

CITY OF SEA ISLE CITY, NEW JERSEY
SCHOOL BOARD AND CITY COUNCIL JOINT MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2011 – 7:00 PM
SEA ISLE SCHOOL GYMNASIUM

COUNCIL ATTENDANCE: Mr. Edwardi, Mr. Kehner, Mr. McHale, Ms. Tighe and Mr. Divney. Also attending was Mayor Desiderio and Administrator Mr. Savastano.

School Board Members, Superintendent Dr. Kathleen Taylor, Business Administrator Tom Grossi and Board Solicitor Mark Toscano were present.

School Board President Mrs. Egnasko called the meeting to order and asked everyone to rise for the flag salute. She then announced that the meeting had been advertised in accordance with P. L. 1975, Chapter 231.

Mayor Desiderio made the opening remarks encouraging everyone to work together and that the students come first.

Board President Egnasko and Council President Divney both had introductory remarks and then turned the meeting over to Business Administrator, Tom Grossi who used a power point presentation to present the current state of the school district and the facilities and the financial situation and possible solutions.

Mrs. Egnasko and Mr. Divney discussed the financial problems facing the 2012 – 2013 school year, the 2% cap and the recommendation to privatize or eliminate pre-K, eliminate some special area teachers and combine the classes options that the Board does not support. After much discussion regarding the financial deficit at somewhere around \$600,000.00 the majority of the Council agreed that it was not in a position to help fulfill the funding needs. Mrs. Egnasko indicated that the Board is not looking to the Council for the funding.

Mr. Edwardi questioned why the Board voted not to take outside students to raise revenue and Mr. Toscano explained that the tuition collected does not cover the cost per pupil and Ms. Tighe questioned note #3 on page 14 regarding un-forecasted additional tuition costs to OCHS and Mrs. Egnasko responded the data is 2 years behind, and the number of students at Catholic grade school going to OCHS was unanticipated. Dr. Taylor added that OCHS has a strict proof of residency check to ensure sending districts pay only for its resident students.

Mr. Divney asked the Board what the Council can do and Mr. Toscano responded that the Board has sent a letter to the State requesting it close the school as that will eliminate the requirement for Ocean City to take tenured teachers. Ms. Tighe suggested that the Board members have been open about its desire to close the school, but there appears to be no back up plan and would like to know what it wants from the City Council. She added that Mr. Tumulo came to a Council meeting asking the City to use the school at no cost, but how would that help with the revenue problems? Mrs. Egnasko stated the Board would like the City to support sending the students to Ocean City by sending a letter in support to the State. Ms. Tighe and Mr. Edwardi indicated they were not willing to do that. Mrs. Egnasko went on to say they are also interested in retaining pre-k through a 3rd party, but would need a commitment from the City that it would make the facility available for that purpose. There was much discussion regarding the use of the school and the land if the school closed with several Board members indicating it would not support turning the facility over to the City if it was not going to remain as a taxpayer use and be sold off. Mr. Toscano reported that the current law provides that the Board would have to give it to the City. The majority of the Council members committed to providing a facility for pre-k and Mr. Divney asked the City Administrator, Mr. Savastano to begin considering what the facility could be used for.

Board member, Mr. Boyle stated that he has been assigned as liaison to attend Council meetings and suggested the Council do the same. Mr. Divney responded that the Administrators have been meeting and that the Council will not be assigning a liaison.

Mr. McHale asked if grant funds have been sought for the facility upgrades and Mrs. Egnasko said yes adding that the school cannot borrow money or bond without a referendum to the voters. Mr. Kehner suggested adult classes and Mr. McHale suggested City use for groups currently using the lodge. Mr. Toscano explained that security measures would be costly for any use while school is in session.

CITIZEN COMMENT

Tara Crowell-142 45th ST: Spoke in support of keeping the school open and expressed concern that dollar amounts to keep it open are not accurate, the children should be the concern but it appears the concern is what to do with the building if the school closes. She added that a 3rd party pre-k becomes day care only.

Stacey Olandt-316 45th Pl: Suggested the Board has been remiss in its duties and have not taken the children into consideration and divided the community.

Maria Bretzke-4904 Pleasure Ave: Expressed that the Board wants to close the school and urged the Council not to back that decision. Regarding adult use and summer use, she indicated air conditioning would have to be installed.

Tom Szczurek-25 – 73rd St: Stated the Council should help with the decision regarding pre-k and the 33 students currently enrolled, but the parents that now send to Ocean City are satisfied.

Dottie Fean-350 44th St: Opposed closing the school as the children are too young for the long bus ride. She also agreed to use part of the school instead of an addition to the Lodge for a Welcome Center.

Andy Ferrilli-344 38th St: Supports keeping the school open. He stated that his children now go to Ocean City and as a parent, he spends much of his time there. He also expressed concern that City offices cannot open in the school without security and supported allowing tuition students.

Carl Alexander-220 46th St: Stated that the neighbors have a concern with the impact of the neighborhood if the school closes and the land developed. He asked that the residents be advised when changes occur.

Meg Dunner-101 68th St: Thanked the teachers for the education of her children and expressed support for tuition students and summer programs to generate revenue.

Kelly Blum-312 45th Pl: Stated that the students that go to Ocean City get a great education, but so do the students in Sea Isle and expressed support for keeping the school open and opposed combining classes.

Dustin Larricks-4708 Park Rd: Asked if there were limitations as to what can occur in the school while it is in session and Mr. Toscano responded that no one is allowed in the school unless it is in a secured area and they are finger printed, however, after hours there are no restrictions.

Mike Denunzio-4014 Landis Ave: Stated he graduated from Sea Isle public school and he has great memories and opposed sending the remaining students to Ocean City.

Rosemary Kazelis 222 57th St: Expressed support for keeping the school open and urged the Council and Board to work together and spend the money on the building that is necessary.

Neil Byrne-379 43rd Pl: Stated that the Board is obligated to provide a thorough and efficient education but it has fallen short in the decisions that it has made.

Mr. Divney then asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion moved by Mr. Edwardi and seconded by Mr. McHale. All ayes followed and the meeting adjourned at 9:17 pm.

Cindy L. Griffith, City Clerk