

DEMAREST BOARD OF EDUCATION

MINUTES - COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE MEETING

September 9, 2014

I. OPENING

A. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. Board President's Announcement:

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon.

In accordance with the provisions of this Act, the Demarest Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time and place thereof posted at the Borough Hall and at the Middle School and by notifying in writing two newspapers: The Record and The Suburbanite.

C. President Holzberg led the flag salute.

D. Roll Call: Geisenheimer, Geller, Kirtane, Verna, Woods and Holzberg were present. Molina was absent.

II. PRESENTATION OF REFENDUM OPTION ANALYSIS

Mr. Fox presented a PowerPoint presentation of a Referendum Option Analysis created from a recent Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting. The presentation consisted of four options. The Committee's recommendation is to eliminate Options 1 and 2 and focus on Options 3A, 3B and 4.

Option 3A proposes to invest approximately \$1,000,000 at County Road School for improvements to the facility.

Option 3B proposes to add four classrooms at the Luther Lee Emerson School, which would house the fourth graders. Existing classrooms would be reassigned. This option would improve safety by creating access to Belmar Street and expanding the upper parking area. Water concerns would also be addressed. The estimated cost for this option is \$3,000,000.

Option 4 proposes to construct a new gymnasium at Demarest Middle School allowing for repurposing the current gym for cultural arts, music, STEM and other educational programs.

Following Mr. Fox's presentation, the board spoke about the Buildings and Grounds Committee recommendations. The board concluded they were not interested in Options 1 or 2. President Holzberg polled the board and all members agreed to continue research of Options 3 and 4. The Referendum Option Analysis will be placed on the district web site for the community.

III. BOARD DISCUSSION AND REVIEW

A. Instruction – Staffing

1. Approve substitute(s).
2. Remove substitute.
3. Approve movement on the guide.
4. Approve soccer stipend position.
5. Approve extended FMLA leave of absence.

*III. BOARD DISCUSSION AND REVIEW (Continued)***B. Instruction – Pupil Programs**

1. Approve tuition contract with Northvale Board of Education.
2. Approve tuition contracts with NVRHS Board of Education.
3. Approve tuition contracts with Closter Board of Education.
4. Confirm non-resident students, pending domicile.

C. Support Services – Staffing

1. Confirm employment of aide for Student ID 5019762465 attending Closter Pre-School.
2. Approve employment of aide at LLE.

D. Support Services – Board of Education

1. Approve the 2014/2015 Nursing Plan and submit to the County Office.
2. Approve Memorandum of Agreement with Demarest Police Department.
3. Approve application for Project Learning Trees Green Works.

E. Support Services – Fiscal Management

1. Confirm payroll.
2. Approve August bills.
3. Confirm August budget transfers.
4. Approve Certification of Board Secretary.
5. Approve Certification of Board of Education.
6. Acknowledge receipt of A-148 and A-149 Reports.

F. Other

1. Schedule Executive Session Meeting at 5:30 p.m. on October 14, 2014 to discuss personnel and/or legal matters.
2. Reschedule Committee-of-the-Whole Meeting to begin at 6:00 p.m. on October 14, 2014 for presentation by NJ School Boards Association on the Demarest Board of Education Self-Evaluation and 2014/2015 Board Goals.
3. Schedule Executive Session Meeting at 6:30 p.m. on October 21, 2014 to discuss personnel and/or legal matters.

IV. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

A. It was moved by Geisenheimer, seconded by Woods and approved by unanimous voice vote to open the meeting to public discussion.

1. Mrs. Hayden of Prescott St. stated she assumed that the four classroom addition to Luther Lee Emerson School would be for special education students.

- Mr. Fox replied that the four classrooms would accommodate the current 4th grade classes, allowing the reassignment of existing classrooms in the building, which would include special education instruction spaces.

IV. PUBLIC DISCUSSION (Continued)

2. Mr. Abbate of Lenox Ave. asked when Option 1 was on the table with Kindergarten and 1st grade in the new wing, what was being reallocated?

Mr. Fox explained realigning the classrooms.

3. Mr. Bernstein of Van Horn St. expressed he was glad Option 1 has been eliminated from consideration. He commented the board should work with the borough council on traffic and access to Belmar Street. He also offered that possibly the board should split the referendum question into 2 questions.

President Holzberg replied the board hasn't determined the referendum questions yet but information on the Ad Hoc Committee and discussions of a possible project have been in the Chalkboard Newsletters since 2012. She also noted that M. Montagne, Borough Councilmember, was on the Ad Hoc Committee.

4. Mrs. Desi of Stewart St. commented that we have decreased enrollment and she disagrees with building a community center.

5. Mr. Miller of Maple Ave. stated we need to look at the needs of the community. Classrooms are exploding. He advised the board to look long term.

6. Mrs. Abbate of Lenox Ave. questioned how many students are in each classroom.

Mr. Fox indicated between 16 and 24, depending on the subject.

7. Mrs. Heenan of Knickerbocker Rd. questioned the need for four more classrooms.

Mr. Fox attempted to explain the need.

8. Mr. Gdalevich of Lenox Ave. spoke about the building square footage and current enrollment at County Road and Luther Lee Emerson Schools.

9. Mr. Rifkin of County Road commented that he could not afford \$400-450 in additional taxes per year for construction. He stated that education only increases home value to a point.

10. Mr. Cuomo of Brookside Ave. made comments comparing the district's budget with those of surrounding towns and noted that Demarest has no ratables.

11. Mr. Reinke of John St. stated he is open minded based on Mr. Fox's presentation. We have superlative administrators. Our children should be able to come attend school in their home town.

12. Mrs. Jacobsen of Orchard Rd. commented she chose Demarest because it's a small town. The district goes above and beyond. They have provided the best education for our children.

13. Dr. Stanzione of Prescott St. commented it is difficult in every school. She questioned the rental of the two classrooms to the Valley Program and why they aren't used for Demarest students.

President Holzberg tried to respond about the need for the four additional classrooms at Luther Lee Emerson School. They will be utilized by our students, not rented.

14. Ms. Hayden of Prescott St. stated she is concerned about traffic. She said she understands the need for quality education but warned to be careful about excessiveness.

15. Mr. Cywinski of County Rd. questioned the boards' communication methods. He asked if we have gone to Belmar Street residents and stated that the borough has not received information. He also opined that Options 3 and 4 should be separate votes.

President Holzberg stated that the discussion has been ongoing. Mary Montagne, Borough Councilmember, was on the Ad Hoc Committee and could have shared the discussions and report with the borough council. The board has also reported several times in the Chalkboard newsletter about the process and the board's investigation into improving our schools.

IV. PUBLIC DISCUSSION (Continued)

16. Mr. McKenley of Woodland Road stated the board should address the educational and recreational needs. This is more about education. He hopes the board picks the right option since he would like to stay in Demarest.

17. A resident stated there is nothing wrong with the current middle school gym and feels it doesn't need to be bigger.

18. Mr. Lazarus of Bogert Rd. commented the current middle school gym is inadequate for basketball. It is about two thirds the size of the gym at LLE. Increased education space for our students is necessary. Property values will go down without the improvements.

19. Mrs. Cardinale of Hardenburgh Ave. commented the size of the middle school gym isn't a deterrent. Demarest is famous for its learning but taxes are outrageous as they are now.

20. Mr. Abbate of Lenox Ave. thanked the board for the open meeting and stated he was glad they are reviewing the community feedback. He said he is pro-education and he got excited about closing CRS and adding 12 rooms to LLE. He said to consider upgrading CRS rather than adding to LLE.

21. Mr. Cuomo of Brookside Ave. commented the board should add the mayor and residents to review the project. He questioned the value of bringing our students back to the district and stated the Community Center doesn't make sense.

22. Ms. Hayden of Prescott St. stated she would not like to see Option 3A go to Option 1. The gym is not the focus.

President Holzberg commented that she understood. She said she lives near Northern Valley Regional High School and must deal with noise and cars on a regular basis.

23. Mr. Cuomo of Brookside Ave. said to not forget this referendum is in addition to the \$7 million for NVRHS.

24. Ms. Hayden of Prescott St. stated she has a lot of questions about the 7,000 square foot gymnasium. She asked if this is another way to get rental income. She said she would not vote for it.

25. Mr. Connelly of Serpentine Rd. would like to see total enrollments and the kids are benefitting.

26. Mr. Cywinski of County Rd. stated we are increasing areas of curriculum; where are you decreasing programs?

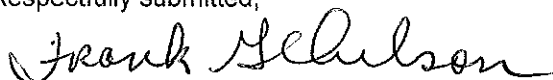
President Holzberg recapped the evening and directed the Buildings and Grounds Committee to continue their investigation into Options 3 and 4 including the educational program needs for four additional classrooms and to report back to the full board.

B. It was moved by Geisenheimer, seconded by Woods and approved by unanimous voice vote to close the meeting to public discussion.

V. ADJOURNMENT

1. It was moved by Kirtane, seconded by Verna and approved by unanimous voice vote to adjourn at 9:16 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Frank G. Chilson
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary