

## **BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**

### **Borough of Manasquan**

*The Special Meeting of the Manasquan Board of Education was held in the Manasquan High School Auditorium, 167 Broad Street, Manasquan, New Jersey, on Thursday, December 12, 2013.*

*Mr. Bauer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and read the Opening Statement.*

#### **1. Call to Order**

Opening Statement: Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-10, notice of this meeting has been provided by publication in the Asbury Park Press, the Coast Star and posted in the Borough Hall of Manasquan and in the schools within the time limits prescribed by law.

Call to Order

*Mr. Bauer requested that everyone stand and join in the Pledge of Allegiance.*

#### **2. Pledge of Allegiance**

Pledge of Allegiance

#### **3. Roll Call**

*Julia Barnes (Brielle)*

*Linda DiPalma - Absent*

*Michael Shelton*

*Thomas Bauer*

*Mark Furey (Belmar) - Absent*

*Katherine Verdi*

*Jack Campbell*

*Michael Forrester (SLH) - Absent*

*James Walsh - Absent*

*Kenneth Clayton*

*Thomas Pellegrino*

*Patricia Walsh*

Roll Call

*Also Present: Renae LaPrete, Interim Superintendent of Schools; Dominic V. Carrea, Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary; Michael Gross, Board Attorney; Sandi Freeman, Recording Secretary.*

*Joyce Pegler, Student Representative – Absent*

*Mr. Bauer read the Mission Statement and Statement to the Public.*

#### **4. Mission Statement**

Manasquan School District's mission is to empower students to reach their potential and become life-long learners. We strive to ensure that students play an active role in their education, are guided by rigorous academic standards aligned with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards, and function within the community that regards student, educators, and parents as full participants in the educational process. We dedicate ourselves to the realization of a supportive learning environment that nurtures growth, personal integrity and mutual respect.

Mission Statement

#### **5. Statement to the Public**

Often times it may appear to members of our audience that the Board of Education takes action with very little comment and in many cases by unanimous vote. Before a matter is placed on the agenda at a public meeting, the administration has thoroughly reviewed the matter with the Superintendent of Schools. If the Superintendent of Schools is satisfied that the matter is ready to be presented to the Board of Education, it is then referred to the appropriate Board committee. The members of the Board committee work with the administration and the Superintendent of Schools to assure that the members fully understand the matter. When the committee is satisfied with the matter, it is presented to the Board of Education for discussion before any final action is taken. Only then is it placed on the agenda for action at a public meeting. In rare instances, matters are presented to the Board of Education for discussion at the same meeting that final action may be taken.

Statement to the Public

**6. Presentation**

**• Mr. Joseph Passiment, Executive County Superintendent of Schools  
Proposed Warrior Athletic Complex Plan – Questions and Answers**

Presentation

Warrior  
Athletic  
Complex

Joseph  
Passiment

*Mr. Bauer thanked the public for coming to this evening's meeting and reported that the main focus was a special presentation by Mr. Joe Passiment, the Executive County Superintendent. He thanked Mr. Passiment for coming to discuss the proposed Warrior Athletic Complex Plan. Mr. Bauer also introduced Andrea Kahn, who serves as the district's Bond Counsel from McManiman Scotland and Bauman, and Mr. Bob Allison, who will be arriving shortly, who serves as the district's Financial Advisor from Holman, Frenia and Allison.*

*Mr. Bauer turned the floor over to Mr. Passiment.*

*Mr. Passiment shared his thoughts and answered questions on the proposed Warrior Athletic Complex Plan. He provided details on the process and procedure that must be addressed by the district to receive approval by the State Department of Education. He stated that the Manasquan School District has gone through the proper procedures at this point and time. He said that he believes the project will be approved; however, he is not sure when the district will receive the approval, possibly sometime in January after the required timelines are met. Mr. Passiment commented that after receipt of approval the Board will have to decide how to pay for the project. Mr. Passiment also commented on the recently approved ROD grants and how local share funding of the awarded grants will be addressed by the district. He said that he wants to be sure that the projects meet all the tests, were submitted to the Office of School Facilities correctly, meet the objectives and have the financial backing to get it done.*

*He addressed questions from the public.*

*Michelle LaSala, 44 Parker Avenue, spoke on behalf of the Concerned Manasquan Taxpayers. She thanked Mr. Passiment for coming to the meeting and answering numerous correspondences sent to him and meeting with the group in September. She asked if the project fits the criteria requiring a referendum since it is a capital expenditure that falls outside of the district's operating budget. Mr. Passiment spoke of the numerous ways a project can be funded and stated that to his knowledge part of this project is already set aside in the current budget and the remainder of the project will need to be budgeted for through a referendum, capital project reserve if available or through a combination of things including lease purchase. Mr. Passiment also said that the district could utilize transfers of funds and the opportunity to move money into capital reserve. Mr. Passiment said the district would need permission from his office if transfers were needed over 10%. Mr. Passiment clarified that OSF approval would lead to the bidding phase. Mr. Passiment expanded on what areas could be addressed through lease purchase. He said the turf, bleachers and lights could be leased purchase but it was his opinion that the construction costs cannot be leased purchased and are biddable items.*

*Marilyn Jacobson, 59 McLean Avenue, Manasquan, expressed her concerns with the fact that the sending districts do not participate in funding of capital improvements only the interest on any loan or the maintenance after it is built. She commented that the state needs to change this situation because it is putting an undue burden on the taxpayers of Manasquan.*

*Heather Garrett-Muly, 28 Elizabeth Avenue, Manasquan, asked if there was another option that could allow for the sending districts to contribute to the project. Ms. Andrea Kahn addressed this question and provided details of the process involved in charging the sending districts for the principal of the plan. Ms. Kahn further stated that if they do not agree and the project went to referendum then only the Manasquan taxpayers would bear the principal costs. Ms. Kahn pointed out the difference in the process for a lease-purchase. Mrs. Garrett-Muly asked if the cost could be included in the sending district tuition if the plan was a maintenance project to improve the*

existing field. Ms. Kahn replied that if funded through the budget it could be passed off in the tuition but if funded through borrowing of any sort you must get their approval.

Jeannie Walsh, 356 Cedar Avenue, Manasquan, said her husband is a member of the Board but she is speaking on her own behalf. She expressed concern with the funding being put out over a 5 year period without knowledge of any unknown expenses. She asked what percentage or dollar figure out of the budget can be used and also stated that she did not want the ROD grants being used for the field. Mr. Passiment explained that the ROD grants relate to very specific projects and were approved based on the nature of the projects. He further explained the process involved in financing the remainder of the costs over and above the awarded grant amounts. He clarified that the state approval for the Warrior Athletic Project was for the plan only and not the method of funding.

Carl Straub, Willow Way, Manasquan, commented that he has always been puzzled by the sending/receiving relationship and asked for details of other districts with similar sending/receiving relationships with regard to balance in terms of size, successful large capital projects, and referenda. Mr. Passiment addressed his question and provided information relating to other districts. He confirmed that there are other districts similar to the configuration at Manasquan with the sending districts making up the larger percentage of students. Mr. Passiment addressed his question on whether there are examples of other sending districts paying for capital improvements and replied affirmatively. Mr. Passiment commented that it is going to be a salesman's job because the sending districts are getting the benefit for what the taxpayers of Manasquan are paying for.

Julia Barnes provided details of the costs incurred by Brielle to send its students to Manasquan. She pointed out that they have no choice as a sending district and cannot go anywhere else. She said Brielle has allocated millions of dollars through tuition paid to Manasquan and Brielle deserves something for those millions.

Mr. Straub commented on the good selling job that has been provided by members on the Board but he feels the sending districts are not buying the sales pitch. He also commented that the project has not been fully described in terms of concrete cost estimates so how can we count on funds being available over the next five years. Mr. Passiment commented that the only way districts can maintain its facilities is through reserve accounts. Mr. Straub also questioned if any other sending/receiving districts provide property for field use. Mr. Passiment answered affirmatively, but said that this is up to the individual towns. Mr. Straub commented on the plan of moving the varsity baseball team onto the elementary school field and believes that it is unfair to take the field away from the elementary school to be used by sending district students.

George Mervine, Brielle, commented on the equality and equity in education regulations and spoke on the district providing equal facilities to male and female students. He said he supports the project and he offered his assistance in selling the concept to the sending districts. Mr. Passiment replied affirmatively in answer to his question as to whether the new board could overturn the resolution approving the field project last year.

Mr. Passiment commented that great school districts have one thing in common and that is a Board of Education, Superintendent and Business Administrator that work cohesively to move things forward. He pointed out that this district lacks a stable administration and the interim positions need to be filled with permanent employees. He offered his assistance in moving the district forward.

Mickey Hart, Ocean Avenue, Belmar, commented that he is in favor of the project or a similar project. He alluded to the Title 9 issues brought up by Mr. Mervine and stressed the importance of equal playing fields for women. He used as an example the improvements made to the Point Pleasant Beach High School and how the taxpayers stood up and backed the project. He said that

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*we have to get away from the “our grammar school – our field concept” because we are a community and we need to find a solution.*

*Michelle LaSala, 44 Parker Avenue, representing the Concerned Manasquan Taxpayers, addressed comments made by Mr. Hart regarding the Concerned Manasquan Taxpayers and advertisements taken out by the group. She commented that they have opposed the project but they also have solutions and completely support athletic upgrades but not this plan and the way it was defined. She said that they have offered solutions and agrees with sitting down and including everyone but she feels this has not been done.*

*James McCarthy, Spring Lake Heights School Board Member, asked what the cost savings was as a result of the change to the health benefits. Mr. Shelton provided details on the savings from health care and retirements. Mr. McCarthy said that his district has not made any decisions on the project funding but are open for conversation and agree that something needs to be done not only with the field but other facilities in the school. He asked Mr. Passiment to address some of his concerns.*

*Mr. Passiment said that he is in favor upgrading the facilities to provide quality programs and facilities, inside through the ROD grants and outside to attract students to attend Manasquan High School.*

*Ms. Kahn addressed Mr. McCarthy question on what Spring Lake Heights Board of Education can legally do to fund the project. Mr. McCarthy asked for some form of communication to provide clarity in how they are allowed to participate.*

*Mr. Allison commented that the sending districts have not been approached yet because the cost is not yet available. He said that after the bidding process is completed and the financial information is available then there will be immediate interaction with the sending districts.*

*Mr. Pellegrino commented that it is frustrating for everyone not to have the answers and any discussions of specific finances for the plan are premature until approval is received from the state.*

*Tim McMahon, 70 Minerva Avenue, Manasquan, thanked Mr. Passiment for his institutional knowledge of the high school and asked if he felt this needed to be done. Mr. Passiment answered that he was in favor of the district enhancing the facility.*

*Donna Bossone, 122 N. Main Street, Manasquan, questioned the sending districts’ financial responsibility if the project went to referendum. Ms. Kahn replied that the sending districts would be paying on the interest and not the principal should Manasquan go to referendum. Ms. Kahn said there is a way to get around this by getting their approval through a resolution by the sending districts prior to going to referendum.*

*Mr. Passiment addressed a question asked by Carol Wilken-Kirkman, 22 Willow Way, Manasquan, on the ROD Grants and replied that Manasquan taxpayers would be responsible for the payment of the 60% the ROD grants. She referred to her education from Manasquan in the '70 and commented that she has watched the school district go down educationally and academically. Ms. Wilken-Kirkman referred to an article she read and spoke of her disappointment that Manasquan was not listed in the top 2000 high schools in New Jersey.*

*Ms. LaPrete spoke in support of the high school and reported that Manasquan High School was ranked in the top 5% nationally for the amount of students taking the accelerated AP classes. She asked to meet with Ms. Wilken-Kirkman and share the number of prestigious colleges attended by Manasquan High School students. Ms. LaPrete said that there were some inaccuracies in comments made by Ms. Wilken-Kirkman and commented that Manasquan is a superb school and has a great reputation with dedication, professionalism and quality of instruction and the students*

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*are happy to be here. Mrs. LaPrete explained that districts must apply and provide criteria to be included in the New Jersey Monthly ranking and she was not sure that Manasquan applied for this process.*

*David Hallman, Manasquan resident, spoke in support of Mr. Coppola, in what he has done and what he is working to do to improve the academics at the high school. He said that we have to work together and stop the negative comments.*

*Rick Coppola, Manasquan High School Principal, thanked Ms. LaPrete for her leadership. He commented that Manasquan has the best teaching staff he has been a part of and it bothers him that statements that are based on opinion and not fact. He spoke on recognitions received by the high school and expressed pride in the students and the high school.*

*Heather Garrett-Muly, Elizabeth Avenue, commented that there are many disagreements being presented but the reality is that something needs to be done. She said there is a different opportunity now with the ROD grants and upgrades are needed inside and out and we need to work together as a community.*

*Mr. Bauer asked Mr. Passiment to provide closing comments.*

*Mr. Passiment thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak tonight. He said that he will return to provide his opinion on what he would like to see at Manasquan. He said the district has a lot of work ahead of them and tonight was a step in the right direction.*

*Mr. Bauer thanked Mr. Passiment on behalf of the entire Board of Education, the administration, the staff and community.*

*Public Comment was included in Mr. Passiment's presentation.*

**7. Public Comment**

Time may be allocated for public comment at this meeting. Each speaker may be allotted a limited time when recognized by the presiding officer. Individuals wishing to address the Board shall be recognized by the presiding officer and shall give their names, addresses and the group, if any, that they represent. Although the Board encourages public participation, it reserves the right, through its presiding officer, to terminate remarks to and/or by any individual not keeping with the conduct of a proper and efficient meeting. During the public participation portions of this meeting, the Board will not respond to questions from the public involving employment, appointment, termination of employment, negotiations, terms and conditions of employment, evaluation of the performance of, promotion or disciplining of any specific or prospective or current employee. This public forum is for comments on all items related to the district.

*Mr. Bauer asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.*

**8. Adjournment**

*Motion was made by Mr. Pellegrino, seconded by Mrs. Verdi, and approved by voice vote to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m.*

*Ayes (8), Nays (0)*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Dominic V. Carrea  
Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary*

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Adjournment