

**Rochelle Park Board of Education  
Budget Hearing Minutes–7:00 P.M.  
April 28, 2016**

- I. Call to Order and Flag Salute**
- II. Roll Call**

<b>Board Members</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Mr. Sam Allos, Vice President	X	
Mr. Shirley Abraham		X (arrived 7:03)
Mrs. Arlene Ciliento-Buyck		X (arrived 7:02)
Mrs. Teresa Judge Cravello	X	
Mrs. Maria Lauerman	X	
Mr. Mark Scully	X	
Mrs. Dimitria Leakas, President	X	

Others present:

- Dr. Geoffrey W. Zoeller, Jr., Superintendent of Schools
- Mrs. Jennifer Pfohl, Business Administrator
- Mrs. Cara Hurd, Director of Curriculum & Instruction
- Mr. Brian Cannici, Principal
- Mr. Kevin Woods, Building & Grounds Supervisor
- Mrs. Ellen Kobylarz, Board Secretary

**III. Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P. L. 1975 Announcement – by Board President**

In accordance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act, I wish to announce that:

“The New Jersey Open Public Meeting Law was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meeting of bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. Notices announcing the date, time and place for this Meeting were sent to all concerned individuals, associations and sent to the Star Ledger, The Record and Our Town, in accordance with Chapter 231, P.L. 1975.

**IV. Dr. Geoffrey W. Zoeller, Jr. / Mrs. Jennifer Pfohl**

- **Presentation of the Proposed 2016-2017 Budget**

Dr. Zoeller opened by thanking the Board of Education members for their time and effort put into this budget development. Highlights of the PowerPoint showed that the total budget for next year is actually going down by -3.68%, however, residents will see an increase in taxes for the budget of approximately \$9.00 a month for the 2016/2017 budget on a home assessed at \$334,000.00. That number should be a negative since the budget went down, and what happened is that Rochelle Park’s local tax base decreased by \$13 million. Therefore fewer taxpayers to spread out the amount, makes less people pay more. There will also be a decrease of

\$22.52 for the average home valued at \$334,000, for the referendum compared to last year.

- **Board Discussion on Proposed Budget**

Mrs. Judge Cravello stated that the town budget went down by \$6.00. How did they do it?

Mrs. Pfohl replied that it depends on their budget (which she has not seen) Could be (and she is speculating- since she hasn't see it) that it could have been a recent contact negotiation or some other agreement that changed. Mrs. Pfohl explained that the numbers are based on the most recent figures she could obtain; they are subject to change and may before next fall.

Dr. Zoeller added that the municipality might have used surplus.

Mrs. Judge Cravello asked where the figures came from.

Mrs. Pfohl replied the county, and she confirmed them with the town.

Dr. Zoeller added that about 3 or 4 years ago the township made an extra tax payment to the school. The school accountants picked it up and the school cut a check back to the township. They may have used that money. How it was not caught by the township is unknown, but when it became known to the district we immediately returned it.

Mr. Scully had to leave the meeting at 7:34 (after the presentation)

**V. Open Public Forum (Pursuant to Board Policy 0167 – Public Participation in Board Meetings)**

During this portion of the meeting, district residents and staff are invited to address the Board of Education on any topics specifically addressed in this agenda or on any other questions, comments, or concerns that may be in respect to the operation of their schools. The Board requests that individuals sign the speakers' list giving name and address, and asks that all remarks be directed to the Board as a whole (not to individuals). The public is reminded that their remarks are being recorded.

The Board wishes to remind all attendees at its meetings that while it subscribes without reservation to the principle of keeping the community completely informed, it cannot respond to or discuss personnel matters. If a matter concerning a district staff member is of interest or concern to a resident, the matter should be referred to the Building Principal, Superintendent of Schools, or the Board of Education, either by telephone, letter, or email.

Each speaker's statement will be limited to five (5) minutes in duration. The Public Forum will be limited to one (1) hour in duration.

Motion by Mrs. Lauerman, seconded by Mr. Allos to open public comment at 7:35 P.M.

Roll Call 6-0

Motion Carried

Mrs. Verhasselt Forest PI- I see that you have for enrollment 0 students received, can you explain that.

*Dr. Zoeller stated students that come from somewhere else to be educated here.*

*Mrs. Pfohl explained that they were the pre-school paid tuition students. The district doesn't get state aid for them.*

*Dr. Zoeller explained that in the past they were not coded properly, not state aid eligible*

Mrs. Verhasselt inquired about a statement Dr. Zoeller made during the presentation regarding benefits and the increased amount being set by the State of New Jersey. She asked doesn't each district determine the benefits for their employees.

*Dr. Zoeller explained that under chapter 78 the district did not have that option. We are in year 4. Three years ago the contract was settled and the negotiations went with what the state had asked, but nothing more. The benefits it is referring to is health care costs.*

Mr. Trawinski Forest Pl.- inquired about the maintenance budget and it going up, he thought the referendum, energy audit that number would have went down not up.

*Dr. Zoeller explained that there are still some items that need to be done that were not included in the referendum, for instance a fence around the playground area, some of our younger students like to bolt, and that is a safety concern. Things like that are in there.*

Mr. Trawinski asked where he could see a breakdown of what was in that line item.

*Mrs. Pfohl added that the public would likely be surprised by some of the items included in that line item, as dictated by the state. She told Mr. Trawinski she would be happy to go over it with him, emails were exchanged.*

Motion by Mrs. Ciliento Buyck, seconded by Mrs. Lauerman, to close public comment at 7:45 P.M.

Roll Call 6-0

Motion Carried

## **VI. Executive Session Announcement (If Needed)**

WHEREAS, the Rochelle Park Board of Education (hereinafter referred to as the "Board") will convene in Executive Session to discuss confidential matters which include:

### Litigious item, Contact.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Board shall move into Executive Session to discuss the above referenced matter(s).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the minutes of the executive session will provide as much information as possible without violating any applicable privilege or confidentiality so that the public can understand what was discussed and when available what the Board decision was.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the minutes of the executive session will be released to the public in an appropriately redacted form within a reasonable period of time after the privilege or confidentiality is no longer applicable to such minutes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the redacted portion of the executive session minutes will not be released until such time as the privilege or confidentiality is no longer applicable.

Motion by Mrs. Judge Cravello, seconded by Mrs. Lauerman, to open Executive Session at 7:46 p.m.  
Roll Call 6-0  
Motion Carried

Motion by Mrs. Abraham, seconded by Mrs. Ciliento Buyck to close Executive Session at 8:40 P.M.  
Roll Call 6-0  
Motion Carried

Motion by Mrs. Lauerman, seconded by Mrs. Judge Cravello, to resume Regular Meeting Agenda at 8:42 P.M.  
Roll Call 6-0  
Motion Carried

## **VII. Adjournment**

Motion by Mrs. Judge Cravello, seconded by Mrs. Abraham, to adjourn meeting at 8:45 p.m.  
Roll Call 6-0  
Motion Carried