

School Board Work Session Meeting  
December 14, 2006

A Work Session Meeting of the Redbank Valley School Board was held, Thursday, December 14, 2006, 6:30 P.M., Redbank Valley High School Library. The following members were in attendance Dee Bell, Vince Markle, Theodore Minich, Shirley Pastor, Glenn Watson and Lou Ann Williams. Louise Clemens, Randall Frampton and Kim Walls were absent.

Dr. Cornish in recognition of School Board Director Appreciation had a meal planned for the members to partake in. Mr. Cherby, Food Service Director prepared and served the meal for the members.

Items discussed are as follows:

A. Columbine Video

Dr. Cornish presented a video to board members of events that were photograph during the Columbine incident. Dr. Cornish after the presentation asked for comments from the board members on what was viewed. Discussion as to the content, safety for students and facility improvements and developing procedures for safe evacuations from the buildings were commented on.

**Recommendation:** It was determined that the board would postpone the discussion of this matter until more information can be presented at a later time.

B. 2007-08 Budget

Dr. Cornish and Jack Loughner presented a preliminary budget for 2007-08 to the board for review. This early presentation was made necessary due to Act 1 of 2006 whereas Act 1 requires a preliminary budget far different from the proposed budgets and final budgets with which school boards are used to dealing. Under Act 1, each school district must prepare a budget. This document must contain estimated revenues, expenditures and any proposed tax rates and must be prepared on a standard form provided by PDE. The preliminary budget must be adopted no later than 90 days before the election that immediately precedes the start of the district's fiscal year for 2007, that date is Feb. 14. There are some important dates that occur before then, however. The board must print the preliminary budget proposal and make it available for public inspection at least 20 days prior to its adoption (Jan. 25, 2007) and must give public notice of its intent to adopt the document at least 10 days prior to its adoption (Feb. 5, 2007). Districts have the option to hold a public hearing on the preliminary budget. Dr. Cornish explained Act 1 presents an option for those who may want to avoid this early adoption schedule associated with the preliminary budget. If a school board adopts a resolution that it will not raise the rate of any tax for the following year above the index, it will be subject to the traditional budget adoption requirements. This includes a preliminary and a final budget adopted in the May/June timeline. The resolution must be adopted no later than 110 days before the election immediately preceding the start of the school district's fiscal year (Jan. 25, 2007). Districts that wish to adopt such resolutions must make the following unconditional certifications:

- That the board will not increase any tax higher than their school district index.
- That the board will comply with the procedures set forth in section 687 of the School Code.
- That the board certifies that increasing any tax at a rate that is less than or equal to the index will be sufficient to balance its final budget.

Boards adopting these resolutions must submit information on a proposed tax increase and a copy of its resolution to PDE no later than five days after the resolution has been adopted. A board that adopts a resolution under this section is ineligible to seek back-end referendum exceptions and is not subject to the requirements to adopt a preliminary budget by Feb. 14 or the requirements for public inspection and public notice of intent to adopt the preliminary budget that occur prior to that date.

Dr. Cornish stated that this early budget adoption process presented many challenges to administrators and staff whereas the timeline was moved up 3 months from the previous budget schedules. Figures presented tonight are estimates on 6 months of expenditures for a 12 month period for the current school year except for contractual items which are known items. Mr. Loughner discussed in detail how the \$15,960,015 proposed budget was formulated. Mr. Loughner pointed out the increases in hospitalization, retirement, special education and supplies cost. Mr. Loughner also stated that no proposed construction or renovation costs for the high school are placed in this budget.

Dr. Cornish then stated that by the next board meeting the school board must consider whether to adopt a resolution to not increase any tax higher than their school district index, but with the additional provision that the district will not be able to seek back-end referendum exceptions, or the option to comply with Act 1 requirements that is available to districts who do not adopt a tax-limiting resolution and file for back-end referendum exceptions. If the board considers the latter the board will have to act in adopting a preliminary budget as presented tonight.

Dr. Cornish also stated that once it has considered the resolution to stay or not to stay within the index, the board must act on Tax Study Commission recommendation and adopt a tax referendum ballot question. This proposed tax referendum question must be advertised for 3 consecutive weeks prior to submitting by Mar. 13, 2007 to the County Board of Election. Mr. Watson questioned the possible wording of a referendum question as to a stated rate increase or percentage rate increase in EIT or PIT whatever the board would decide. Dr. Cornish and Jack Loughner believed the question would need to be stated as a rate increase but would review the options and present information to the board at the next meeting.

**Recommendation:** It was determined that these items would be considered at the next board meeting.

At this time Mr. Watson excused himself from the meeting.

C. Public Meeting Plan for High School Construction

Dr. Cornish asked the board for comments as to preparation for the public meeting scheduled for January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at the High School Auditorium for the purpose of the High School Construction. Discussion from board members as to the time requirements for speakers present at the meeting was discussed as well as the need for architect consultants to attend.

**Recommendation:** It was determined a schedule for speakers be arranged for.

D. Director of Education Hiring Process

Dr. Cornish had earlier informed the board of the resignation of Mary Wolf, Director of Education who has accepted a principal position at Clarion-Limestone Area School District. Dr. Cornish explained that a letter of resignation from Mrs. Wolf is included in their packet along with a revised job description and notice of the vacancy. Dr. Cornish asked Mrs. Wolf to comment to the board. Mrs. Wolf thanked the board for the support she has received for the past 7 years. She stated that she has seen so many improvements here with success of ADED kindergarten program; staff development and curriculum coordination she leaves with a sense of pride of helping Redbank Valley achieve a high level of success. Dr. Cornish stated that he has mixed emotions for Mrs. Wolf departure and that the district is losing one of its great assets. Dr. Cornish asked the board as to the interview process for selecting a candidate to fill the position. Discussion as to the duties and responsibilities for the position were questioned and the qualifications addressed by Dr. Cornish and administrators.

**Recommendation:** It was determined that the board would wait for candidates to be interviewed.

E. Pressbox

Dr. Cornish informed the board that the district was under contract to pay for the designs for the pressbox from the architect. Discussion as to changes in specifications for the pressbox was discussed.

**Recommendation:** It was determined that the board would postpone the discussion of this matter until more information can be presented at a later time.

F. Enrollment Study

Mr. Markle requested that the presentation on the enrollment study be postponed until a later time period.

**Recommendation:** It was determined that the board would postpone the discussion.

G. Other

1. Gas Well – Dr. Cornish informed the board that there would be no restrictions as to the area for drilling a gas well in the Hawthorn Elementary perimeter that would cancel or delay a well company from drilling.

2. Parking Lot – Dr. Cornish informed the board that no restrictions are in place as to the size of the parking lot or area required for water drainage.

3. Calendars – Dr. Cornish handed out drafts of a proposed 2007-08 school year calendar. Dr. Cornish asked board members to review the draft and reply to him with comments.

**Recommendation:** It was determined that the board would postpone the discussion of these matters until more information can be presented at a later time.

The work session adjourned at 9:05 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jack E. Loughner, Jr.  
Board Secretary