

**EAST STROUDSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE  
2009-2010 PRELIMINARY BUDGET AS PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED BY THE BOARD  
March 26, 2009**

**J. T. Lambert Intermediate School - Auditorium**

**6:00 p.m.**

**Minutes**

- I. President Horace Cole called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- II. Members present were: James Brunkard, Horace Cole, Robert Gress, Audrey Hocker, Keith Karkut (by phone; left at 9:19 p.m.), Donald Motts, William Searfoss and William Zacharias. Bet Hays was absent.
- III. School personnel present: Michelle Arnold, Pat Bader, Patricia Baughman, Brian Borosh, John Burrus, Anthony Calderone, Maria Casciotta, Kim Conklin, Irene Duggins, Larry Dymond, Eric D. Forsyth, Heather Gress, Rachael R. Heath, Lynda Hopkins, Leonard Kresefski, Gail Kulick, Sharon Laverdure, Phil Lazowski, Irene Livingston, Frederick P. Mill, Lois Palio, Annelle Prefontaine, Patricia Rosado, Jim Shearouse, Oliver Trojak, Maggie Vitale, Thomas J. Williams, Deborah R. Zacharias and Steve Zall. Also present were: Christopher Brown, Solicitor.
- IV. Community members present: Don Conklin, Suzanne DelCorso, Fred Falteisek, Pamela Fofana, Lori Frazetta, Georgette Gambarini, Lauren Happel, Thomas E. Happel, Lynn Hauth, R. David Heath, Sandy Hess, Tom Howell, Kevin Kennedy, Mike Meachem, Anthony Scott, Roderick Smith, Gary Summers, Judy Summers, Andrea Tucker, Robert Tudor, Orion Vitale, Robert L. William and Cheryl Wilson.
- V. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**ACTION BY THE BOARD:**

Motion was made by Donald Motts to approve this agenda for March 26, 2009 (pages 1), as submitted. Motion was seconded by William Searfoss and carried unanimously, 8-0.

**VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE BOARD**

A. Mr. Cole stated that the next Regular School Board meeting is April 20, 2009. Mr. Karkut stated that there will be a Property/Facilities Committee Meeting on Wednesday, April 8, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. in the High School South Library.

B. Mr. Cole stated that there will be a three minutes time limit during public participation. He stated that the ITEC personnel, Oliver Trojak, will be monitoring and warning the public when they have 30 seconds remaining on the clock. Mr. Cole stated that Mr. Trojak will turn off the microphone once the three minutes are up.

**VII. SUSPENSION OF RULES**

**ACTION BY THE BOARD:**

Motion was made by William Searfoss to suspend the rules of the day to permit discussion of budgetary items to be presented by the administration or members of the Board and the public concerning possible cuts and revisions to the Preliminary Budget without the necessity of a motion and second being previously made and to vote on individual budget strategies in the form as presented. Motion was seconded by James Brunkard and carried unanimously, 8-0.

**VIII. PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION BY THE ADMINISTRATION**

A. Dr. Heath thanked the Board, administration and the public for attending numerous budget meetings. Dr. Heath stated that Mr. Kresefski submitted an updated timeline. She stated that the Board also received a confidential personnel list of staff for attrition and possible furloughed positions. Dr. Heath stated that the third item that the

Board received was an updated list of budget strategies remaining for Board approval. Mr. Kresefski stated that the timeline was updated with meetings that have taken place since the passage of the Preliminary Budget. He stated that, up to tonight, there have been two budget committee meetings and roughly five Board meetings. Mr. Kresefski stated that in the preliminary budget, best guessed numbers were used. He stated that now all collections of taxes have been completed. He stated that the collection rate is the lowest on record and the Business Office is making reconciliation. He stated that a 91% collection rate was used in the Preliminary Budget but in actuality it was closer to 87% due to the economy and change in tax collection method the district has used. He stated that the district cannot use Portnoff but uses the Tax Claim Bureau and as a result, he believes, partially caused the slowdown in collection. Mr. Kresefski stated that some taxpayers prefer to take the option to defer paying. He stated that by the next Board meeting there will be revisions on the collection rate which will have a negative impact in the revenue. Mr. Kresefski stated that some other items affecting the revenue are the shortfall of real estate transfer taxes and 511 taxes under the EIT taxes that the district received. Mr. Kresefski stated that in the preliminary budget estimated numbers were used and it seems worse than he thought it would be. He stated that the district still has a litigation matter with the county pending. Mr. Kresefski stated that the Business Office needs the Board's input on the cuts. He stated that at the Special Board meeting, many items were removed from the list. Mr. Kresefski stated that the updated budget cuts list was narrowed down to questionable items or definite items. He stated that additional direction is needed to get some of the expenditures in line for the final budget process.

Ms. Hocker stated that if the bond restructuring is taken off the list the rest of the cuts do not amount to much. She stated that the district needs to look in areas that have not been looked at before. Ms. Hocker stated that the legal spending has no caps. She stated that she is still looking at Act 93 raises that would retain teachers that are on the list to be cut. Ms. Hocker stated that the district should also look into returning students that are pushed out of the district and that the district is paying ridiculous prices just for the transportation, let alone, the education of each student. Ms. Hocker stated that if you add the list it does not add up to a "hill of beans". She stated that she needs to look at information that she requested. She said there is extravagant spending in the budget that needs to be looked at. Ms. Hocker stated that, basically, she wants the legal areas to be looked into. She stated that the district is cutting items that will affect students, workers and taxpayers; therefore, the district needs to look at where the big spending has gone and needs to be serious about cutting.

Dr. Heath stated that administration has been serious about cutting and have looked at many, many items. She stated that as far as Alternative Education, the budget was cut in half, not including transportation. Dr. Heath stated that as far as the Act 93 raises, it is up to the Board and, as she stated before, the Act 93 raises are included in a legal document. She stated that the Board needs to decide what they want to do legally. Dr. Heath stated that as far as the legal expenses, she gave the Board a copy of all legal items for the past two years.

Ms. Hocker stated that she requested information under the Right-To-Know law to get the actual spending in the legal fees that were blacked out. Dr. Heath stated that the information is confidential. Ms. Hocker stated that she is a Board member and she is entitled to see what the district is spending the money on and not just Dr. Heath. Ms. Hocker stated that Dr. Heath is an honorary Board member with no voting rights. Dr. Heath stated that Ms. Hocker has been given everything she requested. Ms. Hocker stated that she has not received everything she requested.

Dr. Heath stated that Jamie Doyle of Public Financial Management reported on the bond restructuring and asked if the Board would like to look at other cuts before making a decision on the bond restructuring. Mr. Gress stated that, he believes, Ms. Doyle should come in April to discuss the bond restructuring again. He stated that the Board does not have to approve the bond restructuring but the bond restructuring cannot be done with a snap of a finger. Mr. Gress stated that 8.9 million dollars could help not have a tax increase; but, not having a tax increase would not be wise to do. He stated that the 8.9 million dollars should be combined with the other tax cuts. Mr. Gress stated that the district is not the Government or the State because the district does have to balance a budget. He stated that money can be set aside for the following years' budgets. He stated that the bond restructuring can help decrease the tax increase. Mr. Gress stated that if the Board waits until May, it is too late for next year's budget. Mr. Gress stated that the bond restructuring is about 22-23 mils of taxes that can be saved if there is no tax increase, which he does not advocate. Mr. Searfoss stated that at what price would the bond restructuring be done. He stated that all other cuts should be looked at first and if they do not reach their goal then look at bond restructuring. Mr. Gress stated that May 20<sup>th</sup>, a final budget will be put together and; therefore, Ms. Doyle should come in April not in May. Mr. Searfoss stated that even though the Board might approve the bond restructuring, all other areas should be looked at first. Mr. Searfoss stated that he agrees with placing Ms. Doyle on the April's agenda and if necessary Ms. Doyle can be canceled. Dr. Heath stated that the maximum potential of the budget cuts would be a little over 3 million dollars without the bond restructuring. Mr. Brunkard stated that he understands others points but without the restructuring the Board loses flexibility to spend money more wisely. He stated that the Board keeps going into the fund balance and the money that was accumulated over time needs to be replenished. Mr. Brunkard stated that all cuts should be looked at and, even if bond restructuring is done, it still will not bring the district back to where it

has been financially. He stated that when certain items are not addressed immediately, items come back to cost the district more in the future. Mr. Brunkard stated that discussing the restructuring in April would be a good idea to keep it within the time frame. He stated that previously the district had years to balance the budget but now it has only months to get the budget back to where it was. Mr. Brunkard suggested looking under every dime. He stated that the Board should commit to the bond restructuring. Mr. Cole suggested waiting to the end of the meeting whether or not Jamie Doyle should come back in April.

Dr. Heath stated that in the back of the budget cuts page there is a breakdown of all additional building/department budget cuts which total about one million dollars. Mr. Cole stated that he would agree that the buildings/departments should proceed with the cuts.

## IX. ACTION BY THE BOARD

*(It is recommended that individual items be voted upon separately)*

### **ACTION BY THE BOARD:**

Motion was made by William Searfoss to direct the administration to cut the building/departments budget revisions at a potential savings to the district of \$1,086,682.00 as a cost cutting measure in connection with the preparation and presentation of the final budget for adoption by the Board of Education. Motion was seconded by William Zacharias. A roll call vote was made and failed 4-4. Horace Cole, Don Motts, William Searfoss and William Zacharias voted yes. James Brunkard, Robert Gress, Audrey Hocker and Keith Karkut vote no.

Mrs. Baughman stated that the sheet includes professional staff for special education who will be furloughed which means using seniority. She stated that there will be teachers asked to leave the school district. Mrs. Baughman stated that she still needs to go to PDE to ask for permission. Mrs. Baughman stated that the State has now mandated that if you are an itinerant teacher you may now have 15 students and if you are a supplemental teacher you may have 20 students on caseload. Mrs. Baughman stated that she looks at the teaching aspect and went over the list with the Special Education Directors. Mrs. Baughman stated that she felt the Directors are comfortable on which ones to work at and students will receive services that they need. Mrs. Baughman stated that each high school will have one less teacher. Mrs. Baughman stated that the support staff matches up with the teachers who would be furloughed. She stated that instructional aides would not be placed in classrooms with teachers because most teachers prefer to have lower numbers and no assistance. Mrs. Baughman stated that if instructional aides are placed in classrooms more instructional aides would be needed. She stated that if there are rumors that classes are increasing to 30 students, it is not true. Mrs. Baughman stated that class sizes would depend on class level but right now no classes have 30 students. Mrs. Baughman stated that currently, she is only working with positions and not class sizes.

Mr. Searfoss asked since there has been talk about the possibility of employees being furloughed, have any employees come to her with questions of possibly retiring. Mrs. Baughman stated that no one has spoken to her in those terms. She stated that one woman, who has been with the district for a while and has a nice pension, asked her what she would have to do to retire. Mrs. Baughman stated that there is another employee in the high school who is also thinking about retiring. Mr. Searfoss stated that; therefore, she has some people who are close to retirement and considering retiring. Mrs. Baughman stated that there are employees who are getting ready to retire but she does not have any idea who else would want to retire. She stated that the Board has the costs for the definite attrition positions including salary and benefit costs and that is why the list is confidential. Mr. Cole recommended for a motion to be made for the Special Education potential savings.

### **ACTION BY THE BOARD:**

Motion was made by William Searfoss to direct the administration to cut the Special Education Program Alterations at a potential savings to the district of \$642,300 as a cost cutting measure in connection with the preparation and presentation of the final budget for adoption by the Board of Education. Motion was seconded by Donald Motts and passed 7-1. Audrey Hocker voted no.

Mr. Gress stated that he would like a guarantee that the students' services would be met. He stated that he also wants to insure that the students' education will not suffer for both the special education students as well as regular education students. Mr. Gress asked Mrs. Baughman if she had an option, would she recommend cutting the list. Mrs. Baughman said, "Yes", because this year it would be fine to cut but no cuts should be made next year. Mr. Gress stated that one lawsuit would hinder all savings. Mrs. Baughman stated that she cannot guarantee that there will be no lawsuit. She stated that if money was no object, she would assign each student a teacher. Mr. Brunkard asked if the Directors had something to add. Mrs. Hopkins stated that at the high school level, there are 142 students receiving supplemental learning support. She stated that the nine case managers can have up to 20 students in their case load. Mrs. Hopkins stated that the district would only need eight case managers for the

142 students. She stated that if they kept nine case managers then they would have a growth for 38 students and with 8 case managers, the district would have growth for 18 students. Mrs. Hopkins stated that losing Shawna Hill at the High School South, the district is still able to provide student services in the classroom and at High School North, too. Mr. Brunkard asked for the number of students at High School North. Mrs. Hopkins stated that the numbers she stated were for the North students and at the South High School there would be 14 students growth space. Mr. Searfoss stated that the special education would not run on bare bones but that there would be a buffer for special education students' growth. Mrs. Hopkins stated that there is space for students but the district cannot not lose more teachers at this time or they would be below minimum standards. Dr. Heath asked if one position was attrition and one would be furloughed. Mrs. Hopkins stated that one teacher was already attritioned at the High School South and at the High School North one teacher will be furloughed. In the absence of Mrs. Stevens, Mrs. Hopkins stated that there is a teacher who is retiring at J. T. Lambert and at Lehman there is room for growth. The teacher at Lehman would be moved to J. T. Lambert due to attrition. Mrs. Casciotta stated that at the elementary level they are able to lose six teachers, one at each school with room to grow and not affect programming. She stated that this year, she is losing 149 students who are going into sixth grade next year. She said that her teachers are able to go to three year spans, kindergarten to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade in the same classroom. Mrs. Casciotta stated that by shifting grade levels in the classroom, the district is well within compliance. She stated that she has 49 students coming in from early intervention. Mrs. Casciotta stated that six is a safe number to cut and but not more. Mr. Searfoss asked if she also left a buffer for student growth. Mrs. Casciotta said that she did leave a buffer. Dr. Heath stated that there would be 7 positions attrition or furlough. Mr. Gress stated that when the attritions and furloughs occur, will they cut first in last out. Mrs. Baughman stated that non-tenured teachers go first. After those positions are cut, if necessary, the Board would have to make a decision whether they use straight line or the checkered line approach. Mrs. Baughman stated that she would need to know tonight in order for Dr. Heath to send PDE a letter asking for permission to have attrition and furloughs. Mrs. Baughman stated that straight line means from the bottom to the top and checker means if a person is in the Special Education Department and also certified in social studies and has enough time to bump someone else; but, at that point it will be the Board's decision. Mrs. Baughman stated that the attorney stated that the decision to cut by straight line or checkered can be done down the road. Mr. Brunkard stated that the Board voted to look into the possibility of changing around or investigating the possibility of staff cuts but does the Board have any further moves to be done immediately. Mr. Brown stated that the staff cuts do not move immediately to the final budget. Mr. Brunkard asked if the Board motion is enough since the professional staff is covered by a contract. Mrs. Baughman stated that the contract has to be followed and overrules everything else. Mr. Brunkard stated that the previous was for administration to look at the possibility of staff cuts. Mrs. Baughman stated that the Board approved for administration to just look into possible staff cuts. Mr. Brunkard asked if there is still another step to be made by the Board. Mrs. Baughman stated that Mr. Brunkard is correct because there is another step because after tonight if the Board approves the staff cuts, a letter goes to PDE for approval. She stated that the next step would be to meet with the union and attorneys in order for the cuts to be done properly. Mrs. Baughman stated the Board will officially name the staff of employees who will be cut. Ms. Hocker asked Mr. Kresefski for an amount of the Act 93 raises and was it for this year or more years. Mr. Searfoss stated that in the past Act 93 raises were approved year to year but now they approved for more than one year which is not beneficial to the district right now.

Mr. Kresefski stated that he does not have the amount. He stated that professional increases was 1.8 million dollars, support staff increases was \$501,000 and other staff totaled \$199,000 which includes the Act 93 staff. Ms. Hocker said she would like the exact figures. Ms. Hocker stated that she would like the Board to explore the past raises because the last resort should be the cutting or any employee. She stated that she would like employees to keep their jobs.

### **Public Participation**

A. Ms. Cheryl Wilson stated that she saw another district who is considering working for one day without pay. She asked if the district would consider this. Mr. Cole stated that it would not affect this particular item but it should be explored by the employees who are affected to take it any further.

### **ACTION BY THE BOARD:**

Motion was made by Donald Motts to direct the administration to cut the Professional Staff Attrition at a potential savings to the district of \$802,785 as a cost cutting measure in connection with the preparation and presentation of the final budget for adoption by the Board of Education. Motion was seconded by Keith Karkut and carried unanimously, 8-0.

Mrs. Baughman stated that the attrition list would grow but not decrease. Mr. Brunkard stated that he wished that Mrs. Baughman had the possibility of knowing how many will be leaving. Mr. Brunkard asked if Mrs. Baughman believes the amount of people leaving will double. Mrs. Baughman stated that she believes next year, the amount of employees leaving would double but not this year. Mrs. Baughman stated that other districts are tightening their belts. She stated that Pocono Mountain School District, Bethlehem School District and East Stroudsburg School District are going for attrition but they are

not increasing their employee numbers. Mr. Brunkard stated that employees losing their jobs do go to other schools but it will not be a possibility this time. Mr. Brunkard asked if Mrs. Baughman had any guess on the number of teachers who would be leaving in the future. Mrs. Baughman stated, "No". Mrs. Baughman stated that some will be retiring and others will be moving on. Mrs. Baughman stated that in her experience with human resources, she believes that the district will find more retirements next year because the contract will end next year.

**ACTION BY THE BOARD:**

Motion was made by William Searfoss to direct the administration to cut the Alternative Education at a potential savings to the district of \$500,000 as a cost cutting measure in connection with the preparation and presentation of the final budget for adoption by the Board of Education. Motion was seconded by Donald Motts carried unanimously, 8-0.

Dr. Heath stated that, as the Board knows, Alternative Education has been very costly for the district in placing the students in other programs and in transporting them. Dr. Heath stated that since the district started the Virtual Academy some Alternative Education students have registered into the Virtual Academy. She stated that this year the budget was about 1.2 million dollars and now the district would like to cut it down to \$500,000 but would like the option to pursue alternative programs within the district.

Mr. Gress stated that he believes all students who cannot act appropriately should not be placed back in the schools. Dr. Heath stated that she left money in the budget to keep some students that need to stay at the Alternative Education programs. Mr. Searfoss stated that he agrees with Mr. Gress and does not want the district to keep a student in school because they cannot afford to send them to an Alternative Education program. Mr. Karkut asked if anyone from administration looked at the possibility of turning one of the schools into an Alternative Education school. Dr. Heath stated that the administrators did look into the possibility of opening an Alternative Education school but it will take time and planning; therefore, the school will not be ready for the next school year. Mr. Karkut stated that the longer the administrators wait to look into the possibility of opening an Alternative Education school; it will take longer to open one. He stated that he believes it is a great idea and will save the district a lot of money. Dr. Heath stated that administration will continue to look at the possibility.

**Public Participation**

A. Mr. Robert Tudor stated that there is no reason to keep paying other programs such as \$120 a day plus transportation for alternative education programs. He suggested taking a room, one teacher and five problem students who the teacher should be able to handle instead of having the teacher furloughed. Mr. Tudor stated that according to Dr. Heath's numbers the district will save over one million dollars in the cuts and he believes with the alternative education savings of \$500,000 teachers can be retained and work at the district in alternative programs. Mr. Tudor stated that the students should stay at their home school and not pawned them off to anybody else.

**ACTION BY THE BOARD:**

Motion was made by James Brunkard to direct the administration to cut the Support Staff Attrition at a potential savings to the district of \$98,000 as a cost cutting measure in connection with the preparation and presentation of the final budget for adoption by the Board of Education. Motion was seconded by Keith Karkut and carried unanimously, 8-0.

Dr. Heath stated that Mrs. Baughman went over the support staff of those who will retire or transfer. She stated right now there are three names.

**Public Participation**

None

**ACTION BY THE BOARD:**

Motion was made by William Searfoss to direct the administration to cut the Overtime/Extra Help at a potential savings to the district of \$100,000 as a cost cutting measure in connection with the preparation and presentation of the final budget for adoption by the Board of Education. Motion was seconded by Donald Motts and carried unanimously, 8-0.

Dr. Heath stated that in the past the district has paid a lot in overtime or for extra help. She stated that since the budget freeze, overtime has been drastically cut. Dr. Heath stated that all emergency overtime or any overtime for any extra project will have to be approved by Mrs. Baughman. Dr. Heath stated that now the whole district goes through one person. She stated that she is hoping to cut down on more overtime.

Ms. Hocker asked what amount was placed in the budget for overtime. Mr. Kresefski stated that he was not sure. Mr. Karkut stated that he believes about \$500,000 was allocated. Mrs. Hocker asked why the district is only cutting \$100,000. Dr. Heath stated that administration started with \$100,000 but was afraid to cut more at this time in case there are any emergencies. Dr. Heath stated that overtime can be looked at to see if more can be cut after the district sees how much was saved with the budget freeze. Mr. Karkut asked from what department is there overtime. Dr. Heath stated that maintenance, custodians and ITEC Technicians incur overtime. Mrs. Baughman stated that maintenance and custodial, secretaries, and ITEC have made drastic cutbacks in overtime. Mrs. Baughman stated that security is another area that incurs overtime. Mr. Karkut asked if security overtime would be due to weekend events. Mrs. Laverdure stated that tonight there is a security guard working even though they worked all day. Mrs. Laverdure stated that there are also other school functions that need to bring security in and not necessarily only outside activities. Ms. Hocker stated that outside groups that use facilities should pay for security. Mrs. Laverdure stated that outside groups pay for personnel staff. Ms. Hocker asked if non-profit organizations pay for personnel fees. Mrs. Laverdure stated that some organizations pay for personnel fees unless they request a waiver and therefore go before the Board for approval to waive. Mr. Gress stated that before school starts in September, there is always overtime by the custodians. He stated that he wonders why there is a third shift at the High School North and South. Mr. Gress stated that if the same amount of guys are on the same shift you can do more work and can do with less if anyone calls out or is sick. He does not understand why the overtime. Mr. Gress stated that no overtime should be incurred for the opening of school in September. Mr. Cole stated that with regards to overtime and extra help, in athletics events we seem to have overkill on the number of people. He stated that at an exit there are more than one security person. Mr. Cole stated that the district can save money on not having security or school personnel in every exit. Mr. Cole stated money has to be saved and insert common sense to save on some overtime for the district and taxpayers. Dr. Heath stated that Mr. Cole had a good point and will look into it. Mr. Searfoss stated that the man that was working tonight a double shift should have maybe started his shift later. Mr. Searfoss stated that an analysis should be made to see if overtime is the best solution or if reassigning the person at different times would be best, not compromising the position. He stated that some double shifts are good but maybe somebody else could have worked the day shift. Mr. Brunkard asked Mr. Williams to address the possibility of having custodians work the same shift. Mr. Williams stated that, in the past, the district has kept the second shift in place during the summer. He stated that he feels second shift is ineffective. He stated that he would like to bring second shift together with the first shift in order for the custodians to work in cleaning team effort. Mr. Williams stated that he would like to bring third and mix with second and first shift custodians. He stated that the custodians have 49 days to get school ready. Mr. Williams stated that he believes by bringing second shift to first shift in elementary schools and mixing the third shift into first and second shift in the high schools, will be a great chance to get work done and save building operating costs. Ms. Hocker asked what 49 days does Mr. Williams speak of. Mr. Williams stated 49 working days in the summer schedule. Ms. Hocker asked if the 49 days were from now until the end of the school year. Mr. Williams stated the 49 days start when the last student leaves the school on the last day of school. He stated that custodians begin summer cleaning and get ready for new school year. Ms. Hocker asked if custodians work after hours. Mr. Williams stated that the custodians work day shifts and evening shifts. Ms. Hocker suggested that all of the custodians would work together in the summer time. Ms. Hocker asked if custodians work from building to building. Mr. Williams stated that they only work in one building. Ms. Hocker stated that she does not understand where the overtime comes in. Mr. Williams stated that overtime has occurred due to the ice and snow this year. Dr. Heath asked Mr. Williams about his plan for the secondary buildings. Mr. Williams stated that the third shift would be moved down to second and first shift; therefore, leaving the buildings closed for a longer time. Ms. Hocker asked if the district is obligated to pay them throughout the year. Mrs. Baughman stated that custodians who work second shift from 2:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. get a 40 cent differential and those who work third shift get a 50 cent differential. Mrs. Baughman stated that if the custodians are placed to first shift, they would lose shift differential over the summer; but, with Mr. Williams schedule the custodians would lose some money but not the whole differential. Mrs. Baughman stated that each custodian learns their own job and the job goes more quickly.

### **Public Participation**

A. Mr. Gary Summers stated that if the school is clean on the last day of school and cleaned on the first day, why it takes 49 days to get ready for the first day of school. Mr. Williams stated that extensive cleaning is done over the summer that cannot be done normally or when children are in session such as stripping, rinsing and drying hard surface floors refinish wood floors, carpet cleaning, etc.

B. Mr. Larry Dymond stated that at a building meeting, they should consolidate custodians and have them work one shift and then have the building shut down and air conditioning turned off. He stated that he believes that it is a good idea to have all custodians work one shift. He stated that another step that should be taken is to send all custodians to one school to finish and continue to each school building to get everything done.

C. Mr. Anthony Scott stated that only one person on the Board has a job that knows how to handle difficult people. He stated that some students are a handful and the district should not want to cut down on security. Mr. Scott stated that each person who went to the Act 120 class at the district's expense is trained to deal with situations. Mr. Scott stated that the district has a good chief and staff; therefore, the district should let these employees do the job. He stated that if the district takes police officers out of the buildings, there is a savings for the district. Mr. Scott stated that security is not just for when the students are

in the school. He stated that computers have disappeared; therefore, security should be there at night. Mr. Scott stated that those who steal computers are not just taking a laptop but the person has planned and calculated to steal. He stated that with adequate security stealing may not happen. Mr. Scott stated that there are also issues of weapons in schools. Mr. Searfoss stated that with all cuts, security was not part of it. Mr. Searfoss stated that he has a realistic approach with all problems in the district. Mr. Searfoss stated that sometimes cutting down on overtime means you hire sometime.

**ACTION BY THE BOARD:**

Motion was made by William Searfoss to direct the administration to cut the North SRO Program at a potential savings to the district of \$81,000 as a cost cutting measure in connection with the preparation and presentation of the final budget for adoption by the Board of Education. Motion was seconded by Audrey Hocker and carried unanimously, 8-0.

Dr. Heath stated that the district has an SRO at the North and South school. She stated there is a difference in the amount that the district has to pay for each SRO because at the North school the SRO gets paid overtime. Dr. Heath stated that there are usually five different officers a week or one may work two days. She stated that with the police and security of the district having been trained, they believe they have a safe school without an SRO program. Ms. Hocker asked if the district is going to just use only the district's security/police and no one from the outside and get rid of all other expenses. Dr. Heath stated that she is told with the district's own security and police officers the district can handle all situations that the SRO is handling. Ms. Hocker asked if the district has their own police officers. Dr. Heath stated that the district has their own police on staff. Ms. Hocker stated that at the South school the police station is nearby and there is no need for a police officer at the school since we have the district's security with the same training. Dr. Heath stated that Chief Mill has worked with security to train some of them to become police officers. Dr. Heath stated that Chief Mill is working on an ORI, which, Per Chief Mill, will allow the district police to act as regular police in the buildings. Chief Mill stated that all of the district's police were sworn in at Monroe County and Pike County by a Commonwealth Judge to have the same powers as municipal police officers that work in the schools now. Chief Mill stated that the district police have the same powers as the regular police on school property. Ms. Hocker asked for clarification that the district has their own police officers. Chief Mill stated that she is correct. Ms. Hocker stated that the officer at the South school was being paid about \$42,000 from two departments and she does not want this to happen anymore. Mrs. Laverdure stated that the district paid a percentage for the SARP SRO and SARP paid the other percent. Mrs. Laverdure stated that next year the SRO South would cost \$55,000. Dr. Heath stated that up North the district paid the full salary for the SRO (\$81,000).

Chief Mill stated that the training course that the school police went through is the same that the municipal police get. He stated that the school police maintains all certification and receives training geared toward dealing with school children and staff making schools safe. Mr. Searfoss asked when will the ORI be set. Chief Mill said he contacted the State and was told by Lt. Rivera, that the ORI was approved by the State and now it is in the hands of the Federal Government. He stated that there are two different types of ORI's. Chief Mill stated that there is an AOPC and a full status ORI which gives you NCIC clearances capabilities. He stated that due to the North situation being in the middle of nowhere, the district is going for the NCIC clearance capabilities. Chief Mill stated that with the NCIC clearances capabilities, if there is vehicle found, the district police can run plates to see if the car was stolen or if an individual has a warrant out for his/her arrest and the district police can call the State Police for backup. He stated that with the AOPC ORI, it gives the school police capabilities for arrest procedures but no NCIC/CLEAN capabilities. Chief Mill stated that either way the district is going to receive an ORI. Mr. Searfoss asked when. Chief Mill stated that the timetable is 12 weeks for T1 line, 6 weeks for configuration and 6 weeks for assignment. He stated that right now the process is in its 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> week. He stated that ORI's from other districts are being pulled back because the East Stroudsburg School District has submitted an impressive package and the State would like the other districts to follow the same format. Mr. Searfoss stated that; therefore, the ORI will be ready for the new school year. Chief Mill stated that the district will have an ORI before the start of the school year. Mr. Searfoss stated that he was in support of the SRO program but he is confident in what the Chief is saying and will support what he is saying. Mr. Brunkard asked what is an ORI. Chief Mill stated an ORI is an origination number that is given to police agencies to track statistics. Chief Mill stated that anything that happens in the schools need to be reported to the State but now anything that happens will be reported to the Federal Government. Mr. Brunkard asked since currently there is cooperation with State and the Regional Police, will there still be something in place without the SRO program at the schools. Mr. Brunkard stated that there is already an office in Lehman but asked if Chief Mill had any ideas how removing the State Police from the buildings will have an impact on the budget. Mr. Brunkard stated that he is very concerned about security especially with firearms or kidnapping where the schools may be closed down. Chief Mill stated that there was an incident in Ranchlands and the State Police had to leave the school building. He was able to send his own police to cover the school buildings while the State Police did their job elsewhere. Chief Mill stated that he believes integration will be better because outside agencies that need information will now come to the school police officer for information and the district give information but does not get feedback from the police. Chief Mill stated that an incident occurred by Cramers where there were two vans involved which he believes was gang related. He stated that he immediately went to J. M. Hill to protect the students at the school. Chief Mill stated that he believes there will be a much better relationship because all police will collaborate. Mr. Gress said that up North he believes the SRO can be dropped but not at the South because he said up North there are Troopers that can handle that site. Ms. Hocker stated that she does not

understand Mr. Gress' comments. Mr. Gress stated that he said he agrees with North being eliminated but has comments on the South SRO program and will wait to discuss them when appropriate.

### **Public Participation**

- A. Mr. Mike Meachem asked how often are there incidents that require the police to get involved. He also said there is a lot of correlation between State and our police department. Mr. Meachem stated that the State Police have an Internal Review Department that investigates police misconduct and asked if the district's school police have the same department. Mr. Meachem stated that Mr. Gress said that he believes that North SRO program should be taken out from North and asked why? Mr. Gress stated that he does not have to respond but he will. Mr. Gress stated that up North there are five State Police and not one officer at any specific time which will be a better situation. Mr. Gress stated that there is never the same person but one person is better. He stated that the district also is paying overtime for the individuals.
  
- B. Mr. Anthony Scott stated that he knows what goes on inside the hallways of the schools. He stated that he has been up North and disagrees with keeping one officer for so long because "familiarity breathes content". Mr. Scott stated that Chief Mill said that the officer went through the same exact training that the municipal police went through. He stated that the district police are geared toward working with younger people but the municipal police are not. Mr. Scott stated that when the municipal police deal with probable cause or "hook and book", which is police terminology. He stated that what the district needs to do is have police officers that are used to dealing with kids. Mr. Scott stated that he has seen nothing but professionalism in the school police in the way they have been trained. He stated that with a police station two blocks down, you do not need a police officer in the South. Mr. Scott stated that he takes umbrage to Mr. Gress' differentiating the North and South.

### **ACTION BY THE BOARD:**

Motion was made by Audrey Hocker to direct the administration to cut the South SRO Program at a potential savings to the district of \$55,000 as a cost cutting measure in connection with the preparation and presentation of the final budget for adoption by the Board of Education. Motion was seconded by William Zacharias. A roll call vote was taken and passed 5-3. Horace Cole, Audrey Hocker, Keith Karkut, William Searfoss and William Zacharias voted yes. James Brunkard, Robert Gress and Donald Motts voted no.

Dr. Heath stated that the SRO Program was brought up at the last meeting. She stated that administration realized that since North was getting overtime, financially, it could be beneficial to cut the SRO program. Dr. Heath stated that the administration then talked about cutting the South's SRO program (financial reasons) since North's was being cut.

Mr. Brunkard stated that often times in speaking of certain issues both schools should not be spoken to as if there are in two school districts operating separately. He stated that there are logistical or factual matters to be reviewed differently. Mr. Brunkard stated that one school has the State Police by Blooming Grove where there are gated Communities with their own protection. Mr. Brunkard stated that, on the other hand, there is a police that is regional not only dealing with East Stroudsburg but also covering Stroud Township and other areas. He stated that the coverage in both high schools is very distinct. Mr. Brunkard stated that as a Board member he has always felt that decisions should not be made by balancing out the schools. He stated that he will never try to make one equivalent of the other. Mr. Brunkard stated that the Board should supply as needed to the situation as needed. He stated that some things are fundamentally different from both schools and each school should not be treated in an inferior fashion. Mr. Brunkard stated that the Board is one district and sometimes it appears that one is being favored over the other but it is not the case. He suggested looking at all the coverage and agencies involved with securing each school.

Mr. Gress compared the SARP to the Verizon Network which has 60 officers dealing with Stroudsburg and the district attorney's office; therefore, the SRO Program is a better fit for the South school. He stated that he has nothing against the officers that are well trained. Mr. Gress stated that he feels more comfortable with SARP in case something happens in the school. He stated that he is against eliminating the SRO program at South. Mr. Gress stated that Officer Bogart does a wonderful job and knows what is going on and response is excellent. Mr. Gress stated that there were questions about the 911 center, ICI checks and who oversees the police department. He stated that SARP has a discretionary board and does investigations. Mr. Gress stated that he never recalls talking so much about curriculum the way the SRO program has been talked about. He stated that the district has trained officers who can arrest people and make license checks and they should work up north.

Mr. Searfoss stated that the decision to eliminate the SRO program South is a very difficult one because when it was brought to the district it was funded by a grant and there were split decisions on the final outcome. He stated that he believes that the SRO

program has worked but the disadvantage up North was that down South it was the same police officer which helped him to see who the troublemakers are and which kids are good and being picked on. Mr. Searfoss stated that when the SRO North was brought to the district, the district did not get the same value up North due to not having the same police officer in order for them to have familiarity and it also cost more money. Mr. Searfoss stated that Chief Mill has had his police trained and feels they can start the process up north and maybe keep the South SRO program for now.

Ms. Hocker stated that she disagrees because the school police should be given the same chance as the SARP police officer. She stated that the school police should be able to get familiarity with the students and staff. Ms. Hocker stated that she does not think the school police will be tolerant of student's behavior. She stated that with the school police there will be a more familiar type of handling of things and keep the issues in-house and not take the issues to a criminal level. Ms. Hocker stated that South and North should be given the same opportunity.

### **Public Participation**

- A. Mr. Gary Summers stated that if the school police can handle the same situations as SARP then the district should save the \$55,000 that was paid for the SARP program. He said if anyone can convince him or any taxpayer that the services would suffer than the SARP program should not be cut. Mr. Gress stated that if the district can absorb this service by using school police then the program should be cut.
- B. Mr. Anthony Scott stated that the Board is speaking about being fiscally responsible; therefore, they should get off the friendship train. He stated that Mr. Bogart has been here for many years but it is not necessarily money that has been well spent and money has already been spent sending individuals to the police academy. Mr. Scott stated that when someone makes the money that the SRO makes and plays on the computer showing where he will retire or read the newspaper, it is a waste of payroll. Mr. Scott stated that all police officers in the area go through the control center. He stated that when a big riot occurred, a call went out and the district received responses from the hospital police, the college campus police, Stroud Regional and the Sheriff's office. Mr. Scott stated that when something happens and the control center knows, then all the officers know. He stated that to play the scare tactic is not appropriate and due to friendship. Mr. Scott stated that the district needs to make the cuts instead of looking at cutting teachers. He stated that he wishes he could make \$65,000 to read the newspaper. Mr. Gress stated that the control center issue is the 24/7 issue which was discussed at a prior meeting which would be a cost to absorb of \$30,000 to \$40,000 dollars. He stated that as far as the friendship train, he is not friends with Gary Bogart or any other police officer. Mr. Gress stated that no police officer has ever stopped in his house. He stated that he is looking at the safety of the students. Mr. Gress stated that he has one daughter at the South High School and another one coming next year. He stated that he sees the kids at the high school and is looking at the safety for all 1,500 students. Mr. Gress stated that he feels the officer is worth every penny. He stated that it is not a \$55,000 savings because it costs \$42,000 for a school officer including benefits. Mr. Gress stated that in a previous meeting he said if the district can put an officer in the school along with the SRO, we have too many officers. Mr. Searfoss asked if we take out two SRO's, what will it do to the safety of the students, staff and visitors because the school police will no longer be at the positions they have been in. Chief Mills stated that there is a school police officer working with the SRO at South to ease the transition from SARP to school police. Chief Mill stated that the school police do more services than an SRO. He stated that the SRO is tied down to his own department rules and regulations. He stated that the school police do truancy, verifications and even take students home when they miss their bus. Chief Mill stated that he does not think safety will drop because the district will work closely with SARP. He stated that the school police will not take on anything they cannot handle. Chief Mill stated that most incidents that occur in the schools, are minor such as fights, thefts etc. He stated that if a situation gets out of control, they know what to do and they will call 911. Mr. Searfoss stated that if they approve to cut the SRO program no department will be hurt. Mr. Brunkard asked what size is Chief Mills' department. Chief Mill said nine people.
- C. Mr. Tudor stated that currently these school police officers are in the high schools at the same time as the SRO's; therefore, it should not be an issue if they eliminate the programs which will save the district money. He said as far as the dispatch center, the fee should be negotiated because the kids live in the area and their parents pay taxes to support the dispatch center. Mr. Tudor stated that why should the district pay an additional \$4 per child in order for the dispatch center to continue the same services they are providing now. He stated that the district should negotiate and not ask them what they want the district to pay. Mr. Tudor quoted Donald Trump who said "in life you do not get what you deserve, you get what you negotiate". Mr. Gress stated that he is not a member of the control center but they will not negotiate the fee because if the district does not like the fee they can go elsewhere. Mr. Gress stated that Lehman Township pays for fire and police but East Stroudsburg pays for fire, ambulance and police. Mr. Gress stated that a letter came from the Stroud Township control center which said that the fee is non-negotiable. Mr. Tudor stated that he finds it hard to believe because he is a member of the Search and Rescue and his small group was able to negotiate with them; therefore, why can't the district. Ms. Hocker asked if this SRO program is eliminated and there is an emergency we cannot get assistance. Mr. Gress stated that they provide dispatching services. Mr. Gress asked if the district is still planning to use the dispatch center. Chief Mills stated that at this particular time the district will not use the dispatch center since the district does not

know how much more services they will need. Chief Mill stated that, for now, the district will use what they have been using, emergency dispatch capabilities through, Monroe County Control Center.

- D. Mrs. Andrea Tucker asked if the security for all children will be considered such as the Virtual Academy and Alternative Education. Dr. Heath said each student is looked at on a case by case basis. Ms. Tucker asked what factors are used when bringing a student back into the home school. Dr. Heath stated that parents, students, team at alternative school and team from the district as well as the Special Education Directors decide the placement. Ms. Tucker asked if a student returns and cannot function will the student go back into Alternative Education. Dr. Heath stated that the student is placed on a behavior contract and if the student violates it they are returned to the Alternative Education site. Ms. Tucker asked if the student remains at the alternative site permanently. Dr. Heath said we would like all students to return to the home school but if they cannot function they won't return. Ms. Tucker stated that she has a 15 year old daughter who a boy picked on her and made vulgar comments to her. She stated that the student is still in the same class and her daughter is not the only one with that problem. Ms. Tucker stated that she would like to make sure that good students are protected by students who do not belong at the home school.

**ACTION BY THE BOARD:**

Motion was made by William Searfoss to direct the administration to cut and revise the Use of Facilities Policy to eliminate waiver of fees as a cost cutting measure in connection with the preparation and presentation of the final budget for adoption by the Board of Education. Motion was seconded by Audrey Hocker. A second motion was made by James Brunkard to table the motion. Second Motion was seconded by Robert Gress. A roll call vote was taken and passed 5-3. James Brunkard, Horace Cole, Robert Gress, Keith Karkut and Donald Motts voted yes. Audrey Hocker, William Searfoss and William Zacharias voted no to table.

Dr. Heath stated that the Board and Mrs. Laverdure worked very hard to put together a very good policy. She stated that what has happened is that each use of facilities has been brought to the Board to decide if they want to waive any fees, all or none. Dr. Heath stated that it is up to the Board if they want to charge all fees they can or if the Board wants to view case by case they can, too. She stated that several organizations have checked with Mrs. Laverdure to see if they can use the facilities as they did last year. Dr. Heath stated that the Board can waive some fees as they come or not charge a fee or charge for everything.

Mr. Searfoss stated that the problem with case by case basis is that it can become unfair and open the Board to liability. He stated that Mr. Dirvonas dealt with Mr. Brunkard, where he did not believe churches should use the facilities. Mr. Searfoss stated that the Board cannot tell the churches no if the Board tells other 501c's yes. He stated that with all the budget cuts, the Board needs to start charging to use the buildings. Mr. Searfoss stated that some may say it is not fair to charge because some taxpayers are using the building but it is not all of the taxpayers using it. He said that his church used J. T. Lambert three times because another church was charging them too much. Mr. Searfoss stated that the district should also charge; therefore, churches may want to absorb the cost for the other churches to use them.

Ms. Hocker stated that it might be a good idea if the district charges a small base flat rate for the use of facilities and not charge on an hourly basis in order not to cripple small organizations. She stated that the fee may help with staff, lighting or any other expenses. Ms. Hocker stated that she does not believe that the district should charge \$300 for an hour or two. She suggested charging \$50 and let it go up after the hour. Mr. Searfoss stated that the fee would depend on what the organization is using because a small classroom or big room should be a different price. He stated that he saw the policies from the other school districts and the East Stroudsburg Area School District's fees are in between what the Delaware Valley School District and Stroudsburg School District charges.

Mr. Karkut stated that the district has a policy in place which states what organizations need to pay. He stated that the problem is that some organizations that should be paying all costs ask the Board to waive all costs and the Board is making exemptions on a case by case basis. Mr. Karkut stated that the Board needs to charge like the policy states so. He stated that the district needs to take out the part that says that the Board can approve an exemption and just charge everyone. Mr. Searfoss stated that areas of the policy say the organizations can use the facilities for free. He stated no charging gets the district in trouble. Mr. Searfoss stated that that the district uses East Stroudsburg University and East Stroudsburg University uses us which is something that the district should look at. Mr. Searfoss stated that if special arrangements cause a problem then the district should pay to use East Stroudsburg University and East Stroudsburg University should pay to use the district. Mr. Searfoss stated that the policy says that the organization can come and use the building for free and it is not right.

Mr. Brunkard stated that there is a Board policy in place through the efforts of Mr. Searfoss and Mr. Karkut. He stated that the peculiarity of the policy is that it is unlawful and unconstitutional in forcing taxpayers contrary to the Pennsylvania Constitution by allowing churches to use our facilities supported by the taxpayers. Mr. Brunkard stated that he has separate legal issues to discuss as to how a previous Board wrote the use of facilities policy. He stated that he is not in agreement with

blanked endorsing the policy. Mr. Brunkard stated that his legal concerns require a discussion in Executive Session. He stated that the policy was in place when he came on the Board and he has other concerns beside legal issues. Mr. Brunkard stated that the use of facilities concerns taxpayers more than anything else. He stated that there are collateral issues and does not feel bound to the policy and does not understand the full consequences of the policy. Mr. Brunkard stated that if the Board is trying to enforce the policy, he would like to insist that they address his concerns in Executive Session.

Mr. Searfoss stated that the policy should look at all non-profit organizations, whether it is religious or not religious. He stated that he supports an organization and would not want the taxpayers to pay for the organization that he supports. Mr. Searfoss stated that if his organization were to meet at a building, the organization would pay to use it.

Mr. Cole stated that there is a Property/Facilities Committee meeting on April 8th and suggested that the committee review and make a recommendation to the Board and then support the committee's recommendation. Mr. Cole stated that the committee's request is not unreasonable and there may not be unanimity of what the facilities bring to the Board's attention but there should be support.

Mr. Zacharias asked if the Board would support the Property/Facilities Committee like the Dress Code Committee.

Ms. Hocker suggested that the Board be made aware of all fees because some organizations cannot afford a great deal of money. She stated that the Board should charge like East Stroudsburg University charges for the various rooms. Ms. Hocker stated that the Board needs to decide what they want to charge people. She stated that the Board should discuss the issue and decide what to pay. Mr. Searfoss stated the Board can make a motion for the facilities committee to discuss this issue and set a fee.

Mr. Gress stated that the Property/Facilities Committee is for the discussion of bricks, mortars and not policies. He stated that the Property/Facilities Committee was not formed to discuss policies. Mr. Brunkard stated that Mr. Karkut said the committee would also include the use of facilities policy. Mr. Karkut stated that the committee discusses more than bricks and mortars; therefore, why not the use of facilities policy. Ms. Hocker asked if there is a standing committee for policies. Dr. Heath stated that there no standing committee for policies. Ms. Hocker stated that there should be a standing committee because newer members would like to discuss policies. Mr. Brunkard asked Mr. Karkut how far he believes the committee should go. Mr. Brunkard stated that when he joined the committee, he thought it was to discuss repairs and things of this nature but Mr. Karkut deems different. Mr. Karkut stated that the committee is to discuss facilities; a committee that does not vote but is just advisory. He stated that he does not understand the problem with the committee looking at the facilities. Mr. Karkut stated that he thought the purpose of committee was to alleviate these problems. Ms. Hocker asked where the Board stands on this use of facilities motion. Mr. Searfoss stated that the Board should make a motion and let the committee decide the amount. Ms. Hocker stated that the \$300,000 savings should be taken out because in actuality the Board does not know the amount. Mrs. Laverdure stated that the \$300,000 is potential revenue using the scale from the current use of facilities policy. She said it is not a savings but potential revenue. Ms. Hocker stated that the Board should come back and study the amount. Mr. Brunkard suggested that the Board table the motion. Mr. Searfoss stated that there is not motion on the floor to table. Mr. Searfoss motioned to revise policy to eliminate waivers of fees, get a Board committee and get a new policy in place and bring it back to the Board to vote on. Ms. Hocker stated that Mr. Searfoss' suggestion is an excellent idea. Mr. Brunkard stated that he would like to table the motion. Mr. Brown stated that there should be a motion first before it can be tabled.

### **Public Participation**

None

Mr. Karkut stated that he does not understand why the policy cannot be discussed at a committee. Mr. Searfoss asked if he wants to form a committee to discuss the use of facilities policy. Mr. Karkut stated that he agrees with a new committee if that is what it will take to discuss the policy. Mr. Karkut, Ms. Hocker and Mr. Searfoss said they would serve on that committee. Mr. Cole asked what other members of the Board would like to be part of the Facilities Committee dealing with waivers of fees. Mr. Brunkard stated that he is already part of the Facilities Committee. Mr. Cole stated that, therefore, there are three members of the Facilities Committee dealing with waivers of fees. Mr. Karkut suggested that the three committee members meet to discuss. Dr. Heath stated that she would like to clarify that now there are two different committees; one is the Property/Facilities Committee and the other is Facilities Committee dealing with waivers of fees. Mr. Karkut stated that he does not see why the Property/Facilities Committee cannot look at the policy but if the Board wants a separate committee he will be part of it. Ms. Hocker stated that maybe a separate committee is not needed since there is already a Property/Facilities Committee because she did plan to attend and join. Mr. Cole asked if the policy can be discussed then at April 8<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Karkut stated that it will be discussed on April 8<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Heath stated that she and Mr. Kresfesi spoke to PDE and sat in some webinars. She stated that the federal stimulus monies are still unknown but was told the district should get more in Title I and in IDEA (Special Education) and a few dollars

in some other areas. Dr. Heath stated that she was told by PDE that the district should know how much money is in the Federal stimulus in mid April. She stated that the district only received a 2.2 increase in basic subsidy when many other districts received more and PDE said they would look into it and get back to the district.

Dr. Heath stated that pay-to-play is also under budget strategies in case the Board would like to consider pay-to-play. She stated that the discussion on pay to play will need a Board committee to determine each activity and sport. Mr. Brunkard stated that he will not be in agreement with any pay-to-play activity. Ms. Hocker stated that she will not be in agreement either. Mr. Brunkard stated that if other Board members want to discuss it they can but he will vote no. Mr. Motts made a motion to eliminate it from the items being considered for generating revenue potential pay-to-play for extracurricular activities. Mr. Zacharias asked why eliminate pay-to-play because the budget is still not zero. Dr. Heath stated that the reason pay-to-play should be decided on is because if the Board wants to pursue then a committee must be formed with all advisors to put a plan together for the Board. She stated that if it will not go anywhere then there would be other areas to look at. Ms. Hocker stated that she does not agree with pay-to-play because she does not want to cut anything that will directly affect the students. She said other items need to be looked at but nothing that directly affects the students. Mr. Zacharias stated that until the budget gets down to zero, he is not opposed to cutting anything. He said there is a lot of money that can be raised in pay-to-play. Mr. Zacharias stated that he would like to see something done with pay-to-play rather than restructure and get into an 11 million dollar debt. He stated that nobody wants to charge pay-to-play but there are a lot of taxpayers that are losing their jobs and homes. Ms. Hocker stated that it would only be nickels and dimes that the Board would save. Mr. Zacharias stated that the district will probably save millions. Ms. Hocker stated that the district will not save millions and many students would not be able to play because they will not be able to afford it. Mr. Gress stated that there are many questions because does the district charge the student that goes out for the team or would the student be charged if they make the team. He said kids cannot afford to buy sneakers or anything extra. Mr. Gress stated that the district would end up setting up an account to help them. He stated that pay-to-play will not save millions and the district should not waste time in forming a committee. Mr. Gress stated that if the students pay, are they guaranteed to play; he said he does not think so. Mr. Cole stated that pay-to-play is not a new idea and has been implemented in many schools throughout the country. He stated that in other areas pay-to-play has not been successful. Mr. Zacharias stated that pay-to-play would cut down on a lot of after school activities like the knitting club because students may not want to pay for the club and then the advisor would not have to get paid. Mr. Searfoss stated that the biggest obstacles are the social economic level; who will be free or who will pay. Mr. Searfoss stated that there is an expense for sports and clubs. He stated that the athletic director should go back and see what fat to trim from the budget instead of pay-to-play. Mr. Karkut stated that if the Board wants to charge for playing sports and for participating in activities then why not charge for advanced classes because he cannot see charging students to participate when all areas are part of the student's educational process.

## **X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – LIMITED TO BUDGET ITEMS**

- A. Mr. Robert L. Williams, former professor at East Stroudsburg University, stated that he is here to talk on behalf of the seniors, who served in World War II and helped to save this country. He said if the seniors would not have fought there would be no Board to worry about a Budget. Mr. Williams stated that the Board needs to talk about taxes and how taxpayers are going to pay for raising taxes. He stated that those who are 80 years old and above deserve a tax break on this budget. Mr. Williams stated that he did not want to take his hat off because it represents the ship he served on. He stated that the district should go after the State Legislators. Mr. Williams stated that he called the Board clones because they have no concerns for human beings. He stated that the worst people are the State Legislators. Mr. Williams stated that the Constitution says that the legislators shall provide for the education of the students of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. He asked what does provide mean; it means to pay. Mr. Williams stated that he provided for his family food, clothes and a home. Mr. Williams stated that the State Legislators should provide for the education of the students. He said all students should receive the same compensation regardless of what district they belong to. Mr. Williams suggested that the district go after Representatives Scavello, Siptroth, Boscola and all others. Mr. Williams stated that the school districts should get together and march in Harrisburg. Mr. Williams stated that he brought letters, emails and phone calls from senior citizens who responded to his letter in the paper. He asked for consideration for the senior seniors; otherwise, there will be no Eastburg.
- B. Mr. Larry Dymond stated that a lot of good ideas were discussed at the Property/Facilities Committee meeting and he suggested that some follow-up be done. He stated that his observation is that if you take our number of students and multiply it by what the State says in their costing-out study, it costs 64 million dollars to educate the students but our budget states 35-36 million dollars which is quite a gap. He stated that he thinks that the district has about 200 students which should have saved the district 3.4 million dollars. Mr. Dymond stated that the cuts thus far equals about 2 million dollars which should equal more since the district already has a 3.4 million dollar savings with 200 less students. He stated that the district has 650 teachers and if the district adds 1.7 kids to a class the

district can eliminate 100 teachers. Mr. Dymond stated that the district to not have to hold to those exact numbers but if the district adds 1-3 students in high school classroom where there are 8 students it will not create a hardship to anybody. He stated that adding the students to the classes is where the real money should be saved. Mr. Dymond stated that in the short list of things, we seem to pay too much for but he has not seen that the district has created a purchasing agent spot and stay away from bids list to drill down on daily expenses. Mr. Dymond stated that there are gaps that need to be closed up and he does not believe any of his suggestions will damage education but eliminate waste.

- C. Mr. Anthony Scott stated that he does not think that anyone should have to pay-to-play. Mr. Scott stated there are a lot of other things that come out of sports. He stated that people inspire people. Mr. Scott stated that there were two events where he saw a lot of people come out to support sports. He stated that one event was when he held a basketball game and collected 100 a piece from every store owner. Mr. Scott stated that 1,700 people came out in support of basketball. He stated that the other event was when a crowd came out when James Mungro, a graduate of East Stroudsburg, came back. He stated that a lot of students look up to James Mungro. Mr. Scott stated that there are positive influences that come out of sports. Mr. Scott stated that exercise comes out of sports as well as discipline. He stated that students desire to do the training. Mr. Scott stated that a gifted coach is just as good as a great teacher. Mr. Scott stated that if students have to pay-to-play a lot of students will fall by the way-side especially in the current state of the economy. He stated that many will not be able to play and will not have the opportunity to play sports in college like many who have been able to do so in the past. Mr. Scott stated that he does not agree with pay- to-play.
- D. Mr. Gary Summers that the 2,731,929 million dollars established goal for cutting back still means that the district will still need to raise taxes by 11.5% and they should not forget about this reality. He stated that Mr. Kresefski stated that the collection rate used in preliminary budget was 91% but in actuality it turned out to be only 87%. Mr. Summers stated that; therefore, the district has potentially another 4 million dollar problem. He stated that the district needs to do a better job and they have a tough road to go. Mr. Summers stated that district cannot change Harrisburg but if they raise the taxes 11.5% the district will have a revolt.
- E. Ms. Cheryl Wilson stated that some areas should not be cut like teachers, reduction of kindergarten day to half day and special education staff. She suggested that the district wait to get the federal stimulus to see where the district stands. Mr. Cole stated that the cutting down of kindergarten from full day to half day has been dropped and will no longer be considered as an item to cut.
- F. Mr. Robert Tudor stated that in looking at the final numbers in all cuts the maximum potential of cuts is \$12,865,000. He stated that the Board needs to look at the bottom number with the bond restructuring. Mr. Tudor stated that Ms. Doyle stated that upfront costs would be 1.3 million dollars. He stated that overall it will cost the district about 11-13 million dollars with interest. Mr. Tudor stated that by restructuring the Board keeps passing debt along to the future generations of people. He stated that at some point the district needs to stand up take the hard knocks and cut what needs to be cut. Mr. Tudor stated that some professional and support staff are being lost but has anyone looked at administrators. He stated that he is sure that the district can cut 10% from the administrator's staff. Mr. Tudor stated that sometimes it hurts to cut but the district has to cut everywhere not just cut people that directly work with the students.
- G. Mr. Roderick Smith stated that it is surprising that now the district is cutting. He said cutting is something that the Board should do as the year goes by. He said every project should be looked at very carefully to see if it is necessary or unwarranted. He said now the district wants to cut when it should happen with each and every time that comes before the Board. He said the fat should be trimmed with each item. He said and now the Board is trying to save money with pay-to-play. He said that administration cuts, fat cuts can be cut now rather than waiting. Mr. Smith asked what kind of impact with minimal cutting can be placed on the budget. He said he has asked numerous times about budget increase and no one has said anything or done anything about the budget until now.

**XI. PRESENTATION OF ADDITIONAL PROPOSALS FROM THE BOARD REGARDING POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL BUDGET CUTS AND REVISIONS.**

**ACTION BY THE BOARD:**

Motion was made by Donald Motts for administration to invite Jamie Doyle to the April 20<sup>th</sup> Board meeting at High School North to discuss the bond restructuring as a cost cutting measure in connection with the preparation and presentation of the final budget for adoption by the Board of Education. Motion was seconded by James Brunkard. A roll call vote was taken and passed 6-2. James Brunkard, Horace Cole, Robert Gress, Keith Karkut, Donald Motts and William Zacharias voted yes. Audrey Hocker and William Searfoss voted no.

- A. Mr. Gress stated that he thought the bond restructuring was going to be discussed before the end of the meeting. He suggested having Ms. Doyle come back to the April 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- B. Ms. Hocker asked when is the final budget due. Mr. Kresefski stated that the deadline by PDE guidelines to pass the final budget is June 10, 2009. Ms. Hocker stated that she does not want the district to take the bond restructuring as the crutch. She stated that the district should look as long as possible for as much fat to be cut before the bond restructuring is mentioned. Ms. Hocker stated that the bond restructuring is a large load to place on current as well as future taxpayers. Ms. Hocker stated that the 8.9 million dollars figure is still being figured into the budget cuts but feels that the district needs to really get into each one of the "nooks and crannies" and find out where the money is going.

Dr. Heath summarized that the administrators came to the Board with a preliminary budget of \$140,968,000 and then the administrators cut the budget down to \$138,716,000. She stated that she met with the administrators, directors, and central office staff to come up 20 strategies for cost savings. Dr. Heath stated that the administrators did not agree on all the strategies like all day kindergarten but presented all the strategies to the Board. She stated that over the timespan of seven meetings, the Board cut the strategies down to 10 items. She stated that with the 20 strategies there would have been a savings of \$14,000,532 but now with the ten strategies there is a cost savings of \$12,865,767. Dr. Heath stated that tonight the Board chose to move ahead with 8 cutting strategies which reduced that cost savings to about \$2,129,085 without considering the bond restructuring and without the 1 million dollars in department/building cuts. Dr. Heath stated that right now the district needs about 3 -5 million dollars in revenue due to a revenue reduction on taxes. Mr. Kresefski stated that a revenue reduction for local taxes is about 3-5 million dollars. Dr. Heath stated that in addition, the district now needs 3-5 million that has to be added to the preliminary budget. Dr. Heath stated that the district has looked at many, many areas to cut. She stated that if anyone has suggestions on areas to cut to please give them specifics. Dr. Heath stated that it is very difficult to attend 7 meetings and be told that numbers are not correct or more areas need to be looked at. She stated that a final budget needs to be completed or if, as Mr. Zacharias suggested, not to submit a final budget. She stated that Mr. Dirvonas is looking into this matter. Mr. Zacharias asked if no budget is passed will it go into referendum or does the State come and take over. Mr. Brown stated that he does not know but is looking into it. Dr. Heath stated that there are two other areas that can be looked at to add funds to the budget; the stimulus money or charging for use of facilities. She stated that she is asking for specific cuts from everyone and would be glad to sit down and discuss these cuts with anybody. Mr. Zacharias asked where does the district stand in getting to a zero tax increase budget. Mr. Kresefski stated that with tonight's 2.1 million dollars reduction and needing the high end of 5 million revenue plus the federal stimulus, he is not sure how much will be needed. Mr. Zacharias said not to look at what might come in but what we have now and how short we have come. Mr. Kresefski stated that his guess is that roughly \$300,000 is still needed to come to an 11.5 % tax increase. Mr. Zacharias asked if the district is allowed to do increase the taxes by 11.5% Mr. Kresefski stated that with the exceptions of 2.1 million dollars that he submitted to the State and with Act 1 State Law, the district is only allowed to increase the taxes by 8.5%.

Mr. Summers stated that with the preliminary assessment of revenues that the most the district can raise taxes is 8.5%. He stated that the district submitted a preliminary budget that had revenue assumptions in it. Mr. Summers stated that the district received from the State an index of 5.6%. He stated that with the exceptions the most the district can increase the taxes is by 8.5%. Mr. Kresefski stated that the district applied last Thursday the exceptions and the State is roughly allowing the district to increase the taxes by 8.5%. Mr. Summers stated that with all cuts the district will achieve an increase of taxes of 11.5% but the district will not be allowed to raise the taxes by 11.5%; therefore, the voters will have to vote because the budget will go into a referendum. Mr. Kresefski stated that the district will have to go to referendum for the taxpayers to vote on a 10% tax increase. Mr. Summers stated that the taxpayers will have to vote on the budget. Dr. Heath stated that taxpayers will vote only if the district does not cut down to the amount that is needed. Mr. Summers stated that there is no way for the district to decrease the needed 7 or 8 million dollars that are needed to get the tax increase to 8.5%. Mr. Summers stated that he would like the district to do nothing because he wants the voters to have a say on the budget.

Mr. Dymond stated that Mr. Zacharias asked what is needed to get the budget down to a zero percent tax increase. Mr. Dymond stated that the district would need to cut 20 million dollars out of the 140 million dollars budget. He said the district needs to get the budget down to \$120 million dollars in order to have a zero percent tax increase. Mr. Dymond stated that taxes, electricity and the cost of food are going up; therefore, he is hoping for no tax increase. Mr. Kresefski stated that it would require 18% cuts to bring the tax increase to zero percent.

Dr. Heath stated that the April 20<sup>th</sup> Regular Board meeting will be held at the High School North at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium. She stated that Ms. Hocker asked for student handbooks and Mrs. Rosado brought copies for the Board of the elementary and intermediate levels but Mrs. Laverdure's office will make copies of the high school handbook and forward to the Board.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT 9:26 P.M.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia L. Rosado  
Board Secretary