

Township of South Hackensack
Bergen County, New Jersey
May 14, 2008 5:00 P.M.
Special Meeting
MINUTES

Rosina Romano, MayorPresent
Gene Roman, Deputy MayorPresent
James AnzevinoPresent
Walter Eckel, Jr.....Present
Gregorio Maceri.....Present

Also present:

John M. Carbone, Esq., Municipal Attorney
Linda LoPiccolo, Municipal Clerk
Approximately 75 members of the public

Call of Meeting to Order

Mayor Romano called the Regular Meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. She advised that pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act adequate notice of the meetings had been provided to *The Record*, *The Herald and News* and by posting a notice on the bulletin board in the clerk's office where notices are customarily posted. Everyone saluted the flag. The municipal clerk called the roll.

Old Business

South Hackensack Defeated School Budget

Mayor Romano and Committee member Anzevino recused themselves from the school budget process and stepped down from the dais and did not participate in the meeting. Deputy Mayor Gene Roman chaired the meeting.

Deputy Mayor Roman opened the meeting to the public for public comments prior to the adoption of the pending resolution.

Public Comments

Dr. William De Fabiis, Ed. D., CSA, Memorial School – He thanked the members of the Committee for their effort and asked that everyone keep an open mind regarding this very volatile and important issue. Dr. DeFabiis provided the Township Committee with his position regarding each of the proposed reductions along with his understanding of why the Township Committee proposed to reduce them:

Item #1 – Tuition to Other LEA's within state – Special – Dr. DeFabiis indicated that the Committee concluded that there was funding for one additional student and that the line should be reduced by that amount. DeFabiis agreed that the budget includes funding for one additional student, and based upon past history, and his experience, that if he did not anticipate one additional student, he would be derelict in his duty and respectfully requested the Township Committee to reconsider the reduction. He asked that the Committee review material for a 5-10 year period rather than a shorter period when reviewing material of this nature.

Item #2 – Grades 1-5 Salaries of Teachers – Dr. DeFabiis indicated that this is a miscommunication between him and the members of the sub-committee reviewing the material. The Township Committee thought that a \$20,000 grant had not been accounted for and should be deducted from that line. DeFabiis advised that the teacher's salary that is paid with the grant is split between multiple line items and the \$20,000 grant was accounted for elsewhere in the budget. DeFabiis requested that the Committee reconsider this reduction since this reduction would require the school board to consider a cut in personnel.

Item #3 – Other Support Services – Student/Related Services – Purch Prof Ed Svs – Dr. DeFabiis explained that this line item is used for occupational/physical therapy, and disagreed with the Township Committee's conclusion that the item was over budgeted. DeFabiis explained that an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is prepared by the child study team along with the parents for each special education student. Occupational/Physical therapy is expensive and an IEP can change. Considering the number of special education students in the district and that fact that the service is expensive to provide, it would be irresponsible to reduce that line item.

Items #4 & 5 – Salary for Pupil Transportation – Between Home & School – Regular, Salary for Pupil Transportation – Between Home & School – Special – Dr. DeFabiis reported that during this discussion with the sub-committee just prior to this meeting he learned that the Township Committee feels that the appropriation is in the wrong line. DeFabiis explained that they are correct but that the county superintendent of schools approved the appropriation and he provided the name of the individual to the members of the sub-committee with whom he spoke. This appropriation pays the Business Administrator's salary. DeFabiis explained that the Business Administrator provides the check and balance that was the topic of a recent school board election. Prior to the board hiring the current Business Administrator, Dr. DeFabiis allowed the school to use his certification and he was compensated one additional sick day per month for it. He requested that they reconsider this reduction since by eliminating this salary the effect would be to increase the cost, not reduce it.

Item #6 – Contracted Services (Special Ed Students) ESC's & CTSA's – DeFabiis explained that this item has to do with special education transportation routes. The Committee's conclusion was that there was an additional \$50,000 in that line and their recommendation is to reduce it. DeFabiis said that although they were correct in their analysis, the conclusion was incorrect. He went on to advise that in special education

transportation is very volatile and complicated. The Township participates in an inter-local agreement with the Jointure Commission for the transportation of special education students, which over the years has saved money; however, when a route changes for either the township or a town that shares a route with us, the cost can change. The cost may also change because although bus companies are permitted to increase their contract by only 2.89%, they can terminate the contract, thereby causing the board of education to re-bid mid-year that may result in higher costs. The increase is legitimate because of the volatility with special education transportation.

DeFabiis concluded his remarks by advising the Township Committee that in his opinion a reduction of the proposed amount would have a significant negative impact on the school, especially in the area of special education. He advised that he would be happy to discuss the matter further and requested reconsideration of their current position.

Since there were no further public comments offered; Roman motioned; Maceri seconded and the Committee unanimously agreed to close the meeting for public comments.

Resolutions

Resolution No. 2008-101 Resolution of The Township Committee of South Hackensack Regarding The Defeated 2008-09 Budget of The South Hackensack School District, Bergen County, New Jersey
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Maceri motioned; Romano seconded to move the resolution. Prior to the vote, there was a discussion on the motion.

Walter Eckel requested a response to Dr. DeFabiis's comments from the sub-committee since prior to receiving the agenda that afternoon for the evening meeting, he had no indication from the sub-committee regarding their recommendation.

Gregorio Maceri offered the following report on the sub-committee's review and recommended the following reductions in the school budget:

Maceri reported that the school budget was referred to the Township Committee for their review because it was rejected by the voters at the school board election that was held on April 15, 2008. The authorized sub-committee was to subsequently meet with various school officials. Prior to any meeting, the members of the Township Committee were supplied with various documents by the board of education. The sub-committee requested further documentation and requested a recommendation from the board with respect to anything regarding their budget reductions. The sub-committee asked questions, consulted with the board of education, consulted with Dr. DeFabiis and discussed matters as a sub-committee. Their obligation was to review the budget thoroughly and efficiently, and look at areas of concern. In order to ensure a thorough and efficient education without effecting educational programs, without effecting tuitions, basically looking at items in the budget that have a potential for reduction. Based upon Dr. DeFabiis's notes, a review of the data supplied, questions posed to the

board and Dr. DeFabiis the sub-committee decided to reduce the budget by the amount proposed. He thanked the board of education and Dr. DeFabiis for their cooperation, information and access to school staff. He offered the following explanation:

Tuition – regular or special education; transportation and grant allocation. Looking at budget years 2006-07, 2007-08 there were transfers out of this line to other lines. In 2006, \$268,858 was transferred from tuition and \$17,132 was transferred from transportation. Roughly \$200,000 of that was transferred to capital for the purchase of miscellaneous equipment. In the past year, \$90,000 transferred out of tuition and \$46,000 out of transportation. Maceri felt that it was reasonable to look at that line.

Item #1 – Tuition to Other LEA's within state – Special – Maceri said that although it appears to be special education, he does not believe that to be true. He requested actual vs. projections. There were 2 children projected at \$45,000 for a total of \$90,000; one at \$60,000 for a projected total of \$150,000. There is an IDEA grant that provided funding in the amount of \$64,000 last year. Assuming receipt of additional grant funds in the amount of \$60,000 (rounding down) and since \$40,000 is supposed to be allocated to special education tuition and \$20,000 is supposed to be allocated to a social worker hired by the Jointure Commission. The total is \$190,000 when you include the \$40,000 grant funding. The five anticipated children were discussed, not specifically, and a review of a memo to Dr. DeFabiis from Trisha Smith, Child Study Coordinator was discussed also. He felt comfortable reducing the line by \$46,000 because transfers out of that line have been made for the past 2 years.

Item #2 – Grades 1-5 Salaries of Teachers – The sub-committee understood from speaking with Dr. DeFabiis that the \$20,000 grant used to offset teacher salary costs for the federally mandated No Child Left Behind (NCLB) program, had not been applied to that line item and therefore the line could be reduced by at least that amount.

Item #3 – Other Support Services – Student/Related Services – Maceri once again explained that because grant money had not been applied to the line, although it is anticipated, the line was inflated and therefore could be reduced by that amount.

Items #4 & 5 – Salary for Pupil Transportation – Between Home & School – Regular, Salary for Pupil Transportation – Between Home & School – Special – The sub-committee concluded that this was an administrative salary that should not have been in a transportation line. The sub-committee did not feel comfortable with a salary appropriated under a transportation line item. Maceri indicated that although he had not yet spoken with the County Business Administrator or the Superintendent of Schools, that he intended to speak with the County BA to ascertain whether or not approval was given for this appropriation in this line. Maceri found it hard to believe that the county had approved such an appropriation since it appears to circumvent the purpose for an administrative CAP.

Item #6 – Contracted Services (Special Ed Students) ESC's & CTSA's – Maceri reported that because he saw a pattern of transfers out of the line for various equipment purchases, he felt comfortable reducing that line by that amount.

Maceri concluded by saying that he firmly believes that the recommendation of the sub-committee meets the needs of the board of education and the voice of the residents of the Township of South Hackensack. He would not cut special education or any programs that would hinder education. He looked at areas of concern, and being able to reduce those areas without affecting the students, and to give those recommendations to the board of education.

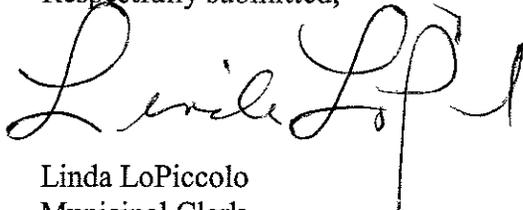
Walter Eckel motioned to re-open the public session so that he could discuss the matter with Dr. DeFabiis since the meeting had already been closed for public comments. The motion failed for the lack of a second.

Roll Call on Resolution: 2008-101
Eckel – no, Maceri – yes, Roman - yes

Adjournment

Roman motioned; Maceri seconded and the Committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 5:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Linda LoPiccolo
Municipal Clerk

Resolution No. 2008-101 Resolution of The Township Committee of South Hackensack Regarding The Defeated 2008-09 Budget of The South Hackensack School District, Bergen County, New Jersey

WHEREAS, in the election held on April 15, 2008, the proposed South Hackensack School District budget for the school year 2008-2009, with a proposed general fund tax levy in the amount of \$5,596,520.00, was defeated as reported in the certified canvas of the election by the Bergen County Board of Canvases for a result of 144 yes votes to 224 no votes; and,

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 18A:22-37 provides that if the voters reject any items of a budget submitted at the annual school election, thereafter, the members of the Governing Body of the municipality shall consult with the Board of Education and determine the amounts

Specific identified line items for reduction and reasons:

<u>Item</u>		<u>Reduction</u>
11-000-100-562	Tuition to Other LEAs Within State - Special	\$46,000
11-120-100-101	Grades 1-5 – Salaries of Teachers	20,000
11-000-216-320	Other Support Services –Students/Related Services – Purch Prof Ed Svs	20,000
11-000-270-160	Salary for Pupil Transportation – Between Home & School - Regular	23,625
11-000-270-161	Salary for Pupil Transportation – Between Home & School - Special	23,625
11-000-270-518	Contracted Services (Special Ed Students) ESCs & CTSA's	<u>50,000</u>
		<u>\$183,250</u>

Reason: Such reductions in the school budget will be without any negative impact on the education of the children of the South Hackensack School District.

Certification of Governing Body

We, the members of the majority and quorum of the Township Committee voting on the Resolution certify that the revised budget is sufficient and adequate to provide the students of the South Hackensack School District a thorough and efficient education:
