

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF BOROUGH OF MORRISVILLE
Morrisville, Pennsylvania

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS

Special Meeting – Wednesday, February 20, 2013

Large Group Instruction Room

Morrisville Intermediate/Senior High School

This meeting took place immediately following the Agenda Meeting (meeting started at 9:50 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 February 20, 2013, after due notice of the meeting had been given as required by law. Mr. Miller, President, called the meeting to order at 9:50 p.m.

Mr. Truelove stated that there was no need to recite the Pledge of Allegiance or for a roll call since this meeting immediately followed the agenda meeting and the same Board members are in attendance. There was also a Board consensus that Mr. DeAngelo would continue as Board Secretary for this meeting.

The following members present:

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

Members absent: N/A

Quorum Present:

Also attending this evening's meeting was Mr. William Ferrara, Superintendent; Mr. Paul DeAngelo, Business Administrator; Mr. Tony Gesualdi, Director of Special Education/Pupil Services; David Truelove, Esq., Solicitor; media, MEA representatives and members of the community.

PUBLIC SESSION #1 (Agenda Items Only)

There were no speakers for Public Session #1.

BUSINESS OPERATIONS/FINANCE COMMITTEE

INFORMATIONAL/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

ACTION ITEMS:

The Board approved a motion to approve the 2013-14 Proposed Preliminary Budget – PDE 2028.

Moved by Mr. Miller, seconded by Mr. DeWilde, and passed by a roll call vote of 6 ayes and 3 nays. Members voting aye were Messrs. Miller, Stoneburner, Dingle, DeWilde, Parker and Ms. Kartal. Members voting nay were Messrs. Buckman, Worob and Stout.

Mr. Buckman discussed exception items to which we would be able to apply. Mr. DeAngelo stated that on the new online system for exceptions from PDE, he was able to do some calculations and we could possibly be able to apply in the areas of special education and PSERS, in the event that we were going raise taxes above the index.

Mr. DeAngelo stated that at the January Board meeting, the Board voted not to pass the resolution to stay within the index, so we are here tonight to approve the Proposed Preliminary Budget, and then we have from now until June 30, 2013, to adopt the final budget. Mr. DeAngelo reviewed the key deadlines stating that we have until February 29th to publish a notice in the newspaper for our intent to request approval from the Department of Education for any referendum exceptions; March 7th is the deadline where the Department of Education has to notify us about the proposed rates with regard to the index; and then seeking approval from the Department of Education we should receive notice from them by March 7th in regard to the online process.

Mr. Worob discussed the 2 percent cap and asked if we qualified and were approved for the exceptions, what our rate would look like. Mr. DeAngelo stated that the 2028 that we are looking at currently gives us a millage rate of 177.30, and balance the 13-14 and that million would bring the millage rate up to 195.20, which would be a 20 mil increase. Mr. Worob stated that he feels that there really is no cap. Mr. Truelove stated that this really only gives us the opportunity to make these applications and get approval from PDE, and many more districts have applied this year for these exceptions than in the past. Mr. Worob stated that a raise in taxes would be a hardship for the Morrisville community and something that we really need to consider.

Mr. Truelove stated that approval of a Preliminary Budget, which is a working document, is a legal requirement with the calendar. He stated that this document gives us more flexibility, time to explore our options, and does not establish any finality at all.

After further discussion by the Board members about raising our taxes, Mr. Miller stated that he feels that we are looking at this the wrong way, and he, personally, does not want his taxes going up. He stated that if the Board would have approved the Act I Resolution of 2%, it would have given us \$220,000 against the one million dollar deficit. Mr. Miller stated that if every Board member puts an effort into looking into our budget to see what can be cut, modified or reduced in spending then we are saving the taxpayers by coming in under the 2%.

Mr. Parker agreed with Mr. Miller stating that every Board member needs to come to the table with ideas about cutting expenses, and not just complain about raising taxes. Mr. Parker stated that he does not want taxes to go up, but we have to pay for the education of the children in this District and he welcomed everyone to step up Saturday and come up with some ideas.

Mr. Ferrara stated that the administrative team will be looking at ways to recommend to the Board to minimize the educational impact on our community while still offering a quality program for our students; that is our job. He stated that the administration will make sure that there are ways that they can work with the Board and give you a lot of options. Mr. Ferrara stated that this process gives us opportunities that they will not take unless they have to to not raise taxes. Mr. Ferrara stated that just because we pass this preliminary budget tonight, it does not mean that we have to take those exceptions. He stated that the administration will do everything in their power to afford our students a great education without putting a tax burden on our citizens.

Mr. DeAngelo reminded the Board that we have made some decisions regarding healthcare which will be discussed further on Saturday, and we have also passed some contracts which we said that in order to be able to pay for these contracts we have to look at certain things. He stated that we have to bring everything to the table to see what we can live with and what can we live without. We need to determine what is a budgetary item and what is an expenditure.

Mr. Miller stated that we have had the benefit of no tax increases for five years, and over the course of time we have paid our bills using our savings account. He stated that by using our fund balance to rectify the budget at the end of each year will cause us to end up with nothing in our savings account.

Mr. Stout stated that there are a lot of elderly people in this town that do not have a savings account and they are the people that he feels sorry for. He stated that he will never give his vote to increase taxes. Mr. Parker asked him if he has any suggestions so that we do not have to raise taxes. Mr. Parker stated that we have cut it to the bone, we have gone through five years of no increases, and that looks very short sighted right now.

Mr. Worob stated that he doesn't care if we have had ten years of no increases, we are probably the most highest taxed in the whole county. Again, Mr. Parker asked for suggestions or options to cut the budget.

PUBLIC SESSION #2

There were no speakers for Public Session #2.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:12 p.m. Moved by Mr. Miller, seconded by Mr. Dingle, and passed by a unanimous voice vote of 9 ayes.

Damon Miller, President

Wanda Kartal, Secretary