

Robbinsville Board of Education

Tuesday, March 12, 2019

6:00 PM

PRMS Cafetorium

Minutes

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mrs. Jane Luciano, President

Mr. Scott Veisz, Vice President

Mrs. Shaina Ciaccio

Mrs. Sharon DeVito

Mr. Vito Galluccio

Mr. Thomas Halm

Mr. Craig Heilman

Mrs. Lisa Temple

Mr. Richard Young

SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Kathleen A. Foster

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

Dr. Kim Tew

SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR / BOARD SECRETARY

Ms. Beth Brooks

BOARD ATTORNEY

Ms. Jodi Howlett

ROBBINSVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION
PUBLIC SESSION MINUTES

March 12, 2019

I. CALL TO ORDER PUBLIC MEETING

Board President Jane Luciano called the March 12, 2019 meeting of the Robbinsville Board of Education to order at 6:06 PM. She read the New Jersey Open Public Meeting Law announcement then led the flag salute.

II. ROLL CALL

Mrs. Ciaccio	Present	Mr. Galluccio	Present	Mrs. Temple	Present
Mrs. DeVito	Present	Mr. Heilman	Present	Mr. Veisz	Present
Mr. Halm	Present	Mrs. Luciano	Present	Mr. Young	Present

III. BOARD PRESIDENT STATEMENT

Mrs. Luciano laid out the parameters of the meeting and indicated that the primary purpose of the evening is to provide the Board a forum to debate the budget. She noted that time would be dedicated to questions and answers during the monthly Board meeting scheduled to take place on March 18 and stressed that this meeting is about transparency so the public can witness the Board engage in discourse and, if needed, provide direction to the Superintendent and School Business Administrator about possible revisions to the budget.

IV. 2019-2020 BUDGET PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION

Dr. Foster and Ms. Brooks provided a presentation on the 2019-2020 annual budget. Dr. Foster indicated that because the budget is designed to uphold the district's values she is recommending a 1.74% increase to support teachers and students as well as capital projects.

V. BOARD DISCUSSION

The Board engaged in a robust conversation about all aspects of the budget including the following:

- Use of projected savings from The Difference Card (possible scholarship fund for senior class trip)
- Board commitment to REA contract and increased salary guide
- Increase in health benefits costs
- Use of revenue generated from the Robbinsville Extended Day program and possible return of RED surplus to the operating budget
- Possible outsourcing of IT / Explore cloud based environment vs. Server based
- Utilities costs
- Commitment to budget more accurately
- Addition of capital line in the budget – Currently the district has \$17M in capital projects to consider
- Enrollment trends
- Student Activity Fees – Possible elimination or reduction
- Non-negotiables include keeping intact security / SROs / RDT services / Special Education

- Special Education trends over past five years
- Reserve (specific purpose / added to or used by resolution) vs Surplus (State mandates 2%)
- Use of surplus
- Tax Rate vs Tax Levy

VI. BREAK – 8:10 PM – 8:19 PM

VII. BOARD DISCUSSION

The Board discussed the following possible scenarios and then took a straw poll to determine where each member stood.

Scenario 1 – Tax Levy Increase of 0.51% (\$189,067)

Total Revenues = \$46,838,625 (Includes 19-20 actual state aid)

Approximately \$90 / year property tax reduction on average assessed value (\$375K)

Revenue shortfall = \$0

Scenario 2 – Tax Levy Flat – 0% (\$0)

Total Revenues = \$46,649,558

Approximately \$115 / year property tax reduction on average assessed value (\$375K)

Revenue shortfall = \$189,067

Scenario 3 – Tax Levy Reduction – 1.51% (\$562,659)

Total Revenues = \$46,086,899

Approximately \$200 / year property tax reduction on average assessed value (\$375K)

Revenue shortfall = \$751,726

Straw Poll

- Lisa Temple – Between scenarios 2 and 3
- Craig Heilman – Scenario 3
- Tom Halm – Between scenarios 2 and 3
- Rich Young – Between scenarios 2 and 3
- Scott Veisz – Between scenarios 2 and 3
- Jane Luciano – Between scenarios 2 and 3
- Sharon DeVito – Between scenarios 2 and 3
- Vito Galluccio – Between scenarios 2 and 3
- Shaina Ciaccio – Between scenarios 2 and 3 (Leaning more toward 3)

Conversation about the guidelines involving use of surplus ensued. Ms. Brooks explained that surplus can be used in three ways: at budget time, end of year reserves, or for one time expenditures. Ultimately the Board charged FFT with the task of creating a new scenario (2a) somewhere between scenarios 2 and 3 and agreed to abide by the committee's recommendation.

VIII. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

A. DEB BAER

Because the district has not yet been in a position to fully rehire for the 29 FTEs that were lost in 2010, would rather kick in \$16 per month than to reduce taxes. Appreciates focus on salary guide but understands that the reason teachers leave is not necessarily based upon salary but on quality of life issues like having to teach 7 periods and class size.

B. DEB BELLA

Urged the Board to go to the 2% cap to allow for smaller classes, security and capital projects.

C. JANSEE SADULA

Thanked the Board and administration for their work on the budget and stressed that there has been no tax increase for the past six years. Advocated for G&T at PRMS, Science & Tech Clubs at PRMS, Teachers for AP Computer Science and Multivariable Calculus (these are currently online classes), more experienced tech and engineering teachers. Also noted a heating issue in January at PRMS.

D. DARREN MCCOOL

Stressed the need for transparency and said that Robbinsville is not an isolated case and that the entire state of New Jersey is in the same predicament. Urged the Board to push back at the township for increasing the cost of SROs and not to make decisions based on a short term market return.

E. VINCENT COSTANZA

Asked how Board goals are funded and how the budget priorities tie in with the goals set at the Board retreat.

F. MAYOR FRIED

Called the district reprehensible for having capital needs with no plan. Said there is no transparency and accused the district of squirreling away \$6M. Said ratable base is going up and home values going down. Claimed big taxpayers are supporting.

G. AVERY HUTCHINSON

Asked about the number of staff vs number of students to determine class size. Supports SRO but urged the district to continue negotiations with township. Thanked the Board for considering dropping activity fees.

H. CHRIS EMIGHOLZ

Glad tax increase is not on the table. Money is not always the answer. Urged property tax relief.

I. CAROL ANN BLANK

Spoke first for Brian Hayes who said that school security is about meeting kids where they are then she indicated that PILOTs do not benefit the district. Money given back to the town does nothing to benefit the 30% of 3rd graders not meeting proficiency guidelines.

J. NOUSHIN KANANI

Doesn't like three minute public comment rule. \$16 / month relief is of no help. Do not cut security and teachers. Stressed the need for transparency. Angry that \$6M is just sitting somewhere.

K. MIKE CIPRIANO

Commended Board and administration on the budget. PILOTs bring money into town – Amazon brought in \$190K.

L. CHRIS CAPFERER

Transparency is key. Asked how \$6M just appeared. Looks forward to open and honest dialog on March 18th.

M. BILL KELLY

Advocated for a tax cut. Said he pays \$18.5K in taxes.

IX. SUMMARY

Mrs. Luciano provided a summary. There was agreement on funding the SROs, the costs associated with the new Random Drug Testing policy, creating a capital line. She asked administration to prioritize the list of what is not included in the budget (slide 13) and asked FFT to address a long term capital plan. Mrs. Luciano also indicated that the Board needed to understand more about the \$6M and implications of use as well as how RED surplus can be factored in. She asked Ms. Brooks to create two new scenarios somewhere between Scenarios 2a and 3 for consideration.

X. ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Mr. Halm and seconded by Mrs. Temple, the Robbinsville Board of Education voted to adjourn the March 12, 2019 meeting at 9:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Brooks
School Business Administrator / Board Secretary