

June 13, 2011

BETHLEHEM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
SPECIAL MEETING

Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Bethlehem Area School District was held on Monday, June 13, 2011, at 6:05 p.m. in the Auditorium of East Hills Middle School, 2005 Chester Road, Bethlehem, PA 18017.

SPECIAL  
MEETING

President Cann called for the roll by the Board Secretary:

MEMBERS  
PRESENT

Members present: Directors Amato, Burkhardt, Faccinetto, Follweiler, Leeson, McKeon, Ortiz, Tenaglia, and President Cann - 9. Director Amato was present via telephone.

Others present: Dr. Joseph Roy, Superintendent of Schools; Stacy Gober, Board Secretary; administrators, members of the press and other interested citizens and staff members.

OTHERS  
PRESENT

At this point of the meeting, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

PLEDGE OF  
ALLEGIANCE

President Cann requested a moment of silent meditation.

MOMENT OF  
SILENCE

President Cann offered Courtesy of the Floor to visitors. Speakers are asked to come to the podium, stating their name and address. Public comment in the first session is limited to 30 minutes and is for agenda items only. The second courtesy of the floor will be for any district concerns or business. Speakers are limited to three minutes each. The board requests that, when possible, all individuals supporting a like position on a topic select a speaker to present their views to avoid repetition. If that is not possible, all are welcome to speak. As per school board policy, generally, speakers are limited to taxpayers, residents, or employees of this school district. At the conclusion of the Special Board Meeting, another block of time will be allocated for public comment. At that time, the same rules will apply. It is asked that speakers observe proper decorum, without personal attacks towards a specific individual or individuals. It is not the custom for the board to enter into a dialogue at these meetings about concerns. However, the board does listen with care to issues raised. Speakers will receive responses, in some form, by the administration.

COURTESY  
OF THE FLOOR  
TO VISITORS

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President Cann seeing none, moved to Approval of the Minutes.

President Cann called for the approval of the minutes from the following meetings: April 18, 2011 - Regular Board Meeting; and May 23, 2011 – Regular Board Meeting.

APPROVAL OF  
MINUTES

Director Leeson made a motion to accept the minutes which was seconded by Director Burkhardt.

MOTION TO ACCEPT  
MINUTES

President Cann called for a voice vote to approve the minutes. The motion was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

VOICE VOTE TO  
ACCEPT MINUTES

Motion passes 9-0

President Cann stated: We are scheduled to have an executive session following this meeting. The executive session involves personnel and real estate.

PRESIDENT'S  
COMMUNICATION/  
SPECIAL MEETINGS

President Cann stated: There is no Superintendent's report this evening.

SUPERINTENDENT'S  
REPORT

President Cann asked if anyone had any unfinished business to discuss. Seeing none, President Cann moved to Recommendations of the Administration.

UNFINISHED  
BUSINESS

President Cann asked for a motion to accept the Recommendations of the Administration, Items 1 and 2. Recommendation #1 is the Final Adoption of our 2011 – 2012 District Budget and #2 is the Homestead and Farmstead Exclusion Resolution.

RECOMMENDATIONS  
OF THE  
ADMINISTRATION

Director Faccinnetto made a motion to accept the Recommendations of the Administration Items 1 and 2. Director McKeon seconded the motion.

MOTION TO ACCEPT  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
OF THE  
ADMINISTRATION

President Cann asked if anyone wanted to pull any items for discussion.

Director Leeson and Director Ortiz pulled Item #1.

DISCUSSION ITEM #1  
(SEE PAGE 1 –  
AGENDA)

President Cann called for a roll call vote on agenda Item 1.

ROLL CALL VOTE –  
ITEM 1

The question was called with roll call as follows: Yea,

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Directors Amato, Burkhardt, Faccinetto, McKeon, Ortiz, and President Cann.

Nay, Directors Follweiler, Leeson, and Tenaglia.

Motion passes 6-3

President Cann called for a roll call vote on agenda Item 2.

ROLL CALL VOTE –  
ITEM 2

The question was called with roll call as follows: Yea, Directors, Amato, Burkhardt, Faccinetto, Follweiler, Leeson, McKeon, Ortiz, Tenaglia, and President Cann.

Motion passes 9-0

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**1. *Final Adoption of the 2011-2012 Bethlehem Area School District Budget***

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the following Resolution to adopt the 2011-2012 Bethlehem Area School District Budget be approved as presented.

**DISCUSSION ITEM #1**

Director Leeson stated: I will not be supporting the current budget for several reasons. One of my primary reasons is the lack of data driven decision making. Perhaps the teaming concept is a positive concept, perhaps it is not, I don't know. Unfortunately, we have not reviewed whether teaming has a positive effect on students or not. I do not recall looking over the past 12 years at the effect of team teaching except last year when we looked at the new team approach at Freedom. The results were not impressive but it was their first year and it could be attributed to a number of start up reasons. Secondly, this is not a sustainable budget. We have a five year projection that is dire. I also believe that the district needs a well thought out plan both an academic plan and a financial plan. Director McKeon has already requested that we look at a financial plan this summer. In this type of economy anything that does not support a strong well developed academic plan should not be funded. This type of plan is not complicated and it is affordable in our community. A well developed plan can and should include support systems for our most vulnerable students and the ability to excel for our most talented. We have raised taxes. Over 11 percent in the last two years in the worst economy most of us have ever seen. I am not opposed to raising taxes, but I am opposed to raising taxes again without making the effort to get rid of and reorganize unproductive spending in this district. For those reasons, I will not be voting for this budget.

Director Ortiz stated: I on the other hand will be voting for this budget because I believe we have to find a common ground where we can say, we have to stop somewhere and I believe we have tried to look for alternatives and right now at this point we haven't had that extra money that we need, but at the same time I want to make sure that I also stress that I disagree with many of the cuts that we have made and because we only were able to increase a 1.7 percent tax increase. We didn't have enough money to save some of the programs that are making an impact in our community, like the SPARK, the teaming systems and the family centers. To the family centers I have to say that we were very fast to get rid of those wonderful people that were able to give a voice to those that couldn't come and defend their children and tried to make it better for

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the children. Sixteen people that were bilingual personnel were dismissed with these family centers and for me that seemed like we were able to do that with the swipe of a pen and in that

particular matter, it is like I want to be able to support the administration but at the same time I have a problem with these decisions. I was the minority. I accept what the minority said, but with this said, I want to be able to make sure that when we put back some of the programs in the future when we have money, we have to look at the programs that have an impact in our community. We are not going to make new programs. We are not going to reinvent the wheel. We want to be able to offer those programs to the people that were left out to put them in the budget so we will have the skews that were not in the budget and then we could swipe them whenever we want. We want to be able to make that a priority and when I vote I want to make sure that this is what we are going to do. We are not going to recreate different programs. We are going to see the things that have worked for the district, the things that have made our district strong and support those programs. With that in mind, I will vote yes but if that is not possible, I would like to make a motion that we are going to support the programs that we have had and we are not going to recreate any other programs, is that possible.

Director Leeson stated: Point of order. Maybe Attorney Spry you can share this with us, can we commit to a future board's decisions.

Attorney Spry stated: No.

President Cann stated: Because the next time that this comes up it may be after December, and there may be a new board here, so while it is not possible to actually commit to what a future board will do, I know that you are saying if there is new funding available, that it should come back to the board, whoever it is made up of, so that we can say what our priorities are and what we value and make sure that we put that in place and I can't imagine that anyone wouldn't agree with that.

Director Ortiz stated: One of the main concerns that I have is that almost 40 percent of our kids have Spanish speaking parents, and we, with the swipe of a pen, got rid of sixteen bilingual personnel. We were making some progress in the hiring process and all of a sudden with the swipe of a pen we eliminated these positions and the excuse that we get is because it wasn't part of our budget. That is what we need to address. We want to make this a fair process for all of the kids that we are addressing. Forty percent of our population weren't even some services that were vital to them, so that is why my intent with this is to make clear that our priorities are very clear in the school district and that we have this population in mind as well.

President Cann stated: I would think that it would be normal procedure to come back to the board for spending priorities. So I am not sure that you need to do anything extra to have that happen.

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Director Ortiz stated: With that in mind and knowing that we have to make a decision and because I am in the minority, but I want to express my concerns. I will be voting yes for this budget.

President Cann stated: Thank you for letting us know your thoughts. It is something that we all have to remember.

Director Faccinetta stated: Tonight I will vote yes to support the 2011-2012 budget, but I need to take a moment to explain why I am choosing to support this spending plan. First off, I hate this budget. I think it goes too far. It eliminates or drastically reduces some of our most successful programs, cuts 171 positions and leaves me as a board member questioning, where do we go next? It has become very easy to blame the governor, the legislature, Washington and anyone else not here in Bethlehem. Although there were many things we had no control over, the fact is, we as board members took an oath to support this district and the blame cannot go any further than this room. There are many different opinions sitting here tonight, and I do truly believe that all of us care deeply about the students and the district and want to provide the best education possible for them. To that extent, I think we have failed in our roles here tonight. No one can argue that this budget will not have an adverse effect next year on students. SPARK, middle school teaming, family centers, middle school soccer, middle school resource officers, academic coaches, tutoring and summer school have all been eliminated or scaled back and the list can go on. In addition to that we are delaying replacements of much needed buses and technology equipment. There is also the human side of this. Forty-nine teachers will lose their jobs tonight; many who are products of the Bethlehem Area School District. They grew up here. They live here. They pay taxes here, and they have landed what seemed to be their dream jobs, to teach in the Bethlehem Area School District. Not for higher pay that was promised by neighboring districts, but for a genuine love of the kids and a desire to give back to their society, 21 educational support staff members will lose their jobs; dedicated employees who help our teachers deliver the best program possible. Sixteen family development specialists and two ASPIRE coordinators will lose their jobs. Dedicated caring individuals who have worked so hard to break down barriers between our schools and the neighborhoods they serve to assist families with the things that most of us take for granted. Nine hall monitors will lose their jobs. People who are here every day to ensure safety in the halls of our two great high schools. We have cut positions in the past, but this time is different. Retirements and resignations won't come close to covering the cuts. This time close to a hundred of our employees will be out of work tonight, victims of a simple roll call vote. To all of the employees who will lose their jobs tonight, thank you for your service, and thank you for your service to Bethlehem Area School District, and I sincerely hope that we can have you back in the future. In the months leading up to tonight's vote, I did not anticipate being able to support a budget that cuts this deeply into our program and eliminates so many employees. I believe we have a duty to fund our programs fully and efficiently. Over the past few budget seasons we have eliminated so much. Some wasteful spending and some valuable programs. There are no easy targets left to cut. We have been told time and time again, by superintendents and business managers, past and present, financial

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advisors, members of the public and others that we don't have a spending problem, but we have a revenue problem. I understand that people are hurting in this economy, but the fact is we are

the lowest taxing district around and have been for quite some time. I would have supported a higher tax increase to be able to save more programs, however, if I do not support this budget tonight, it is unlikely that we will be able to even approve a 1.7 percent tax increase and rather would be cutting more to get to a 0 percent budget. I cannot allow anymore harm to be done to our educational and extracurricular programs and it has not been an easy decision but that is why I will support that budget.

Director Tenaglia stated: Thank you President Cann. I will not be voting any affirmative on Recommendation #1. In November, the administration listed its fiscal priorities for 2011–2012. Included were statements such as: successfully developing a 2011-2012 budget that respects the current economic realities of both the district and the larger Bethlehem Area School District community, and continue to grow the district's fund balance. This budget does neither. In December, the administration committed to the entire ACT 1 index plus more than \$400,000 to salary increases for our largest collective bargaining unit. In January, the administration presented a budget that had a \$17,000,000 deficit and would have required a tax increase of just under 14 percent. Rather than continue to add any savings for future cost increases, and we know they are coming, the administration in this budget reduces the fund balance by \$1,600,000. The same administration that wants to give tax benefits to a billionaire and that is with a B, convinced the majority of this board to hire without the proper solicitation of proposals of the following established procedures for inclusion on the voting agenda. They were offering a questionable reputation to aggressively go out to taxpayers who in many cases are struggling to meet the five percent and the six percent tax increases of the last two years. In its educational priorities for 2011-2012 under relationships, the administration said we must be proactive in building a culture where relationship supports student's success. What we are presented with this evening is just the opposite. If we pass this budget, gone will be programs that are proven to be successful in building relationships. Whether it is team teaching, thematic programs, or a middle school soccer program, something even the most impoverished third world countries manage to support, we are eliminating success and moving to mediocrity. If this is a Roadmap to Excellence, we should be prepared for a lengthy layover in the land of myopia.

#### ROLL CALL VOTE ITEM #1

President Cann called for a roll call vote on agenda Item 1.

The question was called with roll call as follows: Yea, Directors Amato, Burkhardt, Faccinetto, McKeon, Ortiz, and President Cann.

Nay, Directors Follweiler, Leeson, and Tenaglia.

Motion passes 6-3

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**BETHLEHEM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Bethlehem, Pennsylvania**

**RESOLUTION-RE: 2011-2012 BETHLEHEM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**BUDGET**

WHEREAS, a careful consideration of the estimated budget requirements of the Bethlehem Area School District for the fiscal year of 2011-2012 shows that a total of \$203,809,264 will be necessary to operate the public schools on an efficient basis.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The General Fund Budget for the 2011-2012 fiscal year of the Bethlehem Area School District in the amount of \$203,809,264 is based on the following:

- (a.) A 44.92 mill (or \$4.492 per \$100 of assessed valuation) tax on Northampton and Lehigh Counties taxable real estate in the school district.
- (b) A \$5 Resident Per Capita Tax, taxable on 18 year olds and over, based on Section 679 of the School Code of 1949.
- (c) The following taxes under Act 511 are:
  - (1) 1% Earned Income Tax shared equally with the coterminous municipalities.
  - (2) 1% Realty Transfer Tax shared equally with the coterminous municipalities.
  - (3) \$5 Resident Per Capita Tax, taxable on 18 year olds and older.
  - (4) \$5 Local Services Tax.
  - (5) Business Privilege Tax at the rate of one and one-half mills on gross receipts.
  - (6) Mercantile License Tax at the rate of one mill on wholesale vendors or dealers and one and one-half mills on retail vendors or dealers.

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ADMINISTRATION – June 13, 2011**

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**2. *2011 Homestead and Farmstead Exclusion Resolution***

**INFORMATION:**

Under the provisions of Act 50 of 1998, Homestead Property Exclusion Program Act, and Act 1 of 2006, Taxpayer Relief Act, the attached Resolution necessitates the approval by the Board of School Directors to authorize the homestead and farmstead exclusion real estate tax assessment reductions for the school year beginning July 1, 2011. The Resolution addresses multiple items and those items include: Aggregate Amount Available for Homestead and Farmstead Real Estate Tax, Homestead/Farmstead Numbers, Real Estate Tax Reduction Calculation, Homestead/Farmstead Exclusion Authorization – July 1 Tax Bills, and Homestead/Farmstead Exclusion Authorization – Interim Real Estate Tax Bills.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Board of School Directors approves the attached Resolution that addresses the homestead and farmstead exclusion real estate tax assessment reductions for the school year beginning July 1, 2011.

**ROLL CALL VOTE ITEM #2**

President Cann called for a roll call vote on agenda Item 2.

The question was called with roll call as follows: Yea, Directors, Amato, Burkhardt, Faccinetto, Follweiler, Leeson, McKeon, Ortiz, Tenaglia, and President Cann.

Motion passes 9-0

**BETHLEHEM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Bethlehem, Pennsylvania**

**RESOLUTION–RE: 2011 HOMESTEAD AND FARMSTEAD EXCULSION**

RESOLVED, by the Board of School Directors of Bethlehem Area School District, that homestead and farmstead exclusion real estate tax assessment reductions are authorized for the school year beginning July 1, 2011, under the provisions of the Homestead Property Exclusion Program Act (part of Act 50 of 1998) and the Taxpayer Relief Act (Act 1 of 2006), as follows:

1. Aggregate amount available for homestead and farmstead real estate tax reduction. The following amounts are available for homestead and farmstead real estate tax reduction for the school year beginning July 1, 2011:
  - a. Gambling tax funds. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has notified the School District that PDE will pay to the School District during the school year pursuant to Act 1, 53 P.S. § 6926.505(b), as a property tax reduction allocation funded by gambling tax funds, the amount of \$4,698,873.99.
  - b. Philadelphia tax credit reimbursement funds. PDE has notified the School District that PDE will pay to the School District during the school year pursuant to Act 1, 53 P.S. § 6926.324(3), as reimbursement for Philadelphia tax credits claimed against the School District earned income tax by School District resident taxpayers, the amount of \$16,177.36.
  - c. Aggregate amount available. Adding these amounts, the aggregate amount available during the school year for real estate tax reduction is \$4,715,051.35.
2. Homestead/farmstead numbers. Pursuant to Act 50, 54 Pa. C.S. § 8584(i), and Act 1, 53 P.S. § 6926.341(g)(3), the County has provided the School District with a certified report listing approved homesteads and approved farmsteads as follows:
  - a. Homestead property number. The number of approved homesteads within the school district is 21,238 in Northampton County, and 5,540 in Lehigh County. Total number of approved homesteads within the school district is 26,778
  - b. Farmstead property number. The number of approved farmsteads within the school district is 7 in Northampton County, and zero in Lehigh County. Total number of approved homesteads within the school district is 7.
  - c. Homestead/farmstead combined number. Adding these numbers, the aggregate number of approved homesteads and approved farmsteads is 26,785.

3. Real estate tax reduction calculation. The school board has decided that the homestead exclusion amount and the farmstead exclusion amount shall be equal. Dividing the paragraph 1(c) aggregate amount available during the school year for real estate tax reduction of \$4,715,051.35 by the paragraph 2(c) aggregate number of approved homesteads and approved farmsteads of 26,785, the maximum real estate tax reduction amount applicable to each approved homestead and to each approved farmstead is \$176.
  
4. Homestead/farmstead exclusion authorization – July 1 tax bills. The tax notice issued to the owner of each approved homestead within the School District shall reflect a homestead exclusion real estate assessed value reduction equal to the lesser of: (a) the County-established assessed value of the homestead, or (b) the paragraph 4 maximum real estate assessed value reduction of \$3,919. The tax notice issued to the owner of each approved farmstead within the School District shall reflect an additional farmstead exclusion real estate assessed value reduction equal to the lesser of: (a) the County-established assessed value of the farmstead, or (b) the paragraph 4 maximum real estate assessed value reduction of \$3,919. For purposes of this Resolution, “approved homestead” and “approved farmstead” shall mean homesteads and farmsteads listed in the report referred to in paragraph 2 above and received by the School District from the County Assessment Office on or before May 1 pursuant to Act 1, 53 P.S. § 6926.341(g)(3), based on homestead/farmstead applications filed with the County Assessment Office on or before March 1. This paragraph 5 will apply to tax notices issued based on the initial tax duplicate used in issuing initial real estate tax notices for the school year, which will be issued on or promptly after July 1, and will not apply to interim real estate tax bills.
  
6. Homestead/farmstead exclusion authorization – interim real estate tax bills. No homestead or farmstead exclusion will apply to any interim tax bill except an interim tax bill applicable to a property that includes an approved homestead or approved farmstead listed in the report received by the School District from the County Assessment Office on or before May 1, but not included in the tax assessment reflected in the July 1 tax bill for the property. In most cases, the assessment of approved homesteads and approved farmsteads will be reflected in July 1 tax bills. However, in any case when there is an approved homestead or an approved farmstead that is not included in the assessment reflected in the July 1 tax bill, and when an interim real estate tax notice is issued later based on an interim assessment including the approved homestead or approved farmstead, the interim tax notice shall reflect a homestead or farmstead exclusion real estate assessed value reduction calculated under paragraph 5, except that the paragraph 4 maximum real estate assessed value reduction will be prorated in the same manner as the real estate tax is pro rated. Assuming the interim tax notice reflects taxation as of July 1, as will occur in most such cases, the full amount of the paragraph 4 maximum real estate assessed value reduction will apply. In the extraordinary case where the new interim tax assessment is effective after July 1, the paragraph 4 maximum real estate assessed value reduction will be pro rated in the same manner as the real estate tax reflected in the interim tax bill is pro rated.

President Cann asked if anyone had any new or miscellaneous business to discuss.

NEW/MISCELLANEOUS  
BUSINESS

Director Leeson stated: I just wanted to congratulate both of the high schools on very successful graduation ceremonies that we had the opportunity to attend last week.

Director McKeon stated: Over the weekend I was reviewing the package, this is the PDE on the individual LEA data for the 2009-2010, and in it is the summary of the teacher/principal evaluation information and I am going to be perfectly honest. Out of 997 teachers at all the schools, we had one unfavorable evaluation. I would like the administration if they could to go back and I realize this is the first it was available on PDE sight, if they could generate one for each of the last five years from 2009-2010 and back. If they have something along those lines similar to that because I am concerned because if we ever get to the point of merit raises and merit pay, we're finished because there is nothing in this data here that is going to preclude anybody from demanding a substantial amount of money, if we ever get that far. So I'd like to see the data. I think we have to rethink how our building principals are evaluated and our teachers in a fair manner instead of what appears to be the good ole boy network. If somebody could, during the course of the summer, get us that information that would be great.

Dr. Roy stated: That is data we will collect, but I don't know how readily available it is. That is a new survey that the Department of Education required of all the districts across the state and was recently published on their website and made available to us. We completed the data in the late fall and so you are correct, that there was a high percentage of teachers receiving satisfactory. It showed that 97 percent of our teachers are receiving satisfactory evaluations. Our data is almost identifiably within a percentage point or so compared to other state wide data on teacher evaluations as well, but I think it is something that is worth future discussion.

Director McKeon stated: Potentially could we look at, and I realize that PDE is only concerned with satisfactory and unsatisfactory, could we work in conjunction with the BEA and look at something that maybe could take this satisfactory

piece and expand it to superior, just to give more depth to the information that is being put together?

Director Leeson stated: I would like to support Director McKeon in those efforts. I believe that we are also hearing from parents that one of the top parent concerns is the lack of accountability within the classroom, so I think this is a project that is long overdue.

President Cann stated: I have no objection to it, just Dr. Roy could you would let us know if when you look into it, it is more laborious than we see right now. Just so we can make sure that everybody supports that time spent.

President Cann asked if there was any other miscellaneous business. Seeing none, she moved to courtesy of the Floor.

President Cann asked if there was anyone who would like to speak at Courtesy of the Floor.

COURTESY OF THE  
FLOOR TO VISITORS

Karen Becker  
738 Apollo Drive  
Bethlehem, PA

Ms. Becker stated: I think it comes as no surprise this evening that the budget passed. Director Faccinetto talked about blame lying with the board, and I would have to agree with that. You have not come to the table with alternatives. You have cut programs that hit academics, and you have left those that have no academic impact, like kindergarten busing. I know you laughed when you said bring them in and not take them home, yes, when we can't make our kids get to a proficient level of education, I am sorry then the kindergarten moms will have to pick them up or have somebody else manage it or they will have to walk. It is not mandated by the state. So, too little, too late. I would have voted for more taxes, would have, again, too little too late folks. So, when you think about what happened to the academic programs, I want you to think careful about the message I sent to you earlier in the week. The change in teaming. I would like it to go on public record that at this point the change in middle school will result in 45 additional lunch hours and 60 less instructional hours. I realize that the state mandates 180 days and 900 hours of instruction, no specificity as to how that is broken up, quite frankly we could give them three hours of science, but I don't think that is in our best interest and so too

little, too late, you bet it is. So, I hope that you really think about what's going to happen as we move forward and that as you come into curriculum decisions, you think about facility decisions later tonight, you think about what impact this budget is going to have. If you didn't like it, you should not have voted for it. Thank you.

Steve Antalics  
737 Ridge Street  
Bethlehem, PA

Mr. Antalics stated: These comments might be trivial, and I take no joy making them, but I should remind the board, that I find it insulting as an attendee and you as board members might also, but to remind all board members that if they choose to join the meeting via phone, they are restricted to the same rules as if they were sitting at the table so I find it very insulting to hear background noises, I don't know if we were listening to a television set or a conversation in the background but I think that that is rather rude, so if anyone else in the future, any other board member decides to communicate by phone, I would make it very clear to them that their conduct should be governed as if they were sitting at the table. Thank you.

Ray Berger  
801 Yorkshire Road  
Hanover Township, PA

Mr. Berger stated: I guess the board didn't get the message from last year. Director Leeson, I appreciate what you said. I think you are absolutely right, and it surprises me to see that no one else seemed to get it. For one, I am on the proposal right now to try to combine school boards. In other words, to go from 501 to 67. One for each county. Now, I know that this is a state proposal, not something that you as a board have too much say in but you certainly could combine the school boards in Northampton County because this is where the primary part of this school board comes from. So, it seems to me that this is something you should all look into. I am doing what I can from the state side and all I can say is we could eliminate millions of dollars of wasted money because of having excess administration, having 500 school boards in this state. That is ridiculous. But anyway, I was against this budget, because you again are increasing it for people who cannot afford it anymore. We have got an economy out there

that is beyond belief. Forty nine million people on food stamps. You can't think that you can raise taxes again. Thank you.

Anthony Pachenza  
773 Barrymore Lane  
Bethlehem, PA

Mr. Pachenza stated: The truth is, besides obviously as a parent disagreement with the various cuts, I am not sure if this is a good budget and what I mean by that, in a business, I know my business, we take a look at what we spend and we try to compare ourselves and how we break out those monies versus another business, or best in the class business, so I don't know when people say we spend too much on administration. If we compare ourselves to the best school district in the country, do we. None of us know that because you haven't shown us that. I have no clue if we are spending too much or too little. What I do know is I had a conversation back and forth in email with a woman this weekend, where she was telling me to look at Central Bucks School District as the school district that is the example. What I told her was Central Bucks school district, A.) spends a little bit more than we do on a per student basis and B.) if you look at the demographics of that school district, it isn't even close to this district as far as the mix of people, which makes this so much more costly, so much more difficult. It is not that those newer people are less smart, it is as if you took a bunch of people from the United States that only speak English and put them into a French school district and then said ok now spend the same amount of money and integrate these folks. What Director Ortiz said I can understand exactly what she was trying to say. This is a school district that isn't like Central Bucks and is 90 percent of one homogeneous group of people. But my point is unless you give us facts and we can really understand how these in the best performing districts, how we split these monies because most people don't know. With regards to taxes, people will come down and talk that we pay more or we pay less, I have to do my own research but I think as board you can help us out and help us to make better decisions on how to support it and the only other thing I will reiterate and somebody had said it and I agree, if you don't like the budget, you should not vote for it. Thank you.

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President Cann asked if anyone from the board wanted to discuss anything in Open Forum. Seeing none, President Cann moved to have the meeting adjourned.

OPEN FORUM

President Cann asked for a motion for adjournment.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion - Director McKeon moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Director Burkhardt. The meeting was adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

Attest,

Stacy M. Gober  
Board Secretary

SMG:pag