
**The Somerset Hills School District
PUBLIC INPUT & ACTION MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 22, 2010**

Call to Order

The Public Input & Action meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. by Mrs. Coons, President.

Welcome

Welcome to a meeting of the Board of Education of Somerset Hills. Please be advised that this and all meetings of the Board are open to the public and media, consistent with the Open Public Meetings Act: (Chapter 231 Laws of 1975), and that advance notice required therein has been provided. This is a regular meeting of the Board of Education of Somerset Hills at which formal action may be taken. The public will have an opportunity to be heard as shown on the Agenda.

Roll Call**Present**

Robert Baker
Donna Coons
John Dorr
Deborah Hawkins
Linda Kragie
Karen McMahan
Nancy Palazzolo
Louis Palma
Alice Rose *arrived 8:30 p.m.
Lauriann Swadba

Absent**Also Present**

Peter Miller
Nancy Lee Hunter
Barbara Walls

Pledge of Allegiance**Correspondence**

None

Report of the Superintendent

1. Presentation of 2010-2011 School Budget

Mr. Dorr introduced the 2010/2011 School Budget. Mr. Dorr explained that ordinarily we would be introducing the budget in February but we were unable to do so because there was no state aid information. The formal budget hearing will be held on Wednesday, March 24, 2010. Mr. Dorr thanked the Finance Committee and Administration for their efforts. He stated that this was an extremely difficult budget because there is no relief in the economic situation and State aid has been cut drastically. He explained that we need to have a balance between parents, teachers, students and taxpayers.

Mr. Miller presented the details on the loss of State aid and the late notice of such loss from the State. Somerset Hills lost 100% of its general fund State aid. The proposed budget is capped at 2.85%. Mr. Miller stressed that a defeated budget is not an option because all three of our borough councils would need to agree on the amount

by which to further reduce our budget. If they fail to agree, the Department of Education has an opportunity to reduce our budget even further.

Mr. Miller continued that our focus in preparing the 2010/2011 School Budget has been to keep our excellent educational programs intact and to make expense reductions wherever possible, i.e. energy costs.

Mrs. Coons mentioned that the Board asked the Somerset Hills Educational Association to consider opening the contract. We do not have a response as of yet. Mrs. Coons also stated that we will need to look at other areas of cost reduction for the 2011/2012 School Budget.

Public Questions & Comments

Members of the public commented on the 2010/2011 budget regarding pension monies, benefits, salary increases and offered suggestions as to where the district could save money regarding staff members and sports. There was discussion on staff reductions, retirements, class size and busing.

Adjournment

Ms. Kragie made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m. Mrs. Hawkins seconded the motion, which was passed by unanimous vote of 10-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Lee Hunter
Board Secretary