



## MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

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

March 11, 2014

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

**A. FLAG SALUTE - All of those present participated in the salute to the flag.**

**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-** The following was made part of the minutes:

Netcong School District, a small caring community, is committed to providing a quality, well-rounded education achieved through the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards which inspires students to ultimately become fulfilled, contributing and productive citizens.

**D. BOARD GOALS for 2013-2014**

- Successfully complete a 5 year strategic plan in all areas of instruction and programming, personnel, fiscal management, operations and governance as a means to advance student achievement and promote public confidence in our schools.
- Communications- Continue to improve communications to all stakeholders as a means to advance student advocacy and public awareness of our district.
- School Climate and Culture- Support district initiatives regarding a student centered school climate and culture that affords every student to opportunity to develop intellectually, ethically and personally to the fullest extent of his/her abilities.
- Explore alternate sources of revenue to improve and expand district programs.

**E. DISTRICT GOALS for 2013-2014**

- Student Achievement- Continue to improve student achievement as measured by the NCLB progress targets for the district, our schools and all subgroups to reach 100% proficiency by 2017.
- Successful implementation of Achieve NJ (teacher and principal evaluation).
- School Climate and Culture-Develop a student-centered school climate and culture that afford every student the opportunity to develop intellectually, ethically and personally to the fullest extend of his or her abilities.

**II. ROLL CALL**

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

**Not Present:** Ms. Suflay (late arrival 7:04 p.m.)  
Mrs. Popelka (late arrival 7:31 p.m.)

**Also Present:** Mr. Kevin Carroll, Chief School Administrator  
Mr. Peter Weigly, Interim Business Administrator  
Mrs. Nicole Sylvester, Assistant Business Administrator/Board Secretary  
Nine (9) Members of the public present

**III. BOARD CORRESPONDENCE AND MINUTES**

**Correspondence**

None at this time.

**Approval of Board Minutes**

None at this time.

**IV. PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS**

President Dalesandro stated that tonight will be a full Board discussion to review the parameters of the 2014-2015 budget.

She further explained that tonight's full Board discussion will revolve around the creation of the 2014 -2015 school budget.

President Dalesandro made the following comments: All school Board Members play a role in ensuring financial integrity and no one member alone can do this function. It is a role for the entire board acting together as a team. The budget the Board adopts will need to be reasonable in cost yet educationally sound and sufficient. I remind all Board Members that they are elected representatives of their community and as such are tasked with looking at all costs involved to include the amount of money that will have to be raised through the local tax levy and the effect of the budget on every citizens' pocketbooks Board Members represent. The Board must then reconcile, in its best judgment the educational needs of the district's students with the ability of the community to financially support



those needs. Legislation enacted in 2012 to eliminate the requirement that a Board of Education submit its proposed budget to a public vote in April provided that the budget remained at or below the state's two percent tax levy cap. If a Board decided to take the right of the public to vote on a school budget away, the state allowed Board's to move their annual election from April to November.

Board Trustee Colleen Sufly entered the room at 7:04 p.m.

Our Board of Education chose this option in 2012 therefore having no public vote on the 2014-2015 budget. I encourage the public input throughout the budget process and discussion at both Board meetings and within the community with its citizens'. It is still important for this Board to adequately explain to the public the rationale for the choices being made in preparing the 2014- 2015 school budget. It is important to understand where the funding or revenue sources come from, they are the local property taxes, Aid from the State and Aid from the Federal government if any. The state awards three types of aid to schools, equalization aid, categorical aid and grants. Finding alternative revenue sources such as grants for special interests or projects is the sole responsibility of the school district. Equalization aid is determined by the state through a "funding formula". This formula calculates the difference between the Adequacy Budget and the local cost share, if one exists it is covered by the state through Equalization Aid. The adequacy budget is the amount necessary to provide a "thorough and efficient education" to each student in the district, and the local cost share is what the state believes the local taxing authority will be able to raise through two variables, Netcong's property values and the income of the District's residents. However, it is more accurate, in my opinion, to say that the local cost share is the difference between a District's Adequacy Budget and the Equalization Aid. Categorical Aid are categories that address specific issues separate from the Adequacy Budget and there are seven categories. They are, Special Education, Extraordinary Special Education, Security Aid, Transportation Aid, School Choice Aid, Adjustment Aid and Adequacy Aid.

Having said all that, I will now give a brief overview of why we are here tonight. Our finance committee got the first look at the budget on February 18<sup>th</sup> and it called for a tax levy increase of 8.45% causing an unacceptable increase to the average assessed home. This was completely unacceptable to all of those in attendance at the finance committee. We asked Mr. Carroll for more options and a further explanation of why such a major increase. The next time the committee met we were presented with the option of a budget increase of 5% or 5.45% and we were no closer to understanding why we are where we are and why such an increase if there are no new programs or increase in staff.

President Dalesandro closed with the following statement, at 5:15 this evening Mr. Carroll sent information to the Board to review for tonight's discussion. This is the first time most BOE members have seen this information. However, we must now begin the daunting task of deciding what tax increase we as a TEAM will accept.

President Dalesandro then stated that Board will be presenting a bottom line number budget to the public on March 18, 2014.

#### **V. CHIEF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS**

Mr. Carroll stated that he started working on the budget process by asking teachers, staff and administrator's, "Where do we need to invest?" With further research it seemed that the majority of staff believed textbooks and technology needed to increase. With that, Mr. Carroll explained that Mr. Weigly researched the option to lease textbooks which would save the district money. This will provide us the opportunity to update our textbooks and curriculum for the students.

Mr. Carroll explained that the Board had not increased taxes in many years which is why we are in the current position of proposing to raise taxes more than the two percent tax levy by using banked cap. He then explained that based on the average assessed home value of \$290,676, the average taxpayers' property taxes would increase approximately \$271 annually. Mr. Carroll told the public that he consulted with our auditor, Mrs. Kathryn Mantell to help assist in the process.



In an effort to bring down the tax increase, Mr. Carroll stated that he would like to assume more revenue through a breakfast program in which students would come to school at regular time, however, during homeroom they would be able to purchase breakfast at a reduced rate. He explained that many students do not have time to eat breakfast and believes we could bring up our participation in our breakfast program. He then stated he applied for Netcong to become a Title I school which would allow us to use our money more freely within the budget.

Mr. Carroll expressed that to get from the original proposed budget tax rate increase from 8.578% down to 6.921% he recognized more revenue. He then explained the handout to the Board referring to different tax scenarios. He cautioned the Board not to reference anything in the gray box.

Discussion ensued and Mr. Weigly explained how the Borough calculates their tax rate on a calendar year versus our budgeted calculation which we calculate based on a school year.

Board Trustee Lynn Popelka entered the room at 7:31 p.m.

#### **VI. SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS**

None at this time.

#### **VII. PETITIONS AND REQUESTS OF THE PUBLIC**

**Board Trustee Todd Morton moved, seconded by Board Trustee Joe Coladarci, to open the public session at 7:32 p.m. and was approved by a Unanimous Voice Vote by all members present. President Dalesandro opened the meeting at 7:32 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 Chief School Administrator or the Board of Education, either by telephone or letter.

Ms. Corinne Sodano, Andover, NJ asked what the Board's intentions were for the structure of the Business Office.

**There being no further items for discussion, Board Trustee Todd Morton moved, seconded by Board Trustee Joe Coladarci, to close the public session at 7:34 p.m. and was approved by a Unanimous Voice Vote by all members present. President Dalesandro closed the meeting to the public at 7:34 p.m.**

#### **VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

Board Trustee Lynn Popelka asked Mr. Carroll when the school would be looking into updating our security system. Mr. Carroll replied stating that he spoke with the Chief of Police this week and he suggested that we update our entrance, which seems to be the most vulnerable spot of security. He stated that we were going to have vendors coming in last Monday, however, due to the anticipation of snow that day, we pushed back vendors until next week.

**IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- A. GOVERNANCE/POLICY/FINANCE -** Bernadette Dalesandro, Chairperson  
Joe Coladarci, Member  
Patrick McQueeney, Member  
Colleen Suflay, Member

None at this time.

- B. PERSONNEL-** Colleen Suflay, Chairperson  
Bill Stevens, Member  
Marianne Callahan, Member  
Bernadette Dalesandro, Member

None at this time.

- C. FACILITIES/OPERATIONS -** Joe Coladarci, Chairperson  
Lynn Popelka, Member  
Bernadette Dalesandro, Member

None at this time.

- D. CURRICULUM/INSTRUCTION-** Patrick McQueeney, Chairperson  
Marianne Callahan, Member  
Todd Morton, Member  
Bernadette Dalesandro, Member

Board Trustee Patrick McQueeney expressed how pleased he was with Google Chromebooks and the implementation into the curriculum. He expressed that his son was showing him all the great tasks he could accomplish from using his Google Chromebook at home.

**X. MISCELLANEOUS**

Board Trustee Marianne Callahan thanked Board President Dalesandro Bernadette Dalesandro for taking the time to research and create a Bowling Club for the students of Netcong School.

Board Trustee Marianne Callahan also stated that the Bowling Club was Board President Dalesandro's idea from inception to implementation. Board Trustee Marianne Callahan again expressed gratitude to Board President Dalesandro for taking her own time to create the program and work with Mr. Carroll and the Board so the students of Netcong could have a bowling opportunity.

**XI. PETITIONS AND REQUESTS OF THE PUBLIC**

Board Trustee Patrick McQueeney moved, seconded by Board Trustee Joe Coladarci, to open the public session at 7:46 p.m. and was approved by a Unanimous Voice Vote by all members present. President Dalesandro opened the meeting at 7:46 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 Chief School Administrator or the Board of Education, either by telephone or letter.

**There being no further items for discussion, Board Trustee Lynn Popelka moved, seconded by Board Trustee Patrick McQueeney, to close the public session at 7:49 p.m. and was approved by a Unanimous Voice Vote by all members present. President Dalesandro closed the meeting to the public at 7:49 p.m.**

**XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motion by Board Trustee Colleen Sufly, seconded by Board Trustee Todd Morton, that RESOLVED, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-13 and 10:4-12 that the Netcong Board of Education hold a closed Executive Session regarding one or more of the following: legal matters, negotiations, personnel issues, individual student matters, and matters which are attorney-client privileged. It is expected that the discussion undertaken in this closed session can be made public at the time official action is taken. The motion was made at 7:55 p.m. and was approved by a Unanimous Voice Vote by all members present. President Dalesandro closed the meeting to the public at 7:55 p.m. President Dalesandro stated no action will be taken after executive session.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION ADJOURNMENT**

Board Trustee Joe Coladarci made a motion to come out of executive session. It was seconded by Board Trustee Patrick McQueeney and carried by Unanimous Voice Vote by all members present at 10:14 p.m.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**- There being no further business to come before the board, Board Trustee Patrick McQueeney made a motion, seconded by Board Trustee Colleen Sufly and carried by Unanimous Voice Vote to adjourn the March 11, 2014 Special Board Meeting of the Netcong Board of Education at 10:16 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted



Nicole Sylvester  
Assistant Business Administrator/Board Secretary