

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF BOROUGH OF MORRISVILLE  
Morrisville, Pennsylvania

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
**Special Meeting** – Wednesday, January 4, 2012  
Large Group Instruction Room  
Morrisville Intermediate/Senior High School  
7:30 p.m.

***This meeting was recorded for televising***

A special meeting of the Morrisville Board of School Directors was held in the LGI Room located in the Morrisville Intermediate/Senior High School, 550 West Palmer Street, Morrisville, Pennsylvania on January 4, 2012, after due notice of the meeting had been given as required by law. Mr. DeWilde, President, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mr. DeWilde made a motion to appoint Mr. Paul DeAngelo as Temporary Recording Secretary for tonight's meeting. This motion was seconded by Mr. Buckman and passed by a unanimous voice vote of 9 ayes.

**ROLL CALL**

*The following members present on roll call:*

Messrs. Buckman, DeWilde, Parker, Stoneburner, Stout, Miller, Worob and Ms. Kartal and Ms. Marone.

*Quorum Present:*

Also attending this evening's meeting was Mr. William Ferrara, Superintendent; Mr. Paul DeAngelo, Business Administrator; and Thomas J. Profy IV, Esq., Solicitor; media, MEA and members of the community.

## **PUBLIC SESSION**

### **Marlys Mihok**

Ms. Mihok discussed the Act 1 Index Resolution to be voted on this evening and stated that she hopes that the Board will not be raising the taxes. She discussed the current budget and stated that hopefully the Board will find ways to, again, lower the budget as was done last year. She asked the Board to keep the seniors of our community in mind when planning the budget. Ms. Mihok thanked the maintenance crew for their help in planting a memorial tree at Grandview. She is working on the wording for the plaque to be placed at the memorial, and, hopefully, it will be finished and installed by the Spring.

### **Discussion by the Board**

Before voting on the Act 1 Index Resolution motion, Mr. DeWilde asked the Board if they would like to see the presentation to be given by Mr. DeAngelo first and have any questions answered, or if they would like to vote first.

Mr. Ferrara thanked all Board members for coming to tonight's special meeting and recommended that the Board take a look at Mr. DeAngelo's presentation prior to voting on the resolution and reminded the Board that the only thing that they are voting on tonight is to accept the resolution which states that we are not going to raise the taxes above the 1.7 index. The resolution is not saying you are not going to raise taxes or that you are going to raise taxes, it is saying that you are not going to be looking for exceptions over the 1.7 index.

Mr. DeAngelo stated that there are two exceptions when it comes to raising taxes over the 1.7 index. They are special education and PSERS stabilization. Mr. DeAngelo stated that it used to include grandfathered debt and building renovations.

The Board members agreed that they preferred to watch the presentation from Mr. DeAngelo prior to voting on the resolution.

Mr. DeAngelo stated that all Board members were given a packet explaining as much information as he could give them regarding the Act 1 Resolution. Mr. DeAngelo then proceeded to give a power point presentation explaining the 2012-13 budget process and costs, the budget calendar and timelines. Mr. DeAngelo stated that updates on the budget figures will be given at each agenda and business meeting in the future up until the final budget is approved. Mr. DeAngelo stated that the meeting tonight was scheduled to pass the Act 1 Resolution, but felt that the presentation given is necessary for the Board to be more aware of the financial status of our District and to give them more of an understanding of the resolution to be passed this evening.

Ms. Kartal questioned the increase in the budget area for Crossing Guards. Mr. DeAngelo stated that an additional crossing guard was added last year and this expense has been billed to us, thereby, increasing the amount budgeted in this area. Mr. DeAngelo stated that the Borough pays 50% for some of our crossing guards, and 100% for others. He stated that a list is available showing the locations of the crossing guards and who pays for each of these guards.

Mr. Buckman stated that it is the law that the Borough is to pay 50% for all crossing guards if they are hired for the safety of our students.

Ms. Kartal stated that this issue should be pursued with the Borough in order to have all crossing guards paid at 50% by the Borough and 50% by the District. Ms. Kartal asked Mr. DeAngelo if he could mark the budget areas with asterisks in areas where monies have been moved from one area to another so it would make it easier to distinguish these areas. Mr. DeAngelo stated that the Board will be able to log into the Alio Intelligence System, at their convenience, to review the budget and all areas of concern. Ms. Kartal stated that she would like to continue to have the budget balanced, but also see programs increased while bringing in money from other sources. She has been researching ways that other districts have been bringing money into their districts, and will be providing this information to the administration and other Board members. Ms. Kartal expressed her concerns with the cuts made to the Kindergarten program this year and the elimination of middle school football.

Mr. Stoneburner discussed the fund balance. Mr. DeAngelo stated that this money belongs to the employees of the district and that this money has to be reserved. GASB 54 changed how we look at this money and how it is shown in the budget. Mr. DeAngelo stated that in our budget, this money is displayed and budgeted showing all money in this area as an expenditure and available as if all of our employees were to cash out at once. This number, of course, is adjusted as each employee actually retires, etc.

Mr. Buckman discussed information regarding an affiliation study between the Morrisville School District and the Pennsbury School District. He also gave information regarding A Walking School Bus Program to Mr. Ferrara for his review.

Ms. Kartal also discussed a walkability study and stated that she would get this information to the administration and Board for their review. The Board discussed a similar study done by Ms. Ruffing a few years ago and asked that these results be looked at prior to another study being done.

Mr. Marone discussed the enrichment of students in such a hard economic time period without raising taxes. She stated, along with all of the Board members, that their main concern is our students and the quality of education they receive.

Mr. DeAngelo stated that the information (slideshow) presented this evening has been placed on the Board website, and he would be putting it on the district website this evening, and asked that he be permitted to present the budget again at the January agenda or business meeting in order for community members not able to attend tonight's meeting to be aware of this information. The Board members agreed that Mr. DeAngelo should present this information again at one of the January meetings.

Mr. Worob stated that he feels that the taxes are high enough in Morrisville and agreed that we must look into ways of bringing money into the District and that the Board has to stay together and remain strong as a group to keep the taxes from being raised.

Mr. DeAngelo discussed line items regarding our utility bills and explained that these items were budgeted over a three year period working with Provident Company which helped control these costs by making certain that we are being billed correctly. He stated that a spread sheet is available to view these costs. Mr. DeAngelo also discussed the possibility of looking into restricting some of our debt at a lower interest rate.

Mr. Ferrara stated that Mr. DeAngelo does a great job with making sure that we do think outside of the box. He also stated that this administration, along with the School Board, look out for the best interest of our students. If there are opportunities to alter programs or to make programs better through the use of technology, Mr. Ferrara stated that we do our best to take advantage of these opportunities. Mr. Ferrara stated that we are not a money first administration or School Board, and our student's always come first. He stated that our student's receive an excellent education at this time and will continue to do so in the future. He feels that our administrative team is phenomenal in making quality things work in an efficient manner. Mr. Ferrara stated that he is 100% confident that our administrative team will make recommendations based on the betterment of our students' academic and social well being. Mr. Ferrara stated that we have a very good tax return in Morrisville, which is 94.25%. He stated that the people of Morrisville deserve credit for this. Mr. Ferrara informed the Board that when the administration does come to them with recommendations, it is something that has been thought through and researched thoroughly.

Mr. Parker thanked Mr. DeAngelo for all of the information provided to the Board to review prior to tonight's meeting in order for them to be able to make a decision on voting on tonight's Act 1 Resolution.

Mr. Miller stated that, as a new Board member, he does not feel that it is a good idea to approve this resolution, locking us into not being able to raise the taxes beyond the 1.7 index, just in case the Board is faced with raising the taxes beyond this point in case of emergency. Mr. Miller stated that he is not comfortable voting to pass this resolution at this point, and wants to leave as many doors open as possible to the Board.

Mr. Worob feels that by passing this resolution we are sending out a positive note to the community stating that we do not feel that we will need to raise the taxes beyond the 1.7 index. He feels confident in the figures presented by the administration and can see no reason why this resolution should not be passed.

Mr. Parker agreed with Mr. Miller and stated that he also does not feel comfortable passing this resolution locking ourselves into not being able to raise taxes beyond the 1.7 index just in case of an emergency.

1. **BUSINESS OPERATIONS/FINANCIAL COMMITTEE**  
**INFORMATIONAL/DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

None at this time.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

***The Board approved a motion*** to approve the Act 1 Index Resolution. Moved by Mr. DeWilde, seconded by Ms. Kartal, and passed by a roll call vote of 7 ayes and 2 nays. Members voting aye were Messrs. Buckman, DeWilde, Stoneburner, Stout and Worob, and Ms. Kartal and Ms. Marone. Members voting nay were Messrs. Parker and Miller.

**MORRISVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, on June 27, 2006, the Pennsylvania legislature passed Act 1 of Special Session 2006, entitled the "Taxpayer Relief Act" (hereinafter "Act 1");

WHEREAS, Act 1 requires school districts to limit tax increases to the level set by an inflation index unless the tax increase is approved by voters in a referendum or the school district obtains from the Department of Education or a court of common pleas certain referendum exceptions;

WHEREAS, Act 1 does, however, allow a board of school directors to elect to adopt a resolution indicating that it will not raise the rate of any tax for the support of the public schools for the following fiscal year by more than its index, provided this resolution must be adopted no later than 110 days prior to the date of the election immediately preceding the upcoming fiscal year;

WHEREAS, the Morrisville School District index for the 2012-2013 fiscal year is 1.7%;

WHEREAS, the Morrisville School District Board of Directors has made the decision that it shall not raise the rate of any tax for the support of the Morrisville School District for the 2012-2013 fiscal year by more than its index.

AND NOW, on this 4<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2012, it is hereby RESOLVED by the Morrisville School District (hereinafter "District") Board of Directors (hereinafter "Board") the following:

1. The Board certifies that it will not increase any school district tax for the 2012-2013 school year at a rate that exceeds the index as calculated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.
2. The Board certifies that it will comply with the procedures set forth in Section 687, of the Pennsylvania Public School Code (hereinafter "School Code"), 24 P.S. §6-687, for the adoption of its proposed and final budget.

3. The Board certifies that increasing any tax at a rate less than or equal to the index will be sufficient to balance its final budget of the 2012-2013 fiscal year.
4. The Administration of the District will submit the District's information on a proposed increase in the rate of a tax levied for the support of the District to the Pennsylvania Department of Education on the uniform form prepared by the Pennsylvania Department of Education no later than five days after the Board's adoption of this Resolution.
5. The Administration of the District will send a copy of this Resolution to the Pennsylvania Department of Education no later than five days after the Board's adoption of this Resolution.
6. The Board understands and agrees that by passing this Resolution it is not eligible to seek referendum exceptions under Section 333(f) of Act 1 and is not eligible to request approval from the voters through a referendum to increase a tax rate by more than the index as established for the 2012-2013 fiscal year.
7. Once this Resolution is passed, the Administration of the District is not required to comply with the preliminary budget requirements set forth in paragraphs (a) and (c) of Section 311 of Act 1. Provided, however:
  - I. The Board understands and agrees that, upon receipt of the information submitted by the District as set forth in paragraphs 4 and 5 above, the Pennsylvania Department of Education shall compare the District's proposed percentage increase in the rate of the tax with the index.
  - II. Within ten days of the receipt of this information, the Pennsylvania Department of Education shall inform the District whether its proposed tax rate increase is less than or equal to the index.
  - III. If the Pennsylvania Department of Education determines that the District's proposed increase in the rate of the District's tax exceeds the index, the District is subject to the preliminary budget requirements as set forth in paragraph (a) and (c) of Section 311 of Act 1.

**DULY ADOPTED** by the Board of School directors in lawful session duly assembled this fourth day of January, 2012.

BOROUGH OF MORRISVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Bucks County, Pennsylvania

By:  
John DeWilde, President

ATTEST:  
Wanda Kartal, Secretary  
(SEAL)

**OLD BUSINESS**

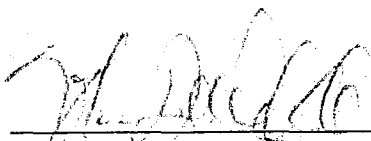
None at this time.

**NEW BUSINESS**

None at this time.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.



John DeWilde, President



Wanda Kartal, Secretary