



Our Children
Our School
Our Future

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING

of the
NETCONG SCHOOL DISTRICT
26 College Road
Netcong, New Jersey 07857

March 9, 2015
7:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by President Dalesandro at 7:00 p.m.

A. FLAG SALUTE

B. OPEN PUBLIC MEETING ACT PROCLAMATION

The New Jersey Open Public Meeting Law was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interest is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of the Act the Board of Education of the Netcong School District in the County of Morris has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time and place thereof posted. The notice was mailed to the Daily Record and those persons or entities requesting notification, and filed with the municipal clerk of the Borough of Netcong.

C. MISSION STATEMENT

Netcong, a tradition to nurture, inspire, empower, and achieve by all, for all.

D. BOARD GOALS for 2014-2015

- Comprehensive review and update of the district policy manual.
- Continue to monitor and approve curriculum updates and systems of assessment.
- Review Board operations to improve Board performance.

E. DISTRICT GOALS for 2014-2015

- Implement the action plans identified in the Netcong School District's Strategic Plan with a 2014/15 timeline under the goal areas of Student Achievement & Technology, School and Community, and Finance and Facilities.

II. ROLL CALL

The following members were present: Mrs. Callahan, Mr. Coladarci, Mrs. Popelka, Mr. McQueeney, Mr. Morton, Mrs. Santana, Mr. Stevens, Ms. Suflay and Mrs. Dalesandro, President.

Not Present: None

Also Present: Mr. Pio Pennisi, Interim Superintendent
Mrs. Nicole Sylvester, Business Administrator/Board Secretary
Ms. Gina Cinotti, Principal
Sixty (60) Members of the public present

III. BOARD CORRESPONDENCE AND MINUTES

None at this time.

IV. PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Good evening thank you all for coming.

I would like to read a brief statement explaining the reasons why the Netcong Board of Education called a special meeting for this evening. After a comprehensive review and analysis of our current budget it was discovered that we are anticipating a budget deficit meaning we will be short funds in Expenses and revenue sources.

Our Interim Superintendent, Mr. Pio Pennisi and our Business Administrator, Mrs. Nicole Sylvester have advised the Board that in order to meet our payroll obligation the Board of Education will need to make some reductions to Staff and personnel. By reducing the hours of some staff members we will not operate in a deficit or be in a deficit, at the end of the year.

I am sure most of you are asking how did this happen. I offer this explanation. During the preparation of the 2014-2015 budget last March, the seated BA at the time, did not properly fund certain positions and benefits packages. Simply stated, the BA short changed or did not fund several line items. This oversight was discovered in late June 2014. That amount was approximately \$65,000 causing money to be shifted from other accounts.

The next issue that caused our deficit occurred on the revenue side of our budget. The former CSA built the budget with approximately \$76,000 in possible revenue sources. Again, simply stated these possible revenue sources did not materialize causing yet another deficit.

Mr. Pennisi and Ms. Cinotti will be presenting an in depth presentation for a better understanding of the issues.

Please understand that the Netcong Board of Education and its administrators have given each recommendation careful thought on the impact to our school community.

No Board of Education member or, administrator takes this situation lightly. I can tell you since I learned of the impending reductions I have been sick over it.

At this time I will turn the meeting over to Mr. Pennisi and Ms. Cinotti.

V. INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS

Mr. Pennisi presented the anticipated 2014-2015 budget deficit and his recommendations. Mr. Pennisi then asked Ms. Cinotti to further discuss the reductions and explain the effect and adjustment for students during the school day. Discussion ensued.

VI. SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS

None at this time.

VII. PETITIONS AND REQUESTS OF THE PUBLIC FOR AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

Board Trustee Lynn Popelka moved, seconded by Board Trustee Patrick McQueeney, to open the public session at 7:19 p.m. and was approved by a Unanimous Voice Vote by all members present. President Dalesandro opened the meeting at 7:19 p.m.

Public is invited to address the Board with any questions, comments or concerns. The Board requests that the individual address the Board, giving name and address, and asks that all remarks be directed to the Chair. The public portion shall be limited to thirty minutes with a five-minute time limit on each participant.

The Board wishes to remind all attendees at its meeting that while it subscribed without reservation to the principle of keeping the public completely informed, by policy it cannot allow public discussion of personnel matters. If a matter concerning the staff of the Netcong Public School is of interest or concern, the matter would be referred to the Interim Superintendent or the Board of Education, either by telephone or letter.

The following members of the public spoke and asked questions about how and why this happened and the effect it will have on the students. Many expressed their concern for teachers being reduced.

Nancy Esposito, Randy Schrader, Kathy Renegar, Joe Albensi, Melanie Nowling, Bob Hathaway, Jack Sylvester, Shannon Cullen.

President Dalesandro stated that we have exceeded the 30 minute time limit. Board Trustee Todd Morton made a motion to extend the public session an additional 30 minutes. This was seconded by Board Trustee Lynn Popelka and was approved by a Unanimous Voice Vote by all members present.

The following members of the public spoke and asked questions about how and why this happened and the effect it will have on the students. Many expressed their concern for teachers being reduced.

Kristen Montella, Tara Donnelly, Jeanette from Bridgewater, Elaine Winget, Karin Bond, Diane Flaherty, Tim Domick, Melissa Billard, Kathy Renegar, Melanie Nowling.

President Dalesandro stated that we have again exceeded the 30 minute time limit. Board Trustee Joe Coladarci made a motion to extend the public session an additional 30 minutes. This was seconded by Board Trustee Lynn Popelka and was approved by a Unanimous Voice Vote by all members present.

The following members of the public spoke and asked questions about how and why this happened and the effect it will have on the students. Many expressed their concern for teachers being reduced.

Randy Schrader, Gina Cordero, Karla Cahill, Sandy Jensen.

Board President Dalesandro responded with tears in her eyes to Ms. Jensen and stated, your reduction hurts me more than anything else, I blame myself, I take full responsibility and I apologize to you.

There being no further items for discussion, Board Trustee Colleen Suflay moved, seconded by Board Trustee Bill Stevens, to close the public session at 8:30 p.m. and was approved by a Unanimous Voice Vote by all members present. President Dalesandro closed the meeting to the public at 8:30 p.m.

Board Trustee Lynn Popelka, seconded by Board Trustee Marianne Callahan moved the following resolutions to be approved as submitted:

Discussion ensued:

Board Trustee Patrick McQueeney thanked everyone for their services and apologized for the Board's part in bringing the district to the point we are at now. He agreed with members of the public who said that this is not a one year event but rather a culmination of years of not fully funding our budget and now we are experiencing the shortfall. Board Trustee Patrick McQueeney stated he would be voting yes and stated that we need to make the hard decision to make the cuts required so that we could move forward. He encouraged the rest of the Board to be sure to think about the choices we make and how they impact our students before our pockets. He apologized again for his part in the mess we are in and promised to do better.

Board Trustee Joe Coladarci agreed with Board Trustee Patrick McQueeney and apologized for the Board's actions.

Board Trustee Lynn Popelka agreed with Board Trustee Patrick McQueeney and expressed that she feels we cut out half of the heart of the school.

Board Trustee Jenn Santana explained that she was in the public seat before being a Board member and understands how upset everyone is. She stated that she has a daughter who loves art. However, she explained that being a Board member you are faced with hard decisions and you have to do what is best for everyone in the end.

1. **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Netcong Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent, hereby approves the suspension of Policy #3421.10, Health Insurance Waiver For State Health Benefits Plan.
2. **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Netcong Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent, hereby approves the reductions in staff, stipend payments and health care waivers as outlined in the attached document.

VOTE: RESOLUTIONS #1 – #2 AS PRESENTED.

AYES: Mrs. Callahan, Mr. Coladarci, Mrs. Popelka (regretfully), Mr. McQueeney, Mr. Morton, Mrs. Santana, Mr. Stevens, Ms. Sufly and Mrs. Dalesandro, President.

NAYES: None

ABSENTATIONS: None

IX. OLD BUSINESS

None at this time.

X. MISCELLANEOUS

None at this time.

XI. PETITIONS AND REQUESTS OF THE PUBLIC

Board Trustee Patrick McQueeney moved, seconded by Board Trustee Joe Coladarci, to open the public session at 8:39 p.m. and was approved by a Unanimous Voice Vote by all members present. President Dalesandro opened the meeting at 8:39 p.m.

The Public is invited to address the Board with any questions, comments or concerns. The Board requests that the individual address the Board, giving name and address, and asks that all remarks be directed to the Chair. The public portion shall be limited to thirty minutes with a five-minute time limit on each participant.

The Board wishes to remind all attendees at its meeting that while it subscribes without reservation to the principle of keeping the public completely informed, by policy it cannot allow public discussion of personnel matters. If a matter concerning the staff of the Netcong Public School is of interest or concern, the matter should be referred to the Interim Superintendent or the Board of Education, either by telephone or letter.

The following members of the public spoke and asked what steps are being taken to ensure this does not happen again.

Jack Sylvester, Patrick Decab and Tara Donnelly.

President Dalesandro stated going forward she believes the right people (administrators) are in place to rectify the errors and make sure it doesn't occur again.

There being no further items for discussion, Board Trustee Marianne Callahan moved, seconded by Board Trustee Todd Morton, to close the public session at 8:44 p.m. and was approved by a Unanimous Voice Vote by all members present. President Dalesandro closed the meeting to the public at 8:44 p.m.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None at this time.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT There being no further business to come before the board, Board Trustee Lynn Popelka made a motion, seconded by Board Trustee Patrick McQueeney and carried by Unanimous Voice Vote to adjourn the March 9, 2015 Special Meeting of the Netcong Board of Education at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



**Nicole Sylvester
Business Administrator/Board Secretary**