

**NUTLEY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**SPECIAL MEETING  
November 13, 2003**

The Nutley Board of Education held a Special Meeting on Thursday, November 13, 2003 in the Franklin School Auditorium, 325 Franklin Avenue, Nutley, NJ 07110.

President Alamo opened the meeting at 7:10 PM.

**CALL TO ORDER**

**MEETING NOTICE**

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President Alamo stated that in compliance with Chapter 231, Public Law 1975 entitled Open Public Meetings Act, adequate notice of this meeting had been provided as specified in the Act. Said notice was legally advertised in The Nutley Sun on November 6, 2003 and posted at the entrance of the Board of Education offices, mailed to The North Jersey Herald & News, The Star Ledger, and The Nutley Journal and mailed to the Nutley Township Clerk.

This is an official meeting.

**FLAG SALUTE**

**FLAG SALUTE**

President Alamo led those in attendance in the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

**ROLL CALL**

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Dr. Philip T. Casale  
Mr. Gerard Del Tufo  
Mr. Alan Genitempo  
Mr. Sai Olivo  
Dr. Gerard M. Parisi  
Mr. James Viola  
Mrs. Maria Alamo

Absent: Mr. John Cafone  
Mr. Alfred R. Restaino, Jr.

Also Present: Dr. Kathleen C. Serafino, Superintendent of Schools  
Dr. James Vivinetto, Assistant Superintendent  
Mr. Dennis Oblack, Assistant to the School Business Administrator

Also Absent: Mr. James Mallen, Business Administrator/Board Secretary  
Miss Meghan Ashley, Student Representative

**SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS**

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OF BUSINESS**

**APPOINT ACTING BOARD SECRETARY**

Trustee Viola moved, Trustee Casale seconded and the Board unanimously approved by voice vote the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves Mr. Dennis Oblack to be Acting Board Secretary for this Special Meeting of November 13, 2003.

**PURPOSE OF SPECIAL MEETING**

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President Alamo explained that the purpose of this special meeting is to present to the public a plan to address the critical facility needs at the Franklin Middle School. She thanked the members of the Board's Facilities Committee for their eight months of working tirelessly to develop an exciting plan, and she also thanked ad hoc members of the committee, Commissioner Joanne Cocchiola who was appointed by Mayor Scarpelli to assist us, and Mr. Ken Reilly representing the Steering Committee.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS**

**COMMENTS  
SUPERINTENDENT**

Dr. Kathleen C. Serafino, Superintendent of Schools, also thanked the Facilities Committee and welcomed and thanked the members of the community present, recognizing their input as extremely important. Dr. Serafino stressed that the plan will provide students the educational opportunities that they need and deserve. She explained that within the Board's overall framework of addressing the district's facility needs one school at a time, this plan addresses needs at Franklin Middle School that arise from four major factors:

The present facility is inadequate to meet the state-mandated Core Curriculum Content Standards especially with respect to technology, science classrooms and media center. The building is over 75 years old, with classrooms that are too small, limited access for those with disabilities, and inadequate heating and ventilation, and security systems. The current enrollment of 675 students results in over-crowding and use of sub-standard classrooms. The state is currently offering grants to partially fund facility improvements thus reducing the cost to Nutley taxpayers.

Dr. Serafino added that the plan being presented at this meeting has been modified from the original plan based on input received from the community after the previously unsuccessful referenda votes.

**PRESENTATION BY BOARD ARCHITECT**

**PRESENTATION  
BOARD  
ARCHITECT**

Mr. Lee Heckendorn, RA of DCM Architecture made a presentation highlighting the proposed design of the renovated facility and how that design meets the objectives of the middle school improvement plan. Those objectives are: to provide adequate space to support a

full middle school educational program utilizing the team teaching model; to provide sufficient capacity for current and future enrollment; and to modernize the building systems. He also contrasted the present conditions with those typically provided after the additions and renovations.

## **HEARING OF CITIZENS**

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The meeting was then opened to comments and questions from the citizens in attendance.

The majority of the time was spent discussing the issue of expansion in the front of the existing building or behind it and the impact of that decision on parking, greenspace, and the location of outdoor physical education areas for the middle school. Several residents of Church Street expressed concern about the impact of a parking area at the rear of the property abutting their lots. They questioned whether alternatives had been considered; whether the town could provide for the needed parking; how the number of parking spaces included was determined; whether new alternatives or compromises could still be considered. Mr. Heckendorn addressed the issue of alternatives, stating that expansion in the front of the building was also considered. However, once it was determined that expansion providing the same total square footage was possible in the back without major excavation, it was felt that that was preferable due to the strong desire within the community to preserve the architectural features of the existing façade. He also explained that, due to the severe shortage of parking for the current building and the expected increased demand as the new facility experiences a higher level of use for community activities, he included as many parking spaces as possible. President Alamo indicated that she hoped the Board would approve this concept so that project could proceed, but that changes would still be possible. She committed to meeting with concerned citizens. Mr. John Calicchio, Franklin Middle School Principal, indicated that outdoor physical education classes now use the Oval.

A question was posed as to whether the building was being sized for the current enrollment or based on future enrollment growth. Dr. Serafino stated that looking at the current elementary school enrollment, it does not appear that the middle school will experience significant growth in enrollment in the near to mid term future.

One resident questioned whether any additional funding sources were being sought for the project. Dr. Serafino indicated that the Board and Administration were currently working with town and state officials in attempting to secure additional funds to further reduce the cost to Nutley taxpayers.

A community member inquired as to whether the plans accommodated use of the facility for community activities. President Alamo indicated that the gyms and media centers in all buildings are currently, and in the future will continue to be, open to

community use. Trustee Del Tufo added that such community use may increase our chances of obtaining additional funding. Mr. Heckendorn responded to the question of whether the plans included air conditioning for the building by stating that they did not since the Board considered the 1.2 million dollar cost to be prohibitive.

Mr. Heckendorn also responded to a question as to whether there were any contingency plans that would cost less by stating that the plan presented did not include any space or features exceeding those required to meet the needs of the middle school students.

Mr. Ken Reilly, a member of the Steering Committee, stated that the general public may not be aware of the effort expended by the Board and its architect in developing this plan and the consideration they gave to taxpayers, citizens, students, commissioners, seniors, etc., etc. Many options were considered. Needs must now be met which have changed since 30 years ago. Citizens should look at what's been approved by other towns and districts.

In responding to a question on how the plan will be communicated to the citizens of Nutley and a recommendation that the Board employ communication techniques used by districts that have passed bond referenda, President Alamo indicated that once the Board approves it, the Public Relations Committee will employ all available media to promote the plan.

Mr. John Calicchio, Franklin Middle School Principal, stressed the extreme need to address inadequacies in space and facilities at the school. He indicated that the plan would enable enhancement of course offerings.

**COMMENTS BY TRUSTEES**

**COMMENTS  
TRUSTEES**

President Alamo then offered the other Trustees the opportunity to comment on the plan.

Mr. Genitempo stated that this plan was the best of the options that he has seen. It addresses the educational needs and parking issues while preserving the front of the existing building. Mr. Genitempo also stated that all school facilities are very well utilized after school hours, and that the Board is conscientiously looking for additional sources of funding.

Mr. Del Tufo remarked that the Board had decided to take a step-by-step approach to addressing the district's facility needs. Renovation at the high school, the first step, will soon begin. This plan for the middle school, which is step two, addresses many of the objections raised to the previously failed referenda.

Dr. Parisi mentioned that all the schools are in good shape for their age, but now require reinvestment if they are to continue to serve students. He indicated that this design enables isolation of building sections to facilitate use by the community, and addresses many

previous questions and concerns. Dr. Parisi emphasized that, "As the school district goes, so goes the town."

Mr. Viola stated that how we invest in our schools and other community assets is very important to the quality of life in the town.

Mr. Olivo indicated that good parks and good schools attract young families to Nutley. He went on to say that he sees the high school renovation as Step 1 and the middle school project as Step 2 in the Board's plan to preserve the quality of education in Nutley and thereby maintain and enhance property values.

Dr. Casale stated that it is important to move ahead with the plan now in order to maintain the building and to serve the current and future students of the district. He felt that modification of parking details could be worked out later. Dr. Casale emphasized the current availability of state funds to offset the cost to Nutley taxpayers, pointing out that if the district does not take action, at some point the state will mandate change and may not provide funding at that time. He went on to say that the district cannot move forward in the current facilities and that investment in the schools is required now to protect property values. Dr. Casale closed by stating that the current availability of state funds combined with low interest rates means that the improvements will never cost less than they will now.

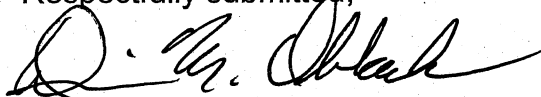
Mrs. Alamo indicated that it is a critical time for the Nutley School District and its students; standards cannot be met with inadequate space. President Alamo closed by thanking those in attendance for their interest, and those who participated for their input, and again thanked the Board, the Facilities Committee, Commissioner Cocchiola and Mr. Reilly for their hard work and efforts.

**ADJOURN**

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM on a motion by Trustee Casale, seconded by Trustee Viola and unanimously approved by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,



**DENNIS OBLACK**  
Acting Board Secretary