

Board of Education
Nutley, New Jersey

February 20, 2002

The Special Meeting of the Board of Education of the Township of Nutley, New Jersey was held in the High School Cafeteria, 300 Franklin Avenue, on Wednesday, February 20, 2002 at 7:00 p.m. with Dr. Philip T. Casale, President, presiding.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF MEETING:

Dr. Casale 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 15, 2002. 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 this meeting will be for the Board to consider the hiring of a public relations firm and discuss any aspect of the referendum.

"Formal action may be taken."

ROLL CALL:

The other members present at roll call were: Mrs. Maria Alamo, Mr. Alan Genitempo, Mr. Vincent A. Moscaritola, Dr. Gerard M. Parisi, Mr. Joseph C. Pelaia, Mr. Alfred R. Restaino, Jr. and Mrs. Agnes Roncaglio. Late: Mr. John Cafone (7:25 .m.). Approximately 2 citizens were present.

FLAG SALUTE:

The meeting was opened with Dr. Casale leading the Board members and citizens in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag.

Dr. Casale stated that the Board will formally discuss and examine hiring a public relations firm this evening.

Dr. Serafino said that Mr. Sincaglia was in touch with Patricia Morris Associates, the public relations firm the Board already received information on, and she contacted IE Communication another public relations firm recommended by Ron Ianoale. Dr. Serafino said she would share the information faxed to her by IE Communication.

Dr. Serafino stated that Roselle Park was one of the districts that had a bond referendum that did not pass and employed Patricia Morris Associates.

Mr. Pelaia asked if Roselle Park was contacted.

Mr. Sincaglia responded that Roselle Park was contacted and said they were not disappointed with the service of the Patricia Morris Associates and when they go out again for the referendum they plan on using them. Mr. Sincaglia stated that Patricia Morris is willing to meet with a committee.

Mr. Restaino said that before we meet with a public relations firm the majority of the Board needs to determine if that is the course of action that is needed. He said he felt that the Board should wait to hear what the surveys say in order to plan the next step. Mr. Restaino added that he was curious if the marketing component came into play with regard to the architectural firm.

Mrs. Roncaglio said she had no problem with moving ahead but agrees with Mr. Restaino that the consensus of the surveys should determine the next step.

Dr. Parisi questioned how qualified the Board is in interpreting the results of the survey in a meaningful way. He said whether a public relations firm is hired tonight, or in the next couple of weeks, he thinks they should be at the forefront of reviewing the survey so that they may guide us on decisions to be made.

Mr. Pelaia said that as mentioned in the past, he is also concerned about processing the information from the survey and if this is not followed meticulously the next referendum will suffer.

Mrs. Alamo stated that if this architectural firm was supposed to provide marketing then why didn't we demand it. She added that if they do not provide us marketing, then it would not hurt to interview a public relations firm.

Mr. Genitempo asked if the contract with the architect states that they will provide marketing services to us.

Mr. Sincaglia said the contract uses statements like assist and formulate.

Mr. Genitempo asked Mr. Sincaglia what the architect did to help us market the referendum. Mr. Sincaglia said they presented the power point presentation, attended multiple meetings and provided assistance with putting together the brochures.

Mr. Genitempo stated that he would like a legal opinion by the Board's attorney by Monday on if the contract with the architect states that they are required to assist with the public relations of the referendum. He noted if that is the case then it should be demanded that they do so, if it does not indicate such, then we need to look into the possibility of hiring a public relations firm.

Mr. Cafone entered at 7:25 p.m.

Mr. Sincaglia stated that one value of meeting with the public relations firm is to get an idea of what they might do. He noted that no outside public relations firm or architect will be able to identify groups and key people, it needs to be a "grass-roots" effort.

Mr. Moscaritola said that before we hire a public relations firm, the Board needs to establish what direction they want to take with regard to the referendum.

Mr. Pelaia stated that he has great doubt with regard to moving this referendum in April since the response date for the survey is March 5 and it does not leave much time to respond to the community.

There was a discussion between Mr. Sincaglia and the Board members regarding the possibility of the Governor changing the annual school election date.

After a lengthy conversation regarding meeting with a public relations firm, it was agreed that the committee would meet with the Patricia Morris firm at 7:00 p.m. tomorrow night and report to the full Board on their findings.

HEARING OF CITIZENS:

Jack Magnifico, 25 Chestnut Street, said that the survey went out to the community and it should reach each household by this weekend. He added that the Board should not rush into anything until they get the surveys back from the community to see what they want.

Dr. Casale said that it is the Board's intention not make any decisions until they hear from the public.

There was a discussion by the Board members with regard to charts that Dr. Casale handed out calculating a 20, 25 and 30 year bond.

Margarite Fritch, 31 Briar Avenue, asked numerous questions regarding the bond referendum to which Dr. Casale responded.

Mr. Cafone said that he feels the Board should move cautiously as they move forward for the referendum because the last election was definitely feedback from the community. He added he is not sure that we can sell a 49 million dollar referendum.

Dr. Casale said that if we drastically reduce the plan we will have to go back to the state for approval and start at the beginning. Dr. Casale said the debate he thinks is whether to make it a two school or five school project because either all the elementary schools are in or out of the plan.

Mr. Moscaritola said that he is concerned about the number of surveys that are going to be returned and feels that the public does not care what is in or out of the plan, it is the \$49 million dollar amount that they are concerned about.

Mrs. Roncaglio said that she does not know what the solution is but the public got "sticker shock" when they saw the amount of the referendum and feels the returned surveys will determine the future.

Mr. Pelaia said he hopes the results of the survey will be useful but he can't say for sure and he is not ready to have a full-blown discussion on what should be or not be left in the plans for the referendum. He added when the

surveys are returned that is when the leadership should take place on what direction we should go because until then we are just spinning our wheels.

Mr. Restaino said he is also of the opinion that the 49 million dollar number scared everyone and feels we need to hear what the public has to say.

Mrs. Alamo said that she agrees with Mr. Moscaritola that there might be a limited amount of surveys returned and feels that the Board as a whole is frustrated and struggling with the next step. She added that she is anxious to hear what the public relations firm has to say.

Mr. Genitempo feels that the Board failed as a group in getting the referendum message across. He added it will cost more in the long run if this project is staged so he feels this is worth fighting for. He suggested that we go out for the referendum in April because he is concerned that if we don't act now we could lose the money from the state. He noted that maybe making adjustments in the plan and going for a 30 year bond referendum will help pass it this time.

Dr. Parisi said that when people talk against the referendum to him they never talk against the plan. He feels the "sticker shock" of 49 million dollars as well as the letter scared a lot of people. He said we should move forward on this plan with some minor adjustments and if it is defeated a second time then that would be the time to cut back. He agreed with Mr. Genitempo regarding the 30 year bond referendum.

Dr. Casle said the Board experienced its first knock-down and feels if you believe in the plan you have to get back up and try again. He said he agrees that there needs to be some cuts but does not feel that the entire plan should be scrapped. He added that we should get up and get out as soon as possible while there are still people mindful of it and are interested in helping. He said he got the surveys back from the staff and he is planning on having them transcribed for Monday's meeting.

The Board members continued to discuss the referendum and their plans to move forward.

Mrs. Roncaglio left at 9:10 p.m.

A lengthy conversation ensued regarding the relocation of the Board offices.

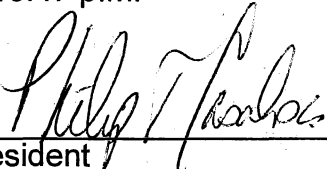
Mr. Pelaia left at 9:15 p.m.

Mr. Sincaglia went over the steps he used in calculating the tax increase for the referendum per household and stated he stands behind his numbers. He said there is another way to calculate the rate and that is how the Finance Department came up with their number. He added both ways are right in their calculations.

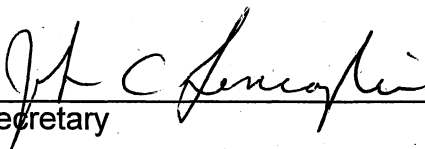
After a lengthy conversation by the Board members and Mr. Sincaglia regarding the different calculations, it was agreed that Mr. Sincaglia communicate with the Finance Department and come up with a number acceptable to both parties, once we determine what we are doing.

ADJOURNMENT:

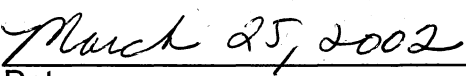
There being no further business to come before the Board, on motion made by Mr. Genitempo, seconded by Mr. Moscaritola, the meeting was adjourned at 10:47 p.m.



President



Secretary



Date