meeting – Wednesday, May 6, 2020 – convenes at 7:00 p.m. for the Regular Meeting via Virtual Meeting through Zoom.

**With the following in attendance:**

Judy Walker	President
Mary Beth Koniecki	Vice-President
Stacey Pappalardo	Member
Darlene Powell	Member
Bonnie Savage	Member
Robert K. Uyehara	Member
Ruth Ann Wilson-Doherty	Member
Patrick McAleer	Superintendent
Kelly Brazelton	Business Administrator/Board Secretary
Dan Long	Solicitor

**EXECUTIVE CLOSED SESSION**

**Moved by Board Member – Savage**

**Second by Board Member –Koniecki**

“That the following Resolution is adopted:

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Pitman Board of Education that pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Law (NJSA 10:4-1 et. seq.) that it shall immediately enter into an Executive Session to discuss a matter that the disclosure of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy and a matter involving the employment, appointment, termination of employment, terms and conditions of employment, evaluation performance, promotion or disciplining of any prospective or current public officer or employee.

The information discussed at this meeting can be disclosed to the public only upon formal written request to the Secretary of the Board of Education at the next Special or Action meeting to disclose the information discussed.”

**Carried by Voice Vote**

**Moved by Board Member – Wilson-Doherty**

**Second by Board Member – Koniecki**

“That the Pitman Board of Education reconvenes in open session at 7:32 p.m.”

**Carried by voice vote**

**STATEMENT FOR REGULAR SESSION**

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Notice of this Public Hearing on 2020/2021 Budget Meeting of the Pitman Board of Education was advertised in the South Jersey Times, posted at Borough Hall, a copy thereof delivered to all Pitman Schools to be posted, and posted on the district's web site. Further, notice was posted and filed as required by law stating that the Board would meet in Executive Closed Session at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Public Hearing/Meeting at 7:30 p.m. Because the Governor of the State of New Jersey has declared a state of emergency that requires school buildings and offices to be closed, the Board of Education shall conduct a virtual meeting utilizing a conference call. Members of the public desiring to listen to and participate in the Board of Education meeting will be able to access the virtual meeting by following the directions posted on the district website.

The President shall entertain any objections, with supporting reasons, to the conduct of this meeting on the grounds that it violates the Open Public Meetings Act.

**PRESENTATIONS**

**Budget 2020/2021**

- Mr. Uyehara asked about Maintenance Reserve and the amounts. Mrs. Brazelton answered Mr. Uyehara indicating the amount of the maintenance reserve being used is what is in our Comprehensive Maintenance Plan and going above that would require a change in that plan and additional approvals from the county.

**PUBLIC HEARING –**

*This is the first of two public comments we will have tonight. This is public comment and not a dialogue between the board and the public. Commenters may send their written questions and remarks via email to [boepublichearing@pitman.k12.nj.us](mailto:boepublichearing@pitman.k12.nj.us). We ask that you only send one message during each comment period. During the meeting public comment via email will be monitored, and comments and questions will be read aloud into the public record. At the close of public comment, we will respond to questions to the best of our ability. If we do not have the information available at that time and, if appropriate, we will get back to you."*

- Michelle Bassetti of Pitman Panther Music Association  
Dear Pitman Board of Education, After reviewing the advertised budget for the 2020-2021 school year posted on the Board of Education website earlier today, I have a few questions and concerns I would like addressed during the public portion of the Board of Education meeting this evening. As the President of the Pitman Panthers Music Association (PPMA), there are some areas of the proposed budget that causes us some concern. The concerns are as follow: The Marching Band has had the same uniforms since the 2008 season and they are only dry cleaned one time per year. Is there any plan,

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on the district side, to replace these uniforms soon? I am aware that sports teams within the district receive new uniforms every few years, yet the marching band is going on 12 years with the same uniforms. Choral robes are also an issue. The robes that our choir students are using have been in the district for over twenty years, at least. We have never had black and orange robes for the students to wear when representing our school and our music program at the regional and state level. The current robes are red and our music students are commonly identified as representing other schools. This year, we had to borrow robes from other schools so that our students could properly represent Pitman. Is there a plan in place to begin replacing the current red choral robes with more appropriate black and orange robes to represent the school? The line item for extra/co-curricular activities was decreased dramatically for the 2020-21 school year. If I am not mistaken, the marching band, jazz band, and color guard are classified under co-curricular activities and are funded directly from that source. If that is correct, can you please explain why that line item is being decreased by almost \$10,000, yet the line item for athletics is being increased by approximately \$5,000? Further, what does this mean for the future of the music program at PHS? I do not see any mention in the budget for the repair of the irrigation system at Davis Field or for continued maintenance of the field. Is there any money being allocated for that? If you'll recall from last year, Davis Field is in ill-repair as a result of the broken irrigation system. Both the football team and the marching band have had to endure the ongoing issues with the field and the lack of maintenance. During our Home Show last year (which is routinely attended by large numbers of band students from schools all across NJ and PA), there were many parents and even Judges that had expressed concern over the ability of the students to perform on the field. At that point of the season, the field was essentially dead grass and dirt. Is there any money that is being allocated towards the updating/repair of the concessions stand at the Middle School, currently used by the PPMA for the sale of concessions during home football games? Last year, the concessions room failed the preliminary inspection due to numerous health and safety concerns. Even though we were ultimately given a satisfactory certificate, restrictions were placed on what we were able to sell during home football games and future marching band events. The PPMA had to come up with an alternative solution that we made work for the short term, but I would like to know if there are any plans to address this concern for the long run. I understand that the budget for the school district has undergone some major changes due to low district enrollment over the last few years, and I can understand the need to cut funding of some areas and re-adjust allocations for other areas. However, I would appreciate the clarification of the issues relating to the music program as a whole so we can know how to better prepare ourselves for the upcoming band season. Respectfully submitted, Michelle A. Bassetti, President Pitman Panther Music Association [President@pitmanmusic.org](mailto:President@pitmanmusic.org)

Mrs. Brazelton responded that band uniforms and choral robes needing to be replaced would come from a building level and be put into the budget by the school Principal. The line item for co/curriculars decreasing \$10,000 did not affect the music program a majority of cuts made in rentals the district no longer needs to pay. The irrigation system

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is being addressed from this years budget and we are waiting approval from the boro to dig up the street. There is no money allocated for improvements to the concession stand.

- Heidi Brown of Holly Avenue and Marianne Muller of South Broadway: The district is planning to cut another nine certified staff members for the next school year, yet has increased administration and even gave a mid-contract raise of \$7000. to one administrator. How does this kind of operations show fiscal responsibility, when there is a budget shortfall? Where is the shared sacrifice if there is, indeed, a budget shortfall?

Mrs. Brazelton responded that it should be noted administrative lines have been cut over \$150,000 in the proposed budget.

- Gred Yordy of Grandview Avenue - Budget Question/Comment - As a resident of Pitman for the last 22 years, I am very proud of the education the children of Pitman have received. But just as I brought up at this time last year, I am finding it very concerning what is happening within the budget once again this year. Under the proposed budget which the BOE is voting to approve, another 9 teachers are being cut from the Pitman School District. This reduction of 9 teachers comes one year after this school board voted to cut 11 teachers last year. Twenty total teacher cuts in the last two years, which is 13% of the teaching staff. What I find very concerning is that once again this year there will be no cuts to the administration. This is in a school district that is losing students, but we continue to sacrifice in one place- the teaching staff. We have 13 ½ administrators, yet for the second year in a row- no cuts. Why are we not having the high school assistant principal also take on the responsibilities of athletic director, like many schools across NJ do and save a \$70,000 part time salary? This school board continues to make decisions in personnel (upon the recommendation of the Superintendent) which impacts the size of classrooms in all schools. What I continually hear around town is these cuts are because of the school funding issue. This is part of the story, but something is not adding up. \*Washington Township- the largest loser money wise in Gloucester County lost \$1.4 million dollars in state aid for the 20/21 school year. Guess how many teachers are being cut? ZERO \* Logan Township- the largest loser percentage wise in Gloucester County lost \$750,000 dollars (15.86% of state aid) for the 20/21 school year. Guess how many teachers are being cut? ZERO \* Pitman lost \$377,418 dollars (4.03% of state aid) for the 20/21 school year, but we are cutting another 9 teachers and zero administration? Something is not adding up here. \* When I look back at your budget from the 17/18 school year and compare it to you audit on the New Jersey state website, I see that the Unanticipated Surplus in Pitman- the excess revenue after all bills are paid is staggering. The BOE budgeted \$183,000 yet the audit showed the district had 1 million dollars or \$813,000 more than they anticipated. In 18/19 the same story- budgeted \$47,000 and had \$900,000 or \$850,000 more in revenue, after all bills were paid, that was unanticipated or not expected. Where is this money

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going if we are continually cutting staff? How much Unanticipated Surplus does the BA anticipate at the end of this school year? But this school board continues to rubber stamp anything that comes across the table at every school board meeting, with no or little discussion. When will one of our elected school board members step up and question these recommendations?\* The BOE approved a \$1,000 a month raise for an administrator, upon Superintendent recommendation, who threatened to leave the district- when the district has no money.\* The BOE approved, upon the Superintendent recommendation, to send out a flyer to parents of 8th grade students with multiple misspellings and grammatical errors- when the district has no money.\* The BOE approved, upon Superintendent recommendation, to send out the said flyer AFTER GCIT closed their application process. So the flyer was sent to 8th grade Pitman families after kids already had to submit their applications for acceptance- when the district has no money.\* The BOE then scheduled a special BOE meeting, at taxpayer expense for the legal counsel at the meeting, to try to hold the high school principal accountable for the flyer when the Superintendent is the leader of this school district and has final say on all things- when the district has no money.\* The BOE oversees the entire district and employees. I hope the BOE sees the district is losing students each and every year to GCIT, Glassboro, and other places. Too top it off- these students who attend GCIT are allowed to go to dances and participate in extra curricular activities here at Pitman, but that is another argument for another time. I have heard families of BOE members say their children will not attend Pitman High. My question is, what is our Superintendent and Curriculum Supervisor doing to keep students within the district? What programs are we developing to keep students home? When are we going to stop allowing kids to go to other schools, yet benefit from what we offer in extra curriculums? The high school is half empty with lots of potential to offer a music or drama program like the STEAM program Glassboro offers with dual credits at Rowan. Something needs to be done to save the Pitman Schools. My hope is that the rubber stamping by the BOE of every recommendation stops and hard questions are asked of our school leadership. I had hope/faith one year ago in this BOE when the hiring of another administrator under these same circumstances was tabled by the BOE, but subsequently approved at the next meeting. What faith should we as taxpayers have when these decisions are rubber stamped including the privatization of any new Cafeteria staff at the last BOE meeting? Instead of rolling your eyes at suggestions from taxpayers, maybe it is time to roll up your sleeves and work to find a solution.

Mrs. Brazelton spoke about fund balance, unassigned, assigned fund balance and what the current excess surplus number could be for 2019/2020

- Matt Newcomb of Adams Avenue - Board Members - Another month has gone by, in which time additional PEA Union members have been told their positions are not being renewed. At the same time, the district this year had a large number of unanticipated

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savings in athletics, in transportation costs, the costs of officials, entry fees, and equipment. Since the district has an account for unanticipated surplus, has there been any discussion about taking some of that savings to preserve a varsity level program, namely golf? Regards, Matt Newcomb

Mrs. Brazelton explained that fund balance for 19-20 cannot be used for future year expenses such as golf unless fund balance was increased for the 20-21 budget.

- Janine Morrison of Olympia Lane, Sicklerville What is the bid threshold that would encourage a district to go out for a formal bid? Thank you- Janine Morrison

Mrs. Brazelton responded with \$40,000, Mr. Long asked if Mrs. Brazelton was a QPA (qualified purchasing agent), Mrs. Brazelton responded yes.

- April Miller of Oak Avenue - What are the factors for why we previously reported tuition of \$259,653 to \$100,00 for this year and \$80,000 for next? Can you speak to what the BSI reduction (-\$50,632) and OT/PT/related services (-\$46,631) may mean for our students? What is the health services reduction of \$40,883 and what will it mean for our students? May I inquire as to what the guidance line item increase of approx \$38k will pay for? What happens to the allocated \$80,000 in food services? Can you speak to why we see the equipment line item vary from \$10,272 to \$61,047 last year and to \$52,500 for next year?

Mrs. Brazelton indicated that some salaries were moved to grant line items, and staff were reassigned to other areas. The reduction in OT/PT had to do with resignations. Reduction in health services also had to do with retirements. The guidance line item increased due to salary increases, realignment of services/purchased services. The allocation of \$80,000 for food service will be used to offset the loss in the pre-k program of over \$50,000 each year and the additional will be used for freshman sports. The equipment line item varied from year to year based on replacement items, computer and tech equipment as well as some custodial/maintenance equipment. Tuition has to do with revenue decreases, Mrs. Brazelton responded that over the last few years this line item as overstated in budgets and she is aligning to actual figures received. In addition the amount of students coming into Pitman as tuition students is also decreasing.

**CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING ON THE BUDGET**

**Moved by Board Member – Uyehara  
Second by Board Member – Powell**

**All In favor**

**FINANCE & FACILITIES COMMITTEE – Uyehara, Walker, Savage**

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**Moved by Board Member – Uyehara  
Second by Board Member – Savage**

1. “That the Pitman Board of Education approves the following budget to be submitted to the County Superintendent of Schools and the State of New Jersey for final approval in the following amounts:

	<b>General Fund</b>	<b>Special Revenues</b>	<b>Debt Service</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2020/2021 Total Expenditures</b>	\$25,365,476.00	\$489,916.00	\$751,950.00	\$26,607,342.00
<b>Less: Anticipated Revenues</b>	\$10,765,186.00	\$489,916.00	\$326,594.00	\$11,581,696.00
<b>Taxes to be Raised</b>	\$14,600,290.00	\$0	\$425,356.00	\$15,025,646.00

Amend the proposed budget to include the following:

**WHEREAS**, the Pitman Board of Education in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-14.2(d) will increase withdrawal from \$100,000 to \$394,376 from maintenance reserve for the 2020-2021 budget, as reported in the district comprehensive maintenance plans on file with the county office,

**WHEREAS**, the Pitman Board of Education in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-14.1 will increase withdrawal from \$100,000 to \$390,574 from Capital Reserve for the 2020-2021 budget from HVAC replacement projects at all schools, masonry and chimney repair projects at Pitman Middle School and Walls School, in addition to partial roof replacement at Kindle School, as reported in the district comprehensive maintenance plans.”

**WHEREAS**, the Pitman Board of Education amends the 2020-2021 budget as follows:

Revenue:

10-307 Withdrawal from Capital Reserve from \$100,000 to \$390,574  
10-310 Withdrawal from Maintenance Reserve from \$100,000 to \$394,376

Expenditures:

11-000-261-420 Required Maintenance from \$121,100 to \$415,476  
12-000-400-334 Architect Fees/ Capital Projects from \$0 to \$50,000  
12-000-400-390 Construction Services from \$0 to \$240,574”

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Question from Board Member –

- Mrs. Powell asked about the \$45000 in the contract for professional development but in the budget there is less appropriated for professional development. Dr. McAleer answered that was tuition reimbursement and does not have to do with professional development line item.

**Roll Call: 1**

**Yes 7: Walker, Koniecki, Conley, Powell, Savage, Uyehara, Wislon-Doherty**

**Abstain: 0**

**No: 0**

**Absent:0**

**CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION – Savage, Koniecki, Powell**

**COMMUNICATION & POLICY – Powell, Wilson-Doherty, Pappalardo**

**PUBLIC HEARING –**

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- Rebecca Graves (no address given) and Jonathan Campbell of Cedar Ave: Hello, I have heard horror stories about these profiteers like Nutri-Serv coming into our public schools. Isn't the Board worried about strangers coming into our schools and working directly with our children? I know I am! Thank you for letting us question our concerns.
- Brooke Yordy of Grandview Avenue - What are we doing to keep our students in Pitman (rather than going to GCIT)? I saw the Superintendent's letter go out AFTER the GCIT application deadline. By the way, that letter contained misspellings, which was very unprofessional. How do we expect our students to stay in our District with these types of missteps from those in charge? Why do we permit those students attending the other districts to still attend dances at our schools? Are our students afforded the same opportunities at those schools?



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- Laurie Boyle of Kenton Avenue - Who will be responsible to supply food and other food-related resources to the district for the 2020-2021 school year.

Mrs. Brazelton responded that Nutri-serve does the purchasing in some cases and the district is billed for it.

- Brooke Yordy of Grandview Avenue - Please add to my first comment which was a budget issue concerning students going to GCIT. Our school employees are essentially performing miracles during this pandemic. Our teachers are continuing to provide meaningful lessons on a moment's notice with very little, if any, training. Our cafeteria workers are essentially risking their lives to provide lunches for our students. Can't we show these employees a little respect by at the very least, settling their labor contract? It seems like we always drag negotiations out each and every year. Now is not the time for that. How can we get them a contract they deserve?
- Marianne Muller of South Broadway - Doesn't Kelly Brazelton oversee the cafeteria department currently? If that department is now under a for-profit company, doesn't that remove responsibilities from her job description? Will her salary be adjusted as a result?

Mrs. Brazelton stated she does oversee the department and her job responsibilities for the department will not change.

- Robert Tender of Crown Point Road - Prior to entering into a contract with NutraServ, within the district, who was responsible for compiling and calculating the operating costs for the food service department?

Mrs. Brazelton answered that the figures come from the prior year audit and the the first half of this year's figures. In addition, several figures are provided by the state in the RFP process and checked before the RFP goes out.

- Anna Waltman of 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue- Mrs. Brazelton, I am amending my prior submitted question. See below. AW Since returning to South Jersey after several years out of state, I have been proud to call Pitman home. The school district has been a source of that pride: the staff's dedication to the students, and the community's commitment maintaining top-notch public education, have been clear and inspiring. It's one of the things I love about living here. My partner and I are in the process of purchasing our first home together. We both love Pitman and initially wanted to put down roots here, but our agent has cautioned us about looking at homes in the Boro due to the high tax burden and perceived fiscal instability of the school district. We are both fine with paying high taxes if it means the school staff and students are well-cared for, and if the district demonstrates both careful stewardship of tax money and sustained focus on the needs of the students. However, we have real concerns about potentially purchasing a home in a place where teaching staff positions and budgets for student programming are being slashed every year and in-

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district positions are being outsourced, as this will effect the overall value of our future home as well as the morale of our community and the quality of education students receive. I encourage the Board to consider that its decisions are already having an impact on young people who want to move to the area, or who want to stay and put down roots as homeowners. Reversing the decline in enrollment depends at least in part upon making this community attractive to young families. Is the Board at all concerned about what local taxpayers and potential home buyers may think when they find out that tax dollars are leaving the district and paying a for profit food corporation to provide services that used to be rendered by the BA?

- Joann Houck of Medford Education Association VP, NJEA ESP Chair - The loss of your food service professionals, who especially recently have been on the front lines distributing a week's worth of meals every Monday to students who needs them is appalling. They are trying to protect their lives now only for you to take their lives away from them. The domino effect of your action causes them to loose homes, loose their health benefits and you take away the compassion and stability they give to the families of your community. Please find another way to save what you need but not at the expense of your Support Professionals.

Mrs. Brazelton responded that to reiterate, no union employee is losing their positon.

- Greg Yordy of Grandview Avenue - As I did in the last meeting, I would like to commend the teachers, custodians, paraprofessionals, secretaries, and cafeteria staff of the Pitman Public Schools as we all deal with this pandemic. My experience with them in this time has been nothing short of remarkable. I believe it is safe to say that many parents are seeing how it is not as easy educating the youth of today as many outsiders have thought. As we are here celebrating Teacher Appreciation Week, I am once again asking the Pitman BOE why these people are still working under an expired contract? Pitman is the only town in Gloucester County working without a contract. It is time for the Pitman BOE to come back to the negotiations table and settle this contract!
- Questions for Mrs. Brazelton as Business Administrator and Board Secretary-
- 1) What was the percentage increase budgeted in the 19/20 school year for the PEA contracts?
  - 2) What is the percentage increase budgeted in the 20/21 school year for the PEA contracts?
  - 3) Is a copy of the budget presentation powerpoint the superintendent shared tonight available on your website?
  - 4) How many BOE positions are up for reelection in November?
  - 5) Any plans to plant some grass seed on the dust bowl known as the high school football field in the planned upgrades? How about some grass seed in front of Kindle School?

Question for Dr. McAleer-

- 1) You said we are working to keep kids in district to my wife's question, yet can you explain to me why my son could not even take all honors classes at the high school as

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they were not offered? I do not expect an answer from you tonight, but you have my home phone number to call me tomorrow. Thanks!

Mrs. Brazelton stated that she cannot answer about the percentages budgeted because the contract is not settled. The budget presentation will be put up on the district website tomorrow. There are two seats up for re-election in November. The irrigation is being addressed in this years budget and then we can address the grass issue.

- Becky Bates (no address given) - Does the board have any plans to outsource any other departments after the BA has her office refurbished. Thank you, Becky

Mrs. Brazelton stated that not at this time and her office has not been r efurbished.

- Jessica Denney of Ardmore Avenue - I understand that the Business Administrator was previously employed in Deptford. Wasn't the cafeteria staff privatized in Deptford while she was there? Is our BA connected to NutriServe? Is Ms. Brazelton & the Board for bringing profiteers into our schools? Thank you, Jessica Denney

Mrs. Brazelton stated she was never the BA in Deptford she was the Assistant BA and any privatization was not her call. She stated she is not connected to Nutri Serve.

- Mrs. Koniecki read a statement
- Mrs. Walker read a statement

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motioned by Board Member – Koniecki  
Second by Board Member – Savage**

“That the meeting be adjourned at 9:11 pm.”

**Voice vote, with all in favor of adjournment.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

Kelly Brazelton, Board Secretary