

**ROBBINSVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
2009-2010 PRELIMINARY BUDGET ADOPTION
March 16, 2009**

ROBBINSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL - STUDENT ACTIVITIES CENTER



PUBLIC SESSION MINUTES

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. Michael Reca, President

Mrs. Maxine Fox, Vice President

Mrs. Carol Boyne

Mrs. Sharon DeVito

Ms. Melissa Foy

Mr. Thomas Halm, Jr. – Arrival (6:07)

Mr. Matthew O’Grady

Mrs. Lainie Potter

Mrs. Faith Silvestrov

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Dr. John J. Szabo

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Kathie Foster

SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR / BOARD SECRETARY

Ms. Louise B. Davis

ROBBINSVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION

March 16, 2009
6:00 PM

ROBBINSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL - STUDENT ACTIVITIES CENTER

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER PUBLIC MEETING

II. STATEMENT OF PUBLIC MEETINGS

The New Jersey Open Public Meeting Law was enacted to insure the rights of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this act, the Robbinsville Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time and place thereof posted in the Trenton Times and the Township of Robbinsville Bulletin Board. In addition, this notice was faxed to the Trenton Times and posted at Windsor School, Sharon School, Pond Road Middle School and Robbinsville High School.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

IV. ROLL CALL

V. BUDGET PRESENTATION

Superintendent John J. Szabo provided a Power Point presentation (attached) to the Board and public detailing the Preliminary Budget.

VI. DISCUSSION

School Business Administrator Louise B. Davis provided a breakdown of anticipated revenue, state aid, and debt service aid. A discussion ensued and Board members asked questions on related matters, i.e.

- Reduction by half of equalization aid – Dr. Szabo indicated that he would ask the County Executive the reason for this;
- Estimated medical benefit costs – Approximately \$15,000 per person;
- A breakdown of health benefits – Ms. Davis will provide this information;
- Status of All Clean contract – The contract remains flat for next year;
- ROTC – A discussion concerning adding a second question to the ballot or the possibility of Robbinsville students attending the Jackson ROTC program and Jackson is a “Choice” school;

VII. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Betty Albano

- Represents Mobile Homes Association – Association will not vote to pass budget / Fixed income / Suggested cutting tennis and lacrosse / Recommended use of volunteers in schools;

B. Bob Muir

- ROTC – Appreciates Board concern for this life altering program / Encouraged Board to explore options in order to continue the program;

C. Joe Franklin

- District's ROTC recruitment effort less than sterling / Suggested better promotion of program and exploration of bringing other districts into Robbinsville's program;
- Brought to Board's attention unlit flag at night;

D. Dorothy Johnson

- Requested clarification on "Choice" schools – Dr. Szabo indicated that each county has one school designated as a Choice school allowing students from other districts to attend. He does not think Jackson is a Choice school but will verify;
- Acknowledged the efforts of Major Hunter and Sergeant DelMonte and asked that the district make a commitment to keep the ROTC program;

E. Joe Armenti

- Questioned what happened to the health benefits savings when the district changed brokers – Mr. Reca indicated that although there was a substantial initial savings, the broker has projected a 25% increase in costs for the upcoming year. As a result, the district is currently looking into the State Health Benefits Plan.
- Asked if the initial \$325,000 savings for the outsourcing of custodians will continue – Ms. Davis indicated that this initial savings occurred two budget cycles ago and reiterated that the All Clean contract will remain flat in the upcoming budget year.
- Questioned funding of PERS – Ms. Davis indicated that in the current year PERS was under funded, however in the 2009-2010 budget it will be fully funded.

F. Walter Dabrowski

- Status of Lawrence Twp. tuition payment – Balance due: \$78,000 (for 2006-2007) half of which will be paid by June 30, 2009 leaving a balance of \$35,000 for the 2009-2010 Budget;

- Requested pennies on the dollar amount for 2009-2010 Budget – Too early to tell but based upon last year's Budget .04+;
- Elementary Language Program cuts – Restructured at elementary level / 7th and 8th graders will take part in full program.

G. John Ruch

- The State is not living up to its word and is structurally keeping the District well below adequacy / Based on current system it would take five to ten years to reach adequacy;
- Encouraged District to continue to work on saving ROTC;
- Asked about improvement to facilities in upcoming budget – Mr. Reca pointed out that roof repairs and grounds maintenance are included but lighting for fields is not.
- Questioned Language Arts program cuts – Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kathie Foster indicated that it is too early to tell the extent of the program cuts but that the District was hoping they would be minor;
- Where will new SPED teachers at PRMS be housed? One additional teacher will be on a cart and the faculty room will be converted to a classroom.

H. Kim Johnson

- Expressed frustration with ROTC program cut at RHS and asked for clarification on related salaries;
- Pointed out greater expense involved with sending students to participate in Jackson ROTC;
- Suggested the ROTC students take over responsibility for the flag at RHS.

I. Joe Armenti

- Encouraged District to look at spending reductions on supplies as a way to save ROTC.

J. Emily Lekko

- Indicated that District could look to Boy Scouts for individuals interested in joining ROTC.

K. Dorothy Johnson

- Suggested that the District solicit more volunteers as a way to streamline the budget and reinstitute ROTC.

L. Mike Krakowski

- Commended ROTC students, as well as Major Hunter and Sergeant DeMonte, for going above and beyond for the program.

M. Karen Centifoni

- ROTC exemplifies BOE mission of preparing today's students for tomorrow's challenges;
- Will do what ever it takes to continue the program.

N. Peter Kvarth

- Noted the passion of ROTC students and parents.

O. Debbie Muench

- Sympathized with the impact of budget cuts and stressed the importance of passing the budget as a way to meet the responsibility of continuing to provide for all students.

P. Karen Cathers

- Pointed out that ROTC teaches self esteem for girls.

Q. Jared Johnson

- A member of ROTC, Jared explained the positive effect the program has had on his life. He expressed that ROTC has taught him more than anything else.

R. Scott Hussey

- RHS Senior Scott Hussey indicated that ROTC is the most beneficial program in high school. He informed the Board that books and uniforms are paid for by the Air Force.

In spite of the restrictions imposed by the State, Board members expressed support for the ROTC program and regret that they are left with few choices and so little flexibility.

VIII. BREAK

A break took place at 8:30 PM. The meeting reconvened at 8:40 PM.

IX. ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION

The Board continued to discuss the Budget, focusing primarily on ROTC. A suggestion was made to explore the possibility of requesting the partial penny amount from the township to retain the program for the upcoming year. The Board acknowledged the importance of a long term commitment and decided to work toward this goal including contacting state legislators for assistance.

A discussion involving arrearages in Student Activities Fees took place. Board members asked for update of current year account detailing the number of students participating in extra-curricular activities.

Dr. Szabo indicated that the Preliminary Budget will be forwarded to the County Executive for approval on Wednesday, March 18, 2009. He noted that he will ask about the process / timeline involved in adding a second question to the ballot.

The Board asked Dr. Szabo to contact Athletic Director Curtis Wyers to provide a sports breakdown detailing numbers of coaches and participants for each sport, as well as how many levels of each sport currently exist.

X. RESOLUTION BEING PRESENTED FOR APPROVAL

On motion of Mr. O’Grady, and seconded by Mrs. Potter, and carried by a vote of 9 – 0, the Board approved the following resolution (X.A.):

A. PRELIMINARY ADOPTION OF 2009-2010 BUDGET FOR ROBBINSVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

That the Robbinsville Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the Robbinsville Public Schools Preliminary Budget for FY 2009-2010 for submission to the Mercer County Executive County Superintendent as follows:

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Local Tax Levy</u>
Total General Fund	\$ 33,763,778	\$ 29,661,806
Total Special Revenue Fund	\$ 358,152	-----
Total Debt Service Fund	\$ 4,436,984	\$ 4,351,668
Total	\$ 38,558,914	\$ 34,013,474

XI. ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Mrs. DeVito, and seconded by Mrs. Silvestrov, and carried by a vote of 9 – 0, the Board adjourned the March 16, 2009 Special Meeting of the Robbinsville Board of Education at 9:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

***Louise B. Davis
School Business Administrator / Board Secretary***