

The May 14, 2010 Special Meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Mayor Petillo, in the Municipal Building, 111 River Styx Road, Hopatcong, NJ.

Mayor Petillo announced this meeting is held in accordance with the 1975 Open Public Meetings Act, NJSA 10:4-6 et seq., special notice having been forwarded to the New Jersey Herald/New Jersey Sunday Herald, the Daily Record, The Star Ledger, and posted on the bulletin board maintained in the Municipal Building for public announcements.

ROLL CALL: Present –Mayor Petillo, Howard Baker, Richard Bunce (arrived at 4:52 p.m.), Mike Francis, Marie Galate, Madeline McManus, & John Young. Others present: Administrator Catherine Steinel & Clerk Lorraine Stark.

#### MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Petillo reported that the School Superintendent Dr. Maranzano was present this evening.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Meeting open to public for comments.

A resident questioned why regionalization of the school was not being discussed; she believed that this was a viable way to save money and wouldn't affect education. She pointed out that the Board of Education website did not address this issue. Mayor Petillo remarked that the governing body does not control the School Board; they are the ones that shape the education. The governing body only makes recommendations. Mayor Petillo informed those present that the meeting with the School Board was amicable; there was an understanding between both groups. Mike Kelly revealed that he has spoken with 61 other students taking German, and they indicated to him that they would very much like to finish their German curriculum; they cannot afford to pay for on-line courses. Mayor Petillo noted that this program was cut prior to the School Election.

Alex McLean a resident from West Shore Avenue said that his wife received a pink slip; she worked in the High School. He remarked that there are other areas in town where we are spending money; the tax burden has become increasingly difficult to raise children in this community. He asked the governing body to take a look at the Municipal Budget especially the Police and Dispatch Services. Mr. McLean stated that he identified 17 positions in the School Budget that does not affect teachers; "cut what doesn't impact the education of our children". He noted that Capital Project were in the Municipal Budget that could be deferred; he offered his services to the governing body to review and make adjustments to the budget. He wants to see the money put back into the classroom.

Barbara Warren resides on Ithanell Road and as a former educator for 33 years she experienced a wage freeze; she is passionate about the Hopatcong Schools and hopes that the teachers would re-consider taking a salary freeze to save some of their colleagues. She noted that there are no jobs available and these individuals would become unemployed. (Councilperson Bunce arrived at 4:52 p.m.) Mayor Petillo said that teachers gave up a total of \$90,000, which was for re-imbusement and classroom expenditures.

Mike Purdue reported that he was an educator in the Hopatcong system that was laid off last year. He stated that in good conscience he couldn't asked the teachers to take a pay freeze. Mr. Purdue said to tax him, don't cut the schools. He spoke about his daughter's success as a graduate of Hopatcong Schools; he wants the School Board to address teacher's contracts and salary levels. He told the governing body that they have the option to support the school budget; we have borrowed from our children's future.

Councilmember McManus commented that as a former teacher she knows the Salary Guide and that most of the money went to new teachers and to protect health benefits.

Councilperson Bunce moved to close public comment period, seconded by McManus. Those present voted affirmative.

Mayor Petillo read the resolution and provided an explanation of the cuts, which were being recommended; these reductions came outside the classroom and programs. Resolution - #212-10 Approve the Adoption of the 2010-2011 Certification School Tax Levy, recommended budget cuts in the amount of \$730,000, moved by Francis, seconded by Bunce. Roll Call Vote: **YES** - Francis, Bunce, Galate, McManus, Young & Baker.

Public comments: Frank Pedula, a former member of the Hopatcong Board of Education, commented that he has to look at the total budget, and that he couldn't guarantee who would be cut; there is a potential for losing more teachers and programs. The governing body only makes recommendations, the final decision rests with the School Board and a lot of dynamics are involved with running a school district.

Mary Davis a resident from 7 Walton Way remarked that she received a RIF letter, she is in favor of a salary freeze because she is there for the children. In addition, she is willing to be taxed instead of cutting the school budget.

Council President Francis moved to close open comment period, seconded by Young. The vote was unanimous.

Councilman Bunce moved to adjourn at 5:26 p.m., seconded by McManus. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted:

