

Board of Education
Nutley, New Jersey

February 25, 1999

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 Thursday, February 25, 1999 at 7:40 p.m. with Mr. Joseph C. Pelaia, President, presiding.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF MEETING:

Mr. Pelaia read the following:

"According to the provisions of the 'Open Public Meetings Act' (Chapter 231, P.L. 1975), proper notice of this Special Meeting was provided on February 22, 1999. Said Notice was:

1. Posted at the entrance of the Board Office.
2. Mailed to The Nutley Sun, the Star Ledger, the North Jersey Herald & News and the Nutley Journal.
3. Mailed to the Nutley Township Clerk.

"The purpose of the meeting will be for the Board to consider the tentative school budget for 1999-2000.

"Formal action may be taken."

RECESS MEETING:

Mrs. Fleitell made a motion to recess the meeting until more members of the Board were present, seconded by Mrs. Roncaglio, and unanimously approved.

The meeting recessed at 7:41 p.m.

RESUME MEETING:

The meeting resumed at 7:47 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

The other members present at roll call were: Dr. Philip T. Casale, Mrs. Michele Fleitell, Mr. Vincent Moscaritola, Mr. Steven P. Picciano, Mrs. Agnes Roncaglio and Mrs. Maria Russo. Late: Dr. Joseph Scarpelli (8:07 p.m.). Absent: Mr. Alfred R. Restaino, Jr. One citizen was present.

HEARING OF CITIZENS (Agenda Items Only):

None

CONSIDER TENTATIVE SCHOOL BUDGET FOR 1999-2000:

Mr. Sincaglia reviewed updated information concerning the budget. He noted that the health benefits increase was being more than offset by a one-month premium holiday which would actually allow the budget to be reduced by nearly \$100,000. He noted that tuition adjustments reflecting new costs from several schools had been taken into account and the amount of surplus was being increased by \$65,000. He also noted that the crossing guard appropriation was set at the current year's amount of \$210,080 and that this represented two tax points.

Mrs. Russo stated that nine members of the Board had indicated we were not going to pay for crossing guards any longer and it was not our responsibility. Mrs. Fleitell said she thought that what was going to take place was that we were going to approach the Commissioner of Public Safety about removing this amount and that was as far as the position of the Board was at that time.

Mrs. Russo said that she was told that there was a 9-0 vote of the Board to remove this item from the budget. Dr. Casale responded that Mrs. Russo had been told that she had been empowered to go to the Commissioner of Public Safety concerning the Board's feelings and further stated that there was no way he would support taking this out of the budget if it could jeopardize the presence of crossing guards.

Mrs. Russo said it is not the Board's responsibility to assign crossing guards. Mr. Pelaia stated that he was not sure the Board couldn't be responsible for assigning crossing guards and mentioned a statement that Mr. Restaino had made at the last public meeting concerning his position on this matter.

Mrs. Fleitell said she thought that her expression over the phone to Dr. Casale was to authorize Mrs. Russo to go to the Commissioner to discuss this matter. Mrs. Russo said that the Budget Committee had discussed what would be done and she further stated that in no way would she want to see any crossing guards eliminated. She went on to say that the Board is not accountable for this function as it is not our legal responsibility.

Mr. Picciano said that he thought Mrs. Russo's visit to the Commissioner of Public Safety was merely a courtesy to inform him that we were no longer going to pay for this item. He further said that he did not care if the Commissioner or Commissioners said "yes" or "no" for it was their responsibility to maintain the crossing guard function.

Mr. Moscaritola said he thought that Mrs. Russo was given the authority to go to the Commissioner to discuss the matter.

Dr. Scarpelli entered

Dr. Casale said that there had been an open-ended discussion about this matter and reiterated that there is no way he would cut this out of the budget even if it was not the Board's responsibility if it could in any way jeopardize the presence of crossing guards. Mrs. Roncaglio said she thought the vote over the phone was to give Mrs. Russo the power to discuss the matter with the Commissioner of Public Safety.

In response to a question from Mrs. Russo Mr. Pelaia stated that it was his recollection that Mr. Restaino's comment at a previous meeting was similar to what Dr. Casale had just stated, i.e. that he did not want to take this out of the budget for fear of the service not being available when school was in session.

Dr. Scarpelli said he thought that the vote simply authorized Mrs. Russo to speak to the Commissioner about taking out the crossing guard appropriation. Mrs. Russo again stated that she was told that there was a consensus of all the Board members to remove this item from the budget.

Mr. Moscaritola asked Mrs. Russo if she would relate to the Board what happened when she met with the Commissioner. Mrs. Russo indicated that she told the Commissioner that the appropriation for crossing guards was out of the budget. Mr. Picciano said he didn't think that the Commissioner's response made any difference because we decided we were taking this money out of the budget.

Mrs. Russo said that she related the information to the Commissioner of Public Safety that this item was not going to be included in the Board's budget. She stated that the Commissioner told her that was going to be difficult and he would be unable to do this. Mrs. Russo indicated that she would relay his comments back to the Board of Education.

Dr. Casale noted that taking the appropriation out would not save the taxpayers one dime for he did not feel the Board should have the right to utilize this money for anything else.

Mrs. Russo left the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Mr. Picciano asked Mr. Sincaglia about the status of the surplus. Mr. Sincaglia passed out an item showing where the surplus would be based on current projections.

Dr. Scarpelli wanted to know if Mrs. Russo had advised Mr. Sincaglia of anything relative to her meeting with the Commissioner to which Mr. Sincaglia stated "no."

Dr. Casale said that the Board does not want to have half the guards present next year and that we would be running a risk.

Mr. Picciano asked for a recess so he could attend to a family matter and then be able to return.

RECESS MEETING:

On motion made by Mr. Moscaritola, seconded by Mrs. Fleitell and unanimously approved by the Board, the meeting recessed at 8:50 p.m.

RESUME MEETING:

The meeting resumed at 9:20 p.m.

Dr. Scarpelli asked questions relating to state aid and the number of tax points. Mrs. Fleitell said that this budget represented an opportunity for the Board to do more things. Mr. Picciano said that we could be doing more in technology and once again returned to the issue of \$210,000 for crossing guards. Dr. Casale said we should forget the matter of the crossing guards as it was not going to happen. Mr. Picciano said that, in his opinion, we sent Mrs. Russo on a mission that could only fail. He said that the Board was taking the position that since the Commissioner said no that was the end of the matter.

Mr. Pelaia asked if the Board wanted to make an attempt to reduce one more tax point from the four points that Mr. Sincaglia indicated earlier in his update. All Board members were in favor of this with Mr. Picciano abstaining.

Mr. Sincaglia explained a scenario how the Board could reduce the budget so that the tax increase would be three points. Mr. Pelaia asked Board members to respond to this possibility, noting that he personally liked the idea.

Mr. Picciano indicated he had no comment. Mr. Moscaritola said he felt this was the way to go. Mrs. Fleitell said this was good. Dr. Casale said he was satisfied. Mrs. Roncaglio said she was gratified by the technology items and other additions and was in favor of this idea. Dr. Scarpelli noted his approval and also commented that the Budget Committee and Mr. Sincaglia should be thanked for their efforts.

Mrs. Fleitell moved that Mr. Sincaglia be directed to prepare a tentative budget which would reflect a three-point increase as per tonight's discussion, to be voted on at the meeting on March 1, seconded by Dr. Scarpelli and unanimously approved by the Board.

Mr. Sincaglia noted that he would not be able to deliver any items to the Board members on Friday but would get something to their homes Monday prior to the meeting.

RESOLUTION TO CLOSE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC:

Mr. Pelaia asked Mr. Sincaglia to read the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Board of Education will be discussing matters exempt from public discussion pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12,

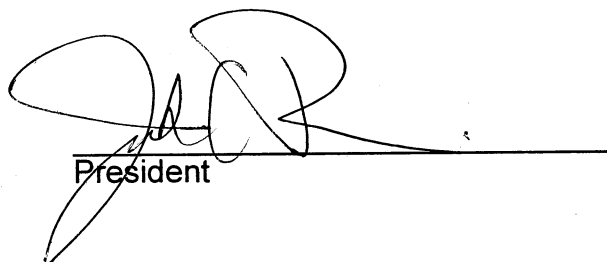
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education recess to closed executive session at this time to discuss a matter of litigation, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the results of the discussions will be made public by inclusion on the agenda of a subsequent meeting of the Board of Education or when the reasons for discussing such matters in closed session no longer exist.

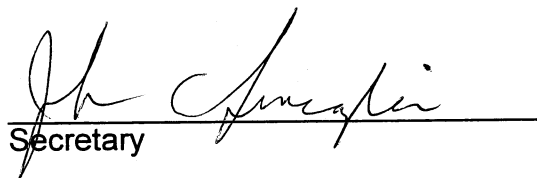
The resolution was moved by Mrs. Fleitell, seconded by Dr. Scarpelli and unanimously approved by the Board.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 10:25 p.m.



President



Secretary

March 22, 1999

Date

February 25, 1999