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**BERNARDS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**BASKING RIDGE, NEW JERSEY**  
**REGULAR MEETING AGENDA MINUTES**  
**MARCH 14, 2011**  
**EXECUTIVE SESSION 5:30 P.M.**  
**REGULAR SESSION 7:00 P.M.**  
**OAK STREET SCHOOL AUDITORIUM**

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**BERNARDS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION  
BASKING RIDGE, NEW JERSEY  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 14, 2011  
EXECUTIVE SESSION 5:30 P.M.  
REGULAR SESSION 7:09 P.M.  
OAK STREET SCHOOL AUDITORIUM**

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 p.m. by President Carlsson.

**I. Salute to Flag**

**II. Roll Call**

PRESENT: Mr. Byrne, Ms. Carlsson, Ms. Cwerner, Mr. Koch, Ms. Kusel,  
Ms. McGowan, Ms. McKeon, Ms. Sherwyn, Mr. Wilke

ABSENT: None

**III. Executive Session – 5:30 p.m. – Oak Street School Conference Room**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Bernards Township Board of Education met in closed session to discuss: matters pertaining to specific personnel; negotiations; and further

BE IT RESOLVED that the matters discussed in closed session will be disclosed to the public as soon as and to the extent that such disclosure can be made without adversely affecting the public interest or without violation of the confidentiality of personnel.

On motion by Ms. Cwerner, seconded by Mr. Koch, and approved by all present, the Board recessed into closed executive session at 5:30 p.m.

On motion by Mr. Wilke, seconded by Ms. Kusel, and approved by all present, the Board returned to public session at 7:00 p.m.

The Board reconvened the regular meeting in the Oak Street School Auditorium at 7:09 p.m.

**IV. Regular Session – Call to Order – 7:09 p.m. – Oak Street School Auditorium**

**V. Statement of Public Notice**

This was a regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Bernards Township. Notice of the time and place of this meeting was provided and copies of that resolution were forwarded to the official newspapers as designated by the Board of Education and to the Township Clerk and a copy of the notice was posted on the bulletin board of the Board of Education Offices in accordance with P.L. 1975 Chapter 231A.

We very much welcome input from the public. There are two times during regular meetings that the public is invited to speak. One time is early in the meeting before the Board votes, and you may speak about any item that is listed on tonight's agenda. Towards the end of the meeting, there is another public forum to address any topic whatsoever.

When you approach the microphone, please state your name and address. We do not have a specific time limit, but we ask that you keep your comments brief. Please understand that our public forums are not structured as question and answer sessions, but rather they are offered as opportunities to share your thoughts with the Board. In instances where the Board feels that there is a misunderstanding or inaccuracy, a member of the Board or Administration will address it in the Board Response portion of the agenda.

There are times when a member of the public makes a comment or asks a question about an employee. New Jersey statute does not permit us to discuss personnel issues in public. Also as a matter of law, a Board of Education may only vote for or against the hiring of an employee upon the recommendation of the superintendent. If the superintendent does not recommend a person, that person's name is not listed on the agenda and there is no vote on that action.

If it is necessary for the Board to go into executive session at the end of the meeting, we will provide an estimated length of time for the session and whether any action is anticipated to be taken upon returning to public session.

**VI. Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Valerie A. Goger explained the zero base budget model utilized for planning the 2011-12 budget, the need to establish a baseline, and the impact of the loss of revenue with a 2% cap as compared to past budgets that were held at 4%. This change created an immediate loss in revenue of \$1.5M. Administrators continued to prioritize their budgets as late as December and January realizing an additional \$600K savings between textbooks, supplies, and athletic accounts. Some cuts create a one-year savings

while others are long-term such as the eight-period day which creates a \$360K savings the first year but increases in future years as unemployment responsibilities decline. Dr. Goger also stated an increase in class size is not anticipated at the high school as a result of the eight-period day and explained the change to the resource room model at the middle school.

## **VII. Board Presentations**

### 1) 2011-12 Budget

Business Administrator Nick Markarian's presentation highlighted the following:

- Review of General Fund Revenue - \$82,432,885
- Explanation of the state's account numbering system
- Summary of budget to be advertised (showing accounts samples)
- Analysis of salaries by building (estimated figures)
- Clarification of elementary assistant principal positions
- Reduction to all school and department budgets
- Review of 2011-12 budget cuts
- Budget was submitted to county office for review, budget will be advertised on March 23, final budget presentation on March 28 with Board vote, school election on April 27

Board comments were made regarding the zero base budgetary exercise, transportation cuts (athletic dept.), telecommunication savings (through new agreement), athletic reductions (fewer practices, scrimmages and coaching cuts).

### 2) Somerset County Improvement Authority Solar Project Representatives

A presentation of the district's potential solar panel project highlighted the program's inception in Morris County until today. Included was an explanation of funding, power purchase agreements, the bidding process, project timeline, and competitive contracting. Drawings of solar panel locations were distributed to the Board. An estimated \$2.5M projection of cost savings over the 15-year program is anticipated. Upkeep and maintenance of panels, panel location at Mount Prospect and William Annin Middle Schools, as well as current condition and future maintenance of roofs was discussed. It was agreed the solar panel project would be brought back to the Ad Hoc Facilities Committee for further discussion.

## **VIII. Public Forum on Agenda Items**

Comments were made regarding tax levy increases in recent years, looking at non-classroom areas for cost reduction, administrative costs, going forward looking at

salary/benefits, additional state aid being utilized for education programs not capital projects, maintenance and custodial costs, and the increase in savings of the eight-period day from \$240K to \$360K.

Board response included an explanation of the additional savings from the eight-period day. These additional savings were received due to the state’s reduction in the employer’s responsibility toward unemployment benefits. The district is also looking into additional methods of scheduling flexibility at the high school for elective courses.

**IX. Committee Reports**

**Finance Committee**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT

1) WHEREAS, the Superintendent of Schools has proposed a budget for operation of the Bernards Township Public Schools during the 2011-2012 school year, and

WHEREAS, the proposed budget includes sufficient funds to provide curriculum and instruction which will enable all students to achieve the Core Curriculum Content Standards, and is in compliance with N.J.S.A. 18A and N.J.A.C. Title 6 and 6A, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education and its Finance Committee have reviewed and modified that proposed budget, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, the Board of Education adopts the following preliminary budget for the 2011-2012 school year:

<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	
General Fund	\$82,432,885
Special Revenue Fund	\$ 1,050,000
Debt Service Fund	\$ 6,108,622
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$89,591,507</b>
<b>REVENUES</b>	
Budgeted Fund Balance – General Fund	\$ 3,059,078
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$ 1,522,791
State Aid	\$ 3,667,752
Federal Aid	\$ 1,050,000
Federal Aid – Education Jobs Fund	\$ 156,767
Local Tax Levy – General Fund	\$74,368,937
Local Tax Levy – Debt Service	\$ 5,766,182

**TOTAL****\$89,591,507**

and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that as per NJAC 6A:23B-1 .2(b), the proposed budget provides for a maximum expenditure amount that may be allotted for travel and expense reimbursement. The 2011-12 tentative budget includes a maximum travel appropriation of \$52,975. The School Business Administrator shall track and record these costs to insure that the maximum amount is not exceeded. Included in the 2011-12 proposed budget is a maximum regular business travel amount of \$1,500 per employee, and be it

FUTHER RESOLVED, that the school Business Administrator is authorized to submit the tentative 2011-2012 to the County Superintendent for her review and approval. The supporting documentation of this budget also contains an itemization of certain expenditures required under administrative regulations, and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, the Superintendent and Secretary are directed to prepare this preliminary budget on forms prescribed by the State Department of Education and to submit it along with any required support documentation to the County Superintendent, and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, the secretary is directed to advertise this budget and notice of a public hearing on it to be held on Monday, March 28, 2011, as required by law.

On motion by Ms. McGowan, seconded by Mr. Koch, Item #1 was approved by the following roll call vote:

“Ayes” - Mr. Byrne, Ms. Cwerner, Mr. Koch, Ms. Kusel, Ms. McGowan,  
Ms. McKeon, Ms. Sherwyn, Mr. Wilke, Ms. Carlsson  
“Noes” - None  
“Abstain” - None

### **Personnel Committee**

No report.

### **Curriculum Committee**

Chairperson Bev Cwerner reported discussion at the recent Curriculum Committee meeting included the newly adopted state’s common core standards scheduled for implementation in the 2012-13 school year with initial testing in 2014-15, the K-5 Language Arts curriculum “Words Their Way,” and the pilot program of “We the Kids” in grade 3 at Cedar Hill School to be rolled out in all elementary schools next year. Other topics included review of textbooks for adoptions, the possibility of eliminating mid-term exams at the high school, hiring an additional guidance counselor at the middle school,

and reinstating Junior Honors Government, and Economics, and British Literature courses.

**Policy Committee**

No report.

**Ad Hoc Facilities Committee**

Chairperson Ken Wilke reviewed the walkthrough at Cedar Hill School, SEE program update, approving the American Red Cross utilizing district facilities in the event of a crisis, expanding the contract with Energy for America to include high school this year and all other buildings in 2011-12, the solar energy project, and assessment of roof areas in need of repair.

**Community Relations Committee**

Chairperson Robin McKeon stated the committee met with the PTO Advisory Board this morning. A sample absentee ballot will be sent to PTO presidents for publication, a combined PTO budget presentation meeting is scheduled for April 6 at William Annin Middle School, and candidates night is scheduled for April 7 in the Ridge High School PAC. Ms. McKeon will generate a list of future PTO and PEC meetings. She urged Board members to attend these meetings.

**Liaison Reports**

Ms. Sherwyn stated the Municipal Alliance is focusing on neighborhood coffees and is looking for volunteers to host. In response to a question, Dr. Goger stated the drug testing report is preliminarily scheduled for a May Board meeting when feedback from the drug and alcohol survey is available.

**X. Future Topics for Board Forum**

**XI. Public Forum on Other than Agenda Items**

The Board was thanked for the possible elimination of mid-term exams at the high school, maintaining the high school guidance counselor, and reinstatement of junior honors classes. Comments were made on the significance of passing the budget for students, the impact on home value, and the district maintaining a significantly low cost per pupil. Additional comments on the eight vs. nine-period day included use of unanticipated state aid to maintain the current high school schedule. The liability vs. benefit of solar panels was questioned.

**XII. Adjournment**

On motion by Ms. Cwerner, seconded by Mr. Byrne, and approved by all present, the meeting was adjourned at 9:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nick Markarian  
Board Secretary