

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL ESTIMATE
PUBLIC MEETING
HELD THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 2008 AT 6:00 P.M.
22 VALLEY ROAD, MONTCLAIR, NEW JERSEY

I. The meeting was opened at 6:15 p.m. and the following statement was read:

Let the minutes reflect that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in the following manner:

1. On March 26, 2008 notice of this meeting was faxed to the Montclair Times, the Herald and News and the Star-Ledger. The time, date and location of this meeting were accurately set forth therein.

2. On this same date a copy of said notice was filed with the Township Clerk and was posted at the public bulletin board in the first floor main hall of the Board of Education building, 22 Valley Road.

3. Copies have also been mailed to all persons who have requested same at no cost.

II. The Pledge of Allegiance occurred at 6:16 p.m.

III. ROLL CALL OF THE BOARD

	Present	Absent
Ed Remsen	<u> X </u>	_____
Jerold Freier	<u> X </u>	_____
Gerald Tobin	<u> X </u>	_____
Shelly Lombard	<u> X </u>	_____
Timothy Barr	<u> X </u>	_____
Staff Members Present	6	
Members of the Public	25	
Members of the Press	0	

IV. Discussion by BSE Members regarding 2008-2009 Budget

Mayor Remsen asked for comments from members of the Board of Education.

Timothy Barr stated that since the first version of the budget was presented, he felt that this was a fair and reasonable presentation and felt comfortable in supporting the budget.

Mayor Ed Remsen made the following comments:

He was going to support the budget but that up to a couple of hours prior, he had some uncertainty in supporting the budget.

The budget was not where he would have liked it to be dollar wise but was substantially less than the original proposed budget, which he had hoped would have been lower to start.

He was happy that he, as well as others, had an opportunity to receive comments which resulted in reductions to the budget.

It was hard for him to say that the budget was status quo with the amount of dollar increase.

While it is true the list of new items was minimal, the budget had to make up for lost revenue from the state.

The increase in tax levy was brought down from the original 7.2% to 4.8%.

To bring the tax levy down further would require an additional \$700,000 to \$800,000 in reductions.

The Board will have difficult choices to make, such as:

- new contract negotiations
- keeping salaries in line with other districts in the county
- dealing with difficult economic times

The Chinese alternative program might have been postponed.

The Board of School Estimate has an obligation to the taxpayers to adopt a fair and accurate budget. They must keep a sharper eye on what is essential in the budget and this resulted in \$1.6 million in total reductions.

Gerald Tobin stated that the Board of School Estimate had some reductions to the budget and questioned whether they should be presented now. He noted that this has been a very difficult process since they had to weigh the teaching side with the tax rate increase for homeowners. He stated that the Board of School of Estimate, after listening to comments and after much discussion, is requesting an additional reduction of \$275,000. Gerald Tobin noted that the cuts would not come from the separate proposal but, at the current time, would be a reduction of \$150,000 in health benefits and \$125,000 in instructional aides. Mr. Tobin stated that the tax levy increase would be 4.8%, down from the original 7.2%. He questioned Dana Sullivan as to what the tax impact would be on a homeowner.

Dana Sullivan responded that the homeowner would see an average of a \$390 increase with a 4.8% tax rate increase versus approximately \$500 from the original 7.2% tax rate increase.

Gerald Tobin stated that the Board of School Estimate worked very hard, listened to both sides and looked at areas to make cuts that were least harmful to the school system.

Dana Sullivan distributed a new resolution to adopt the budget with the \$275,000 additional reductions.

Dana Sullivan stated that the tax levy for the base budget would be \$91,697,071; the tax levy for the separate proposal would be \$1,308,881 for a total tax levy of \$93,005,952.

Shirley Grill, Board of Education Member, thanked everyone for their hard work. She stated that she has renewed her faith in the process and that the process does work. Ms. Grill noted that an increase is never wanted but felt that the Board did a great job in very difficult economic times.

Jerold Freier stated that the increase in spending for the schools is going to be 4.43% and that this represents built in increases in salaries, fuel and maintaining quality schools. Mr. Freier commended the superintendent and staff for a great job done in finding ways/areas to make cuts and still fund high priority programs etc. Mr. Freier noted that with a few thousand dollars more, more teachers or programs could be added but unfortunately with high taxes and increased property taxes, this would be a hardship on homeowners.

Mr. Freier wanted the School Board to know that he appreciated all they have done and continue to do to operate schools successfully.

V. Discussion by BSE Members regarding 2008-2009 Capital Budget

Mayor Ed Remsen asked if the capital budget had changed.

Dana Sullivan responded that the capital budget had not changed and was \$5,141,200 plus bonding costs.

VI. Resolution Re: Acknowledge Receipt of Certificate from the Montclair Board of Education to the Montclair Board of School Estimate Relating to the 2008-2009 Operating Budget

Mayor Ed Remsen moved to acknowledge receipt of this certificate.

Seconded by Gerald Tobin and approved by a roll call vote

	<u>Aye</u>	<u>Nay</u>
Ed Remsen	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Jerold Freier	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Gerald Tobin	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Shelly Lombard	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Timothy Barr	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>

VII. Action on Proposed Board of School Estimate Resolution Re: Adoption of 2008-2009 Budget

Gerald Tobin moved the following resolution:

WHEREAS, NJSA Title 18A:22-14 requires that the Board of School Estimate fix and determine by official action the amount of money necessary to be appropriated for the use of the public schools in the district for ensuing year and,

WHEREAS, NJAC 6:19-5.2 requires that if the amount of money appropriated by the board of school estimate is less than the amount proposed by the board of education, the board of school estimate shall present to the board of education, the governing body and the county superintendent a statement of the specific line-item reductions made by the board of school estimate, along with a certification that the board of school estimate has reviewed the budget proposed by the board of education and deems the revised budget sufficient for provision of a thorough and efficient system of education and that the reductions will not adversely affect the stability of the district given the need for long term planning and budgeting,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Montclair Board of School Estimate, after careful study and due deliberation, does hereby approve a FY 2008-2009 school district budget, as follows: Ninety-One Million, Six Hundred Ninety-Seven Thousand, Seventy-One Dollars (\$91,697,071), for a base budget

plus an additional One Million, Three Hundred Eight Thousand, Eight Hundred Eighty-One Dollars (\$1,308,881) for the separate proposal for the 2008-2009 school year, for a total tax levy of Ninety-Three Million, Five Thousand, Nine Hundred Fifty-Two Dollars (\$93,005,952). The tax levy funds designated for the separate proposal (Attachment A) will be used exclusively to fund the separate proposal specifically for achievement, school security, arts and community based programs. These proposed additional expenditures are not required by law and are in addition to those necessary to achieve the Core Curriculum Content Standards, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of School Estimate does hereby certify said amount to the governing body of the Township of Montclair pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:22-19, and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Secretary is hereby instructed to prepare two certificates of this action, one to be sent to the Board of Education of the Township of Montclair, and the other to the Council of the Township of Montclair.

Seconded by Timothy Barr and approved by a roll call vote.

	<u>Aye</u>	<u>Nay</u>
Ed Remsen	<u> X </u>	_____
Jerold Freier	<u> X </u>	_____
Gerald Tobin	<u> X </u>	_____
Shelly Lombard	<u> X </u>	_____
Timothy Barr	<u> X </u>	_____

VIII. Resolution Re: Acknowledge Receipt of Certificate from the Montclair Board of Education to the Montclair Board of School Estimate Relating to the 2008-2009 Authorization of School Bonds for Capital Purposes

Jerold Freier moved to acknowledge receipt of this certificate.

Seconded by Shelly Lombard and approved by a roll call vote

	<u>Aye</u>	<u>Nay</u>
Ed Remsen	<u> X </u>	_____
Jerold Freier	<u> X </u>	_____
Gerald Tobin	<u> X </u>	_____
Shelly Lombard	<u> X </u>	_____
Timothy Barr	<u> X </u>	_____

IX. Action on Proposed Board of School Estimate Resolution Re: Authorization of School Bonds for Capital Purposes

Jerold Freier moved the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has submitted a request for capital funds for school purposes pursuant to NJSA Title 18A:22-18, and

WHEREAS, said purposes relate to raising funds for roofing replacement at various schools, energy conservation and environmental projects district-wide, site improvements district-wide, furniture and equipment in various schools; technology upgrade and district-wide building modifications, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has estimated the cost thereof of Five Million, One Hundred Forty-One Thousand, Two Hundred Dollars (\$5,141,200) (attached), plus Section 20 costs of Two Hundred Five Thousand, Six Hundred Forty-Eight Dollars (\$205,648) related to the issuance of bonds, and

WHEREAS, the projects requested meet the standards for capital projects pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18:A-21-1, and

WHEREAS, the projects are included in the district's Long-Range Facility Plan that was previously submitted to the New Jersey State Department of Education,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that after careful study and due deliberation, the Board of School Estimate does hereby fix and determine the amount to be raised as Five Million, Three Hundred Forty-Six Thousand, Eight Hundred Forty-Eight Dollars (\$5,346,848), including Section 20 costs related to the issuance of bonds, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of School Estimate does authorize funding for the local share needed to complete these projects. The local share will be calculated as the total estimated cost of the project less the amount of state funds that will be provided for these projects as determined by the New Jersey Department of Education, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of School Estimate does hereby certify said amount to the governing body of the Township of Montclair pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:22-19, and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Secretary is hereby instructed to prepare two certificates of this action, one to be sent to the Board of Education of the Township of Montclair, and the other to the Council of the Township of Montclair.

Seconded by Shelly Lombard and approved by a roll call vote.

	<u>Aye</u>	<u>Nay</u>
Ed Remsen	<u>X</u>	_____
Jerold Freier	<u>X</u>	_____
Gerald Tobin	<u>X</u>	_____
Shelly Lombard	<u>X</u>	_____
Timothy Barr	<u>X</u>	_____

X. Meeting Open to Public

Mary Beth Rosenthal – PTA Council - thanked everyone who worked very hard on the budget process and appreciated their time and effort.

Jerold Freier thanked Mary Beth Rosenthal and the PTA Council for having a continuing commitment to the schools. Mr. Freier noted that the amount of extra dollars raised by the PTA is appreciated that is one of the reasons Montclair is within the top 100 school systems.

Mary Beth Rosenthal stated that the PTA will continue to support and work with the Town Council and Board of Education.

Dennis Murray – MEA – wanted to express his appreciation on behalf of the MEA for a job well done. He stated that he knows how difficult the job gets each year and he values the process of how a final decision is achieved.

Tom Parente – 24 Glenridge Parkway – wanted to thank the Board of School Estimate and the Board of Education for the addition of a strings teacher. Mr. Parente stated how important a part music plays in education and hopes that this is a first step in bringing the district in line with other surrounding districts.

Joanne Aidala – 95 Montclair Avenue – Director of Health and Wellness Program – expressed her thanks for keeping the program in the budget. Ms. Aidala committed to continue working to make the direct link between health and academic success for all students.

Gerald Tobin thanked everyone who attended meetings and/or made any comments or suggestions. He stated that all input was appreciated and suggested that the public be critical of any new or existing programs so that an analysis of each program can be made.

Shirley Grill – Member of Board of Education – thanked everyone for all their efforts. Ms. Grill responded to Mr. Tobin that the evaluation of programs are made at Board of Education meetings and would invite everyone to attend these meetings.

Dr. Frank Alvarez thanked the Board of School Estimate for supporting the budget. He also reminded everyone that programs are evaluated at Board of Education meetings.

Dr. Alvarez re-stated that \$1.6 million was cut from the budget last year and that through consolidation of areas and efficiencies, another \$1.6 million was cut this year. Dr. Alvarez stated that this was not an easy task and thanked everyone for their support. Dr. Alvarez thanked Dana Sullivan for all her work and effort in building and presenting the budget.

Cary Africk -2 Erwin Place – former member of the JCIA - emphasized that if the Board of School Estimate meetings were moved to 205 Claremont Avenue, more community members could be involved in this process since the meetings could be video taped.

Mr. Africk also would like to see more gifted education programs in the budget.

Mr. Africk stated that he felt more discussion should have been presented regarding the \$500,000 for the Glenfield classroom expansion.

XI. Adjournment

At 6:50 p.m. Jerold Freier moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Gerald Tobin and approved by a vote of 5-0.