



PUBLIC SESSION MINUTES

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. Matthew O’Grady, President

Mr. Thomas Halm, Jr., Vice President

Mrs. Shaina Ciaccio

Ms. Leslie Dee

Mrs. Sharon DeVito

Mr. Craig Heilman

Mr. Keith Kochberg

Mrs. Faith Silvestrov

Mr. Richard Young

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Dr. Steven J. Mayer

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Kathleen A. Foster

SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR / BOARD SECRETARY

Ms. Christina Moskal

ROBBINSVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION
PUBLIC SESSION MINUTES

March 14, 2016

I. CALL TO ORDER PUBLIC MEETING

Board President Matthew O’Grady called the March 16, 2016 meeting to order at 7:03PM. He read the *Statement of Public Meetings* and led the flag salute.

II. ROLL CALL

Mrs. Ciaccio	Present	Mr. Halm	Absent	Mr. O’Grady	Present
Ms. Dee	Present	Mr. Heilman	Present	Mrs. Silvestrov	Present
Mrs. DeVito	Present	Mr. Kochberg	Present	Mr. Young	Present

III. TENTATIVE BUDGET PRESENTATION – Dr. Steven Mayer

Dr. Mayer provided the budget presentation and detailed the district’s fiscal forecast for the 2016-2017 school year. He noted that as things currently stand, the average Robbinsville homeowner is looking at a tax increase of about 2 cents per \$100,000 of assessed value or approximately \$75 for the year. He stipulated that this figure is based upon an estimate for health care costs and that once the insurance company is able to calculate the loss ratio for the entire year (rather than for only part of the year), the district is hoping to see a tax increase that drops below 2 cents. Dr. Mayer informed attendees that although enrollment is on the rise and the district would be well served with five new FTEs (full time equivalent) to maintain optimal class size, there is not a way to finance them and remain within the state mandated cap.

Board Discussion

Mr. Heilman noted that although he is happy with the overall budget, he would like to see the tax rate remain flat. He stated that an increase of \$170,000 in the Special Education budget seems high, specifically pointing out a line on page 37. He wondered if it might be able to be trimmed.

Dr. Mayer explained that the item questioned anchors into Wilson training for special education teachers. The Wilson technique is a multi-sensory approach to reading that helps students to become fluent readers. He indicated that funds in that line were also earmarked for other things like student support for after school programs and contracted services. The shift from in-house services to contracted services by outside vendors in some areas related to Special Education this year has resulted in a corresponding budget increase.

Dr. Mayer also pointed out some cost savings measures that have been instituted over the past several years. For instance, new LLD and autistic programs have allowed the district to bring students that were formerly placed in schools outside of the district. Also, the RHS S.O.A.R. program has recently expanded to include a class at the middle school.

He noted that the sale of Windsor and the final cost of health care will be driving factors in determining how close to flat the 2016-2017 budget will be. Looking ahead to 2017-2018, Dr. Mayer projected that the district will have additional revenue based upon the solar initiative that is currently underway.

Mr. O’Grady stated that the district is currently looking at the prospect of replacing the track and turf at the high school. He indicated that it might be a good time to consider revising the activity fee structure to help offset some of the costs. Currently activity fees, which have remained flat for the past seven years, account for 8% (or \$125,000) of the sports and extra-curricular budget.

Mr. Young encouraged members of the public to contact the district with questions about the budget.

IV. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

A. AARON HOBART

Mr. Hobart asked for clarification of the term ‘loss ratio’ as it relates to the health care renewals. In a follow up question he asked if the district had considered offering a high deductible health plan option. Dr. Mayer explained that next year as the district and REA enter negotiations it may be an option that would serve as a win-win for the district and for younger employees but that currently, since the benefit package is a negotiated item, it is not.

Mr. Hobart stated that he is not looking for the district to necessarily keep the tax rate flat. Rather, he and many of his neighbors have a keen understanding that quality programs and services, such as those offered to the children of Robbinsville Schools, are costly. He indicated that, in his view, allocating money for debt services is a better long term financial strategy for maintaining the health of the district.

B. NUSHIN KANANI

Mrs. Kanani wondered how the district will pay for the items listed on the slide entitled “What’s not in the budget?” Dr. Mayer informed her that the things on that particular slide are wish list items and, ultimately, items the district is unable to fund. She asked if the Robbinsville shares services with neighboring districts. Dr. Mayer informed her that the 2016-2017 budget projects revenue from shared services in the amount of \$35,800 from transportation jointures and by allowing Allentown High School students to participate on Robbinsville’s swim and ice hockey teams. When Mrs. Kanani asked how much state aid the district anticipates, Dr. Mayer informed her that although \$43,000 in aid is expected this year, the district continues to be funded at a level that is \$4M under what the state deems as adequate for educating a student.

C. RAMESH VENUGAPAL

Mr. Venugapal asked if funds from corporate donations are applied to the budget. Mr. Mayer explained that donations are typically earmarked for a specific use, such as for the Robotics Team, and are not added to the general fund.

D. SHAZIA BUSKINS

Mrs. Buskins explained that, in her opinion, paying taxes to educate the township’s children is part of an implied civic bargain that, ultimately, serves the township well.

V. APPROVE RESOLUTIONS

On motion of Mrs. DeVito and seconded by Mrs. Ciaccio, the Robbinsville Board of Education voted 8-0 to adopt the 2016-2017 tentative budget as indicated. Mr. Halm was absent.

A. ADOPT TENTATIVE BUDGET: ROBBINSVILLE SCHOOLS 2016-2017

RESOLVED, that the Board adopt the following resolution to approve and submit the proposed 2016-2017 annual school budget. The Board also accepts the New Jersey Department of Education notification of 2016-2017 State aid and authorizes the Administration to make minor adjustments in the budget required by the Mercer County Executive Superintendent of Schools.

WHEREAS, P.L. 2013, chapter 280 requires the submission of an itemized budget to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools by March 22, 2016;

WHEREAS, the Executive County Superintendent will review the budget documents and either approve them or recommend adjustments;

WHEREAS, the Board will have additional opportunities to modify this budget at future Board meetings, after review by the Executive County Superintendent, or at the public hearing scheduled for Tuesday, April 26, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the Student Activity Center at the Robbinsville High School, 155 Robbinsville Edinburg Road;

WHEREAS, the Administration recommends that the Board approve and submit the following proposed 2016-2017 annual school budget and accept the New Jersey Department of Education notification of 2016-2017 State aid;

WHEREAS, supporting documentation of this budget also contains an itemization of certain expenditures required under administrative regulations;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the tentative budget be approved for FY 2016-2017 using the 2016-2017 state aid figures and the Secretary to the Board of Education be authorized to submit the following tentative budget to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools for approval in accordance with the statutory deadline as follows:

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Local Tax Levy</u>
General Fund	\$39,933,831	\$35,144,055
Special Revenue Fund	\$608,242	\$0
Debt Service Fund	<u>\$5,526,726</u>	<u>\$5,247,680</u>
Total Base Budget	\$46,068,799	\$40,391,735

And to advertise said tentative budget in the Trenton Times in accordance with the form suggested by the New Jersey Department of Education.

The tentative budget general fund tax levy, as per N.J.S.A. 18A:75-38, includes a tax levy adjustment for increases in health care cost increases in the amount of \$232,711.00 and a request to \$11,020.00 (enrollment adjustment) for increases to health benefit costs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a public hearing be held at the Robbinsville High School, 155 Robbinsville Edinburg Road, New Jersey on April 26, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the budget for the 2016-2017 School Year.

The school district has prepared programs and services in addition to the Core Curriculum Content Standards adopted by the State Board of Education. Information on this budget and the programs and services it provides is available in the Administration Office.

B. APPROVE MAXIMUM TRAVEL EXPENDITURE FOR 2016-2017

On motion of Mrs. DeVito and seconded by Ms. Dee, the Robbinsville Board of Education voted 8-0 to approve the maximum travel expenditure for the 2016 – 2017 school year for all staff and board members in the amount \$130,000.00 in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23B-1.2(b). The Robbinsville Board of Education also approves that an annual school year threshold of \$1,500.00 per staff member be established for regular business travel where prior Board approval shall not be required unless this annual threshold for a staff member is exceeded in the school year. Mr. Halm was absent.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Mrs. DeVito and seconded by Mrs. Silvestrov, the Robbinsville Board of Education voted to adjourn the March 14, 2016 budget hearing at 8:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Moskal
School Business Administrator / Board Secretary