

Oakland Public Schools

Special Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 3, 2023

5:00 PM

A Special Meeting of the Board of Education was held at the Valley Middle School Media Center on April 3, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 5:18 PM by Mr. Scerbo.

Mr. Scerbo led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance and read the Open Public Meeting announcement as follows: The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this Act, the Oakland Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time and place thereof posted on March 31, 2023 in the Municipal Building, the Board Offices, all school offices and copies sent to newspapers serving Oakland: The Record News. The Board reserves the right to limit public discussion of personnel items, so as to preserve individual privacy.

The Board appreciates the concerns and comments expressed by the public and will take them into consideration. However, please remain advised that, neither the Board nor the administration may comment on or respond to public inquiries or statements regarding any internal personnel matters involving a District employee.

Please be further advised that there is no privilege or qualified privilege with regard to any statements that you make before the Board of Education. Furthermore, in addition to their respective rights to privacy, employees of this school district retain all rights regarding defamation and slander according to the laws of New Jersey.

Persons wishing to speak must, upon being recognized, rise, sign in, and state their names and addresses. Each speaker shall be limited to three minutes. A speaker who has not finished in the allotted time will be directed by the presiding officer to summarize quickly and relinquish the floor within 30 seconds.

Roll Call

The following members were present: Ms. Kilday, Mr. Mazzilli (via telephone), Mr. Scerbo.
ABSENT: Ms. Cooper and Ms. Shelkin

Also present were Dr. Gina M. Coffaro, Superintendent of Schools, and Ms. Annette Wells, Board Secretary/Business Administrator, and 19 members of the public.

I. BUDGET PLANNING/SCHOOL SECURITY-STAFFING

Ms. Wells discussed the prior year budget defeat and subsequent .86% increase on the tax levy. She stated that at the last board meeting, the board approved a tentative budget with a modest 2.5% increase. She explained that the district was experiencing increases in various areas including health benefits, insurance, transportation, electric and gas.

Ms. Wells explained the accumulation of the district's banked cap noting the health benefit increase, prior year difference from .86% to the 2% cap, and increase in the number of students. Ms. Wells requested that the board approve adjustments to the tentative budget and increase the proposed tax levy by an additional \$250,000 to allow for Class III Officers in each of our school buildings. The \$250,000 would equate to approximately an additional \$2 per month on the average home. Ms. Wells also requested additional adjustments to provide additional security measures.

Chief Sanzari spoke in support of the Class III Officers and stated that the Borough was also in support. The officers would report to Chief Sanzari and the district would pay the Borough. Chief Sanzari discussed timelines to secure the officers adding that there are few officers available who meet the criteria for Class III Officers and there are many districts looking to hire them. Chief Sanzari had estimated that the timeline could be as early as September or as late as January.

Dr. Coffaro and Ms. Wells stated that the district wants to move forward with this as soon as possible. The district is awaiting an agreement from the Borough and plans to have it approved at the April 25th Board meeting.

Mr. Scerbo stated that this is the right thing to do. He added that the district is doing everything right for the community and our children.

Ms. Kilday stated that there are Class III Officers in the district she works in and they provide even more value than just safety.

Mr. Mazzilli echoed what was said by Mr. Scerbo and Ms. Kilday. He stated that the timing is right and this could be done within budgetary constraints.

All members of the board were in agreement with making adjustments to the 2023-24 budget to include an additional \$250,000 for Class III Officers and changes for other security measures.

II. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Members of the community questioned additional building security measures.

Dr. Coffaro and Ms. Wells stated that we are working with Chief Sanzari and our architect on additional measures.

A member of the community requested providing additional exposure to drills during lunch and playtime.

A member of the public questioned what happens when a student is in the restroom during a drill. Mr. Bowe responded.

III. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A Motion was made by Ms. Kilday, seconded by Mr. Mazzilli to enter executive session at 6:10 pm

WHEREAS, The Board of Education must discuss subjects concerning personnel matters, legal issues, and

WHEREAS, the aforesaid subjects are not appropriate subjects to be discussed in a public meeting; and

WHEREAS, the aforesaid subjects to be discussed are within the exemptions which are permitted to be discussed and acted upon in closed executive session pursuant to P.L. 1975, Chapter 231, it is therefore

RESOLVED, that the aforesaid subjects shall be discussed in a closed executive session by this Board and administrative and information pertaining thereto will be made available to the public as soon thereafter as possible and once the reasons for nondisclosure no longer exist.

Upon call of the roll, the motion carried with a unanimous vote.

The board will not return to public session and no action will be taken.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Ms. Kilday, seconded by Mr. Mazzilli that the meeting be adjourned at 7:37 PM. Upon call of the question, the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette M. Wells
School Business Administrator/ Board Secretary