

Board of Education
Nutley, New Jersey

March 9, 1987

The Special Meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Nutley, New Jersey, was held in the Board Room, 375 Bloomfield Avenue, on Monday, March 9, 1987 at 8:00 p.m., with Mr. Charles W. Kucinski, Jr., President, presiding.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF MEETING:

Mr. Kucinski read the following:

"According to the provisions of the 'Open Public Meetings Act' (Chapter 231, P.L. 1975) and NJSA 18A:22-11, proper notice of this Special Meeting was made on February 26, 1987 and March 2, 1987. Said notice was:

1. Published in The Nutley Sun on February 26, 1987.
2. Posted at the entrance of the Board Office.
3. Mailed or delivered, and/or telephoned to The Nutley Sun, the Newark Star Ledger, the Passaic Herald News, and the Nutley Journal.
4. Mailed or delivered, and/or telephoned to the Nutley Township Clerk.

"The purpose of this meeting is:

1. Conduct the Public Hearing on the 1987-88 school budget.
2. Adopt the 1987-88 school budget.
3. Adopt a resolution regarding the 1987 school election.
4. Conduct such other business that may properly come before the Board of Education.

"Formal action may be taken."

CALL OF ROLL:

The other members present at roll call were: Dr. Anthony N. Baratta, Mr. Sam Battaglia, Mrs. Sally Goodson, Mr. Frank V. Hermo, Mr. Charles J. Piro, Mr. Gerard T. Restaino, Mr. Robert J. Rusignuolo and Mrs. Rosalie C. Scheckel. Sixteen citizens were present.

PRESENTATION OF 1987/1988 BUDGET:

Mr. Kucinski presented the proposed 1987/1988 budget. Mr. Kucinski stated that the budget increased 7.4% over last year and explained the budget process.

Mr. Rusignuolo left the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Mr. Kucinski explained that the budget is over \$800,000 under the budget "cap." Some of the budget problems faced by the Board include: insurance costs, the "Right-to-Know" law, the loss of \$98,000 in State aid, the fact that the district receives only 14% of its budget in State aid whereas Belleville receives 33%. The Board took \$600,000 out of surplus to help hold taxes down. Mr. Kucinski pointed out that Nutley ranks 19th in Essex County in costs of education per student.

Mr. Piro commented that school taxes will increase by 19 points. The county and municipality also have financial problems which means taxes will show a large increase. Mr. Piro suggested citizens contact State officials since the Governor is interested in education but keeps cutting our subsidies. Mr. Piro added that he is not happy with a 19 point tax increase but realizes that it is important for the district. Mr. Piro feels the budget is a good one and urged the citizens to support it.

Mrs. Scheckel commented that the school budget is the only one that can be voted on and stated that she hoped the citizens would not take out their displeasure on the entire property tax increase by voting against the budget. The budget came in far under the allowable cap and she also urged citizens to support it.

Mr. Hermo stated that this budget represents what the professionals feel is necessary to continue having an excellent educational system. He added that the Board cut out approximately \$235,000 from the original budget.

Dr. Baratta stated that last year our school tax rate increased by 3%, the County 17% and the Township 11%. The school budget is for the children's education. The Board has been very responsible, and Dr. Baratta strongly urged the citizens to continue supporting the school budget as their help is needed.

Mr. Kucinski noted that the enrollment and the budget reflects the elimination of six teaching positions and one instructional classroom aide.

HEARING OF CITIZENS (Agenda Items Only):

Mr. R. Gregory Nicholls, 62 Bromley Place, made comments with regard to the monies the Board had appropriated from surplus for the past three years, to which Mr. Kucinski replied. Mr. Nicholls also made reference to the declining enrollments versus budget increases and questioned if classroom space is available because of the fewer number of students.

Mr. Sig Bogdanowicz, 208 Alexander Avenue, questioned how the 7.0% tax increase was determined as he came up with a different percent, to which Mr. Sincaglia explained that the 7.0% increase is for the 1987 tax year. Mr. Bogdanowicz also questioned if any classroom space is available, to which Mr. Kucinski replied. Dr. Fadule also commented, explaining the ratios used to determine the number of teaching positions needed, which affects classroom space. Dr. Fadule elaborated by saying that in grades 1-3, the ratio is 25 to 1. After you reach 50 students, a third teacher is utilized. In grades 4-6, 27 students per class is the number agreed upon, and when 54 students are in a particular grade, a third teacher is hired. There is no fixed amount of students per teacher beyond the sixth grade because many different factors determine class size.

Mr. Bogdanowicz stated that he felt cuts should be made in the budget, adding that he felt, however, that Dr. Fadule has done an excellent job. Mr. Piro commented that the State and Federal governments are cutting their budgets by taking money away from municipalities.

Mr. Rusignuolo returned at 8:32 p.m.

Mrs. Scheckel added that since so much of the budget is determined by mandatory programs and fixed costs, the only place to reduce would be to cut programs.

Mrs. Joan Rubino, 48 North Road, asked why other districts receive more State aid than Nutley. Dr. Fadule explained that the formula for determining State aid is based on property values rather than personal income. A town such as Nutley has very high property values, but the income of the residents is not comparable to the value of the property.

Mrs. Mary Ann Gabriele, 21 Emily Avenue, questioned if the curriculum would be hurt if the budget is defeated, to which Mr. Kucinski replied.

Mrs. Rubino questioned the number of guidance counselors in the high school, to which Dr. Fadule replied.

Mrs. Sera Shuster, 462 Chestnut Street, questioned how much more in taxes the Board would want.

Mr. Nicholls asked questions regarding the expenses for Operation of Plant, to which Mr. Sincaglia responded. Mr. Nicholls then questioned the money budgeted for Other Expenses in the Administration account, to which Mr. Sincaglia replied.

Mrs. Rubino made comments regarding the costs of curriculum workshops.

Mr. Bill Dunn, 124 Satterthwaite Avenue, expressed his concern with seeing school buses driving citizens around, adding that cuts should be made in the budget.

Mrs. Shuster asked questions relating to account 740 - Other Expenses for Plant/Grounds/Equipment Maintenance.

Mrs. Rubino asked if computers were a mandated State program. Mr. Sincaglia indicated that they were not.

ADOPTING BUDGET FOR THE 1987/1988 SCHOOL YEAR:

Mr. Hermo presented and moved the adoption of the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Rusignuolo. Upon being put to a roll call vote the resolution was adopted with Dr. Baratta, Mr. Battaglia, Mrs. Goodson, Mr. Hermo, Mr. Piro, Mr. Rusignuolo, Mrs. Scheckel and Mr. Kucinski voting aye and Mr. Restaino voting nay:

WHEREAS, the Board of Education of the Township of Nutley adopted a tentative budget for the 1987/1988 school year on February 4, 1987, and

WHEREAS, said tentative budget was properly advertised on February 26, 1987, and

WHEREAS, the Public Hearing on the budget was conducted on March 9, 1987,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education hereby adopts the official budget for the 1987/1988 school year in the following amounts:

Current Expense	\$18,407,934.00
Debt Service	<u>108,091.25</u>
Total Budget	\$18,516,025.25, of which

the following amount shall be raised by local tax levy:

Current Expense	\$14,708,910.00
Debt Service	<u>103,599.25</u>
Total	\$14,812,509.25, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Secretary be authorized to place on the ballot at the Annual School Election to be held on April 7, 1987, the proposal to approve the Current Expense portion of the 1987/1988 school budget. (The complete budget for 1987/1988 is attached as Appendix 1.)

SCHOOL ELECTION:

Mr. Hermo presented and moved the adoption of the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Battaglia. On a roll call vote the resolution was unanimously adopted:

WHEREAS, the Annual School Election shall take place on April 7, 1987, and

WHEREAS, at said election the legal voters of the school district will elect three members to the Board of Education for a term of three years and one member of the Board of Education for a one-year unexpired term, and

WHEREAS, the legal voters of the school district will vote on the proposed tax levy for current expense for the 1987/1988 school year in the amount of \$14,708,910,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Secretary of the Board of Education is hereby directed to post notices on each schoolhouse in the district and the following named public places: Township Hall, The Nutley Sun Office, Rite Aid Pharmacy, Gary's Pharmacy, Little's Pharmacy, Fred's Party Shop, and Griffith Shade Shop, no later than March 27, 1987, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the boundaries of the sections of the school district, the voters of which shall be entitled to vote at the respective polling places, be as herein designated:

<p><u>Polling District No. 1</u> Lincoln School Ward 1 - Districts 1, 2 & 7</p>	<p><u>Polling District No. 4</u> Yantacaw School Ward 2 - Districts 1, 5 & 6</p>
<p><u>Polling District No. 2</u> Radcliffe School Ward 1- District 6</p>	<p><u>Polling District No. 5</u> Yantacaw School Ward 3 - Districts 3, 4 & 5</p>
<p><u>Polling District No. 3</u> Franklin School Ward 1 - Districts 3, 4 & 5</p>	<p><u>Polling District No. 6</u> Washington School Ward 3 - Districts 1, 2, 6 & 7</p>
<p><u>Polling District No. 7</u> Spring Garden School Ward 2 - Districts 2, 3 & 4 and</p>	

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, That the polls be open between the hours of 2:30 and 9:00 p.m.

ACCEPTANCE OF CHAPTER I CARRY-OVER FUNDS - FY 86:

Mr. Hermo presented and moved the adoption of the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Rusignuolo. On a roll call vote the resolution was unanimously adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education accept the Chapter I carry-over funds for FY 86 in the amount of \$11,590.

March 9, 1987

STATE INTERVENTION:

Mr. Kucinski read the following statement:

"At our last public Board meeting, February 23, this Board of Education passed a motion dealing with what is known as the State Intervention or State 'Takeover' bill. I believe that some people have chosen to interpret our action incorrectly, and as Board President, I would like to indicate my feelings on what I know is a very controversial subject.

"I personally am not opposed to the intervention of the State in those school districts where it has clearly been demonstrated that a thorough and efficient education is not being provided. I agree with the Governor and the Commissioner of Education that the State has an obligation to step in when deficiencies, which have been documented, are allowed to remain uncorrected year after year. To not step in would be an admission that we don't care what happens in those communities as far as education is concerned.

"The original legislation, however, contains some elements which make it difficult for many concerned citizens, including Board members, to support.

"I believe the entity of the local Board of Education should continue to exist even after a State appointed Superintendent comes in to assume control. The local Board is, after all, the community's elected representatives and should be involved with the operation of the school district even if in only an advisory manner. When it is clear, however, that individual Board members are themselves the cause of the deficiencies, then they should be removed. I believe that it is not fair to punish the innocent with the guilty.

"Similarly, I cannot understand why there should not be some basic due process protections for the administrative staff. There is no valid or fair reason why all central administrators should be summarily dismissed. If it is proven that they are ineffective, uncooperative or obstructionist, then they should be dismissed. But does it make sense to remove someone solely because of his/her job title?

"The legislation, as I understand it, is primarily aimed at those districts where students are not learning. If that is the case, shouldn't the intervention plan address the teaching staff in addition to the Board and administration? The original plan does not. It seems to me that teachers, too, must be included if an intervention plan is to be successful.

"Finally, if part of the problem is due to serious financial needs, shouldn't the State be willing to provide extra monetary assistance? In some cases, money may not be the problem but where extra funds are truly needed, it is unfair to saddle the local taxpayers with the entire burden.


"The Nutley Board of Education voted to express its opposition to the intervention plan 'as originally proposed.' We did not vote against any and all intervention plans or the concept of an intervention plan. I hope this statement helps clarify my position on this issue. If any other Board members would like the public to know the basis of their positions at this time, I know we would be happy to listen. Thank you."

Mrs. Goodson said that she feels a child has a right to a thorough and efficient education in this state, and if a school district is not providing it, the State has both a legal and moral obligation to intercede. She added that she did have problems with the legislation as originally proposed.

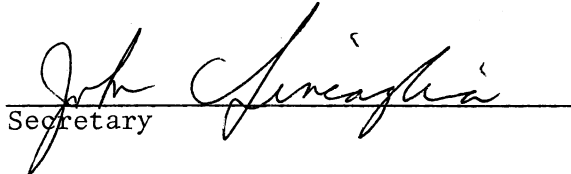
Mrs. Scheckel stated that the Board made it very clear that it is opposed to the "original" legislation, but not necessarily to the idea of intervention.

ADJOURNMENT:

On motion made by Mr. Battaglia, seconded by Mrs. Goodson, the Special Meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.



 President



 Secretary

3/24/87

 Date