

BOROUGH OF HASBROUCK HEIGHTS

MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING - BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET

May 6, 2008

A Special Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Hasbrouck Heights was held on May 6, 2008 at 8:02 p.m. at Borough Hall, 320 Boulevard, Hasbrouck Heights, NJ.

Borough Clerk Rose Marie Sees stated that the meeting complied with the Sunshine law, adequate notice of this meeting having been made to all members of the Council by personal service on April 23, 2008 and transmitted to The Observer, The Record and The Herald News on April 23, 2008

ROLL CALL: Present: Mayor Rose Heck, Councilman Justin A. DiPisa, Councilwoman Maryetta Saccomano, Councilman Anthony DiNanno, Councilman Stephen Altobelli, Councilwoman Sonya Buckman, Councilman David Gonzalez

Absent: None

SALUTE TO THE FLAG AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor Heck led in the Salute to the Flag and Pledge of Allegiance.

NEW BUSINESS:

REPORT OF CFO/ADMIN. MICHAEL KRONYAK:

Mr. Kronyak opened by stating that the Finance Committee including Mayor Heck, Councilwoman Buckman, Councilman DiPisa, Mr. Kronyak, BOE Supt. Joseph Luongo and BOE Secretary Joseph Bellino had met five times in an effort to reduce the Board of Education Budget which had been defeated in the School Election on April 15, 2008. He passed out to the council a spreadsheet enumerating cuts to the budget including 14 line items in the amount of \$243,234 and \$34,266 in additional surplus be anticipated as revenue. He explained the differences in the budgets, BOE versus Municipal, that there were not as many opportunities to make cuts. The rationale was to look at the actual 2007/2008 year school year and what was anticipated to be spend in the new year. He asked the Council for questions, either of himself or Mr. Luongo and Mr. Bellino.

Mayor Heck thought reducing it by 1.5 points was reasonable and the committee had worked diligently to come to this point. \$277,000 to be cut was a surprising amount to

the Board of Education representatives, but they were cooperative and recognized the common goal.

Councilman DiPisa said 1.5 points was substantial and that all areas were looked at.

COUNCIL COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Councilman Altobelli questioned what percentage of the budget the \$277,000 was and was told 1%. He asked if there was any minimum or maximum that the State allows cuts, and was told no, they do not set any perimeters. If a substantial cut were made, the BOE could appeal it to the State Department of Education. Part of the requirements are no negative impact on education.

Mayor Heck asked Mr. Luongo how many students there were and was told 1,700.

Councilman Altobelli asked what were the three line items noted for unallocated employee benefits and was told 220 was social security, 280 was tuition reimbursement, and 290 was retirement. He questioned the information technology classifications and was told this was not a reduction of computers in the classroom. The reduction was due to a retirement. There were well over 200 computers in the system.

Councilman DiNanno questioned the home instruction course of \$215,000 and why it was so high. It was explained this included guide movement and substitutes. He asked the per diem substitute teachers and it was explained that \$80 is for the first 20 dates, \$85 for past 20 dates, \$90 for State Certificate and \$95 for past 25 dates. He questioned before and after care. Mr. Bellino explained that specific activity is not included in the budget, is in the enterprise fund, not an educational program, it is an aftercare program that has been in place over 14 years ago. Mr. Kronyak explained it was similar to the Recreation Program where fees are paid and placed in a trust fund which is expended out of the trust to pay for the programs. This is all subject to audit. Mr. Bellino said there is some profit which offsets items in the budget such as custodial salaries. Mr. DiNanno asked if there was a way of cutting costs. Mr. Luongo said by hiring uncertified teachers, which he would not recommend, except as assistants. Mr. DiNanno questioned if going back to a half day Kindergarten would be a possibility, and Mr. Luongo said full day Kindergarten was in place since the 1970s.

Councilwoman Saccomano questioned the home instruction and that expenditures in 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 was zero, but in 2008/2009 jumped up to \$215,000. It was explained that this is strictly a budget function, and is expended in the four line items above it. She questioned lease purchase agreements principal went from \$39,140, \$47,000 and in the new year \$91,473. It was explained that a substantial purchase of computers was made which lease agreement payments will be paid over a three year

COUNCIL COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR RECOMMENDATIONS (cont'd):

period. She questioned transfer of funds to charter schools and the difference in the increase and it was explained that notification of students who attend charter schools comes from the State of New Jersey for which the district is responsible for the tuition. They are not included in the enrollment figures. She questioned salaries for maintenance jumping up considerably, and it was explained there was one additional custodian.

Councilman Altobelli questioned the unallocated employee benefits. Mr. Kronyak explained what was budgeted and what was actually expended and used that calculation for suggested cuts.

Mayor Heck thanked Mr. Kronyak for his hours of work on this and that the major concern was cut the budget but not adversely impact education.

Councilwoman Saccomano referring to undistributed expenditures and that three line items showed a large increase from last year including salaries clerical assistants, making a total of \$91,000 more. It was explained that was a reallocation from another cost center, which would show a reduction.

Councilwoman Buckman commended Mr. Kronyak for a terrific job with his auditing background to go line by line and define every cut he was able to make that did not affect student education.

COMMENTS FROM SUPT. OF SCHOOLS LUONGO:

Mr. Luongo of course did not like to be cut \$277,000, but thought it was fair and a joint effort, that any cuts have an adverse effect on education. He said the BOE would adopt that amount on May 19, 2008 and have their public hearing on that date.

Mayor Heck said it was appropriate at this time to mention that joint purchasing and shared services were already under discussion for saving dollars, which was confirmed by Mr. Luongo.

Mr. Kronyak reported that the actual resolution enumerating these cuts would be introduced at the Mayor and Council meeting of May 13, 2008.

MISCELLANEOUS FROM PUBLIC:

Christian Semenez, 415 Jefferson Avenue, noticed from the questions of the council that the school budget is not people friendly and disconcerting. He was concerned that the board members were not present at this meeting in total. (*Present were Constance Doheny, Richard Parodi, Lillian Romano, Glenn Ruroede, Josephine Ciocia.*) He said

MISCELLANEOUS FROM PUBLIC (cont'd):

there were still questions with this budget and was advised that he could make any recommendations at this time.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

On a motion by Councilman DiPisa, seconded by Councilman DiNanno, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned.

There being no further business to be conducted by the Mayor and Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

I, ROSE MARIE SEES, Borough Clerk of the Borough of Hasbrouck Heights, do hereby certify that the foregoing Minutes are to the best of my knowledge a true account of the Special Mayor and Council Meeting held on May 6, 2008.

Rose Marie Sees, RMC
Borough Clerk