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**BERNARDS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
BASKING RIDGE, NEW JERSEY
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES INDEX
MARCH 12, 2012
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REGULAR SESSION 7:10 P.M.
WILLIAM ANNIN MIDDLE SCHOOL CAFETERIA**

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The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by President Carlsson.

I. Salute to Flag

II. Roll Call

PRESENT: Mr. Byrne, Ms. Carlsson, Mr. Koch, Ms. Kusel, Ms. McGowan,
Ms. McKeon, Ms. Shah, Ms. Sherwyn, Ms. Wooldridge

ABSENT: None

III. Executive Session – 6:30 p.m. – William Annin Middle School Faculty Cafeteria

BE IT RESOLVED that the Bernards Township Board of Education met in closed session to discuss: review of qualifications of persons under consideration for employment; 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. McKeon, seconded by Mr. Koch, and approved by all present, the Board recessed into closed executive session at 6:30 p.m.

On motion by Ms. Shah, seconded by Ms. Wooldridge, and approved by all present, the Board returned to public session at 7:05 p.m.

The Board reconvened the regular meeting in the William Annin Middle School Auditorium at 7:10 p.m.

IV. Regular Session – Call to Order – 7:10 p.m. – William Annin Middle School Cafeteria

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. Student Representative

Student Representation Maggie Peterpaul updated the Board on the Ridge Factor (March 15), the Superhero Half Marathon (May 20), Mr. Ridge, and plans for the upcoming Student Government meeting with representatives attending from all schools.

VII. Presentations

1) **Solar Project** – Somerset County Improvement Authority

Mr. Pearlman Ingelesino, Pearlman, Wyciskala & Taylor, LLC, Mr. Kosto Project Manger Wanzek, and Ms. Vogel Senior Energy Engineer Birdsall Services Group presented the Board with updated information and responded to questions as the Board revisits installation of solar panels on the roofs at William Annin Middle and Ridge High Schools. The savings to the district over the 15-year contract period would be approximately \$600,000.

The Board members asked questions regarding impact and responsibility when roof damage occurs, what disruption of panels means to savings, warrantees, placement of solar panels in parking lots (at this time panels would only be placed on roofs), and what would occur at the end of the 15-year period.

2) **2012-13 Budget Presentation** – Business Administrator Nick Markarian

Mr. Markarian presented information on the 2012-13 school budget beginning with a review of revenue sources, 2009-2013 state aid, and a five-year history of local taxes. He continued by highlighting the tax increase for the upcoming budget year, budget expenditures, and items included in the budget. Mr. Markarian presented the budget breakdown within the areas of instruction, general education, special education, support services, and capital projects under consideration.

Director of Curriculum Sean Siet reviewed two educational programs under consideration for reinstatement. After reviewing several models with the Board Curriculum Committee, Mr. Siet presented the enrichment model selected along with the program cost. The second program is Spanish in grades 3-5 with approximately 2-3 sessions per week each session 25 minutes in length. The Spanish program would be in place in September 2012 and the enrichment program would be piloted in one elementary school in 2012-13. Reinstating these two programs would reduce funds available for capital projects.

Comments by Board members included stabilizing the budget, restoring the two programs would be a positive message, the need to address capital projects, property tax relief, meeting state assessments, test scores, focus on programs with non-recurring expenses, future class size guidelines, and rational for selection of two programs.

Dates to remember: March 26 Public Hearing on Budget; June 5 nominating positions for seats on the Board of Education are due to the county clerk.

click [here](#) to view presentation

VII. Public Forum on Agenda Items

Comments were made regarding proposed capital projects, the educational impact of Spanish program, enrichment program reaching only a small number of students, evaluation of proposed construction projects, individualized instruction, smaller class sizes, bringing aides back into certain classrooms, and potential stress issues due to enrichment program selection process.

A Board member commented that the proposed enrichment program is also a ‘push’ program for entire classrooms.

IX. Committee Reports

FINANCE

Chairperson Susan McGowan stated the committee last met on February 15 with discussion of February 27 agenda items, 2012-13 budget draft prior to release of state aid figures, Ridge High busing and traffic drop off, subscription busing cost for next year remaining flat and concern over early sign up date, capital projects for summer 2012. The committee’s next meeting is Wednesday, March 21.

PERSONNEL

Chairperson and Board President Susan Carlsson stated the committee is continuing negotiations with the BTAA (Bernards Township Administrators Association) and the selection of the Business Administrator candidate and contract negotiations.

AD HOC FACILITIES

Chairperson Bill Koch stated the committee’s next meeting is Tuesday, March 20, where topics of discussion will include capital projects, the solar power purchase agreement and the high school busing drop off. The township is willing to assist the district with the traffic issue at the high school but will not agree to the municipal complex as a drop-off site.

Mr. Markarian stated the bond refunding is on hold awaiting a better market condition. The Ad Hoc Facilities Committee will meet at 3:30 on March 20 with community members regarding the bus drop off at Cedar Hill School. Mr. Markarian has met with two different traffic engineering firms. Each will submit a proposal for a traffic study. He will bring information to the Board at its March 26 meeting along with a recommendation.

POLICY

Chairperson Elaine Kusel stated the committee did not meet.

CURRICULUM

Chairperson Robin McKeon stated at its last meeting the committee discussed reinstatement in the budget of two elementary programs, student projects and establishing teacher guidelines,

quarterly assessments vs. mid-terms and finals with assessments increasing instructional time.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Chairperson Audrey Sherwyn reported on the March 12 meeting with the PTO Advisory Committee. Topics included the March 15 presentation by Maurice J. Elias, Ph.D. at the RHS PAC, and the March 14 PTO meeting at William Annin Middle School on stress and nutrition.

LIAISONS

Ms. Sherwyn stated the student stressor survey will be conducted in May, Charter Day is scheduled for May 19, and the Twilight Challenge is being held on June 3.

A question was raised by a Board member in regard to a follow-up presentation on random drug testing. Dr. Goger stated that there was not sufficient interest by the majority of the Board to pursue this program. She once again asked the Board and only two members were in favor of reopening discussion on this topic.

There was additional discussion on the township's assistance with the busing issue. They will assist with engineering and police support, allowing a right of way access through the Health Dept., and will interface with the county on the district's behalf. A plan under consideration calls for a separation of parent and school bus drop off on the high school campus and student driver (one way) access to the high school off of South Finley Avenue utilizing the road near the Health Dept. A concern is in regard to consequences to the traffic pattern on South Finley Avenue while making a left into this entrance.

X. Board Forum

1) Tenure Reform – proposed legislation

Board President Susan Carlsson expressed concern regarding the proposed legislation on tenure reform. Tenure would change from three to four years, staffing recommendations and reassignments would be removed from the superintendent and given solely to the principals, and the establishment of a school improvement plan that would be responsible for the mentoring and evaluation of staff members (this proposal removes supervisors from the evaluation process). NJEA opposes the bill. Ms. Carlsson inquired if the Board was interested in drafting a letter to its state representatives.

2) Student Stressors

A student survey constructed jointly by the Municipal Alliance and the District will be conducted in May.

XI. Public Forum on Other Than Agenda Items

A resident presented an initial request to the Board for consideration of an adult education program utilizing district facilities. She would like the district to partner with the adult schools currently in Chatham, Florham Park, and Madison by having a pilot program of approximately five or six key courses run in the fall of 2012. The Facilities Committee will discuss her request at its March 20 meeting.

Additional comments from the public included the BYOT (Bring Your Own Technology) policy and the middle school, switching from mid-terms and finals to a quarterly assessments, the lead time for review prior to either exams or assessments, and random drug testing. Mr. Siet stated a survey of teachers regarding the BYOT policy is being sent this week. In both the middle and high schools, personal use of technology must be approved by the teachers.

Comments were made regarding the Ridge High/Cedar Hills Schools busing issue and the impact on the surrounding neighborhood. It was requested that the Board communicate information back to the neighborhood. The public would like the Board to make a formal resolution requesting the township to allow the school district to utilize its complex as a drop-off site for high school buses for the remainder of the school year. Board President Susan Carlsson stated Board members may be e-mailed or called if a resident has questions or would like an update on an ongoing issue.

Mr. Byrne brought forward the following motion.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT

1) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby request the Municipality of Bernards Township to allow Ridge High school buses to utilize municipal property as a drop-off site for the remainder of the 2011-12 school year.

On motion by Mr. Byrne, seconded by Ms. McGowan, the foregoing was approved by the following roll call vote:

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

Mr. Markarian will make a request to the township.

XII. Adjournment

On motion by Mr. Byrne, seconded by Mr. Koch, and approved by all present, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nick Markarian
Board Secretary