

MINUTES OF THE OPEN SESSION MEETING OF
THE TEANECK TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
HELD IN THE TEANECK HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
THURSDAY, MAY 13, 2010

Mayor Feit called the Open Session Meeting of the Teaneck Township Council to order at 8:06 p.m., and asked all those present to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: C. Gussen, C. Hameeduddin, DM. Parker, C. Honis (arrived at 8:07 p.m.), C. Katz, C. Toffler, Mayor Feit.

Absent: None.

Also Present. S. Turitz, Ferrara, Turitz, Harraka & Goldberg Esqs.; W. Broughton, Township Manager; L. Aportela-Hernandez, Municipal Clerk, C. Ferraioli, Ferraioli, Wielkotz, Cerullo, & Cuva, PA.

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by Resolution 322-09, setting the 2010 meeting dates, and Resolution 110-10 and the May 6, 2010 Sunshine Notice amending the 2010 meeting dates, sending a copy to THE RECORD, THE SUBURBANITE, THE BERGEN NEWS/SUN BULLETIN, THE JEWISH STANDARD, and THE COUNTY SEAT, filing a copy in the Township Clerk's Office and posting it on the Municipal Building bulletin board, and the Mayor hereby directs that this statement be included in the minutes.

Council requested that the May 17th meeting be relocated to the Teaneck High School Auditorium. The Clerk will confirm the availability of the auditorium and submit the proper notice under the Open Public Meetings Act.

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR GOOD AND WELFARE

Mayor Feit inquired whether any member of the Council has any comments prior to opening the meeting to any comments from the public.

At this time Council authorized the release of the report on the 2010-2011 School Board Budget prepared by Mr. Ferraioli to the public.

Mr. Ferraioli explained that is report contained a list of reductions to the budget ranging incrementally form 8% through 0% increase in the tax levy. It also included potential economic savings realized by budget cuts made in the cost of extra-curricular activities, athletics, athletic transportation, in-district transportation, reductions in supplies, equipment, health benefits, administrative staffing, teachers in the middle and high schools, and non-custodial/technology positions can be made and still provide a thorough and efficient education as required by the New Jersey Department of Education. Staffing in the elementary schools was not part of the review. He reported that employees have started to submit their retirement papers, in which the deadline is August 1st.

C. Toffler requested that job descriptions for the non-mandated positions recommended for reduction or elimination be provided. Mr. Ferraioli advised that he will reach out to the Board of Education Secretary for that information.

C. Gussen mentioned that the average class size is skewed by large classes such as physical education.

Mayor Feit declared that any members of the public wishing to be heard at this time shall come forward and state their names and addresses for the record. Comments shall be limited to five minutes per person

Alex Rashim - 543 Sagamore Avenue - referenced budget cuts made in the Tenafly and Ridgewood school districts; explained that he offered to teach courses for free but has not received a response; stated that the Township should take advantage of retired personnel to fill-in the gaps; recommended setting the budget under 4%.

Eric Campbell - 1445 Teaneck Road - spoke in favor of the high school curriculum, expressed frustration over lack of definite numbers; recommended greater advertising of classes so students can take advantage; requested Council to support fundraisers in order to boost participation; explained the need for more than 1 guidance counselor per grade.

Rich Rodda - Teacher - described how he is a teacher for 30 students and that an ICS is an in-class support teacher, who specifically supports 8 to 9 students; explained that some of the smaller classes provide internships and peer leaders comprised of seniors to assist incoming freshman. The numbers listed in this report do not explain everything.

Henry Pruitt - Voorhees Street - explained that the proposed budget is comparable with that of the prior year; the district lost 6.5 million in state funding; 52 people were put on notice that they may be fired.

Howard Rose - 575 Northumberland Road - reminded Council that 5500 voted for the school budget.

Allison Levin - 642 Pomander Walk - explained how she was last year's valedictorian and how prepared she was for college, especially with the AP curriculum.

David Kleiber - Winthrop Road - stated that the staff reductions are retirements and that the Board of Education needs to negotiate with staff; requested a 0% increase.

Charles Powers - 1374 Academy Lane - expressed how he unimpressed he was with the report since it provides no idea what it is for; he stated that the strangest process yielded the strangest document.

David Eckelcheck - Garrison Avenue - reported that \$230,000 salary for the superintendent is not reasonable or rational.

Keith Broman - 278 Churchill Road - explained that the auditor had an impossible task forced by the Board of Education; districts similar to Teaneck only proposed 2 - 3% increases; the Township and education needs to be preserved.

Kaitlyn Richards - 464 Kipp Street - urged Council to find a reasonable number since the district cannot take any cuts.

Andres Santacruz - 449 Cedar Lane - said that taking away teachers and increasing class size is just wrong; kids will have no where to go if sports are cut; requested not to cut counselors.

Samantha Wilkerson - 1778 Lilbet Road - expressed that cutting teachers is not an option since larger classes affects the learning environment.

Susan Griffin - 1137 Julia Street - explained that the Commissioner of Education state that if all teachers take a pay freeze, it would not make a dent; things are not being explained correctly; only 35 districts out of 600 agreed to a pay freeze; a wage freeze is not necessary since the contract is up in July 2011; teachers are being demonized daily.

There being no further persons wishing to speak at this time Mayor Feit declared that the public comment portion of the meeting is now closed.

OLD BUSINESS

2010-2011 School Budget.

Mayor Feit informed the audience that Council is not looking to cut AP classes or clubs; they are looking at numbers.

C. Toffler stated that she felt like Council will pick an arbitrary number since they do not have any educational information. Although she is not sure how they will come to a decision, Council will not recommend to cut clubs, transportation or sports.

C. Hameeduddin mentioned that he wanted to know what was the Board of Education's target number since they are the experts, but are not providing any recommendations for Council.

C. Gussen stated that emotions are coming to play, Council needs to take the emotion and fear out of this process, look at the issue rationally, and not demonize teachers.

DM. Parker declared that Council does not have the benefit of time, they need to work through this document, but does not feel anymore prepared; dragging this process is not healthy for anyone.

C. Gussen cited an expenditure of \$600,000 for professional outside development and requested a better understanding of this cost.

Mr. Turitz advised that he will draft a resolution with exhibits based on the auditor's report and any line items Council wishes to identify.

Mr. Ferraioli requested that Council e-mail any questions to him or Mr. Broughton and he will contact the Board of Education to obtain the information on Council's behalf for their deliberations on Monday evening.

ADJOURNMENT

C. Hameeduddin moved to adjourn the Open Session Meeting at 10:15 p.m. Seconded by DM. Parker.

In Favor: C. Gussen, C. Hameeduddin, DM. Parker, C. Honis, C. Katz, C. Toffler, Mayor Feit.

Opposed: None.

Absent: None.

Lissette Aportela-Hernandez, MPA, RMC
Municipal Clerk