

MINUTES OF THE OPEN SESSION MEETING OF
THE TEANECK TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
HELD IN THE TEANECK HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
MONDAY, MAY 17, 2010

Mayor Feit called the Open Session Meeting of the Teaneck Township Council to order at 8:10 p.m., and asked all those present to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: C. Gussen, C. Hameeduddin, DM. Parker, C. Honis, C. Katz, C. Toffler, Mayor Feit.

Absent: None.

Also Present. S. Turitz, Ferrara, Turitz, Harraka & Goldberg Esqs.; W. Rupp, Ferrara, Turitz, Harraka & Goldberg Esqs; W. Broughton, Township Manager; L. Aportela-Hernandez, Municipal Clerk; C. Ferraioli, Ferraioli, Wielkotz, Cerullo, & Cuva, P.A.

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by Resolution 322-09, setting the 2010 meeting dates, and Resolution 110-10, the May 10, 2010 Sunshine Notice, and May 14, 2010 Sunshine Notice amending the 2010 meeting dates, sending a copy to THE RECORD, THE SUBURBANITE, THE BERGEN NEWS/SUN BULLETIN, THE JEWISH STANDARD, and THE COUNTY SEAT, filing a copy in the Township Clerk's Office and posting it on the Municipal Building bulletin board, and the Mayor hereby directs that this statement be included in the minutes.

DISCUSSION ON 2010-2011 SCHOOL BOARD BUDGET

Mayor Feit recognized Board of Education members Pruitt, Fisher, Rice, and Diuguid.

Mayor Feit confirmed that the Council will not consider cutting extracurricular activities, athletics, or transportation.

DM. Parker explained that the members of the Youth Advisory Board do not support reductions in guidance, and as such she does not support the cut. C. Toffler confirmed. The consensus among the majority of Council was to reduce the number of guidance counselors for 7th to 12th grade.

Council concurred to include additional recommendations provided by Mayor Feit and C. Gussen in the reduction of the budget.

C. Hameeduddin clarified that Council's reductions are only recommendations as the Board of Education makes the final decision on which line items to reduce funding.

Council cited reductions in non-custodial and technological staff, as well as the Executive Assistant to the Human Resource Manager and the Assistant to the Business Administrator as part of the reduction, but not to eliminate any teaching positions. These staffing reductions include salary and health benefits.

Council recessed between 9:24 p.m. to 9:38 p.m. in order for Mr. Ferraioli to calculate the current total of cuts.

Mr. Ferraioli confirmed that Council has reduced the budget at this time by \$3,443,169.

At this time, Council discussed the line items that were on hold, which included assistant principals, supervisors, Director of Facilities and Grounds, Substitute Coordinator, various coordinators, and fringes. The consensus among the majority of Council was to eliminate these positions at a further reduction of \$1,810,990.

C. Katz cited additional reductions to the 2008-2009 funding levels for various line items in general administrative support services, supplies, and miscellaneous purchases. C. Gussen cited additional reductions in line items for instructional staff training services.

Mr. Ferraioli confirmed that the proposed total reduction to the 2010-2011 School Budget is now \$6,130,274.

C. Toffler mentioned that if Council has to reduce any future school budgets, she hoped that the members of the Board of Education and the Business Administrator would participate in these meetings.

Mr. Turitz read into the record Resolution #113-10, Establishing Local Share of the General Fund of the Board of Education Budget for the Year 2010-2011. He explained that a formal resolution will be finalized tomorrow morning reflecting what was read into the record.

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR GOOD AND WELFARE

Mayor Feit inquired whether any member of the Council has any comments prior to opening the meeting to any comments from the public.

There were no comments.

Mayor Feit declared that any members of the public wishing to be heard at this time shall come forward and state their names and addresses for the record. Comments shall be limited to five minutes per person.

David Diuguid - 130 Johnson Avenue - does not agree that the proposed cuts will not adversely affect education; explained that during the budget process several small items were consolidated into miscellaneous accounts and to cut the administration responsible for monitoring and

implementing programs is not a possibility; will take recommendations under advisement, but will not follow all line items.

Alex Rashim - 543 Sagamore Avenue - spoke about consolidating classes to save on teacher's salaries in the computer and science programs.

Mitch Schonfeld - 308 Van Buren Avenue - stated that the 6 million dollar reduction is severe; asked why Council is not being as strict with the municipal budget.

Emily Rosenblum - 851 Club Road - said that 6 million is significant money, spoke in favor of the guidance department, and said that Council's obligation is to support the Township's children.

Howard Rose - 575 Northumberland Road - mentioned that the auditors' document explains how to provide a bare boned and eviscerated education, proposes cuts with no information, and had no impact statement.

Kaitlyn Richards - 464 Kipp Street - expressed how appalled she was over how the meeting was ran, no one is sharing information with one another, and miscellaneous does not mean not important.

Ron Schwartz - 698 Larch Avenue - noted that a bad message is being given to the community, said that some members are representing some constituencies that care more for municipal services than public schools; this vote is an indication of the divisions in town; asked why the Business Administrator or Interim Superintendent did not attend.

Gwen Acree - 101 Stuyvesant Road - commented that out of 41 years, there was never a year where there was a 0% increase for education; Council is comprised of 5 Teaneck public school graduates who have created a shell of a public school system.

Issac Rappaport - 747 Mildred Street - mentioned that this process has been a blame game of backhanded insults.

Rivka Rappaport - 747 Mildred Street - felt that the audience was manipulated and urged Council to follow a supervisor or vice principal around the schools for a day.

Regina Milner - 141 Monroe Street, Garfield - expressed how proud she was of students, it is unfair to suggest to violate a 3-year contract and to make teachers out to be greedy villains.

Lillian Lewis - Ardsley Court - asked why Council does not attend the Board of Education budget meetings.

Kevin Barster - 84 Oakdene Avenue - cited a lack of leadership on Council for not meeting with the Board of Education and the teachers' association; reduction will damage the school system; teachers need to realize the Township is in a depression; all sides need to meet at the middle.

Charles Powers - 1374 Academy Lane - stated that Council failed to put in a position over a 23 day period to know what the consequences of their actions are; spoke of the importance of assistant principals.

Fred Gibbons - 685 Linden Avenue - urged the resolution to be rejected because Council does not have enough information and the blame should go to those who did not vote.

Asif Mustafa - 1063 Griggs Avenue- said he was glad that Council made a decision that was long overdue as there is no more money, property values are going down, and the number of foreclosed homes are increasing.

Henry Pruitt - 113 Voorhees Street - asked why Council is doing this after coming out of a contentious election; expressed that he was ashamed of the cuts which are similar to a budget of an inner city school.

Ardie Walser - 350 Johnson Avenue - spoke about how imperative it is for elected officials to work together; the initial budget increase was what was best for the children; Council and the Board of Education need to look at serious ways to collaborate.

Eric Forman - 546 Beverly Road - explained how he is a mason; cited the infrastructure problems of the schools and how the zero percent increase is a shame.

There being no further persons wishing to speak at this time (or the time limit of one hour having expired), the Mayor Feit declared that the public comment portion of the meeting is now closed.

Mayor Feit inquired whether any member of the Council or the Manager wishes to respond to the public comments.

C. Toffler commented that she was thinking of how the Governor's cuts in Teaneck has devastated the Township by exacerbating existing divisions; the damage will take years to repair; and the Township is going to be terribly torn.

C. Katz noted how he has educated himself about the school budget; no matter what the Township does, someone will feel it is too much or too little; the problem happened over many years; if the Board of Education does not make creative cuts that do not effect the children's education, then there needs to be new leadership; the Board should sell property and has too many administrators.

C. Honis commented that she did not vote for the auditor's report; fears the damage made to the relationship among Council and the Board of Education; did not agree on the 0% budget increase in the municipal budget years ago and will not vote for these reductions.

DM. Parker stated that she will not be supporting this resolution as the cuts are unreasonable and reckless; the 0% municipal budget increase in 2008 caused torture in 2009 and she does not want to pass on that experience.

C. Hameeduddin apologized for losing his temper; had asked for intelligent information and was not provided with any; Council needs to make Teaneck affordable; and promised everything will be all right.

C. Gussen explained that while the municipal budget was introduced with a 4.8% increase, he will vote against it unless it goes down; Teaneck has to remain affordable or it will not benefit anyone; Teaneck ranks 3rd in spending per pupil in the State, so this is not a shell of a budget and will not impair the education of children.

Mayor Feit mentioned that he thinks the school board will move on; encourages a subcommittee to meet with the Board of Education; all meetings should be scheduled in advance; it is time for the two elected bodies to get together on a regular basis.

RESOLUTION

113-10 Establishing Local Share of the General Fund of the Board of Education Budget for the Year 2010-2011.

C. Gussen moved to approve Resolution 113-10, Establishing Local Share of the General Fund of the Board of Education Budget for the Year 2010-2011. Seconded by C. Hameeduddin.

Mayor to call on the Clerk for a roll-call vote.

In Favor: C. Gussen, C. Hameeduddin, C. Katz, Mayor Feit.

Opposed: DM. Parker, C. Honis, C. Toffler.

Absent: None.

Mayor Feit declared that the resolution was adopted.

ADJOURNMENT

C. Gussen moved to adjourn the Open Session Meeting at 12:44 a.m. Seconded by C. Hameeduddin.

In Favor: C. Gussen, C. Hameeduddin, DM. Parker, C. Honis, C. Katz, C. Toffler, Mayor Feit.

Opposed: None.

Absent: None.

Lisette Aportela-Hernandez, MPA, RMC
Municipal Clerk