

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD OF EDUCATION

MEETING MINUTES

Special Meeting

Monday April 18, 2016

7:00 P.M.

Board of Education
2434 Rt. 563
Egg Harbor City, NJ 08215

Washington Township Board of Education

April 18, 2016 7:00 P.M.

1. VISION STATEMENT

BOE Vision

Washington Township Schools aim to:

- Create an inviting learning environment that blends an assortment of instructional techniques while accepting all learning styles and abilities.
- Inspire our students to become global competitors who make responsible choices while building a strong sense of community.
- Cultivate life-long learners that embrace the value of education.

2. MISSION STATEMENT

Mission Statement

Based on the belief that Green Bank School maintains a positive and safe learning environment, our mission at Green Bank School is to promote physical, social, and emotional well-being. This is accomplished within a student-centered environment that differentiates instruction while adhering to the state and national standards with highly qualified teachers.

Call to Order

3. CALL TO ORDER

4. STATEMENT TO THE PUBLIC

This meeting is called to order under the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act. The Secretary certifies that all requirements have been met. I, Jeremy Senn, Board President, call this meeting to order at 7:07 P.M.

5. OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS STATEMENT/SUNSHINE LAW

Sunshine Law

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies as any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this act, the Washington Township Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be given by having the date, time, and place mailed to the clerk of the municipality and posted on the Administrative Office's bulletin boards.

6. ROLL CALL

Roll Call

Present: Mr. Bartling, Mrs. Ford, Mrs. Melita, Mr. Senn, Mrs. Lee and Mrs. Del Nero.

Not Present: Mr. Scamoffa

Required Personnel: Interim Superintendent, Dr. Thomas Baruffi, Business Administrator/ Board Secretary, Karen Gfroehrer, and Board Attorney, Mr. Ronald Sahli

7. FLAG SALUTE

Flag Salute

8. PRESENTATION

Non-Operating School District

9. COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC AND STAFF

Michael Peronte, Lower Bank, asked the following questions: What is the cost per pupil? What is the average tax increase? What was Mullica's tax increase? How do Green Bank students compare with Mullica students? Mr. Peronte also said that there were many residents on fixed incomes. Ms. Gfroehrer explained the cost per pupil and the tax information. Dr. Baruffi explained that there was no difference between the Mullica students and the Green Bank students.

Washington Township Board of Education

April 18, 2016 7:00 P.M.

Mr. Peronte further commented that many residents are on fixed incomes and the tax impact of the school is difficult for them.

Alex Coushard, Lower Bank, questioned the effects of regionalization on the district including taking on the burden of debt of the joining district. He said that he was willing to put aside funds for tuition reserve to avoid the fiscal cliff.

Dan Walters asked if Green Bank would have a representative on the Mullica board. Mr. Sahli explained that it would be a non-voting seat.

Melissa Achey commented that as a parent, she would have preferred to know about the closing earlier so that she had the opportunity to send her child to a choice school. Ms. Achey also asked if the district can pull out of the send receive contract. Dr. Baruffi explained that the district received notice from the Executive County Superintendent last week. Mr. Sahli explained that the district can pull out of the send receive relationship but there is a lengthy process to do so.

Leonard Farand asked what was going to happen to property values if the township had no school. He said that the State of New Jersey was giving the Township money that should be going to the school. He also asked what would happen if more students moved into town. Scott Bartling explained that the Township has decided to stop sharing funds with the school. If more students moved into town, the district would have to hire more teachers and the cost of educating the students would increase. Mr. Bartling further explained that becoming a non-operating district had the least impact compared with alternatives. The issue comes back to ratables.

Mayor Dudley Lewis explained that the Township has no municipal tax rate and that in the upcoming year, the Township will be using surplus from prior years to maintain no municipal tax rate.

Ebb Alexander said that she agrees with Mr. Bartling and she appreciates the hard work that the Board of Education has done to bring the district to this point.

Brian Dietrich, Wading River, said that these decisions are not easy decisions. He supports the decision to become a non-operating district. The timing is perfect.

Matt Rubsam, asked if residents can still come to Green Bank for board meeting or do they have to go to Mullica? He also asked about repurposing the school.

Mr. Bartling commented that the Board definitely wants to lease the building for educational use.

Brendan Achey stated that he was concerned with the long term possibility of regionalization. Mr. Sahli explained that the taxes would be based on the ratables in the township.

Washington Township Board of Education

April 18, 2016 7:00 P.M.

Judith Vogel, Wading River, observed that 95% of the comments are focused on money. She said that the focus should be on the students. There will be negatives to the transition but the timing is perfect for her children. There will be culture shock. Her child is different because of the small town experience. The money is irrelevant.

Pat Bartling agrees "whole-heartedly" with Mrs. Vogel. She is concerned with her grandchildren being integrated in Mullica. This is a sad day. She doesn't want the school to close and wants her grandchildren to stay at Green Bank.

Peggy Sooy, Jenkins, said that we cannot live in the past. The presentation was very well prepared and showed the pros and cons of becoming a non-operating district. Ms. Sooy asked what the benefit of the students going to Mullica is. Her concern is for the longer bus ride for preschool students.

Tara Talia said that her son is in the first grade and she would rather have him transition now rather than wait until he is in the fifth grade.

Dr. Baruffi said that Mullica is a great school district.

Stacey Rubsam asked about the activities offered by Mullica. Dr. Baruffi explained the extra-curricular activities. Ms. Leshner explained the process of student placement.

Frank Vogel, Wading River, gave credit to the Board of Education. He said that the township has been living this for ten years. We are ending a legacy. He asked about the transition for the students and staff, such as a back to school night. Mr. Vogel asked if all staff members were going to Mullica; and what the tax impact is to the district. He said that he has great things to say about the teachers in Green Bank. What is the price of innocence? He believes that the district is giving up their ability to self-govern but the Board doesn't have much choice. Ms. Leshner explained that Mullica has a new student orientation. Dr. Baruffi explained that the two districts share professional development and that Mullica will make every effort to bring all Green Bank staff to the school. Ms. Gfroehrer explained the tax impact.

Dan Walters said that this is a serious time for all involved. The only negative is the longer bus ride. The only charge of the board is to provide the best education. Mr. Walters said that he doesn't want to see the school close but this is a no brainer.

Ms. Melita thanked the public for the discussion. She said that they were more open minded than at previous meetings. She said that her daughter had a great experience at Green Bank and thanked the teachers and the support staff for their advocacy and dedication to the students. She also thanked the public for their support.

10. RESOLUTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Mr. Bartling and seconded by Ms. Ford that the Board of Education shall meet in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract issues.

Washington Township Board of Education

April 18, 2016 7:00 P.M.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the discussion of such subject matters in Executive Session will be disclosed to the public when the matter has been resolved, unless such is otherwise prohibited by law. Time: 8:35 P.M.

11. RESUME PUBLIC PORTION OF MEETING

A motion was made by Ms. Ford and seconded by Ms. Melita to return to public session at 9:29 P.M.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT (Dr. Thomas Baruffi, Interim Superintendent) upon recommendation of Superintendent:

A. Approve Extending the Current Send- Receive Relationship with the Mullica School District:

Approval of extending the current send-receive relationship with the Mullica Township School District to include, but not limited to, grades pre-K through eight

Motion by Ms. Lee and Seconded by Mr. Bartling to approve items 11A.

13. PUBLIC COMMENT

Michael Peronte, Lower Bank, thanked the Board and appreciates their decision.

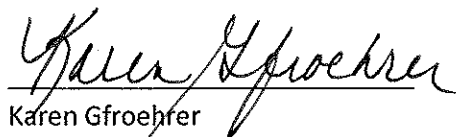
Barry Cavaleer, Washington Township Committeeman, thanked the Board. He acknowledged that this was not an easy decision.

Dudley Lewis, Mayor, thanked the Board for making a difficult decision.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Ms. Ford and seconded by Mr. Bartling to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Karen Gfroehrer
Board Secretary