

Toms River, New Jersey, May 7, 2024

A Budget Hearing of the Board of Education of the Toms River Regional Schools took place at High School North Media Center, 1245 Old Freehold Road, Toms River, on Tuesday, May 7, 2024 at 6:41 P.M.

Board President Ms. Kathy Eagan read the following Opening Statement:

“Good Evening, Welcome to a Budget Hearing of the Board of Education of the Toms River Regional Schools.”

“This meeting was announced to the public through a notice published in The Star Ledger and the Asbury Park Press on May 3, 2024, which constituted at least 48 hours notice as required by law under the Open Public Meetings Act.”

A roll call of attendance indicated the following Board Members were present: Mrs. Jennifer Howe, Mr. Kevin Kidney, Mrs. Ashley Lamb, Mrs. Melissa Morrison, Mrs. Paola Pascarella, Mrs. Anna Polozzo and Ms. Kathy Eagan.

Mr. James Capone was absent.

Mr. Joseph Nardini was absent.

Also in attendance were Superintendent Citta, Assistant Superintendents DiMeo, Ricotta, Thomas, Business Administrator Doering, Board Secretary Saxton, and Board Attorney Burns.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - 6:42 P.M.

A motion was made by Mrs. Lamb, seconded by Mr. Kidney and carried that the following Executive Session Resolution be approved:

Resolved, that the Board of Education, at this time, move to a closed session to be held in High School North Executive Session Meeting Room, 1245 Old Freehold Road, Toms River, New Jersey, for the purpose of:

Executive Session – To *Include* – Personnel; Legal/Litigation Update; Other.
Subject to change.

as outlined under the Open public Meetings Act.

RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION – 7:15 P.M.

A motion was made by Mrs. Howe, seconded by Mrs. Lamb and carried that the Board return to Regular Session at 7:15 P.M.

All members present voting Aye.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board President Ms. Kathy Eagan led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Superintendent Michael Citta stated our school budget hearing by statute and code, needs to be held by May 7, 2024, and the last day to vote on a balanced budget for the 2024/2025 school year is Tuesday, May 14, 2024. Business Administrator Mr. Bill Doering gave an overview of the 2024-2025 budget, which is also on our website, as we work toward a solution in our \$26.5 million dollar aid shortfall. Superintendent Citta stated the District is working with the Department of Education. We have provided a lot of documents, answered questions, and have gone through multiple checklists. Everything we have sent to the Department of Education has been through many different representatives who have looked at our proposed budget and our financial situation to make a determination of what we can cut, if anything, moving forward. As recent as last week, the County Business Administrator, submitted her report of the findings and discovered the exact same thing, Toms River Regional Schools is in need of \$26.5 million dollars. Superintendent Citta expressed his concern that the Board and school district cannot cut any more in Toms River and Superintendent Citta would not sign a budget that would not provide a thorough and efficient education for our students. Superintendent Citta was hopeful that there was an acknowledgment that Toms River Schools financial situation was created by many different factors over the course of many different years, and will continue to work with the Department of Education in order to come up with a solution.

MOTION TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 2024-2025 SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET

A motion was made by Mr. Kidney, seconded by Mrs. Polozzo and carried that the Motion to Open the Public Hearing on the 2024-2025 School District Budget be approved.

On roll call following the vote:

Ayes: Howe, Kidney, Lamb, Morrison, Pascarella, Polozzo, Eagan

Noes: None

Recused: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Capone, Nardini

COMMENTS FROM GUESTS AND PRESS – BUDGET HEARING ONLY

(limited to 3 minutes as per Board Policy # 0167 – Public Participation in Board Meetings)

Public comments were heard by Lisa Contessa.

Public comments were heard by Carlos Almanzar.

Public comments were heard by Aimee Hart.

MOTION TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 2024-2025 SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET

A motion was made by Mrs. Lamb, seconded by Mr. Kidney and carried that the Motion to Close the Public Hearing on the 2024-2025 School District Budget be approved.

On roll call following the vote:

Ayes: Howe, Kidney, Lamb, Morrison, Pascarella, Polozzo, Eagan

Noes: None

Recused: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Capone, Nardini

COMMENTS FROM GUESTS AND PRESS *(limited to 5 minutes as per Board Policy # 0167 – Public Participation in Board Meetings)*

None.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

A motion was made by Mrs. Lamb, seconded by Mrs. Polozzo and carried that the meeting be adjourned at 7:37 P.M.

All members present voting Aye.

Wendy L. Saxton, Board Secretary