

MAY 13, 2008

The South Harrison Township Committee held a special meeting on Tuesday, May 13, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. in the South Harrison Township Municipal Building.

Mayor Charles T. Tyson called the meeting to order.

Requirements of the "Open Public Meetings Act" were met. Notice of this meeting was given by: (1) sending sufficient notice herewith to the Today's Sunbeam of Salem and the Gloucester County Times of Woodbury; and (2) posting notice on the public bulletin board at the South Harrison Township Municipal Building.

Roll Call: James McCall – present, Cornelius McIntyre – present, Charles Tyson – present, Robert Campbell – present, Gary Spinner – present, Nancy Kearns, Municipal Clerk – present.

SH Elementary School Defeated Budget

Present from the School Board were Tracy Anderson, Leeann Azari, Jeff Brown, Debbie Cunningham, Carole English, Heidi Lerch, Connie Myers and Karen Nuss along with David Datz, Superintendent, Fran Adler, Business Administrator/Board Secretary, and Cheryl Burr. Ms. Cunningham addressed and responded each area of cuts suggested by the Township Committee at the last meeting. Committeeman McIntyre asked about the trailer. The Board explained that the trailer has been upgraded to meet all of the state standards and will be able to be used for the preschool children with disability program and depending on the number you may be able to increase revenue by charging tuition.

Open Meeting to the Public:

Motion to open the meeting to the public was made by Gary Spinner, second by James McCall. Motion carried.

Mike Brennan asked who hired Bill Randazzo. Mr. Brennan was advised that the Township Committee hired Mr. Randazzo by Resolution. Mr. Brennan asked if his references were checked and what position does he hold now and if the Committee was aware that he was brought up on ethics charges. Committeeman Campbell responded that he was a Business Administrator and is now a superintendent and that the charges were sometime ago and he was cleared of that. Mr. Brennan stated that he resigned November 22.

Roger Samartino asked how the Committee got Mr. Randazzo's name. Mayor Tyson said he got the name at one of the Mayors' dinners from East Greenwich. Mr. Samartino would question someone who's per pupil fee is almost \$13,000.00 and South Harrison's per pupil cost is \$4,309.00. If you use that as a benchmark, South Harrison is doing a wonderful job. Mr. Samartino asked who recommended Sunrise Solutions. He was advised that that is who the Township uses and has used for years. Committeeman McIntyre said that a 3.3 cent increase would be about \$60 to 70 dollars per household. Mr. Samartino hopes that the Committee votes to not make any cuts.

Janice Huggins advised the Committee that she has been a teacher for 32 years and did vote for the budget. Ms. Huggins stated that she went through South Harrison School as did her niece and nephew and her nephew is graduating on Friday and is number one in his class. Ms. Huggins feels that the South Harrison Township teaches are underpaid.

Misty Solomon spoke about the pre-school disabled program and is concerned about pulling the 3 children out of Harrison and putting them in a program in South Harrison that is not already up and running. Ms. Solomon has no problem with using the modular trailer, but does have concerns about removing them to a new program when the program they are in is fantastic. The Child Study Team is overwhelmed and they need/must have more help.

Donna Schenk advised that her son is also in the preschool disabled program in Harrison and echoes what Misty said. It seems like we are stretched so why are we moving ahead with this.

Close Meeting to the Public:

Motion to close the meeting to the public was made by Gary Spinner, second by Cornelius McIntyre. Motion carried.

South Harrison School advised that 4 are attending Harrison, 1 is at Mantua and 1 is at Logan and is in the process of evaluating another for placement and Gloucester County special services just informed that they are servicing one child. If eight children you need one teacher and one aide, if you go over that you have to have an additional aide or split into 2 classes. Mr. Randazzo made his recommendations but he is not left with the consequences, there are things planned in the long term.

Mr. Datz stated that 40% of the proposal has been cut, the Board heard the voter.

Committeeman Spinner likes having the inaction of the Board and open dialogue to help iron this out and get it resolved.

Committeeman McCall stated that South Harrison is a model school and is satisfied with the schools justification.

Committeeman McIntyre stated Mr. Randazzo was hired to go through it, he came back with his findings, but it is ultimately the Committee who decides and Mr. Randazzo is a superintendent of another school and is making recommendations for a school he really doesn't know anything about. No disrespect to him. Committeeman McIntyre is inclined to agree with Committeeman McCall on 1.3 cents.

Tracy Anderson asked if Mr. Randazzo explained how the school budget works. Committeeman McIntyre replied in some aspects yes.

South Harrison School is considered Gloucester County "school choice" that program is waiting for legislative re-authorization. The Board has discontinued accepting excepting outside students until the legislators re-authorize it, because of the funding that comes with it. It started out with \$9,800.00 per child and are down to one "school choice" student and only get \$7,100.00, transportation cost is not included. Because this is "school choice" school can not accept tuition students.

Mayor Tyson wants to hear from Bill Boldizar. Board advised that they contacted Mr. Boldizar to see if that could get his proposal to review before tomorrow night and were advised that it is not ready yet.

Deputy Mayor Campbell feels there is time to review the health care issue and doesn't want to respond until after Mr. Boldizar's presentation.

Committeeman Spinner would like to see another \$42,000.00 cut for a flat increase, from levy stand point.

Open Meeting to the Public:

Motion to open the meeting to the public was made by Gary Spinner, second by Cornelius McIntyre. Motion carried.

Ed Gibson addressed the issue of health care and although you can change things you must let the teachers review and go through their union. Waiting on health issue is impossible and can't happen in time.

Roger Samartino feels it is disingenuous to ask them to keep making cuts. You should vote, accept or don't accept but decide and vote.

Laura Hoffman is a resident and stated she is for the school budget, that the Board has done an excellent job.

Mary Howard advised that she didn't vote it down and is satisfied to pay the 3.3 cents.

Janice Huggins advised that she never questioned the budget and doesn't have children in the school. Mr. Datz is highly respected and doesn't feel the Board can sharpen the pencil anymore than they have.

Jeanine Campbell stated that they should decide tonight and not have another meeting on Thursday.

Dan Webster addressed the Committee stating that he is literally on the fence. Mr. Webster initially voted down the budget, but now with being at this hearing is with the school and feels the Committee should decide tonight and cancel the meeting scheduled for Thursday.

Close Meeting to the Public:

Motion to close the meeting to the public was made by Gary Spinner, second by Robert Campbell. Motion carried.

The Township Committee and School Board discussed and reviewed cuts to the budget with the Board agreeing to reduce the tax rate to 1.4 cents.

Motion to accept this tax rate was made by James McCall, second by Cornelius McIntyre.

Roll Call Vote: James McCall – yes, Cornelius McIntyre – yes, Charles Tyson – no, Robert Campbell – yes, Gary Spinner – yes. **R.C.V.: 4 – yes, 1 – no. Motion carried.**

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn was made by Gary Spinner, second by Cornelius McIntyre. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Kearns, RMC
Municipal Clerk