

Borough of Jamesburg

Special Council Meeting

Minutes - May 6, 2008 - 6:00PM

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00pm - Mayor LaMantia called the meeting to order and announced that the same is being held pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act of 1974 and all provisions of the Act have been met. Any contracts awarded tonight or between tonight and the next meeting require the contractor to comply with P.L. 1975. In the event of a fire and pursuant to the N.J. Uniform Fire Code, members of the audience were requested to take notice of the exits.

FLAG SALUTE: Led by Mayor LaMantia

ROLL CALL: Those Present: Mayor LaMantia
Council President Kostbar
Council member Carpenter
Council member Grimes – *arrived at 6:02pm*
Council member Jennings
Council member Longo
Denise Jawidzik, Business Administrator

Those Absent: Council member Bodall

DISCUSSION: 2008-2009 Board of Education Budget

Mayor LaMantia gave the floor to Don Peterson, Board of Education President. Mr. Peterson spoke regarding the low voter turnout and addressed the matter of past years having flat or decreased budgets, which he feels has done an injustice to the students, by not giving them additional services. The number of ESL (English as a Second Language) students has risen to 41 from 22 last year, which adds to test grades being low. Should test grades not improve, Jamesburg could become a "district in need of improvement", whereby the State would step in and mandate certain action(s) be taken, the cost of which would take away from existing programs. Jamesburg has strengths in every area except test scores. Over the years, Art & Music programs have come and gone due to budgetary constraints. Mr. Peterson spoke regarding negotiations with Monroe Township Board of Education for tuition for High School students, cost per pupil expenditure compared to State average, and the restructuring of the Boards debt. Compared to County averages, teachers and administration are underpaid. Computer systems require constant investment. The school district is making improvements – recently the 5th grade has shown dramatic improvement in test scores.

Superintendent, Dr. Verona, informed Council that the JFK School is being recognized on the New 12 New Jersey television station, confirming the strides being made. Dr. Verona reported that when she arrived, the arts programs and curriculum were deficient. This "bare bones" budget includes funding for administration software to centralize data and assist with necessary State reports. A free pilot program is being started in the kindergarten, but textbooks will need to be purchased to continue the program. Jamesburg is doing its best to align with Monroe programs to facilitate transition for students to the High School. Dr. Verona also spoke regarding the purchase of new laptops in order to keep up with technology.

Patrice Faraone, member of the Board of Education and the Jamesburg representative to Monroe Township's Board of Education, spoke of her upset of the budget being defeated by only 29 votes. Mrs. Faraone informed Council that Monroe will be performing an inservice for Jamesburg in order to assist the kids heading into Monroe Schools.

Council member Carpenter inquired about a stipend shown in the budget. Mr. Peterson and Mrs. Faraone explained that it is common for "confidential employees" to be paid a stipend when assisting with the numerous State reports, requiring more work hours. Council member Grimes stated that he feels that something must be cut from the budget, adhering to what the voters want. Mr. Grimes made suggestion for at least a 1 cent cut. Mr. Grimes made further suggestion for a lease of laptops instead of outright purchase. Debate ensued between Mr. Grimes and Mr. Peterson regarding purchase vs. lease of the computers, as well as warranties and programs. Council member Longo spoke regarding the number of votes causing the defeat of the budget, stating that citizens are angry and he feels that this was one place they could express that. Mr. Longo expressed agreement with the idea of lease-purchasing. Also agrees that a 1 cent cut should be made to the budget. Council member Kostbar reminded Council that a specific line item to be decreased is to be recommended in the Resolution setting the tax levy. Mayor LaMantia stated that he does not believe in lease purchasing. The Mayor also feels that the Board of Education could have better informed the public about their budget, as well as the Borough Council

regarding the loss of aid causing the budget increase. The Mayor also spoke to the need to better test scores, which if not done, is a detriment to the town as a whole.

Dr. Verona left the meeting at this time.

Council member Jennings stated that he will vote considering what is best for the children of this community. Council member Kostbar stated that when he initially heard that the budget was voted down, he thought that a cut would need to be made. After the numerous hours spent with the budget, Council member Kostbar raised concern about cuts and suggested that next year, the Board of Education make presentation to the Council prior to the budget election for all involved to be better informed. After review by the Finance Committee, Mr. Kostbar recommends no decreases be made to this budget. Council discussed the level of specificity required to be in the budget resolution. Upon inquiry by Council member Kostbar, the Board of Education representatives described the "N.J. Single Quality Assurance Act" monitoring done. Council member Grimes spoke regarding the lost aid funding and when the Board of Education informed Council of the loss of aid. Council member Grimes also expressed his displeasure at not being included in the Finance Committee's review of the Board of Education budget.

Mayor LaMantia called for a motion on the Resolution recommended by the Finance Committee.

RESOLUTION #130-05-06-08

RESOLUTION CERTIFYING THE GENERAL FUND TAX LEVY FOR THE JAMESBURG BOARD OF EDUCATION FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 2008-2009, BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE BOROUGH OF JAMESBURG, COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY

WHEREAS, THE VOTERS OF THE BOROUGH OF JAMESBURG IN A DULY HELD ELECTION, DID FAIL TO APPROVE THE GENERAL FUND TAX LEVY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE BOROUGH OF JAMESBURG FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 2008-2009; AND

WHEREAS, THE EDUCATION, BUDGETS AND APPROPRIATIONS LAW, N.J.S.A. 28a-22-37, REQUIRES THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE BOROUGH OF JAMESBURG, AFTER CONSULTATION WITH THE JAMESBURG BOARD OF EDUCATION, TO DETERMINE THE AMOUNT WHICH IS NECESSARY TO BE APPROPRIATED IN SUCH BUDGET AND TO CERTIFY TO THE COUNTY BOARD OF TAXATION THE TOTAL AMOUNT SO DETERMINED; AND

WHEREAS, THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE BOROUGH OF JAMESBURG HAS CONSULTED WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE JAMESBURG BOARD OF EDUCATION, AND HAS THEREAFTER DETERMINED THE AMOUNT NECESSARY TO BE APPROPRIATED;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE BOROUGH OF JAMESBURG, COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, THAT THE FOLLOWING DETERMINATION IS HEREBY MADE:

- 1. THE ORIGINAL TAX LEVY ON THE BALLOT FOR THE BASE BUDGET: \$6,547,012
- 2. THE AMOUNT OF REDUCTION TO THE TAX LEVY FOR THE BASE BUDGET: -0-
- 3. THE AMOUNT OF TAX LEVY BEING CERTIFIED FOR THE BASE BUDGET: \$6,547,012
- 4. SPECIFIC LINE ITEM REDUCTIONS: NONE

COUNCIL	MOTION	SECOND	AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
BODALL						X
CARPENTER			X			
GRIMES				X		
JENNINGS		X	X			
KOSTBAR	X		X			
LONGO				X		
MAYOR LAMANTIA						

Although a public comment period was listed on the agenda, no members of the public were present, therefore no motion was made to open to public comment.

TIME OF ADJOURNMENT: 7:00 pm