

**BERNARDS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION  
BASKING RIDGE, NEW JERSEY  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES INDEX  
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REGULAR SESSION 7:00 P.M.  
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REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**FEBRUARY 13, 2012**  
**EXECUTIVE SESSION 6:15 P.M.**  
**REGULAR SESSION 7:00 P.M.**  
**WILLIAM ANNIN MIDDLE SCHOOL**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Carlsson.

**I. Salute to Flag**

**II. Roll Call**

PRESENT: Mr. Byrne, Ms. Carlsson, Mr. Koch, Ms. Kusel, Ms. McGowan,  
Ms. McKeon, Ms. Shah, Ms. Wooldridge

ABSENT: Ms. Sherwyn (entered meeting at 9:50 p.m. – left meeting at 9:55 p.m.)

**III. Executive Session – 6:15 p.m. – William Annin Middle School Conference Room**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Bernards Township Board of Education met in closed session to discuss: negotiations; 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 Mr. Koch, seconded by Ms. Wooldridge, and approved by all present, the Board recessed into closed executive session at 6:15 p.m.

On motion by Ms. Wooldridge, seconded by Ms. McKeon, and approved by all present, the Board returned to public session at 6:50 p.m.

The Board reconvened the regular meeting in the William Annin Middle School Auditorium at 7:00 p.m.

**IV. Regular Session – Call to Order – 7:00 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**

Student Representative Maggie Peterpaul spoke on the upcoming tryouts for the Mr. Ridge talent show, the Jr. Class Fashion Show, and community service projects focusing on helping children.

#### **VII. Presentation – Ridge High School Busing – Ridge High Principal Frank Howlett**

Three video clips were shown. The first highlighted the high school morning arrival traffic pattern prior to the re-routing of buses to Cedar Hill School, after the bus drop off was changed to Cedar Hill, and one of the current Homestead Village traffic pattern.

Mr. Howlett reviewed the following notes of the change: 20 minutes of additional traffic in Homestead Village; 600 foot walk to Ridge High for students; priority clearing of sidewalk between Ridge High and Cedar Hill by ARAMARK; availability of golf cart for students in need; buses are on time which may encourage more student utilization; oval at the high school is safer; more space for car drop off; reduced wait time at traffic light; reduced lines coming into the school.

Mr. Howlett's report included a comparison of student tardiness from January 2011, January 2012 and after the re-routing of buses in February 2012.

He highlighted solutions previously considered by the district including:

- Second entrance at municipal complex
- Second entrance at Maple Avenue
- Cedar Hill School drop off
- No right on red into high school from South Finley
- Health Dept. exit
- Encourage parents to have children ride buses
- Bus drop off behind RHS gym
- Segregate arrival of buses vs. cars and/or bell schedule

There are shared sacrifices for the neighborhood, students required to walk 600 feet, drivers dealing with traffic congestion, and walkers dealing with weather conditions. Comments by the Ridge High staff have been positive to the reduction of traffic coming into the high school.

Comments from the Board included the shorter traffic line, safer drop off at the high school with students not having to navigate the buses, success of separate bus/parent traffic pattern, a smoother transition at the railroad crossing, safer oval at high school, increased car traffic at Cedar Hill as additional parents are utilizing this area in the mornings, bus drop off being finished by 7:15, and length of drop off time at the high school being approximately 30 minutes.

The conclusion is utilization of Cedar Hill School as a bus drop off for the high school is a valuable alternative and will continue.

click [here](#) for presentation

### **VIII. Public Forum on Agenda Items**

Deputy Mayor Carolyn Gaziano read a statement regarding having additional traffic routed through the township complex creating too much congestion and its interference with emergency vehicles. She stated the Township Committee's desire to work with the district to find a mutual solution to the high school traffic issue.

Comments from the public included additional car traffic in Homestead Village with the re-routing of the buses, child safety concerns, lack of sidewalks, obtaining the services of a professional to perform a traffic study, segregate traffic vehicles, additional direct exit lane from high school to Lake Road, lack of information prior to the change, concern with growing enrollment at the high school, the need for an additional exit from the high school in case of an emergency, and lack of street lights in the Homestead Village area. A portion of the township Master Plan was reviewed by a resident.

Board of Education comments included the speed in which cars (both at the high school and on Peachtree Road) drive, the number of cars utilizing Cedar Hill School as a drop off for high school students, difficulty of buses navigating the roads in Homestead Village, performing a traffic study, construction of additional sidewalks in the Homestead area, inability to meet state requirements in order to have a direct access lane between the high school and Lake Road, and a need for more of a police presence.

The Facility Committee will meet Tuesday, February 14, at 4:00 p.m. in the Board Office. It was requested by the Board that a representative of the township attend.

## **IX. Committee Reports**

### **FINANCE**

Chairperson Susan McGowan reported at the last meeting discussion included Mary Lyons (Capital Finance) and refunding of bonds, Mark Mobus (Wells Fargo) and cost savings in regard to the district health plan, William Annin club activities, and a review of the initial budget.

### **PERSONNEL**

Board President Susan Carlsson stated the Board is in continuing negotiations with the BTAA and the final five candidates for the position of Business Administrator will be interviewed on Friday, February 17.

### **AD HOC FACILITIES**

Chairperson Bill Koch stated the committee will meet on February 14 to discuss the high school traffic issue and capital projects.

### **POLICY**

Chairperson Elaine Kusel stated at its recent meeting the committee continued its review of the homework policy, and inclusion of the holiday of Diwali in the district calendar. She stated in the upcoming school year the Strategic Planning process will include the school calendar, in general, to determine if changes need to be made to service all people affected by it.

### **CURRICULUM**

Chairperson Robin McKeon updated the Board on both the January and February Curriculum Committee meetings. Topics covered included an update on Honors World History, Math Common Core Standards, CAD project overview, follow-up on homework survey, male vs. female academic performance, LA common core standards, textbook adoptions, 7<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra placement and an alternate path to 8<sup>th</sup> grade Geometry utilizing a new MAP online assessment tool, Option II and Honors Appeal will now be completed online, and a discussion of mid-term and final exams.

Ms. Sherwyn entered the meeting at 9:50 p.m.

## **X. Board Forum**

### **BE IT RESOLVED THAT**

- 1) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby establish the Election of Members of the Bernards Township Board of Education as the First Tuesday after the First Monday in November

- WHEREAS, P.L. 2011, c.202 (Senate Bill 3148) authorizes a local board of education to change the election date of school board members from the third Tuesday in April to the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November (the General Election); and
- WHEREAS, Such action requires the adoption of a resolution by a majority vote of a quorum of the local board of education; and
- WHEREAS, P.L. 2011, c. 202 (S-3148) requires that the change in election date remain in effect for four years; and
- WHEREAS, P.L. 2011, c. 202 (S-3148) eliminates the annual voter referendum on the proposed general fund tax levy (i.e., the base budget which is at or below the statutory tax levy cap) in school districts where board of education members are selected at the General Election; and
- WHEREAS, P.L. 2011, c. 202 (S-3148) requires that an additional general fund tax levy proposal (i.e., for an expenditure in excess of the tax levy cap) be presented to voters as a separate question at the General Election; and
- WHEREAS, The Bernards Township Board of Education believes that the financial interest of its constituents is safeguarded by the state's tax levy cap and the thorough review of the proposed school budget by the Executive County Superintendent and the Executive County School Business Administrator; and
- WHEREAS, The Bernards Township Board of Education believes that more citizens will participate in the selection of its members at the General Election than on the third Tuesday in April and that the higher level of participation will foster positive interest in our public schools; and
- WHEREAS, The Bernards Township Board of Education is committed to the non-partisan status of school board membership and the non-partisan conduct of school elections, and believes this principle will not be compromised by conducting board member elections in November. Now therefore be it
- RESOLVED, That, pursuant to P.L. 2011, c. 202 (S-3148), the Bernards Township Board of Education changes the annual election date for its members from the third Tuesday in April to the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November (the General Election), beginning in 2012; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That, pursuant to P.L. 2011, c. 202 (S-3148), this change will remain in effect at least through November 2015;

RESOLVED, That, pursuant to P.L. 2011, c. 202 (S-3148), the annual organization meeting of the Bernards Township Board of Education will take place in the first week of January following the November General Election and that the Board of Education's next organization meeting will take place on January 7, 2013; and be it further

RESOLVED, That, pursuant to P.L. 2011, c. 202 (S-3148), members of the Bernards Township Board of Education whose terms would have expired by May 1, 2012 will continue to serve in office until the January 2013 organization meeting; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this resolution be transmitted to Governor Christopher Christie, Lieutenant Governor/Secretary of State Kimberly M. Guadagno; Richard E. Constable, III, Acting Commissioner, Department of Community Affairs; Robert F. Giles, Director, Division of Elections, Department of State; Somerset County Clerk; the Somerset County Board of Elections; Christopher Cerf, Acting Commissioner of Education; the Division of Finance, New Jersey Department of Education; and Kathleen Serafino, Executive County Superintendent for Somerset County; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be provided to the New Jersey School Boards Association.

On motion by Ms. Wooldridge, seconded by Mr. Koch, the foregoing was approved by the following roll call vote:

"Ayes" - Mr. Byrne, Mr. Koch, Ms. McKeon, Ms. Shah, Ms. Sherwyn, Ms. Wooldridge  
"Noes" - Ms. Kusel, Ms. McGowan, Ms. Carlsson  
"Abstain" - None

Ms. Sherwyn left the meeting at 9:55 p.m.

1) Student Stressors

## XI. Committee Reports - continued

### COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Ms. Wooldridge reported on the Community Relations meeting with the PTO Advisory Committee stating topics of discussion included moving the annual election to November. She stated the PTOs support the change in election dates.

### LIAISONS

No report.

**XII. Public Forum on Other Than Agenda Items**

**XIII. Adjournment**

On motion by Mr. Koch, seconded by Ms. Shah, and approved by all present, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nick Markarian  
Board Secretary