

Special Workshop Meeting  
South Orange-Maplewood  
Board of Education  
March 21, 2013

A Special Workshop Meeting of the Board of Education of South Orange-Maplewood was held in the District Meeting Room at the Administration Building, 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, New Jersey, on March 21, 2013.

President Beth Daugherty called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m.

Adequate written notice of this meeting of the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education was sent to the Township and Village Clerks, the Libraries, The Star Ledger, the News Record and all schools.

ROLL CALL: Present: Mr. Bennett, Ms. Crawford, Mrs. Daugherty,  
Mr. Eastman, Mr. Giles, Ms. Karriem,  
Mrs. Wren-Hardin

Absent: Dr. Gaudelli, Ms. Pai, Mr. Wolff

7 MEMBERS AND ONE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE PRESENT

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mrs. Daugherty introduced the agenda for this 2013-14 Budget Hearing and Dr. Osborne gave a brief introduction.

DISCUSSION

2013-14 Preliminary Budget - Mrs. Schneider

Mrs. Schneider provided a powerpoint presentation that included a review of the budget process:

- Budget development process
- Budget materials
- Required and variable expenses
- Revenues, expenses and adjustments
- Total allowable tax levy
- Banked cap available future year budgets
- Multi-year projections
- Estimated tax impact

[on file in Board Secretary's office and on district website].

Presentation was followed by discussion among Board members whose comments included:

Dr. Osborne commented on how difficult the budget cuts were to make this year and unfortunately, due to the ongoing economic recession, some painful decisions had to be made. All decisions were made with resolve to protect the classroom by restructuring the budget, tightening lines, becoming more efficient and outsourcing wherever we can. The district continues to fund additional guidance counselors to support students' well being.

Mrs. Daugherty thanked the business office for a very transparent budget process and emphasized that the adjustment is not about money in the bank but utilizing the ability to increase taxes to that point. This is the first time that the district is looking to use just a part of the adjustment available.

#### HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

The following individuals spoke in favor of retaining the Student Assistance Coordinators:

Students - Ellie Williams with a petition of 597 signatures, Nash Collings-Miller, Emily Schnorr, Sam Price, Paul Tannis, Carolyn John, Jamie Mountain and Max Fine; and Student Assistance Coordinator, Philip Lester.

Student comments were made regarding personal experiences they have had or know about relative to help given to students by Student Assistance Coordinators, the staff member commented that guidance counselors do not give the same type of support to students.

Barbara Cokarinos, a district resident, thanked the district for the work on the budget and agrees that it should be passed at the level it is being proposed.

#### DISCUSSION

Board members' and administrators' comments and questions included:

- Are there plans for professional development for guidance counselors?
- The budget sets the amount, there is still time to develop plan for implementing funds. The Guidance Department may want to restructure.
- Thanks to students who spoke. The responsibilities of Student Assistance Coordinators cannot be diffused to other positions. Losing them would be tantamount to increased class size.
- This district receives less state and federal aide than other similar districts.
- The Board does not micro-manage the process but it is important to follow up with the administration to be sure that social and emotional needs of the students are met.
- It is not the Board's role to run the school, but rather to make sure the schools are run well. Because a large percentage of the budget is salary, cuts will impact personnel.
- The Board and Administration has heard well the comments made tonight.
- Some Board members support a 2% cap on the tax levy.
- The district met with the two towns regarding the tax burden and moving forward.
- Thanks to Mrs. Schneider and her staff for their hard work to come up with the budget.
- Appreciate Dr. Osborne's plan and have confidence that our Superintendent and the Administration is working with the best interest of our students in mind.

- High level of collaboration among all levels of administration throughout the district was involved in the budget process.
- The budget is fiscally sound and we will do whatever we can to help all students.

ITEMS FOR ACTION

MOTION made by Ms. Crawford, seconded by Ms. Karriem, that the Board of Education:

3006. Approves the 2013-2014 tax levy for the General Fund in the amount of \$104,473,642.

3007. Approves the 2013-2014 tax levy for the Debt Service in the amount of \$3,890,933.

ROLL CALL: Motion 3006 passed; 5 yes, 2 no (Mr. Bennett, Mr. Eastman).  
Motion 3007 passed; 7 yes, 0 no.

Motion made by Ms. Crawford, seconded by Ms. Karriem, that the Board of Education meet in Executive Session prior to the April 22 Public meeting to discuss personnel, legal and Special Education matters and negotiations, the nature of which will be made public at a future date. Motion unanimously approved.

MOTION made by Ms. Crawford, seconded by Ms. Karriem, that the Board of Education adjourn. Motion unanimously approved at 8:58 p.m.

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Cheryl Schneider, Board Secretary