

MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING, MAY 15, 2009 AT 1:00 P.M. OR AS SOON THEREAFTER AT BOROUGH HALL

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT.

BOROUGH CLERK: This Special meeting is being held in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Open Public Meetings Act of the State of New Jersey. Adequate notice of this Special meeting was provided by forwarding a Sunshine notice which included the time, date and location of this Special meeting of the Mayor and Council.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL:

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Councilman Granell, Councilman Hughes, Councilman Tanelli, Councilman Yampaglia

ABSENT: Councilman Bianchi, Councilman DiBlasi

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Peter C. Massa, Terence M. Wall, Acting Borough Clerk, Anthony D'Elia, Borough Attorney

DISCUSSION OF SCHOOL BUDGET

(part of meeting was not recorded properly)

Tony D'Elia – ...that there be no vote taken today until the board of education meets Monday night I believe you have a regular meeting and then we will meet immediately thereafter to discuss their final position, alright? And I think that's what you're going to have to do legally because the board of education is not here today. So with that, that's why we're going into executive session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

INTRODUCED BY: (not on recording)

SECONDED BY: (not on recording)

ROLL CALL: All council present vote in the affirmative

ABSENT: Councilman Bianchi, Councilman DiBlasi

Terence – we're now back on the record.

MOTION TO RETURN TO REGULAR ORDER OF BUSINESS

INTRODUCED BY: Councilman Tanelli

SECONDED BY: Councilman Hughes

ROLL CALL: All council present vote in the affirmative

ABSENT: Councilman Bianchi, Councilman DiBlasi

Mayor Massa – ladies and gentlemen, as a result of conference with members of the council in the interest of expediting the budgets already processed to the board of education. And after a very thorough review by an independent auditing firm, it was identified a potential cost saver actual cost savings. The mayor and council's about to introduce a resolution which will reduce the board of education budget.

R-115-09 RESO RE: CERTIFICATION OF LOCAL TAX LEVY FOR 2009 FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION

INTRODUCED BY: Councilman Granell

SECONDED BY: Councilman Tanelli

ROLL CALL: All council present vote in the affirmative

ABSENT: Councilman Bianchi, Councilman DiBlasi

Mayor Massa – I'd like to commend the members of the council for their diligence in having this review accomplished by our auditing firm. With this what it will translate to for the community is a zero tax increase without affecting the ability of the board of education to provide necessary services to the community. I also want to say that this is one of the few times in my recollection, either a member of the governing body or board of education for 6 years from 1990 to 1996 that such a review by the mayor and council on the defeated budget had taken place. And I think its incumbent upon us that while we fully understand the importance of providing our students and community with excellent education, its all incumbent upon us to be as cost effective and responsible to tax payers we can, especially now in these extremely difficult times. Call the roll?

Terence – resolution passes.

Mayor Massa – any other further business?

Councilman Granell – I just want to say a couple quick things. Nothing is more passionate or close than our kids. That's the bottom line. Municipal or board of ed, they're our kids. So I have to be very honest with you, I was very disappointed when I hear rhetoric weeks before the budget that nothing can be cut because teachers and programs will be cut and I hear rhetoric like that in the local newspapers from board trustees. That bothers me. Especially when I get the results from the audit team and I see the surpluses that are there. It bothers me that there's a tax increase generated on the school side when there are surpluses in the budget. Now whether or not you guys go back contest this or not, that's another issue that you decision as a governing body you're going to have to make. But I want to make it perfectly clear that the mayor and council hasn't cut a teacher, a raise, a child's program, or anything. The only thing that was looked at here was surplus and it is very concerning that there's so much surplus in this budget and I'm kind of questioning the process itself as how does this get put together. How you can generate a proposal of 3.8% tax increase when there's money in the budget to begin with. I've had people ask me, teachers who are untenured, who have been ripped or riced if you will, if they're going to have a job and I don't know what to tell teachers who are not tenured when they've been riced if there going to have a job when there's surplus in the budget. My question is why aren't they going to you guys at your Monday meeting and asking that question. I don't know why we're getting janitors and telling janitors they're losing their job because the budget failed and the mayor and council are getting their budget. I don't understand those types of questions and I understand it's a passionate subject and its close to people, you know, it's a family and nobody likes to deal with issues that's in the family but when it becomes public and your finger pointing, it's a real issue. Mr. Blanco you're a former superintendent and you're no rookie when it comes to this. So to make statements in the local paper that programs are going to have to be cut when it comes to this budget, they look to you for leadership and guidance as one of the senior members on that board, so that is a very serious concern and I have to be honest with you Dr. Stringham, when we first met with you, when this budget failed before, your team presented to us with an 'A' and 'B' plan and on that 'A' and 'B' plan we reduced that budget by twenty twelve thousand dollars and everybody walked away. I wasn't happy to cut it but we had something to work with. They have to force these auditors to come in and look at these books and find the things we have, it doesn't make sense. It's just costing people more money. Now we have to pay an auditing firm for things we already knew or should have done in the beginning. To me these things don't make sense. At what points are we just going to stop? Just a couple quick things and I'm going to be quiet, take my lungs, and re-welcome this. Money transfers out of the capital reserve between now and the end of the year. I'm not sure how that's going to work and how much that could affect the decision but I think its something that has to be watched very closely. We got to work together on making sure the things work here. The insurance story which are packages over at the board of health, I know when we negotiated the police contracts, fight backs and insurance programs, its very big it's a big monsters truck of our budget. I know we talked in the past about shared services or working in the borough and the board of Ed maybe working from an insurance perspective being under the same plan. There's got to be thousands, millions of dollars to save here if we did this jointly. Moving forward, that's a strategy not an option. We don't have the option to do things in silos anymore. I don't know if we get a better rate if we do the insurance together. I don't know if you get a better rate if you do the state, I don't if you guys are looking at that per se. I'm sure you are. But these are things that you just got to start doing. It's done from our perspective. That line in the sand has been drawn this

far I think as a mayor and council. Its time to move forward and we got to work together. So I think the name calling and finger pointing all the other stuff that goes on with rhetoric because it is so passionate should really cease and stop. And I know what I'm doing when teachers or people on the board who work for board come to me and ask me what's going on. I'm simply going to redirect them back to the people they should be talking to which is you guys. That's all I have to say mayor.

Mayor Massa –any other councilman? I'll entertain a motion to adjourn...

Mr. Blanco – Mayor, just an answer to Mr. Granell.

Mayor Massa – as a point of order Mr. Blanco what I will do is open the meeting to hearing of citizens at which time you can be heard.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Anthony Blanco – 18 Stover Avenue – Mr. Granell I'll answer to your comment as long as you mentioned my name. I'll stand on my record any day compared to yours. You're a neophyte in this town, okay. So, I'll stand on my record any time that you want to challenge me and my record I'll be here.

Councilman Granell – Mr. Blanco, I'm not challenging your record. You made a statement in the paper...

Anthony Blanco – you're challenging my record because you mentioned my name...

Councilman Granell – you said

Tony D'Elia – wait, wait, wait until the public comments...let me say, Mr. Blanco you can continue in five minutes. The normal course of business is that we've been doing for two years, public speaks first. When they close the business, council members can speak if they desire to so hold any comments if you want any until after the public comments.

Anthony Blanco – I stand on my record.

Mayor Massa – thank you Mr. Blanco. Anyone else wishing to be heard? Mr. McDermott.

George McDermott – 216 Rutherford Place – I'm sympathetic to budget cuts. This is the second time we've gone through this. This didn't quite work out the way it did last time. I think the dynamics and the circumstances were significantly different. Last time we met we had some information in advance that we were able to sit down, talk, and be able to work something out. This process this time was elongated, some miscommunications whatever, its water under the bridge. The whole idea is to move forward with respects to working for your kids. I think that there's a lot to be learned through budgets that I'm still learning. I'm going to go back and sit with the business administrator and try to learn a little more, see where these supposed over [inaudible] and monies that are dropping and find out what the purpose and the reasonings are behind that and I would welcome to share that information back with the mayor and council so that we're both on the same page and either this looks like we're working against each other. Thank you.

Mayor Massa – thank you Mr. McDermott. Anyone else? At this time I'll entertain motion to close hearing of citizens.

MOTION TO CLOSE PUBLIC COMMENTS

INTRODUCED BY: Councilman Tanelli

SECONDED BY: Councilman Granell

ROLL CALL: All council present vote in the affirmative

ABSENT: Councilman Bianchi, Councilman DiBlasi

Councilman Granell – George like I told you this morning, you've sat at my kitchen table and we've talked about this dozens of times. And we've talked about the transparency that needs to happen for the budget. Not only from your municipal side but from the

board of ed side as well. That's not at all the story between me, we've talked about that a hundred times. So I'm really glad to hear you're going to keep doing, you going to go down that path because that's something like I said before we've talked about that has to get to done. Concerning Mr. Blanco, Mr. Blanco I don't question your record. Your record speaks for itself. Exemplary wonderful all those wonderful things, but lets be perfectly clear, in the Leader newspaper you said not me you said that if anything were to happen to this budget, teachers or programs would be cut and I'm simply stating that with your seniority and your background, people look to you as a senior member for guidance and when you make statements like that and there's almost \$700,000 in the budget of surplus, that's a problem. You're misleading the public. You can do that when you feel like, not here. This is transparency. The budgets been looked at, the numbers don't lie. The numbers don't lie. Thank you.

Mayor Massa – any other members of the council wishing to be heard? Thank you Mr. Granell. I'll just have a quick comment myself. As I said previously, the actions been taken by the mayor and council after having a very thorough review conducted by independent auditing firm. These are very difficult times for us financially. We expect that the board of education just as a mayor and council would do everything in its power to maintain minimum tax impact for the community. I understand there's been a great deal of rhetoric during this particular season. I hope that is all behind us. To echo the words of board president Mr. McDermott, its time to go forward and make sure the kids get educated. However it is a concern that the board of education member would make comments in fact that programs would be lost if the budget did not remain in its original form. Of course there could be difference of opinion. I will, due respect for Mr. Blanco, I've known him not only personally for many years but I worked with him when I was a board of education trustee, and of course its our expectation that this governing body and the board of education can for future budgets provide the same kind of scrutiny to the expansion of tax payer dollars that we try to do tonight. And I do want to publicly commend the people on the board of education, [inaudible] the administrative staff for doing their jobs to keep our kids educated because that's the bottom line. So I do want to thank you for being here with us today and I want to thank the members of this governing body in this diligence and patience and spending a lot of their own time to make sure this process goes forward as responsibly for the community as we possibly can.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

INTRODUCED BY: Councilman Tanelli

SECONDED BY: Councilman Hughes

ROLL CALL: AYES: Councilman Granell, Hughes, Tanelli

ABSENT: Councilman Bianchi, DiBlasi, Yampaglia