

**MENDHAM TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
BROOKSIDE, NEW JERSEY  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STAFF DEVELOPMENT ROOM  
(MEETING IS BEING HELD VIRTUALLY,  
NO IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE WILL BE ALLOWED)  
PUBLIC HEARING MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, MAY 4, 2021, 7:30 PM**

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 pm.

**II. Flag Salute - Mrs. Holquist led the flag salute.**

**III. Roll Call of the Board of Education**

Mrs. Gretchen Holquist	President	Present
Mr. Andrew Christmann	Vice President	Absent
Mr. Peter Dumovic		Present
Dr. Rekha Mandel		Present
Mrs. Joan Mody		Present
Mr. Aadithya Thayyar		Present
Mr. Robert Wowk		Present

Also present: Dr. Salvatore Constantino, Superintendent  
Mrs. Donna Mosner, Business Administrator/Board Secretary  
General Public – 20

**IV. Sunshine Law – Mrs. Holquist read the following statement -**

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this act, the Mendham Township Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time, and place thereof posted in the Mendham Township Board of Education Office, sent to the Clerk of Mendham Township, and the Observer Tribune and the Daily Record. This is an official meeting.

**V. 2021-2022 Public Hearing Budget Presentation**

**Budget Goals:**

- To improve instructional programs and "educational opportunities" for all students.
- Maintain small class sizes and outstanding learning environments for all students.
- Continue student support services and expand SEL programming.
- Build a culture committed to equity and opportunity for all students.
- To present taxpayers with a fiscally sound and responsible budget.

## **Budget Priorities:**

**Health and well-being, safety and security, continuity of programs, instructional technology, operations and facilities management, re-engagement of pre-covid programming, curriculum audit and updates.**

### **District Goals**

#### **»- District Goal #1:**

The MTSD will monitor closely the implementation of the Restart and Recovery Plan to Open Schools by engaging Board Committees and Administration in specific actions to support and review successes and needs throughout the school year.

#### **»- District Goal #2:**

The MTSD is committed to equity and excellence in every facet of the District's operations. The Administrative Team will work throughout the year, in collaboration with faculty and staff, to review the policies, practices, and structures in our school system to ensure equity based on race, gender, and ethnicity. District review in 2020-2021 will include the following areas:

- Staff and Leadership Training Programs
- Hiring and Recruiting Practices
- Culturally Responsive Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Practices

#### **»- District Goal #3:**

Safeguarding the health and safety of students and staff, and supporting the social/emotional health and well-being of students and staff regardless of the mode of educational delivery.

### **Budget Concerns**

- NJDOE and NJDOH have not yet released guidelines or rules for the fall.
- The intention and expectation of the MTSD is to return to the 2021/2022 school year with all students attending full days of school every day.
- There may still be requirements for virus mitigation: items such as masks, social distancing, contact tracing, desk shields, alterations to schedules.
- The budget prepares the District for several return to school options.

### **Budget Facts**

The 2021-2022 Mendham Township School Budget Includes:

- Programs maintained and re-established
- 2% Tax Levy
- Shared Services
- Increase in Staffing
- Special Education Programming
- Completion of One-to-One Initiative
- Expansion of Remote Programming and Supports

## Continuing Success

- Continuous improvement in student achievement
- Support for the development of new programming and curriculum
- Provide resources for students in order to meet and exceed standards
- Offer high quality experiences across the curriculum
- Guarantee 2P<sup>1</sup> century learning preparation
- Maintain safe and efficient facilities - safe return to unknown conditions
- Present a fiscally sound and responsible budget

## Budget Highlights

Tax Levy 2020-2021	\$ 16,632,084
Tax Levy Change	332,642 (2.00% CAP increase)
Tax Levy 2021-2022	\$ 16,964,726

State Aid 2020-2021	\$736,826
State Aid Change	\$115,645 (15.70 increase due to enrollment)
State Aid 2021-2022	\$852,474

20-21 Operating Budget	\$19,721,962
Total Budget Change	\$ 76,218 (68,538 + 7,680 PY Enc.)
21-22 Operating Budget	\$19,790,500

20-21 Debt Repayment	\$1,171,175
Total Debt Change	\$ -60,375 (5.16% decrease)
21-22 Debt Repayment	\$1,110,800

20-21 Overall Budget	\$21,023,137
Total Change	\$16,863 (0.08% increase)
21-22 Overall Budget	\$21,040,000

## **VI. Verbal Communications from the Public**

The Board President, or Presiding Officer, will direct members of the public to speak in turn and shall have the right to limit the speaking time of individuals wishing to provide comment to the board as necessary. Board of Education members provide public comment as a time to listen to the comments from attendees of the Board of Education meeting. Public comment shall not be a time for open dialogue with the speaker. Public comment shall not be a time for board members to answer questions posed to them from a speaker or comment on a speaker's concerns. Speakers shall provide their name, address, and direct their comments to the board and not to district staff or other audience members. Speakers shall not expect board members to answer questions during public comment. Questions shall be referred to the Superintendent, or his/her designee, for review, study and response. If appropriate, the board may request the issue be a discussion item at a future Board of Education meeting.

Sarah Neibart – One Samantha Lane – what is the value of the increase where is it going?

Dr. Constantino – it is \$332,642

Sarah Neibart – where is that going? It seems like you are spending much more?

Dr. Constantino – we are actually spending less.

R. Wowk - Total Operating budget – increases 76,000 but the levy is going up 332,000.

G. Holquist – Sal maybe you can do a simplified balance sheet for the town meeting.

Sarah Neibart – new special ed teacher, which is great. Are there any other changes or faculty being let go to make the budget work?

Dr. Constantino – overall we will have two more regular ed and one special ed teachers, letting go 2 fulltime support staff and one half time support staff.

Rochelle Kiam-Abraham - 8:19 PM – 6 Roxiticus Road Mendham NJ

You mentioned that The special education increases are due to costly providers By providers do you mean OT/PT speech? Are these providers under contract or per diem?

Dr. Constantino – we contract for OT, PT per diem and hire for ABA contractually, both RK and DM look at this constantly to see if we are being as cost effective as possible.

Lauren Garofalo – 8:27 PM – 15 Old Orchard Road - is there any room to hire more special ed teachers along with the one. We did a fabulous job this year and I hope that this BOE is going to support this budget on the BOE.

Dr. Constantino – it is such a volatile area and the students in the program, we look after so very closely to be certain we are reaching their needs. Hiring a new teacher to meet the needs of our students is crucial and having a new program in place that our student ratio will be the right ratio and environment for both the teachers and staff. There is no additional money in any special area to do that right now but if we get some extra funding we would look at that but now we would not be looking at that.

Mrs. Duarte – 8:31 PM - 22 Brockton Drive – thank you for doing such an amazing job this year, wonderful presentation. Are you doing a presentation on diversity. I think it is so very important to do this and I would like to attend.

Dr. Constantino – thank you, it is so very important, the presentation will be on May 18<sup>th</sup> at our work session.

Dr. Constantino – public comment is now closed – 8:33 PM – Thank you

## **VII. Action Items:**

### **Operations and Finance**

**1. ADOPTION OF THE FINAL BUDGET 2021-2022 BUDGET**

**A. 2021-2022 BUDGET AND PUBLIC HEARING**

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mendham Township Board of Education adopts the final budget for the 2021-2022 School Year:

	General Fund	Special Revenue	Debt Service	Total
2021-2022 Total Expenditures	\$19,790,500	\$ 138,700	\$1,110,800	\$21,040,000
Less: Anticipated Revenues	\$ 2,825,774	\$ 138,700	\$ 0	\$ 2,964,474
Taxes to be Raised	\$16,964,726	\$ 0	\$1,110,800	\$18,075,526

**B. TRAVEL AND RELATED EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT – 2021-2022**

**MAXIMUM TRAVEL ALLOWANCE FOR 2021-2022 BUDGET:**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3, a board of education must establish in the annual school budget a maximum dollar limit for such travel and expenditure reimbursement for the 2021-2022 school year, as defined in N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.1 et seq.,

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Mendham Township Board of Education approves establishing a maximum travel expenditure amount of \$25,000 for the 2021-2022 school year. The maximum travel expenditure amount for the 2020-2021 school year is \$25,000, of which, \$4,050 has been spent as of April 1, 2021, and \$1,350 is encumbered to date.

**C. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES 2021-2022 BUDGET**

**WHEREAS**, N.J.A.C. 6A:23A:5.2 (a) mandates boards to establish annually prior to budget preparation, for public relations and each type of professional service a maximum level of spending for the ensuing school year (2021-2022); and

**WHEREAS**, the tentative budget includes the following appropriations:

Legal	\$10,000
Auditor	\$30,500
Architect	\$25,000
Physician	\$4,200

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the School Business Administrator track and record these costs to ensure that the maximum amount is not exceeded.

**2. RESOLUTION FOR DISTRICT TAX 2021-2022**

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the amount of district taxes needed to meet the obligations of the Mendham Township Board of Education during the school year 2021-2022 is \$16,964,726 plus \$1,045,000 Principal Debt Service Payment and \$65,800 Debt Service Interest Payments, totaling \$1,110,800 for Debt Service, which equals \$18,075,526 in total for the tax levy for the 2021-2022 school year that Mendham Township is hereby requested to place in the hands of the Treasurer of School Monies that amount according to the following schedule in accordance with the statutes relating thereto:

Monthly Due Date	General Fund Tax Levy	Debt Service Tax Levy	Monthly Due Date	General Fund Tax Levy	Debt Service Tax Levy
July 1, 2021	1,413,728.00		January 1, 2022	1,413,728.00	
August 1, 2021	1,413,727.00		February 1, 2022	1,413,727.00	
September 1, 2021	1,413,727.00	28,900.00	March 1, 2022	1,413,727.00	555,400.00
October 1, 2021	1,413,727.00		April 1, 2022	1,413,727.00	
November 1, 2021	1,413,727.00	526,500.00	May 1, 2022	1,413,727.00	
December 1, 2021	1,413,727.00		June 1, 2022	1,413,727.00	
Total 2021:	<u>8,482,363.00</u>	<u>555,400.00</u>	Total 2022:	<u>8,482,363.00</u>	<u>555,400.00</u>
				<u>16,964,726.00</u>	<u>1,110,800.00</u>
			Total FY 21-22 Certified Levy:	<u>\$18,075,526.00</u>	

**Discussion:**

R. Wowk – overall the presentation was well done. The school objectives and initiative – being ultra conservative and my issue is not budgeting more revenue from the transportation revenue. We could reduce tax levy by a point taking that into consideration. I hope this does not take away from the work that has been done.

Dr. Constantino – thank you, we appreciate it.

P. Dumovic – First, Sal and Donna thank you for your comprehensive presentation tonight. I want to thank the district Administration and the board's Operations & Finance Committee for the hard work to develop this budget. Without doubt, there was a significant amount of time and effort applied towards helping mitigate ever-increasing costs and expenses while ensuring that students would still receive a high quality education. However, I do not believe the cost-containment effort examining potential reductions of budget expenditures has gone far enough. I think our community can ill afford this budget. With all due respect to my fellow board members, I believe this budget is not fiscally responsible to the taxpayer and I will vote no on the adoption of this budget. The Total Tax Levy to be Raised locally (General Fund + Debt Service Fund) represents an overall increase of 2.8 percent vs. last year's budget. And that's on top of the 5.16 percent increase last year, and the 4.8 percent increase in the year before that. In fact, if we approve this budget tonight, the total taxes to be raised locally amount to an increase of more than \$2.1 Million over the 2018-2019 budget. Lastly, the impact of this year's budget on Mendham Township taxpayers pocketbooks is an increase of \$40.79 per \$100,000 of assessed value, and that's significantly higher than last year's increase of \$35 per \$100,000 of assessed value. Personally, I can't support placing this level of increased property tax burden on the residents of our community.

A. Thayyar – how many students did we increase from last year to this?

Dr. Constantino – 43 more students.

A. Thayyar – how many are special ed?

Mrs. Mosner – last year at this time that population was 92 and this year it is 102.

A. Thayyar – thank you to the staff since it is teacher appreciation week. We have done so well for our children this year. All of the hard work. We could be more aggressive with the transportation revenue but overall that will go back to the students, I think this is an extremely sound and responsible budget and support it.

J. Mody – thank Dr. Constantino and Mrs. Mosner for all of your hard work and the presentation – definitely laid out the needs well and appreciate the hard work. Being on the committee I have seen the hard work that has been done. It is such an accomplishment to recoup the cost savings with the health benefits and we provided a budget at 2% as we promised last year without limiting what we offer to our students. It is significant what we have provided to all of our students and what the admin and staff have done. To have remain at the 2%, stayed open and attracted so many more students, I fully support this budget.

Dr. Mandel – Mrs. Mody, I echo those feelings and sentiments, I am so grateful for the teachers and support, I am so grateful. There are so many insecurities since we do not know the variants, this is so secure and wonderful that we can offer this and the overall picture, looking at the big picture, our kids are getting the best, thank you Dr. Constantino and Mrs. Mosner, I fully support this, thank you.

G. Holquist – I share similar sentiments of having the students back in school, I see other areas of the country that are well known for education yet we have been extremely successful and flourished and with the fact that there can be some uncertainty, it is important to be prudent with the expectations, it took a lot to get the students back into the building. PD – I am a little set back that you did not think the cost containment did not go far given the health benefits and work that the committee has done. I look forward to your work on the ad hoc committee and what you can bring. RW – I hear you but with field trips it is not going to ramp back up quickly, I agree and acknowledge that we are looking at the same information yet seeing it differently. This is going to come back and help us in the long term. This budget is appropriate coming into the new school year while continuing to maintain the level education that we provide.

**Mrs. Mody moved to approve the Action Items for May 4, 2021, Public Hearing; Operations & Finance items 1 – 2, seconded by Mr. Dumovic and the motion was CARRIED in a roll call vote: Mr. Dumovic; no, Dr. Mandel; yes, Mrs. Mody, yes; Mr. Thayyar; yes; Mr. Wowk; no, and Mrs. Holquist; yes. Motions carry**

## VIII. Adjournment

Moved by Mr. Thayyar, second by Mr. Wowk to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Donna Mosner  
School Business Administrator/  
Board Secretary