

EAST WINDSOR REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT HIGHTSTOWN, NJ 08520

MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, TOWNSHIP OF EAST WINDSOR OFFICIALS AND HIGHTSTOWN BOROUGH OFFICIALS REGARDING THE DEFEATED SCHOOL BUDGET DATE: MAY 19, 2010 HHS Cafeteria 7:30 pm

The two host municipalities of the East Windsor Regional School District held a joint meeting on Wednesday, May 19, 2010 to discuss the defeated 2010-11 district budget.

The EWRSD Board of Education was also in attendance.

ITEM 1. WELCOME

The EWRSD Board President Alice Weisman opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m. and read the Open Public Meeting Act Statement as follows: "Written advance notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with law. Minutes of this meeting are being kept by the Board Secretary and will be made available promptly to any member of the public requesting them from the Board Secretary at the Administration building 25A Leshin Lane, Hightstown, NJ. Minutes will be provided at cost and in accordance with Board policy."

Ms. Weisman asked "Are there any Board members present who believe this meeting to be in violation of the Open Public Meeting Act?" No one objected. "There being none, we may proceed."

Members Present: Paul Connolly, Bruce Ettman Suzann Fallon, Bonnie Fayer, Christine Harrington, Bob Laverty Susan Lloyd, Kennedy Paul, and Alice Weisman.

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Michael Dzwonar, Interim Superintendent
Kurt Stumbaugh, Business Administrator/Board Secretary
David Coates, Board Legal Counsel

Fire Code Compliance: Ms. Weisman made the following announcement: "In compliance with the fire code of the State of New Jersey, I call your attention to the emergency exit for this room, which is located....." (Ms. Weisman pointed to the emergency exit.)

ITEM 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Weisman asked those present to join in the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

The meeting was then turned over to East Windsor Mayor Janice Mironov and Hightstown Mayor Robert.Patten.

Mayor Mironov opened the meeting with the public comment session.

Summary of Public Comments:

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Bonnie Crisco of East Windsor is a teacher in another district. Sees firsthand how far we surpass many surrounding districts. Further cuts to our budget would be devastating. It will result in our district moving backwards and hurt our progress. Asked both councils to keep the budget intact.

Joan Upbin of East Windsor is the District KidCare and Turning Point supervisor since 1987. Our extended day program is a model program that is highly valued by the community. Over the years thousands of parents have used our services including district employees. As her position has been eliminated, she does not understand the logic behind this decision. Kidcare and Turning Point. have always been funded by tuition. Taxpayer money does not fund Kidcare and Turning Point. Unless you plan on eliminating these programs, you will need someone to run them efficiently and effectively.

Dick Tuliszewski of Hightstown commented that the task is to save money not to cut jobs. Spoke in support of the facilities staff. Reducing custodial and maintenance staff will cost us in the long run. He read a long list of maintenance department jobs and compared the cost if we were to outsource these jobs. He showed that we have saved significant money for the district by having our maintenance and custodial needs taken care of in house. We cannot afford to let these people go.

Terry Tuliszewski of Hightstown stated that she does not support the teacher wage freeze as teachers did not create the problem. Knows firsthand how hard the teachers of this district work. Disgusted by how the teachers are being attacked and criticized. She gave examples of her concerns with district spending. She is also concerned that further cuts will lead to a decline in the quality of our children's education. Cuts hurt our kids.

Stu Dolgon of East Windsor commented on the inaccurate information out there. The local newspaper doesn't get the facts right. Misquotes do not present the facts the public needs to know. The Board's number one priority is and has always been the quality education for our children. Cannot reduce budget where education will suffer. EWRSD cannot be run like a business. We are mandated to deliver the service in spite of the economy. A commercial business could reduce the level of service, but we cannot.

Lynn Woods of Hightstown commented that our financial crisis requires unity. To blame and accuse is not the answer. This budget is not frivolous. In the past the budget may have been reduced but the results were devastating. Spoke about the progress the District has achieved under former Superintendent Bolandi. Our children deserve a quality education not just an adequate one. More cuts would be harmful - do not reduce budget further.

Amy Gazelah of East Windsor thanked the Board for their time and dedication. Urges the community to communicate and maintain an ongoing and open dialogue with the Board and administration.

Gary Lucas of Hightstown commented that the budget should be cut. NJ has the highest education cost of any state in the union. Since the teachers union isn't sharing in the cuts, only way to send a message is to cut a few more teachers.

Michael Winkler of East Windsor commented that teacher union is willing to eat their young. In a time when people are lucky enough to have a job, does not understand the logic of not accepting a wage freeze to protect the new and upcoming teachers who are untenured. Are they really concerned about the future of the education of our children? Administrators who do not also teach does not make sense and is a waste and inefficient.

Janice Mastriano of Hightstown spoke on behalf of the senior citizens of the community. Seniors and low income residents cannot sustain the tax burden. We do not want to move but the excessively high cost of our school system is forcing us to make this decision. The tax payers have voted down the budget. Asks the school board and the municipalities to reduce the school budget.

Ellen Murphy of East Windsor commented that the teachers should not always be the ones who are penalized. Asked about the high rates we pay our substitute teachers and if the prior Superintendent is being paid consulting fees. Regarding Supervisors and Department heads, asked how many do we have and what are their duties, and are assistant principals really needed?

Darwin Page of East Windsor is the PLD librarian. He commented that he doesn't understand the reduction in force of the district librarians. Read off statistics that support the fact that kids who read books become better readers. School librarians do more than read stories and check out books. Libraries provide support and materials for the entire district curriculum. These materials help to better student performance.

Pat Laudati teacher at WCB commented that we are here for the students. All the teachers are valued professionals. She and her fellow teachers have earned their salary and benefits. Governor Christie undermines the local districts. Please don't make more cuts tonight and compromise the quality of education for our students.

Virginio Cavalli of East Windsor commented on the tax impact of the budget and that his no vote for the budget is a statement that the budget is too high. We residents have an overwhelming tax burden and a no tax increase budget is needed.

Tom Niebojewski of East Windsor apologized that he did not vote on school election. Spoke about his positive experience as a student of the District and said that the teachers and afterschool programs were very beneficial to the success he has achieved. The programs should not be cut. You can't run the district like a corporation. If so we should do what most companies do when making cuts and make them at the top.

Rachelle St. Phard (sp?) of East Windsor is shocked at the Kidcare issue, and is confused since it is independently funded. Maintenance issues should be considered. The statistics she heard this evening are alarming. Heard rumors that middle school sports may be cut. If so, would gladly participate in "pay to play". If sports are cut then pay to play should be offered.

Denis Kenny of East Windsor commented that we are developing well rounded students. Student self esteem is important. Maintain the excellence we have so far achieved in the classroom.

Hannah Crisco of East Windsor, 4th grader at EMK, said that her class is crowded. Firing teachers will make classes more crowded. Clubs and Kidcare are needed. We need sports and band.

Colleen Murphy of East Windsor and sophomore class president commented that she takes part in many athletic and co-curricular clubs and activities and this has helped her become a well rounded and responsible student. These activities are just as valuable as the regular curriculum and should not be cut.

Joann Zapicchi of Robbinsville is a HHS Phys. Ed. teacher. Commented on the possibility of closing the pool. Spoke about the numerous students who come to high school who cannot swim and learn to at HHS. The pool is a valuable asset to the school. In addition all athletics and the co-curricular activities should be supported - not cut.

David Abalos of East Windsor commented on the large number of people who have shown up at the budget meetings and how it shows the involvement and concern of the community. Spoke highly of the EWRSD staff and how they are very committed to student success.

Maryann Lewellen of East Windsor commented that the voters voted down the budget and both councils should keep this in mind. There is waste and areas to cut without eliminating teachers and maintenance.

End of Public Comment

Mayor Mironov thanked everyone for their comments and the meeting had a short recess at this time.

Hightsown mayor Robert Patten introduced the following budget resolution:

HIGHTSTOWN COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2010-133

Regarding the Defeated 2010-11 Budget of the East Windsor Regional School District.

WHEREAS, in an election held on April 20, 2010, the proposed East Windsor Regional School District budget for the school year 2010-2011, with a proposed general fund tax levy in the amount of \$56,804,450 was defeated in all but one voting district by a total of 2,159 votes to 1,565 votes; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A 18A:22-37 provides that if the voters reject any items of a budget submitted at the annual school election, thereafter, the member governing bodies of each municipality within a regional school district shall consult with the board of education and determine the amounts which they deem necessary to provide a thorough and efficient system of schools for the regional district for the ensuing year; and

WHEREAS, joint open public meetings of the Hightstown Borough Council, East Windsor Township Council and East Windsor Regional School District Board of Education, to hear public comment and to review the defeated budget, were held on May 11, 2010 and May 19, 2010; and

WHEREAS, these budget adjustment are being made in consultation with and with the concurrence of the East Windsor Township Council and the East Windsor Regional School District,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Hightstown, County of Mercer, and State of New Jersey as follows:

1. For reasons set forth on the attached, the following sums shall be raised by taxation in the East Windsor Regional District and certified to be necessary to provide a thorough and efficient system of schools. These are potential budget reductions that are to be recommended to the Board of Education for consideration:

Salary Freeze by Management Bargaining Unit	\$ 74,000
Salary Freeze by Non-Union Administrators	128,000
Postpone or Modify Technology and Security Data Center Project	250,000
Eliminate Repro Services	130,000
Grade 6 World Language Exploratory Program	30,000
Eliminate Substitute Teachers at HHS (Singletons)	100,000
Reduce Substitute Teacher Pay by \$5.00	50,000
Maintenance Supply Account	35,000
Reduce Security Staff at HHS and/or MHK	85,000
Custodian Substitutes/Overtime	30,000
Clerical Substitutes	20,000
Middle School Activities-20% Reduction (Reduce Costs Not Activities)	35,534
TOTAL	\$967,534

Current expenses are 55,836,871

This represents a reduction of \$967,534 from the 2010-2011 proposed budget.

2. The municipal clerk shall forward of copy of the Resolution certifying the amounts to be raised for current expenses to the East Windsor Regional School District, The Council of East Windsor Township, The Hightstown Borough Tax Assessor, and The Mercer County Superintendent of Schools and the Mercer County Board of Taxation no later than May 19, 2010.

Mayor Patten asked for discussion

Hightstown Councilwoman McGinty commented that she has a tremendous respect for the work of the school board. Has done research and is aware of the costs to the district and taxpayers. The two councils have been also working on their own municipal budgets in addition to the school district's budget and this has been an arduous process. The District budget is far more complex task. She does not have the expertise to understand the line items the school board has cut. We are basically asked to arbitrarily cut from that budget and is not comfortable that the councils have made the wisest cuts. She is against the cuts and will have to vote no.

Councilman Bond said he recognizes that the State cut of 4.1 million. The voters have spoken and a lot of them would like to see an additional cut of 1.7 million dollars and more. Feels this is a pretty good compromise. The committee did a good job. Unfortunately the State system is horrible. It is unfair for the board to do all that work and have the voters defeat it and give it to the councils who do not have the expertise that the school board does. He urged people to write to their legislators to get this system and process off the books.

Councilman Musing commented that he agrees that the system is broken. The council does not have the expertise to know what the schools require. Understands the voters have spoken and agrees that taxes are high. Cutting education will undermine our future and the education of our kids is our lifeline. Personally feels he cannot support the resolution and will vote no.

Mayor Patten asked for a roll call vote.

On a roll call vote of the Hightstown Borough Municipal Council, Resolution 2010-133 is passed with 5 yes, 2 no votes.

EAST WINDSOR TOWNSHIP RESOLUTION R2020-101

Mayor Mironov introduced **EAST WINDSOR TOWNSHIP RESOLUTION R2010-101** which was a parallel and identical resolution on the budget adjustments in concurrence with the Hightstown Borough Council.

Mayor Mironov commented that the process is not fun but it is a mandated one that we must perform. It is an onerous job and noted that the school budget was well developed and the school board is to be commended for their excellent work. The budget was carefully crafted and the councils tried very hard to identify cuts that would have minimal impact on class instruction and on activities. We all try to do the best for the community

Mayor Mironov asked for discussion.
No one spoke.

Mayor Mironov asked for a vote.

On a roll call vote of the East Windsor Township Council, Resolution R2010-101 passes unanimously with 5 yes and 0 no votes.

The joint meeting of the East Windsor Township and Hightstown Borough officials was adjourned by the councils

MINUTES OF THE EWRSD BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING ON MAY 19, 2010

At this point the District Board of Education proceeded with their meeting.

ITEM 3.A APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Lavery moved seconded by Mr. Paul to approve the agenda as submitted.
On roll call vote, motion to approve was carried unanimously.

3B. RESOLUTION CLOSED SESSION

Mr. Lavery moved seconded by Mr. Paul to approve the following.

Be it Resolved, that the East Windsor Regional School District Board of Education will hold a closed session at its meeting on May 19, 2010.

This closed session involves contract negotiations, personnel matters, attorney client privilege and litigation. Minutes of the closed session are made available to the public when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

On a roll call vote of the Board, motion to approve was carried unanimously.

The Board went into Executive Session.

4. OPEN SESSION

5. ADJOURN

Ms. Lloyd moved to adjourn.

Kurt Stumbaugh, Board Secretary