

**BERNARDS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
BASKING RIDGE, NEW JERSEY
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES INDEX
FEBRUARY 11, 2008
EXECUTIVE SESSION 6:32 P.M.
REGULAR SESSION 7:09 P.M.
WILLIAM ANNIN MIDDLE SCHOOL**

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The meeting was called to order at 7:09 p.m. by President Koch.

I. Salute to Flag

II. Roll Call

PRESENT: Mr. Byrne, Ms. Carlsson, Mr. Carlucci, Mr. Koch, Ms. McGowan,
Ms. Smith, Ms. Stevens, Ms. Winter

ABSENT: Ms. Woolford

III. Executive Session – 6:32 p.m. – William Annin Faculty Dining Room

BE IT RESOLVED that the Bernards Township Board of Education met in closed session to discuss litigation; and further

BE IT RESOLVED that the matters discussed in closed session will be disclosed to the public as soon as and to the extent that such disclosure can be made without adversely affecting the public interest or without violation of the confidentiality of personnel.

On motion by Ms. Carlsson, seconded by Mr. Carlucci, and approved by all present, the Board recessed into closed executive session at 6:32 p.m.

On motion by Ms. Winter, seconded by Ms. Smith, and approved by all present, the Board returned to public session at 7:00 p.m.

The Board reconvened the regular meeting in the William Annin Middle School Auditorium at 7:09 p.m.

IV. Regular Session – Call to Order – 7:09 p.m. – William Annin Middle School Auditorium

V. Statement of Public Notice

This was a regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Bernards Township. Notice of the time and place of this meeting was provided and copies of that resolution were forwarded to the official newspapers as designated by the Board of Education and to the Township Clerk and a copy of the notice was posted on the bulletin board of the Board of Education Offices in accordance with P.L. 1975 Chapter 231A.

We very much welcome input from the public. There are two times during regular meetings that the public is invited to speak. One time is early in the meeting before the Board votes, and you may speak about any item that is listed on tonight's agenda. Towards the end of the meeting, there is another public forum to address any topic whatsoever.

When you approach the microphone, please state your name and address. We do not have a specific time limit, but we ask that you keep your comments brief. Please understand that our public forums are not structured as question and answer sessions, but rather they are offered as opportunities to share your thoughts with the Board. In instances where the Board feels that there is a misunderstanding or inaccuracy, a member of the Board or Administration will address it in the Board Response portion of the agenda.

There are times when a member of the public makes a comment or asks a question about an employee. New Jersey statute does not permit us to discuss personnel issues in public. Also as a matter of law, a Board of Education may only vote for or against the hiring of an employee upon the recommendation of the superintendent. If the superintendent does not recommend a person, that person's name is not listed on the agenda and there is no vote on that action. If it is necessary for the Board to go into executive session at the end of the meeting, we will provide an estimated length of time for the session and whether any action is anticipated to be taken upon returning to public session.

VI. Student Representative's Report

Student Representative Mark Schroeder commented on upcoming events including, Senior prom bids, the Junior class fashion show, the Junior Prom in April, the success of winter sports and the presentation in March of Fiddler on the Roof.

VII. Business Administrator's Report

VIII. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Goger commented on a meeting she recently attended along with three other Somerset County superintendents (Bedminster, Bound Brook & Manville) with Assemblywoman Dennis Coyle. During the meeting, the superintendents spoke on the number of e-mails received from the state on a weekly basis carrying repetitive or follow-up information. A significant portion of the meeting was a discussion on shared services and cooperative purchasing. Assemblywoman Coyle has promised to carry the superintendents' concerns to Trenton. Dr. Goger spoke briefly on recently reported standardized test results and how well the district did. She cautioned, while Bernards Township was first in the county, the difference between several school districts was minimal. The New Jersey School Report Cards will be available on February 14 and copies will be sent in the Board packet.

Superintendent Valerie A. Goger presented the 2008-09 preliminary budget to the Board emphasizing that changes may and probably will be made prior to the Public Hearing on March 24. She informed the Board that the second download from the state has not yet been received. The preliminary budget will go to the county on February 15 for approval to advertise. Dr. Goger reviewed what is new and what remained the same in budget preparation emphasizing the power the Executive County Superintendents possess and explained the Cap waiver process. The proposed budget shows a total tax increase of 3.67% with the only new spending including new hires to accommodate class growth.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT

1) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby approve the initial 2008-09 school budget for submission to the Somerset County Executive Superintendent of Schools for approval to advertise prior to the Public Hearing on March 24, 2008 and that the Business Administrator be authorized to make revisions as required:

General Fund	\$76,476,726
Special Revenue Fund	\$ 950,000
Debt Service Fund	\$ 6,282,629
Total Base Budget	\$83,709,355

And be it further resolved, that the following amounts be raised from taxes:

General Fund	\$66,539,029
Debt Service	\$ 5,243,926
Total Raised from Taxes	\$71,782,955

And approve the following adjustments for the 2008-09 budget statement in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-5D:

New School Cost	\$207,909
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And authorize the Business Administrator to submit the proposed budget to the Executive County Superintendent for compliance with state regulations, and further that the Business Administrator be authorized to amend the proposed budget as directed by the Executive County Superintendent so that it may be submitted to the Bernardsville News for advertisement prior to the March 24, 2008 Public Budget Hearing.

On motion by Ms. Smith, seconded by Mr. Byrne, Item #1 was approved by the following roll call vote:

“Ayes” - Mr. Byrne, Ms. Carlsson, Mr. Carlucci, Ms. McGowan, Ms. Smith,
Ms. Winter, Mr. Koch
“Noes” - None
“Abstain” - Ms. Stevens

IX. Committee Reports

Finance Committee

Chairperson Janet Smith reviewed the committee’s recent meeting with the auditor where discussion included the most advantageous manner in which to handle the opening of new construction, CAP waivers and earned interest income of approximately 2.5 million. She stated the district is receiving a payment of its debt service aid from the state giving a significant boost to the state aid retroactive figure for the upcoming year. Payment next year will be approximately \$450,000 and will continue for about 17 years on a decreasing scale. Other items of discussion at the meeting included interest rates/refinancing, shared services with the township and the Ridge Sports Foundation.

Personnel Committee

Chairperson Lisa Winter had no comments.

Curriculum Committee

Chairperson Leslie Stevens stated minutes from the January 25 meeting had been distributed along with the 2007 District Testing Report. She reviewed the recent committee meeting explaining the revised Program of Studies for 8th graders entering Ridge High. She discussed the on-line SAT course stating that approximately 160 students have already signed up. The district is a ‘pilot’ for Oncourse and was included in a recent CNBC short. The next Curriculum Committee meeting is scheduled for February 29.

Policy Committee

Chairperson Susan McGowan stated the committee would meet on February 21. The meeting will be a further review of policies approved on first reading at the January 28 Board meeting and also include the three policies regarding criminal background checks for substitutes and volunteers.

Community Relations

Chairperson Susan Carlsson stated minutes from the January 23 meeting had been distributed. This meeting included members of the township with discussion of the access road at the high school. The American Studies class from the high school will again be doing a project with senior citizens.

Discussion with the Board followed on the informational pamphlet entitled *Board Basics*, the recent Job Fair and the possibility of holding it every two years, the Board retreat, the procedure for members of the public to contact Board members via e-mail, designing a uniform district 'brand' and the access road at the high school.

Facilities Committee

Chairperson Louis Carlucci stated the committee would meet on February 12, 2008.

Liaison Reports

No reports

X. Public Forum

Comments were made regarding a new playground at Mount Prospect School, the budget increase of 3.67% and inclusion of additional items in the budget.

XI. Board Forum

- 1) Verizon Tower – M. Byrne
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Discussion by the Board centered on the Verizon Tower proposal, school board member training and new standards, the Board Retreat, duties of a board member and development of a mission statement listing objectives and outlining the function of the board. Comments will be forwarded to Ms. Carlsson who will compile them with the

initial Board Basics document and forward them to the full Board.

XII. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Winter, seconded by Ms. Carlsson, and approved by all present, the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

H. Ronald Smith
Interim Board Secretary