

1 **OFFICIAL MINUTES**

2
3 of the **SPECIAL MEETING** of the Greenwich Township Board of Education held
4 Monday, May 5, 2008 in the Nehaunsey Middle School library.

5
6 The meeting was called to order by President Patrick J. Lani, Jr. at 6:00 p.m.

7
8 **Roll Call:**

9
10 Patrick Lani, Jr.
11 Frederick Reel
12 Louis Fabiani
13 Robyn Glocker Hammond
14 Loraine LaPalomanto
15 Frank Minniti (arrived at 6:03 p.m.)
16 Michael Myers

17
18 Also present were Dr. Francine Marteski, Superintendent and Scott A. Campbell,
19 School Business Administrator/Board Secretary.

20
21 As required under the guidelines of the Open Public Meeting Law, notice of this meeting
22 was sent to the **Gloucester County Times**, **The Courier Post** and the Township Clerk.
23 It was also posted in the Greenwich Township School Buildings. (Optional:
24 Videotaping Regulations – “The proceedings of this meeting are being videotaped and
25 anyone wishing to discuss an individual child should so note.”)

26
27 Flag Salute

28
29 **1. PRESENTATIONS**

30
31 A presentation was made for professional services for the position of Architect of
32 Record for the 2008-2009 school year. The Gibson/Tarquini Group will present
33 first and will have one-half hour for their presentation and questions and
34 answers. Garrison Architects will follow with the same format. Copies of each
35 presentation are available in the Business Office for review.

36
37 John Gibson from Gibson/Tarquini Group covered the following during his
38 presentation:

- 39
40 1) Review of projects that they have completed.
41 2) Review of the districts buildings.
42 3) Funding available to accomplish districts' goals. Mr. Gibson feels the district
43 would receive 40% funding from the state and the district would be required to
44 foot the bill on the remaining 60%.
45 4) Enrollment Trends.

- 1 5) Options available to the Board of Education.
- 2 -renovate and add onto Nehaunsey Middle School
- 3 -renovate and add onto Broad Street School
- 4 -renovate both buildings
- 5 -renovate Nehaunsey Middle School; partially renovate Broad Street School
- 6 with community usage
- 7 6) Financial Issues
- 8 7) Educational Issues
- 9 8) Town Issues

10 Why Do Referendums Fail?

- 11
- 12
- 13 1) Board's sometimes do not do their homework.
- 14 2) Projects are sometimes thought of as "The Superintendent or Business
- 15 Administrator's Project".
- 16 3) Taxes are too high.
- 17 4) Local politics are against the plan.
- 18 5) Students' parents are not registered to vote.
- 19

20 Mr. Gibson feels the district should develop an action plan which would include:

- 21
- 22 1) Publicizing the District
- 23 2) Publicize the state reimbursement program
- 24 3) Forming of a Citizen Advisory Committee
- 25 4) Referendum planning and execution
- 26

27 Louis Fabiani commented that two referendums to add onto Nehaunsey Middle
28 School failed. How do you think we should proceed? Should we let the people
29 choose what school? Mr. Gibson responded that the process is not simple and
30 would require a full analysis of the district and meetings with parents and
31 members of the community on how to upgrade the districts schools. Then the
32 Board of Education would evaluate and decide on which way they want to move
33 forward. Mr. Fabiani then added that we are supporting two buildings and in turn
34 we have double the expense. Mr. Gibson responded that you will still have to
35 give the people what they want.

36
37 Fred Reel asked if they had ever seen the state force a closing of a school
38 building? Mr. Gibson responded that he is not aware of any occurrence.

39
40 Patrick Lani, Jr. asked for an explanation on debt service. Mr. Gibson gave a
41 brief explanation. Mr. Gibson also explained the process of analyzing the
42 district's facility needs. Mr. Lani then asked how much it would cost for this to
43 be done? Mr. Gibson responded that it would cost about \$5,000.00 to \$6,000.00.
44 Mr. Lani asked if their fees include permit fees? Mr. Gibson responded that it
45 did. Mr. Lani then asked if our custodial/maintenance staff could do some of the

1 work and would he guide them? Mr. Gibson responded yes to both. Mr. Lani
2 then asked how long it would take to renovate a school from start to finish? Mr.
3 Gibson described the process and also what the initial steps were stating that the
4 whole process could take two to three years.

5
6 Jim Sorbello, 26 North Poplar Street, Gibbstown, NJ asked Mr. Gibson what
7 his experience is with asbestos, for example, if you find it behind walls? Mr.
8 Gibson stated that they have handled over fifty asbestos projects and gave a
9 brief overview of the process.

10
11 Robert Garrison Sr., founder of Garrison Architects, gave a brief history of their
12 relationship with our district and the services that they will provide.

13 Frank DeFranco, project manager, described the projects from last year and
14 scheduled projects for this year and pointed out that there were zero change
15 orders on all projects and that each one came in under budget. Most of
16 Garrison's work is renovation work and they pride themselves on completing
17 work in a timely manner with minimal change orders.

18 Mr. Garrison explained that their fee schedule has not changed since 2007
19 and they only charge for the work they do and do not look to drain districts out of
20 every dime. Mr. Garrison explained how they serve the district on every project
21 and their involvement.

22
23 Bridget DiGiambattista, 346 Kirkbride Drive, Gibbstown, NJ asked if most schools
24 today are single story or two stories? Mr. Garrison responded that preference is
25 on single story because with two stories, you have elevators, stairways, and
26 duplication of lavatories which drive costs up.

27
28 Jim Sorbello then asked what their experience with asbestos was and how would
29 they handle it if found during the school year or during a summer project? Mr.
30 Garrison gave a brief description of their history with asbestos abatement
31 projects and how they follow the districts asbestos report and work with
32 consultants to make sure that there are no problems with renovations. Any and
33 all problems are handled immediately. Mr. Sorbello then asked if they have ever
34 encountered asbestos at our schools? Frank DeFranco responded that on the
35 most recent roofing project that went out to bid, there was asbestos in the base
36 felt and base flashing and that there was a coordinated effort to address the
37 issues and we are moving forward. Mr. Garrison again added that they address
38 all problems immediately. The problems encountered at Broad Street School
39 recently have dealt with the roof and tile in Room 213. Everyday, asbestos
40 problems are dealt with and there are procedures.

41
42 Patrick Lani asked how you detect "hot spots"? Mr. Garrison responded that you
43 go through the survey and also do some random sampling. Frank DeFranco
44 commented that if there is a concentration greater than 1%, that it has to be
45 handled by a licensed contractor.

1 Susan Vernacchio, 224 Phyllis Drive, Gibbstown, NJ asked how much funding
2 from the state was available? Mr. Garrison explained that during the prior two
3 referendums, there was grant money available based on the number of un-
4 housed students which was standard and then renovations. The standard for
5 new construction is the number of students times (x) the square footage of the
6 school times (x) \$143.00 per square foot times (x) 40%. On renovation work,
7 you get a percentage of what the architect's estimates are. No one builds
8 anything for \$143.00 a square foot anymore. There isn't any grant money
9 available and districts have to use debt service aid and the average amount
10 given is 21% to 22%. Mr. Garrison has never seen 40% awarded. He is
11 confident that Garrison Architects receives the better percentage on returns
12 because they know how to operate in the system.
13

14 Jim Sorbello asked if they would recommend building or renovating to maximize
15 financial value? Mr. Garrison responded that space is the determining factor.
16 With renovation, you get more money but a combination of renovation and new
17 structures is what you mostly see.
18

19 Bridget DiGiambattista asked what they would recommend now? Mr. Garrison
20 felt the cost effective way to proceed was Nehaunsey Middle School. Broad
21 Street School is a great, beautiful building but it has so many levels and needs a
22 lot of work.
23

24 Patrick Lani asked what the cost would be to do a study of the buildings? Mr.
25 Garrison responded that it would be an updating of material and it would cost
26 approximately \$5,000.00. Mr. Lani then asked if permits were included in their
27 fees? Mr. Garrison replied that they were not. Mr. Lani then asked if the
28 custodial/maintenance staff could do some of the work? Mr. Garrison replied
29 that they could and we have utilized them in the past here in Greenwich
30 Township. Mr. Lani then asked how long the project would take from start to
31 finish? Mr. Garrison responded that the study would have to be updated; bond
32 issue would have to be handled and could address the issue within ninety (90)
33 days and about two years to be complete. In a renovation project like Broad
34 Street, room sizes were a concern along with the different levels and
35 infrastructure to support today's technology.
36

37 Michael Myers asked how many rooms at Broad Street School do not have the
38 ability to handle more than eighteen (18) students? Mr. Garrison responded that
39 most of the rooms can handle eighteen (18) students but do not meet the
40 standards for Kindergarten.
41

42 Louis Fabiani again said that there were two failed referendums and that we will
43 have to do our homework. The patience of the voters is thin and most people are
44 leaning towards a consolidation. Mr. Garrison stated that the problems have not
45 changed and neither facility has been used efficiently.

1 Susan Vernacchio asked if the railroad tracks behind Broad Street School
2 causes safety issues? Mr. Garrison stated that the tracks are far enough back
3 but since the building already exists, there are no problems. If it was a new
4 project, there could be issues. Frank Minniti commented that there are some
5 dangerous chemicals such as nitrogen, propane, butane, ammonium and
6 chlorine that make the school being located there a very dangerous situation.
7

8 Patrick Lani asked Mr. Garrison if he felt it was in our best interest to make sure
9 the schools were brought up to standard? Mr. Garrison replied, "sure".
10

11 Bridget DiGiambattista, wants the board to take into consideration the children
12 when they make a decision on the schools and put the politics aside. Schools in
13 other areas are phenomenal and people aren't moving here for our schools.
14 Patrick Lani responded by saying it is the duty of the Board of Education to
15 present every option and let the people make the decision. The Board of
16 Education will not be the sole determining factor. It will be left up to the citizens.
17

18 Jim Sorbello commented that he did not feel comfortable with a Board of
19 Education making decisions for the townspeople when they keep quoting a figure
20 and they don't understand the figure. Maybe they should plan on having a
21 presentation to fully explain everything. Patrick Lani hopes to have town
22 meetings and get the people involved including elected officials. He does not
23 want to make the decision for the children--it is the responsibility of the citizens of
24 Gibbstown.
25

26 Louis Fabiani commented that voters voted down two referendums. The people
27 did not say they didn't want to educate the children. Given the opportunity to
28 present a referendum to renovate Broad Street School, he is confident that the
29 Broad Street School referendum would be passed. A building is a building.
30 There has to be a willingness to learn and teach. Mr. Fabiani reiterated that
31 senior citizens and the people who send in absentee ballots would pass the
32 referendum for Broad Street School.
33

34 Susan Vernacchio responded that since a building is just a building, why wouldn't
35 the people make the most equitable choice? Mr. Fabiani responded that the
36 people would have to be asked. Both times a referendum failed and we should
37 study the plans and let the people choose.
38

39 Jim Sorbello commented that we know how political this subject gets and that is
40 why he is no longer on the school board. It is the 21st century and we have to
41 keep the students up to date with technology and we should think of them first.
42

43 Loraine LaPalomente wanted to make the statement that she is for the education
44 of the children and the bickering about a building is ridiculous.

1 Fred Reel wanted to make a motion to hire Gibson/Tarquini for the 2008-2009
2 school year. Since we will get an honest evaluation and it is his opinion that we
3 need two schools. Frank Minniti seconded the motion but asked if we could vote
4 on it tonight. Scott Campbell responded that we could not vote on it tonight since
5 we just received the "Pay to Play" statement from them this evening and we have
6 to have it on file at least ten (10) days before we make an appointment. We can
7 make the recommendation for the May 19, 2008 meeting.
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9 **2. ADJOURNMENT**

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11 Motion: (Glocker Hammond/Minniti) to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 p.m.
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13 Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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20 Respectfully Submitted,
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24 _____
25 Scott A. Campbell, Board Secretary
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