

**HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE SPECIAL JOINT MEETING
TIMBERLANE MIDDLE SCHOOL CAFETORIUM**

Thursday, May 11, 2006 - 7:00 p.m.

PROPER STATEMENT OF NOTICE - Hopewell Township Mayor Sandom, who served as Chairperson, called the meeting to order stating that notice of this meeting has been forwarded to the Hopewell Valley News and The Times of Trenton on May 9, 2006.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG - Mayor Sandom led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

ROLL CALLS:

Those answering the roll call of Pennington Borough Municipal Clerk Sterling:

PRESENT: Garbel, Heinzel, Lawver, Persichilli, Tucker, Mayor Benton
ABSENT: Lytle

Those answering the roll call of Hopewell Borough Municipal Clerk Hovan:

PRESENT: Anzano, Knights, Lewis, Mackie, Morehouse, Samse, Mayor Nettles
ABSENT: None

Those answering the roll call of Hopewell Township Deputy Municipal Clerk Moore:

PRESENT: Iorio, Murphy, Sandahl, Mayor Sandom
ABSENT: None
RECUSED: Niederer
ALSO PRESENT: Township Attorney Goodell

ALSO PRESENT: School Board President Newport, Superintendent Ferguson, Business Administrator/Board Secretary Nemeth

At this time, Pennington Borough Mayor Benton recused himself from further participation in the school budget review process insofar as his wife is employed by the school district.

Pennington Borough Council Member Persichilli reviewed meetings and discussion over the past two days including a meeting of a subcommittee comprised of representatives from the three municipalities with CPA Peter Martin and school officials. Hopewell Borough Council Member Knights explained proposed budget reductions that would effect a two-cent tax reduction for each of the three towns.

Hopewell Valley Regional School Board Chair Kim Newport read a letter into the record informing that the Board's budget subcommittee is prepared to recommend that the full Board accept a reduction of \$2,140,690 in the tax levy for the 2006-2007 school year.

Council and Committee members commented on the effort to reduce the tax impact of the school budget without lowering the quality of school programming and staffing.

Mayor Sandom opened discussion to the public.

Sally Turner, a resident of Hopewell Township, opposed cuts to the school budget and urged Pennington Borough to support the vote of its residents.

Eugene Ramsey, a resident of Hopewell Township, expressed support for reductions in the school budget, the need for which was reflected in the overall vote of the communities.

There were no further comments from the public.

Hopewell Township Attorney Goodell explained a proposed joint resolution for consideration by the three governing bodies, certifying the tax levy for the Hopewell Valley Regional School District for the 2006-2007 school year.

Motion was made by Committee Member Iorio, seconded by Committee Member Murphy to adopt the joint resolution.

The Clerks of Pennington and Hopewell Boroughs called a roll call vote on the resolution: all members present voted affirmatively with the exception of Pennington Borough Council Member Lawver.

HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Iorio, Murphy, Sandahl, Mayor Sandom
NOES: None
RECUSED: Niederer

RESOLUTION #06-170

**JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL, MERCER COUNTY, THE MAYOR AND
COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF PENNINGTON, MERCER COUNTY,
AND THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF
HOPEWELL, MERCER COUNTY, CERTIFYING THE TAX LEVY
FOR THE HOPEWELL VALLEY REGIONAL SCHOOL
DISTRICT FOR THE 2006-2007 SCHOOL YEAR**

WHEREAS, on April 18, 2006, the Hopewell Valley Regional Board of Education's budget for the 2006-2007 school year was rejected at the polls; and

WHEREAS, state law (*N.J.S.A.* 18A:22-37) requires the municipalities included in a regional district to consult with the board and, by May 19, to determine the amount that is necessary to be appropriated for each item appearing in the budget, and to certify to the County Board of Taxation the totals of the amount so determined; and

WHEREAS, the Hopewell Valley Regional School District is comprised of the municipalities of Hopewell Township, Hopewell Borough and Pennington Borough; and

WHEREAS, on May 9, 2006, the governing bodies of the three municipalities held a joint public meeting with the Board of Education to consult on the board's budget; and

WHEREAS, at the joint public meeting, the superintendent of schools presented the board's budget, school district staff answered questions about the budget from members of the governing bodies, and members of the public voiced their opinions about whether the budget should be maintained or reduced; and

WHEREAS, the three municipalities together hired a consultant, Peter S. Martin, C.P.A., C.V.A., of the accounting firm of Civale, Silvestri, Alfieri, Martin & Higgins, LLC, to assist them in their review of the school board budget; and

WHEREAS, the governing bodies of the three municipalities held a joint public meeting on May 11, 2006, to determine the appropriate school tax levy; and

WHEREAS, the governing bodies agree that the school board budget can be reduced without adversely affecting the stability of the district or the district's ability to offer a thorough and efficient education to its students.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Hopewell, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Hopewell, and the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pennington, as follows:

1. The original general fund tax levy on the ballot for the base budget of the Hopewell Valley Regional School District was **\$57,202,608**.
2. The amount of reduction to the general fund tax levy for the base budget is **\$2,140,694**.
3. The amount of general fund tax levy being certified by municipal government for the base budget is **\$55,061,914**.
4. The specific line item reductions and increases in budgeted revenues and the supporting reasons for each reduction or increase are as follows:
 - a. General fund balance increase – capital reserve appropriation of \$534,809 anticipated from 2005-2006 school year budget allotted for 2006-2007 tax relief.
 - b. General fund balance increase – maintenance reserve appropriation of \$328,824 anticipated from 2005-2006 school year budget allotted for 2006-2007 tax relief.
 - c. General fund balance increase – additional surplus of \$250,691 anticipated in the 2005-2006 school year budget available to be appropriated for 2006-2007 tax relief. The district has notified that it will receive additional extraordinary aid from the state.
 - d. Health benefits, item 11-000-291-270, is reduced by \$307,000, because the district has been notified by its insurance carrier of adjusted 2006-2007 premiums.
 - e. Construction services, item 12-000-400-450, are reduced by \$719,370, because the district has elected to defer various capital projects.
5. The revised budget is sufficient to provide a thorough and efficient education to the students of the Hopewell Valley Regional School District.
6. This budget, with the reductions made by the governing bodies, is not below the Minimum T&E amount established by the State Department of Education.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the accountant's worksheet summarizing the changes to the tax levy be attached to this resolution as Appendix A.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Mercer County Board of Taxation, the Mercer County Superintendent of Schools, and the Hopewell Valley Regional Board of Education.

At 6:55 p.m., Motion was made by Murphy, seconded by Sandahl to adjourn the meeting.
MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

ANNE B. MOORE
DEPUTY MUNICIPAL CLERK,
HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP