

Board of Education  
Nutley, New Jersey

April 3, 1995

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, April 3, 1995 at 7:30 p.m. with Mrs. Aileen Hresko, Vice-President, presiding.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF MEETING:

Mrs. Hresko read the following:

"According to the provisions of the 'Open Public Meetings Act' (Chapter 231, P.L. 1975) and NJSA 18A:22-11 and 22-12, proper notice of this Special Meeting was made on March 1, 1995. Said Notice was:

1. Published in The Nutley Sun on March 23, 1995.
2. Posted at the entrance of the Board Office.
3. Mailed or delivered, and/or telephoned to The Nutley Sun, the Star Ledger, the North Jersey 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 1995-96 school budget.
2. Adopt the 1995-96 school budget.
3. Adopt a resolution regarding the 1995 school election.
4. Conduct such other business that may properly come before the Board of Education.

"Formal action will be taken."

ROLL CALL:

The other members present at roll call were: Mr. Frank V. Hermo, Mr. Charles W. Kucinski, Jr., Mr. Joseph C. Pelaia, Mrs. Maria Russo and Mrs. Rosalie C. Scheckel. Absent: Mr. Sam P. Battaglia, Mr. Charles J. Piro and Mr. Robert J. Rusignuolo.

PRESENTATION OF 1995/1996 BUDGET:

Mr. Kucinski indicated that the Board had spent quite a bit of time going over the budget with the assistance of the administration, adding that it is a fiscally responsible budget.

Mr. Sincaglia noted that the budget provides for the education of over 3,700 pupils in our district and those in out-of-district placements. He indicated that enrollment was up by 115 students from last year which is a 3-1/4% increase, adding that since the 1991 school year, there has been an increase in enrollment of 370 pupils, which is over 11%.

Mr. Sincaglia explained that this budget has a 2-1/2% increase in spending and this will allow current educational programs to continue, will maintain the class size ratio, and will allow the spending of nearly \$130,000 for computers and computer-related items. Mr. Sincaglia also noted that in addition to routine maintenance there are major capital items in the budget such as roof restoration work at the high school, sanding and refinishing the gymnasium and stage floors at the high school and the continuation of the fire alarm upgrade. He further noted that brick repointing work, concrete work, suspended ceilings, new lighting, painting the auditorium at Franklin School and the Lincoln School gymnasium, electrical repairs and fire door replacements would take place. Mr. Sincaglia mentioned that with the exception of Radcliffe School and portions of the high school, every other school building was built before the Depression, adding that the buildings are very well maintained.

Mr. Sincaglia continued by noting that athletics and extra-curricular programs will continue without reductions even though the Athletic Committee and athletic department presented a budget that was actually lower than the current year's budget. Mr. Sincaglia further indicated that the increase in the budget is below the state budget cap by almost \$350,000. He explained that in the last four budgets the Board has been below the cap by nearly \$800,000 even though those decisions have limited this Board and any future Board's ability to increase future budgets since each year's budget is based on the prior year and if you budget below the cap you start at a lower base the following year. Mr. Sincaglia stressed the fact that this reflects that the Board tries to budget only what it needs.

Mr. Sincaglia noted that the revenue picture of this budget is distressing and somewhat depressing. He then showed graphs which illuminated the effect that the lack of adequate state aid has had on the taxpayers of Nutley. He indicated that this budget would necessitate \$773,000 in additional taxes, noting that if state aid had kept up to what the district received for the 1993-94 school year, the budget would have required almost no additional taxes.

With regard to revenue distribution, Mr. Sincaglia indicated that the source of revenue in Nutley is overwhelmingly local property taxes since the state's philosophy seems to focus on general income

and sales taxes and Nutley's share of the state pie is relatively small. He added that federal aid and use of surplus are not very large, although we have increased the use of surplus by over 30% in this budget, taking \$525,000 from surplus instead of raising it through taxation. Mr. Sincaglia also noted that the Board decided to take a one-time payment against debt service using unspent funds from the 1990 referendum. He explained that the referendum projects were completed with \$111,000 left over, and even though the district could have put this money in the capital fund or general fund, the Board decided to take the money and reduce taxes.

With regard to state aid, Mr. Sincaglia noted that Newark receives more aid per child than Nutley spends per child from every source of revenue, adding that school districts such as Nutley that are achieving are not rewarded. He did note that this year the state designated reward money for districts not spending excessively on administrative costs, either \$30,000 or \$60,000. He explained that Nutley received \$60,000 because of our enrollment size, but he indicated that the entire situation of the rewards was unfair because the state had changed the rules in the middle of the game. He further said that the reward money was a token gesture seemingly designed to get attention.

In discussing costs, Mr. Sincaglia stated that 80% of the budget is comprised of personnel costs, salaries and benefits. He did note that even though books, computers, etc. were needed, we are a service provider and services happen with people and that is the essence of public education. He also noted that educational programs are implemented by people.

Mr. Sincaglia then made comparisons in costs per pupil state wide and county wide versus Nutley, noting that state wide, costs are 12% higher than Nutley and county wide, 15% higher. He noted that Nutley has high achievement for low cost with very good scores on the EWT and HSPT. State wide, the EWT passing grade for all three sections was 72.5 and for Nutley, it was 92.8; in our district factor group of "DE", the average score was 77. Mr. Sincaglia noted that only five districts in our district factor group had better passing scores than Nutley. He listed districts in the North Jersey area in our group, all of whom had lower scores and higher costs. Mr. Sincaglia further noted that Nutley's passing scores were better than the average score of every socioeconomic group from "A" to "I" and we even did better than some "J" districts.

On the HSPT, Mr. Sincaglia noted that Nutley's 89% passing grade on all three sections exceeded the state average by 13% and 8% for our socioeconomic group. He also made mention of the fact that these results are not new.

Mr. Sincaglia indicated that the Board has realized economies by switching auto, property and liability insurance carriers. He noted that more of our employees have a higher deductible on the prescription plan and new employees must wait three years to receive pre-

scription and family dental coverage. Mr. Sincaglia also noted that the district continues to show savings in utilities costs, having reduced the budget by \$220,000 in ten years. He further noted that the district saves money by taking in Special Education tuition students from other districts, sharing bus services and receiving supplemental vocational funds by acting quickly.

Mr. Sincaglia commented that the Board shares the concern regarding taxes, noting that the amount of local taxes is directly influenced by two things - cost and state aid, adding that the "Special Needs" districts receive enormous amounts of state aid and raise very little money in their local communities. He also explained that if the four "Special Needs" districts are omitted, Nutley ranks fourth lowest on raising local taxes on a per pupil basis.

Mr. Sincaglia concluded by noting that Nutley citizens have been supportive of the local school budget and it is up to them to decide if they want to continue that philosophy and concept. Mr. Sincaglia thanked the members of his staff for their assistance in putting the budget together in the proper manner and also thanked Mrs. Marando for her last-minute duty manning the projector.

#### HEARING OF CITIZENS (Agenda Items Only):

Mr. Douglas Eisenfelder, 51 Enclosure, noted that, unlike a neighboring town, Nutley has consistently supported the budget, thereby sending a positive message to the Board, administration, teachers and students. He added that he hopes this will be another year when the people of Nutley vote "yes" on the budget.

Mr. George Hayes, 518 Prospect Street, questioned if the Board had decided against privatizing certain services. Mr. Sincaglia replied that the Board had reported on that issue at a meeting held about a month ago. Mr. Kucinski commented that the Budget Review Committee had looked at privatizing custodial and cafeteria services and brought their findings to the entire Board, at which time there was no desire by the Board to go in that direction at this time.

#### ADOPTING BUDGET FOR THE 1995/1996 SCHOOL YEAR:

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

WHEREAS, the Board of Education of the Township of Nutley adopted a tentative budget for the 1995/1996 school year on February 27, 1995, and

WHEREAS, said tentative budget was properly advertised on March 23, 1995, and

WHEREAS, the Public Hearing on the budget was conducted on April 3, 1995,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education hereby adopts the official budget for the 1995/1996 school year in the following amounts:

General Fund	\$30,397,160
Special Revenue Fund	605,249
Debt Service	<u>208,403</u>

Total Budget	\$31,210,812	of which
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the following amount shall be raised by local tax levy:

General Fund	\$26,997,114
Debt Service	<u>88,738</u>

Total	\$27,085,852
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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Secretary be authorized to place on the ballot at the Annual School Election to be held on April 18, 1995, the proposal to approve the General Fund tax levy portion of the 1995/1996 school budget. (The complete budget for 1995/1996 is attached as Appendix 1.)

#### SCHOOL ELECTION:

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

WHEREAS, the Annual School Election shall take place on April 18, 1995, 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

WHEREAS, the legal voters of the school district will vote on the proposed tax levy for General Fund for the 1995/1996 school year in the amount of \$26,997,114,

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, Gary's Pharmacy, Little's Pharmacy, Fred's Party Shop and Griffith Shade Shop, no later than April 8, 1995, 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:

