

MINUTES  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Special Meeting/Work Session – May 12, 2009  
High School Auditorium

PRESENT: President, Mrs. Kathleen V. Berezny; Vice President, Mrs. Christine Prete; Mrs. Ann Cotten-DeGrasse; Ms. Angela DeVito; and, Mr. Gregory Meyer.

ABSENT: Mrs. Mary Ellen Harkin.

LATE: Mr. Timothy Griffing.

ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Diane B. Scricca.

Board President, Mrs. Berezny, opened the meeting at 6:17 p.m. with the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Pledge of Allegiance

A motion was made by Mr. Meyer, seconded by Ms. DeVito, to recess to executive session to discuss personnel.

Recess to Executive Session

Yes 5 No 0  
Motion Carried.

The Board of Education recessed to executive session at 6:18 p.m.

Mr. Griffing arrived at 6:47 p.m.

A motion was made by Ms. DeVito, seconded by Mr. Griffing, to return to open session.

Return to Open Session

Yes 6 No 0  
Motion Carried.

The Board of Education returned to open session at 7:31 p.m.

A brief recess followed.

The meeting resumed at 7:40 p.m.

There were about 30 other people in attendance.

ALSO PRESENT: Ms. Nancy Carney, Mr. Michael Ivanoff, Mr. Joseph Ogeka, Jr., and Mrs. Barbara O’Kula.

The public hearing on the district’s proposed budget for 2009-2010 began at 7:41 P.M.

Public Hearing  
-Proposed 2009-2010  
Budget  
-\$105,953,599

Minutes  
Board of Education  
May 12, 2009  
Page 2

Mr. Michael Ivanoff, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, gave a summary of the \$105,953,599 proposed budget for the 2009-2010 school year. The adopted budget calls for a 3.35% budget-to-budget increase in spending. The spending plan will raise school property taxes by 3.98% (actual rates cannot be determined until later in the year when the towns finalize their assessment numbers...the Southampton portion of the district will be effected by the reduction in Preservation Fund Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOTS)). An anticipated contingent budget would be about 3.25% as state officials indicate that a contingency budget cannot be higher than a proposed budget that is not passed by the voters. The proposed budget reflects the needs of the community and the children it serves to educate in a fiscally responsible manner. The proposed budget eliminates 23 teaching positions and 40 positions overall. Sixteen of the teaching positions would be eliminated through layoffs and unfilled vacancies resulting from retirement, insufficient class enrollment, etc. If these positions were not eliminated, the tax levy would increase by approximately 10%. In response to previous questions raised at other meetings regarding a proposed budget increase of 3.35% versus a tax levy increase of 3.98%, Mr. Ivanoff stated that the district has not been receiving state aid increases at the rate it should be. To compare, he stated that roughly 19% of our budget comes from state aid...the rest basically comes from our taxpayers. The majority of New York City funding comes from state aid and their budgets are **not** voted upon by the taxpayers and is part of the overall New York City budget. New York City's level of available state aid is at 39.5% versus 12% for Long Island public schools. Components of the proposed budget as required by state law includes cost-driven and unfunded mandates as follows:

Capital	- 12%
Administrative	- 9%
Program	- 79%

The proposed budget maintains class sizes and all programs, enhances technology integration, continuation of ongoing staff development, and athletic programs/co-curricular activities.

The district maintains an appropriate fund balance of approximately \$2.6 million to help offset taxes and about \$1.6 million is restored under Governor Paterson's federal stimulus package.

Minutes  
Board of Education  
May 12, 2009  
Page 3

Mr. Ivanoff encouraged all qualified voters to participate in the vote scheduled for May 19, 2009, 6:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. in the High School gymnasium.

Questions and comments from the audience included:

-reference to the proposed MTA payroll tax and its inclusion in the budget (Mr. Ivanoff stated that the proposed tax was not included in any of the budget projections as the approximate cost of \$180,000-200,000 would eventually be reimbursed by the state.)

-loss of 23 teaching positions (Last count is 15 and may be down to 14 by the return of a special education teacher funded through grant monies. Decreases in enrollment in the elementary grades and loss of certain grants were a large impetus to eliminate positions.)

-“Thank you” for bringing down the percentage on the contingency cap

-tuition for charter school students at \$15,000 per student is substantially less than the more than \$18,000 the district spends for our own students as indicated on the School Report Card (Dr. Scricca stated that it is far less costly to educate elementary children than high school students along with the special services that we offer. The issue remains (as recently discussed with Regent Tilles and other legislators) is not the existence of a charter school but how it is funded...if the budget were to be defeated, it would still leave us with \$1.75 million owed to the charter school, regardless, and the district would have to take dollars off for the rest of our student population. For example, if we had to cut 6%, the district would have to eliminate programs, etc. for 4600 of our students but not for the 115 students who attend the charter school.)

-percentage of increase in student services in the Program Component pie chart. Per Mr. Ivanoff, the proposed budget includes about \$83.8 million for programs and student services for 2009-10 which is nearly \$4.3 million more than in 2008-2009.)

-increase in administrative component (As stated by Mr. Ivanoff, this component includes auditing services: internal auditor, external auditor, and claims auditor, as per state guidelines, and is allocated as such thus reflecting a \$700,000 increase.)

Minutes  
Board of Education  
May 12, 2009  
Page 4

Dr. Scricca also stated that what appears to be high is a movement from one column to another. Remember, the administrators did not take a raise...the 3.35% is a bottom-line percentage due to recoding. Mr. Ivanoff further offered that as a result of the new financial software (WinCap), the district is now able to track costs in a much more accurate manner. In the past, the district was mass-coding and, in some cases, put in the wrong category resulting in the many budget transfers you see. Also, due to recoding, as per the Commissioner of Education, the district's program costs/positions are now done in a more efficient manner although it may appear to be higher in some areas.

-any information on STAR monies and percentage if combined with state aid inasmuch as 19% in state aid coming to the district seems misleading? (Mr. Ivanoff stated that he recently had a discussion with the Assessor's Office in the Town of Riverhead and was informed that the STAR program is still in effect...the average taxpayer in Riverhead will receive \$654 in STAR savings which is down significantly. Additionally, STAR monies are not part of our aid and is not included in the budget. Dr. Scricca illustrated that if a taxpayer gets back about \$300 in a STAR rebate check...that check will no longer be; however, there will continue to be an Enhanced STAR program. Another interpretation of the question, as stated by Mrs. Prete, is if the STAR monies were sent to the school district, what percentage would be added to our state aid....the answer to which we do not know. She stated that the amount each town is getting back in STAR monies is based on determined assessments, equalization rates, etc. - 19% in state aid is just for Riverhead Central School District because each school district has a different formula. Dr. Scricca stated that the argument the Board of Education has been in is to try working with legislators to get our fair share and adjust the formula to be fair which...we are not winning. As an example, she cited that Mt. Sinai gets 38% in state aid, some get 50, 60 or 70%. Riverhead, in particular, does not get its fair share. As Mrs. Prete stated, she would like to see the formula for education the same across the board.

The hearing ended at 8:20 p.m.

The following candidates spoke in support of their campaign to run for the Board of Education for a term of three years beginning July 1, 2009 and ending June 30, 2012. They spoke in order as they will appear on the ballot for the School Budget Vote and Election of Board Members on May 19, 2009:

*Opportunity for  
Candidates*

Minutes  
Board of Education  
May 12, 2009  
Page 5

Timothy S. Griffing  
Angela M. DeVito  
Amelia Lantz  
Marlando Williams

A motion was made by Mrs. Prete, seconded by Mr. Griffing, to approve the following resolution:

Approval of Vote  
Workers for  
Special District  
Meeting  
-Approved

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Riverhead Central School District approves the appointment of the following individuals for the special district meeting of qualified voters on May 19, 2009 for the School Budget Vote and Election of Board Members:

Inspectors of Election: Barbara Lennon, Laura O’Kula, Anna Travis

Yes 6 No 0  
Motion Carried.

A motion was made by Mrs. Prete, seconded by Mr. Meyer, to approve the following resolution:

Acceptance of  
Termination  
-James Finch  
-Approved

WHEREAS, the Department of the Navy has revoked the certification of James Finch as an instructor in the NJROTC Program, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the employment relationship between the Riverhead Central School District and James Finch is hereby terminated, effective immediately.

Yes 6 No 0  
Motion Carried.

Ms. Maria Andreotti, K-12 ELA Director, gave a Power Point presentation on English Language Arts which was prefaced with her comment that she is pleased about the direction the district is going and of the positive results that are included in tonight’s presentation. The presentation detailed assessments and overall assessments, findings, and goals for elementary, intermediate and High School. The implementation of foundations this year has begun to address phonetics, spelling, and fluency issues in grades K-2. Assessments in curriculum resulted in commonalities to see where students were in need of support and will enable the district

English Presentation  
-Ms. Maria Andreotti

Minutes  
Board of Education  
May 12, 2009  
Page 6

to develop strategies and put a plan into action. In one year, increases in English test scores went up dramatically as noted in the following results:

6% in Grade 3  
17% in Grade 4  
7% in Grade 5  
19% in Grade 6  
6% in Grade 7  
11% in Grade 8

One major goal is the implementation of a Response to Intervention (RTI) program which is a multi-tiered approach to help struggling learners. The student's progress is closely monitored at each stage of intervention to determine the need for further research-based instruction and/or intervention. The establishment of an RTI team consisting of content area directors, literacy coaches, and classroom teachers will help fulfill this goal. An overall assessment of instruction methodologies and pedagogy are needed in preparing lesson plans for daily instruction to increase student engagement with the promotion of 21st Century skills. Support to teachers in the use of instructional technologies such as twitter/tweeting, blogs, and Wikis are instructional tools that will be used to further improve ELA results. In summary, the district has begun to see the impact that extensive data analysis, directed teaching, sustained professional development and Reader's/Writer's Workshop have made in a very short time toward improved ELA scores.

A motion was made by Ms. DeVito, seconded by Mr. Griffing, to adjourn the meeting.

Adjournment

Yes 6 No 0  
Motion Carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Barbara O'Kula  
District Clerk