

# SPECIAL WEST AMWELL TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

## May 18, 2010 – 7:00 p.m.

The West Amwell Township Committee met on the above date at 7:01 p.m. Present: Mayor Molnar, Committeemen Masterson and Fisher. Hal Shute arrived at 7:10 p.m.

In compliance with the Public Meetings Act, Mayor Molnar announced that this Special Meeting was called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act with notices faxed to the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Trenton Times on May 14, 2010. A copy of this notice is and has been available to the public and is on file in the office of the Municipal Clerk.

The meeting was not recorded.

### **RESOLUTION FOR SOUTH HUNTERDON REGIONAL DEFEATED BUDGET:**

Mr. Fisher spoke briefly about the provisions of the negotiations reflected in the resolution and noted that everyone is trying. Mr. Molnar commented that in prior years, it was just “x” dollars cut whereas this year’s effort focuses more on moving forward. The ideas presented were positive and set a path for future defeated budgets that involve not only cuts but other stipulations as well. It was noted that the presented resolution was adopted by Lambertville last evening.

### **RESOLUTION #86-2010**

*“Resolution Certifying the General Fund Tax Levy for the South Hunterdon Regional High School Board of Education for the School Year 2010-2011, by the Governing Body of the Township of West Amwell, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey”*

WHEREAS, the voters of the Township of West Amwell in a duly held election, did fail to approve the General Fund Tax Levy Budget of the Board of Education of the South Hunterdon Regional High School for the school year 2010-2011; and

WHEREAS, the Education, Budgets and Appropriations Law, N.J.S.A. 28a-22-37, requires the Governing Body of the Township of West Amwell, after consultation with the South Hunterdon Regional High School Board of Education, to determine the amount which is necessary to be appropriate in such budget and to certify to the County Board of Taxation the total amount so determined; and

WHEREAS, the Governing Body of the Township of West Amwell has consulted with representatives of the South Hunterdon Regional High School Board of Education, and has thereafter determined the amount necessary to be appropriate:

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Governing Body of the Township of West Amwell, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, that the following determination is hereby made:

1. The original tax levy on the ballot for the base budget: \$8,040,666.
2. The amount of reduction to the tax levy for the base budget: \$ 228,000.
3. The amount of tax levy being certified for the base budget: \$7,812,666.
4. Specific line items to be reduced to reflect an overall reduction in the tax levy for the base budget of \$228,000 or 2.84%, which is double the arithmetic percent of failed budgets settled by Municipalities and School Boards in Hunterdon County include:
  - a. The benefits line item will be reduced by \$50,000, and the members of the collective bargaining unit will contribute 1.5% towards their health benefits plan.
  - b. The salary line item will be reduced by 3% proportionate to the raise included in the budget for those members in the collective bargaining unit or \$111,000.
  - c. South Hunterdon will reduce the budget by \$30,000 and introduce a *Student Participation Fee* for participation in extracurricular activities. The fee will be based on the following: \$100 per student or \$200 per family for the 2010/2011 fiscal year.
5. Supporting reasons for reduction: Based upon a review of all data provided by the Board of Education, meetings with representatives of the Board of Education, numerous public hearings and consideration of the public need, it has been determined that the

reductions set forth herein can be effectuated without a reduction in programs or negatively impacting upon the education of the students.

6. The revised budget is sufficient to provide a thorough and efficient education.
7. There was no additional general fund tax levy considered by the voters.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that:

1. South Hunterdon Regional High School Board of Education obtain an outside audit of special education to include all sending districts and provide for a complete review of K-12 students; and
2. South Work Group, consisting of representatives of each municipal body, the school board and the County superintendent, continue to meet throughout the upcoming school year at a schedule to be determined by the members of the Work Group; and
3. South Hunterdon Regional High School Administration and School Board Members will develop a five year plan to improve the school and address funding issues within sixty days from the date of the adoption of the school budget.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this resolution be forwarded to the South Hunterdon Regional High School Board of Education, Executive County Superintendent of Schools for Hunterdon County, and the Administrator of the Hunterdon County Board of Taxation.

The Resolution was unanimously adopted on motion by Fisher, second by Masterson.

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:**

Hal Shute questioned the amount of the cut; the percentage of the budget; why more wasn't requested; and, that perhaps a 5% cut should have been the starting point for negotiations. He also was looking for some commitment to regionalization. Mr. Fisher responded that this is an ongoing issue but there is no money; that all districts involved would have to agree; and, the time frame for a defeated budget review is constrained. However, work is progressing on regionalizing the elementary schools. Mr. Shute also inquired if there is any talk of combining the administration of South and Central. Mr. Masterson questioned if South would favor this and Mr. Molnar noted that he will continue to speak out about a shared superintendent for the two school systems but also acknowledged that there is no money for a feasibility study. He also questioned where the additional 100 students needed to bring down per pupil costs would come from unless the door is opened to East Amwell and Delaware Townships and cited a recent situation with a student for the Ag program. It was suggested that perhaps Mr. Shute should consider joining the South Work Group.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:15 p.m. on motion by Fisher, seconded by Masterson.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lora L. Olsen, RMC  
Township Clerk