

Special Meeting - Budget Meeting #2 Community Input for the 2021-2022 School Year (Saturday, February 6, 2021)

Generated by Evelyn Holland on Tuesday, February 9, 2021

Members present

Laurie Gibson-Parker, Debra Williams, Danielle Spinner, Daisy Maxwell-Cisse, Carlos Worthy, April Maxwell-Henley, Alexis Harkley, Mike Bird, Corvena Francis-Denton

Meeting called to order at 9:04 AM

1. Opening Meeting

Procedural: 1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

Procedural: 1.3 Roll Call

Action: 1.4 Approval of Agenda
Motion to Approve Agenda.

Motion by Carlos Worthy, second by Danielle Spinner.

Final Resolution: Motion Passed

Yes: Laurie Gibson-Parker, Debra Williams, Danielle Spinner, Daisy Maxwell-Cisse, Carlos Worthy, April Maxwell-Henley, Alexis Harkley, Mike Bird, Corvena Francis-Denton

2. Board Meeting Comments

Information, Procedural: 2.1 Board President's Statement

Information: 2.2 Superintendent's Comment

Happy to see everyone here this morning. Today is the second of six budget meetings designed for community input. Please note that at this point there are no state numbers and Mr. Smith will be providing numbers later.

Talked about Black History and the monthlong celebrations that will take place. You can check the website for school wide and in class activities, such as trivia, research of famous African Americans, virtual storytelling and letters from our pre-k students at J. C. Stuart to the 1st female Vice President.

Recognized National Counselor's Week and thanked them for teaching our students to think and believe that anything is possible and there are no limits and possibilities are endless.

Information: 2.3 Public Comment

Jackie Mack - Talked about the Alternative School and how it had been successful in the past, but now there are only 22 students. She wanted to know if we were doing the students service and do they graduate? Maybe should look at sending students over to County might work out better. The restructuring of schools, how many times gone through this. What are parents thinking who move to Willingboro and don't know schools aren't open. If going to do, need to come up with good plan. Would like to see the teachers contract settled before next year.

Information: 2.4 Superintendent's Response

Thank Ms. Mack for her comments and informed her that she is working to get the board information now on the Alternative School. Recommending to hold off on restructuring, and there are no plans to discuss contracts and only in the first year of having none.

Information: 2.5 Board Member Comments

Laurie Gibson-Parker - The reason for keeping the Alternative School was to have other districts send students there. Being virtual isn't the same, the whole district can join in to People Institute for Survival and Beyond.

April Maxwell-Henley - Agrees with Ms. Mack with getting rid of the Alternative School. I know you weren't the Superintendent at the time it was mentioned to get rid of, but holding off again is a slap in the face. Who's responsible for what was discussed last year. Ripping our budget for 25 students and I don't think we're doing them any service.

Debra Williams - I agree that there should be another solution for the Alternative School. All students deserve the best, and they aren't getting it. It should be enough to get our schools restructured and provide a quality education. We don't have the budget for a County School. The community supports K-4 schools, and keep one ECDC in place at J. C. Stuart, and go back to four park schools K-4. There was talk about getting a demographer, and now it's February, and now saying let's wait a whole year. I say put out surveys, we survey for everything else, and this shouldn't take a year. I believe this will save money and kids will build relationships.

Danielle Spinner - The Alternative School came up last year and it was supposed to be reinforcements made to make better for the students or scrap all together. Nothing happened and it was pushed to the side. I would like to see something done, and at this point find an alternative method for the students.

Superintendent - At the next budget meeting I will have for the board information on the Alternative School regarding how much it's costing the district now and how much to take to an outside district. The restructuring of schools, I'm currently looking for a demographer, and the reason to wait is that I don't know what the configurations are and wanted to get more research. I can send a survey out, but must be strategic about it. The board can let me know their desires, but I recommend to wait.

3. Miscellaneous Items

Information: 3.1 Budget Meeting #2 Community Input

Superintendent - Stated that the presentation being presented was done by the entire cabinet (Dr. Neely Hackett, Kelvin Smith, Nadine Tribbett, and Cherelle Tolor), the entire budget #2 presentation can be seen on boarddocs as an attachment on the 2/6/21 agenda, item 3.1

Quote by Nelson Mandela - "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

Overview of Presentation

Tentative General Revenue Fund 2021- 2022

Enrollment Comparison

Overview of Budget Hearings

Instructional Initiatives

Staffing Recommendations

Community Input for 2021-2022

Remaining Budget Meetings

Agenda for February 17, 2021 @ 6:00 p.m.

Discussion

The board members addressed concerns about the curriculum and meeting standards, staffing recommendations and the need for them, the increase of special education students and if students were being over classified or falling behind, state aid numbers, the amount of walk-throughs being done virtually, initiatives for next year, more professional development for special education teachers and would like to see more of the special education director and supervisors, staff recommendations, look at ISL data and get surveys out, and would like for whole curriculum team to determine master teacher and master classroom. Hiring within is good, but if we don't have someone we should look into it, and if we do that person should be highlighted and should visit other classrooms.

The Superintendent and cabinet members answered the boards concerns. The standards are changing, so must offer competitive programs to enrich their learning and focus on areas K-12 and look into a new ELA program, get surveys out and feedback from stakeholders. Talked about staffing recommendations, the need for a gym teacher and computer teacher at Memorial School and reassigning positions due to increase of enrollment. Determine how students are being classified, will break information down by number of kids with IEP that are coming in classified to students already in the district. Intervention of referral services, you have tiers 1, 2 and 3 before decision is made and monitor students before they are moved to special education. Will revisit with a more aggressive tier 2 and 3, this will let us know if students are behind or actually need special education services. Talked about social and emotional behavior and informed board that a RFP was put out to work with students for 3 & 4 marking periods along with BPIS in every school and guidance counselors available to put trauma pieces in place. Informed the board that for the General Revenue Fund nothing was received from the State yet, so using numbers as a projection from last year. However, it didn't show the State aide deduction increase for last year, that came from the County via the State for \$162,816.00. Also, the 1 to 5 student ratio for special education is alarming, would like to bring in a Special Education Master Teacher to provide additional support and tools for special education students. This will be a reassignment and wise to give additional support while home and when students return. It was noted that a request for a bio of what they will be doing and what it entails be provided to the board members. There is one vacancy at Twin Hills and W. R. James, and some at the high school and doing our best to get applicants to fill positions. We understand concerns and need to do research when it involves money and our students.

Tiffany Worthy - Stated that she appreciate the meetings for enhancing awareness and that the County is beginning their budget process and has similar things restructuring of Willingboro. Wanted to thank the Superintendent and Board for your leadership during this pandemic and overcoming obstacles and challenges not be able to move as quickly. I appreciate the time the board is taking with changes for students that are lasting and meaningful. To the statement teachers not doing enough, I have seen lots of positive changes. The increase of Google tools, multiple logins using different platforms, PDF forms changed and after school help for students who need it. There is the French Clubs and faster IEP reports. You may not see changes but for students going virtual every day teachers are doing a lot of things. Being able to keep them engaged and adjusting to curriculum like the Holocaust where it was revisited and then changed. I know there is still more to do, but would like to give thanks to what is being done now.

Tonya Brown - Just wanted to tell the new board members that the budget is your budget. Two things board does, hire the Superintendent and the budget. I would ask you to take your time, ask questions and listen to move forward. There has always been a high number of special education students here in Willingboro. Look at how many shelters, that effects children and need to know it matters. Reclassification of titles and what programs are working, and what's worth spending the money on. Things don't work in one year. When are we looking to bring students back. If they are behind now will really be behind when they come back. The budget can't pass unless the board passes it.

Superintendent - The return date for everyone is April 18, 2021.

Ms. Green - Would like to commend Superintendent and Board for information by email and text. I've had students in school for over twenty years and this is the first time district is reaching out. This is my first experience for a child needing special education services. I've given the district the opportunity, and the process was 90 days. Want to express class sizes and how they are very large. My child is autistic and it diminishes their experiences. Is there anything being done to make smaller.

Superintendent - Stated that none of the classes are over state mandate, but it is always nice to have smaller. Informed the parent to email her with any concerns, and she would make sure someone reaches out by next week. The district is in compliance but not always ideal.

Jackie Mack - Hope soon to celebrate students coming back on April 18th and thanks for the presentation. Will be listening and looking for agenda for the next budget meeting.

Superintendent - Thanked Ms. Mack for listening and attending meetings.

4. Executive Session

Action: 4.1 Resolution to Go Into Closed Executive Session

Action: 4.2 Come Out of Closed Executive Session

5. Meeting Closing

Action: 5.1 Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn

Motion by Danielle Spinner, second by Corvena Francis-Denton.

Final Resolution: Motion Passed

Yes: Laurie Gibson-Parker, Debra Williams, Danielle Spinner, Daisy Maxwell-Cisse, Carlos Worthy, April Maxwell-Henley, Alexis Harkley, Mike Bird, Corvena Francis-Denton