

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
 HELD ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2010 AT 7:00 P.M.
 IN THE LITTLE THEATER OF THE GEORGE INNESS ANNEX
 141 PARK STREET, MONTCLAIR, NEW JERSEY

A. STATEMENTS

Let the minutes reflect that adequate notice of this meeting has been approved in the following manner:

1. On Friday, October 22, 2010 notice of this meeting was faxed to the Montclair Times, the Herald News and the Star-Ledger. The time, date and location of this meeting were accurately set forth therein.
2. On this same date a copy of said notice was filed with the Township Clerk and was posted at the public bulletin board in the first floor main hall of the Board of Education building, 22 Valley Road.
3. Copies have also been mailed to all persons who have requested same at no cost.

B. The meeting opened at 7:19 p.m.

C. The Pledge of Allegiance did not occur.

D. ROLL CALL

	PRESENT	ABSENT
Angelica Allen-McMillan	x	
Shirley Grill	x	
Robert Kautz	x	
Robin Kulwin		x
Leslie Larson	x	
Shelly Lombard	x	
Deborah Wilson	x	
Staff Members	18	
Members of the Public	50	
Members of the Press	4	

E. FINANCE WORKING GROUP COMMITTEE PRESENTATION

Ed Fowley, Representative of the Budget Finance Working Group, presented information to the Board about the Budget Options for the 2011-2012 School Year. He highlighted the following areas for discussion:

- Members, Process, Scope
- Review of 5-Year Projections
- 2010-2012 Line Item Review of the Budget
- Strategic Initiatives
- Budget Presentation Recommendations

COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS:

Mrs. Lombard stated that the presentation was very sobering given that the budget cycle is stressful. This is driven by the feeling that the district will lose \$3.5 million in state aid. She thanked the Budget Committee Working Group for volunteering their time to review lined items of the budget and for their presentation. She stated that a lot of these estimates are approximates and more work needs to be done..

Mrs. Lombard indicated that the Board felt it was important to put all items on the table. She stated that the goal is to get as many savings as possible. She added that the hardest battle will be to strike a balance. She concluded that this will be very difficult budget cycle with \$6.7 million in reductions to keep flat taxes.

Ms. Grill stated that as the Board goes through this period they intend on maintaining the quality of schools for the children and the community. If the Board were to take drastic actions there can be long term effects on the students which would impose a longer time to close the achievement gap, and drastic effect on real estate value. The Board is prepared to make some difficult choices. She added that the charter school factor has not been realized. If the district closes a building and have revenue go to a charter school it would be a very difficult situation.

Ms. Grill stated that in light of all of these issues, the revenue group has been trying to find ways to bring in revenue in the district. She indicated that they will begin starting to explore options in terms of policies and renting of facilities. The budget presentation was a list of very well thought out worse case scenarios.

Mrs. Wilson expressed her concerns about outsourcing aides, the consolidation of Renaissance to Mt. Hebron and in what way the Rand building will be used.

Ms. Larson expressed her concerns about the cost for consolidating a middle school and an elementary school. She indicated that there would then be two empty unoccupied buildings in the district.

Dr. Allen-McMillan expressed her concerns about the school opening costs and what attributes to these costs.

Mr. Kautz expressed his appreciation for the hard work of the Budget Committees Working Group. He stated that in respects to the information provided, much of the suggestions depends upon whether the district will lose or gain state aid. He added that the Board will not be able to set specific goals but a range of goals given the inability to possess information from the State in a timely manner.

Dr. Alvarez stated that this is difficult times for everyone. What was encouraging about the presentation is that for the first time in recent months there's talk about balance between cost effectiveness and quality. He stated that he thinks that there are some terrific ideas on the budget working groups' presentation.

Mrs. Lombard stated that feed back is welcome but ideas and suggestion are needed. She added that members of the public will have an opportunity to give ideas and suggestions on the budget at the November 15th public board meeting.

F. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Sanford Sorkin of 3 Marquette Road expressed his concerns about how the Board reached the goal of a \$6.7 million budget. He stated that the committees report did not include the financial consequences of layoffs, and the cost to the town of the tenure system.

Harant Yousofian of 1 Argyle Road expressed his concerns about class size being at 25 students in a classroom. He suggested that the Board increase class size.

Milt Horowitz of 17 Madison Avenue expressed his concerns about professional development, engaging in grant proposals where technology programs are free, and keeping class size down.

Marge Astorino of the MEA made suggestions to the board to rent the Rand building to the charter school. She clarified that the Guidance Department brings staff back to the office because it takes quite a bit of work to revise schedules. She indicated that she will be ready for negotiations in April but is willing to go into negotiations early to avoid cutting staff.

Mayor Fried 177 Union Street expressed his appreciation for the budget committee working group and the Board of Education for opening up the budget to the community.

Karen Turner 74 Highland Avenue thanked the Board for their work. She stated that she appreciate what is being done in the district. She asked the Board to keep in mind that the quality of education doesn't equate to what people have to pay in taxes because there are a lot of people leaving town.

Mr. Yousofian of 1 Argyle Road read a portion of the first amendment to the Board. He stated that maintaining the quality of education does not keep property taxes low.

G. ADJOURNMENT

At 9:09 p.m. Ms. Grill moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by *Dr. Allen-McMillan* and approved by a vote of 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Dana Sullivan
Board Secretary