

**BERNARDS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
BASKING RIDGE, NEW JERSEY
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES INDEX
JANUARY 12, 2009
EXECUTIVE SESSION 6:30 P.M.
REGULAR SESSION 7:03 P.M.
WILLIAM ANNIN MIDDLE SCHOOL**

- I. **Salute to Flag** – page 143
- II. **Roll Call** – page 143
- III. **Executive Session – 6:30 p.m. – William Annin Middle School Faculty Dining Room** – page 143
- IV. **Regular Session – Call to Order – 7:03 p.m. – William Annin Middle School Auditorium** – page 143
- V. **Statement of Public Notice** – page 144
- VI. **Student Representatives’ Report** – page 144
- VII. **Board Presentation**
 - 1) 2009-10 Budgetary Challenges – Superintendent Valerie A. Goger – page 145
 - 2) Ridge High School Eight Period Day – Director of Curriculum Sean Siet & Ridge High School Principal Frank Howlett – page 145
- VIII. **Public Comment on Agenda Items** – page 145
- IX. **Business Administrator’s Report** – page 146
- X. **Committee Reports**
 - Finance Committee** – page 146
Report on Progress
 - Personnel Committee** – page 146
Report on Progress
 - Curriculum Committee** – page 146
Report on Progress

Community Relations Committee – page 146
Report on Progress

Policy Committee – page 146
Report on Progress

Liaison Reports – page 146
Report on Progress

XI. **Public Forum** – page 146

XII. **Board Forum**

1) Board Goal Setting Procedure – page 147

XIII. **Adjournment** – page 147

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The meeting was called to order by President Koch at 7:03 p.m.

I. Salute to Flag

II. Roll Call

PRESENT: Mr. Byrne, Ms. Carlsson, Mr. Carlucci, Ms. Cwerner, Ms. McGowan,
Mr. Wilke, Ms. Winter, Ms. Woolford, Mr. Koch

ABSENT: None

III. Executive Session – 6:30 p.m. – William Annin Middle School Faculty Dining Room

BE IT RESOLVED that the Bernards Township Board of Education met in closed session to discuss budgetary matters; 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 Ms. Carlsson, seconded by Ms. Winter, and approved by all present, the Board recessed into closed executive session at 6:35 p.m.

On motion by Ms. Cwerner, seconded by Ms. Carlsson, and approved by all present, the Board returned to public session at 7:03 p.m.

The Board reconvened the regular meeting in the William Annin Auditorium at 7:03 p.m.

IV. Regular Session – Call to Order – 7:03 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 Representatives' Report**

Student Representatives Perry Hooker and Laura Graff updated the Board on the success of the volleyball tournament held prior to the holiday break and the current Awareness Week at the high school. An AIDS awareness day has already been held and a political awareness day is scheduled to coincide with the presidential inauguration. The Student Council is currently seeking new projects for the remainder of the school year.

VII. Board Presentation

1) Superintendent Valerie A. Goger spoke on the budgetary challenges facing the district highlighting the following contributing factors:

- ❑ \$1M rise in personnel expenses
- ❑ Rise in health care expenses
- ❑ Rise in utilities
- ❑ Shortfall in investments
- ❑ Change in student enrollment in private schools

The district has been working under restricted spending since September 15 and has already made cuts including eliminating 11 electives with low enrollment at the high school. Also reviewed were the state and district budget timetable and cap waiver process.

Dr. Goger explained the following basics for creating a school district budget while working under state restrictions:

- ❑ Tax levy capped at 4% annually +
- ❑ State aid +
- ❑ Miscellaneous revenue +
- ❑ Surplus fund in excess of 2%

1) Director of Curriculum Sean Siet & Ridge High School Principal Frank Howlett presented an overview of a proposed change from the current 9-period day to an 8-period day. Items included in the presentation were:

- ❑ Mechanics of change
- ❑ Comparison of Mag 7 districts
- ❑ Increase in core course instruction time
- ❑ Impact on student achievement & college admission
- ❑ Future use of virtual high school
- ❑ Elimination of 15 teaching staff members
- ❑ Overview of revised schedules

It was noted that the presentations will be on the district website on Tuesday, January 13.

VIII. Public Comment on Agenda Items

Members of the public made comments regarding the impact of a change to an 8-period day for the students at the high school and incoming freshmen. Other comments included utilizing a half-day kindergarten program, block scheduling at the high school, elimination of the lunch periods, elimination of grades 1-5 foreign language and having children of staff members' attend district schools on a tuition only basis.

IX. Business Administrator's Report

Business Administrator Nick Markarian is waiting for the state to release guidelines and software for the budget process. It is anticipated this information will be available on or about January 19. He highlighted the following items:

- ❑ Debt service & debt service aid
- ❑ Food service proposals will be sought for 2009-10 school year
- ❑ Facilities & maintenance management services will go to bid for the 2009-10 school year

X. Committee Reports

Finance Committee

Chairperson Susan McGowan stated the next committee meeting is scheduled for January 21.

Personnel Committee

No report.

Curriculum Committee

Chairperson Lisa Winter stated the next committee meeting is scheduled for January 23.

Community Relations Committee

Chairperson Susan Carlsson spoke on the recent tour of Ridge High School for township senior citizens. The group also included members of the VNA, Bernards Township Health Dept., Parks & Recreation and the county. Ms. Carlsson said the event was well received and appreciated by all who attended.

Policy Committee

Chairperson Lou Carlucci stated the next committee meeting has been canceled.

Liaison Reports

Susan Carlsson updated the Board on anticipated budget information from NJSBA by the end of the month.

XI. Public Forum

A former Ridge High School student made comments regarding the 8-period day.

XII. Board Forum

Prior to discussing procedure for goal setting, the Board brainstormed the best way to respond to public concerns and inform them on the full impact of the constraints imposed by the state on the budget process.

1) Board Goal Setting Procedure

The Board discussed how best to proceed with setting its goals. Comments included the following:

- Strive to keep goals attainable
- Keep goals measurable
- Consider degree of administrative involvement
- Each individual is to submit a goal
- Submitted goals will be reviewed by the Board as a whole
- Have specific goals and set a reasonable number (3 or less)
- Goals must be in place for upcoming school year to satisfy QSAC requirement
- Goals should not be tied to a specific committee (district direction not committee direction)
- Each board member will research a school district to obtain its goals and submit to Susan Carlson for compilation along with their specific goal
- Review & discussion will be held at the February 16 Board meeting

XIII. Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted,

Nick Markarian
Board Secretary