

The Conference Meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Nutley, New Jersey was held in the Board Conference Room, 375 Bloomfield Avenue, on Monday, September 13, 1999 at 7:15 p.m. with Mr. Vincent A. Moscaritola, President, presiding.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE:

Mr. Moscaritola read the following:

"According to the provisions of the 'Open Public Meetings Act' (Chapter 231, P.L. 1975), proper notice of this Conference Meeting was provided in the Annual Notice of May 3, 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."

CALL OF ROLL:

The members present at roll call were: Dr. Philip T. Casale, Mrs. Michele Fleitell, Mr. Joseph C. Pelaia, Mr. Steven P. Picciano, Mr. Alfred R. Restaino, Jr., Mrs. Agnes Roncaglio and Mr. Vincent A. Moscaritola. Late: Mr. John Cafone (7:18 p.m.) and Mrs. Maria Russo (7:18 p.m.). Also present were Mr. Lloyd Rosenberg and Mr. John Scheckel of DMR.

1. Mr. Sincaglia noted that the new Regulation on Special Education was being prepared and would require a Board vote at the next meeting.  
  
He also noted that today was the deadline for the third request for residency information.
2. There was a discussion about the enrollment projections. Mr. Pelaia was concerned that consultants be provided with current enrollment information to see if it would impact on their projections.

Mr. Cafone and Mrs. Russo entered during this discussion

- Mr. Pelaia moved that the Board request Whitehall Associates to revise enrollment projection data based on 1999/2000 actual enrollments, seconded by Dr. Casale and unanimously approved by the Board.
3. The next order of business was for the Board to discuss with the architects from DMR the revised draft of the feasibility study.  
  
DMR's representatives, Lloyd Rosenberg and John Scheckel explained that while there appeared to be capacities at some elementary schools,

particularly Lincoln School, this was primarily due to the fact that special education classes contained less students than a regular class. They noted that the architectural recommendations about capital improvements should not necessarily be considered part of a building plan.

DMR and Mr. Sincaglia clarified certain cost items from the Architectural Capital Improvement Recommendations list. Mr. Scheckel provided some possible financial scenarios although he and Mr. Rosenberg cautioned that by no means should this be thought of as any final plan; it should be viewed as simply one possibility of moving forward. Mr. Scheckel reviewed certain aspects of the plans.

Mrs. Fleitell asked if the Board was not going to decide where the district needs to go educationally.

Mr. Pelaia wanted to know what the cost would be per each million dollars. Dr. Casale commented that the public must be involved in this process. Mr. Rosenberg said it was important that the Board narrow down what the focus of the plan would be.

Mrs. Russo referred to prior work of facilities committees and pointed out that we all know we probably won't be able to do everything that we would like to do. She also stated that we need to address the educational decisions so we could narrow down our positions.

Dr. Serafino noted she had been in touch with other districts and also reviewed research and concluded there is no one "best" configuration for grade alignment. Both the K-6 and K-5 approaches can function equally well; however, she did state the K-5 approach was her personal preference. She stated that in that scenario students are in a middle school for three years instead of two and are able to be offered a greater breadth of programs than can be offered in the elementary schools.

She felt it would be possible to keep the sixth graders in a specific area within the school and have a team teaching approach. She said that there were many things to consider in any move to change grade alignment and, further, that the transition year, be it grade 6 or 7, would still be a tough year. She further posed the question of whether Nutley is ready to move to the 6-7-8 middle school concept. She stated that she has heard from some people that they were concerned about having sixth graders on Franklin Avenue in proximity to the high school. Dr. Serafino said we must choose an approach that can be approved by the public.

Mrs. Fleitell said she agreed with the Superintendent and thinks the Board should come up with a recommendation and then be prepared to go out and sell it to the community. Dr. Serafino said she certainly wanted community input in this process.

Mrs. Fleitell said that Franklin School functioned as a junior high school and the district needs to change the concept of how instruction is provided there. She further stated that there have been almost no changes made there in years.

Mr. Pelaia expressed his concern of sixth grade pupils in the center of town.

Mrs. Russo said she agreed with Mrs. Fleitell's comments on the middle school approach and the need for the Board to make a decision.

Mr. Rosenberg said that the issue of grade alignment will be one of the major issues in any referendum. He noted that if the Board were to opt for the K-5, 6, 7, 8 approach, DMR could design a building addition that would essentially keep sixth graders from the rest of the pupils in the middle school. He said there are ways to solve grade mixing. Mr. Rosenberg said that people's personal preferences must be considered.

Mrs. Russo said that the Board was not going to be able to please everyone but must move on to what we think is the best total package.

Mr. Cafone said he is not sure the community is ready to send sixth graders to middle school but emphasized we must reach out to the community to see what they want.

Mr. Moscaritola suggested that the Board take a brief recess.

#### RECESS MEETING:

The meeting recessed at 8:54 p.m.

#### RESUME MEETING:

The meeting resumed at 9:07 p.m.

Mr. Picciano questioned if the Board wanted to take a straw poll at this time.

Mr. Restaino said that the Superintendent had stated her concerns but he said that he interpreted her statement that she was not prepared to give us a concrete recommendation as to what direction the district would move. He also said he did not think the Board would be able to expedite this through one single meeting.

Dr. Serafino said that there were other things that needed to be done, one of which was sitting and talking with the professional staff about such a change in grade alignment.

Mr. Pelaia said he was concerned about the involvement of staff.

Mr. Moscaritola said he thought it would be wise to have the PT Council meet on this and open it up to other people as well.

Mr. Picciano expressed an idea that the Board consider making Franklin School an elementary school, make the high school a middle school and build a new high school. Mr. Sincaglia pointed out that this would have the effect of running eight schools in the district rather than seven which would involve operational costs beyond whatever it would cost to construct a new building.

Mrs. Russo stated again the need for the Board to move forward.

Mr. Cafone said he felt that the Board needed to hear from DMR and then have the Superintendent solicit community input.

Mr. Pelaia said he was not prepared to make a decision on educational concerns alone or financial concerns alone.

There was some discussion on being able to get some new information by the Board meeting of September 27. Mr. Pelaia said the Board should spend whatever time it needs even if it takes longer than we would prefer.

Mr. Rosenberg pointed out the Board's need to decide on the grade 6 issue.

Mrs. Fleitell suggested that the Board present a plan to the public and explain our willingness to change it before a final decision is made.

Mr. Picciano again raised his idea about the option of opening a new high school. Mr. Moscaritola asked that he present this in the form of a motion.

Mr. Picciano moved that DMR prepare a feasibility study to purchase land to build a high school, that the existing high school become a district-wide middle school and that Franklin School become an elementary school. The motion died for lack of a second.

Mr. Moscaritola felt that the Board had done all that was practical for this evening. Dr. Casale said he wanted the Board to meet in executive session on a personnel item.

#### RESOLUTION TO CLOSE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC:

Mr. Moscaritola 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 adjourn to closed executive session at this time to discuss personnel matters, 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.

Dr. Casale moved that the resolution be approved, seconded by Mr. Pelaia and unanimously approved by the Board.

#### ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 10:17 p.m.

  
Secretary

9/28/99  
Date