

**HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING
HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING AUDITORIUM**

Wednesday, September 20, 2006 - 5:02 p.m.

PROPER STATEMENT OF NOTICE –Mayor Sandom called the meeting to order stating that notice of the meeting had been posted on the municipal bulletin board and forwarded to the Hopewell Valley News and The Times (the official newspapers) on September 18, 2006 in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975.

ROLL CALL: Those answering the roll call of the Deputy Municipal Clerk:

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Niederer, Sandahl, Mayor Sandom

ABSENT: Iorio, Murphy

STAFF PRESENT: Township Administrator Hilling, Township Attorney Goodell, Deputy Municipal Clerk Moore

NON-BINDING REFERENDUM CONCERNING COURTESY BUSING

Mayor Sandom read into the record a resolution rescinding resolution #06-268 that authorized the placement of a non-binding referendum on the November general election ballot concerning payment for non-mandated school busing. As noted in the resolution, a task force has been formed to study the issue, and the Committee is of the opinion that such a referendum should not be offered pending the outcome of the findings of the task force.

Mayor Sandom solicited comments from the public.

Robert Giangrasso, a resident of Chicory Lane, expressed support for the proposed resolution to delay a referendum on the question of payment for school busing pending additional research on the matter.

There were no further comments from the public.

Township Committee members commented individually on the proposed resolution. Mayor Sandom reported that she had notified the school district and the Boroughs of Hopewell and Pennington of the Committee's intent to withdraw the referendum question. Committee Member Sandahl concurred that the matter needed further investigation as to the number of affected students and possible alternatives prior to posing the question of payment by township residents. Committee Member Niederer referred to a report prepared by a Hopewell Valley Regional School District Ad Hoc Committee on Courtesy Busing that the elimination of all busing under the state approved mileage is not feasible and that anticipated cost savings may not be realized as expected by the school board. The report stated a recommendation to "postpone the elimination of courtesy busing until a more comprehensive approach could be planned and implemented." Committee Member Niederer expressed her support for postponing the public question pending further review of the non-mandated school busing issue.

A brief discussion was held as to potential membership of a task force on non-mandated school busing.

RESOLUTION #06-304. Read by title.

Motion by Sandahl, seconded by Niederer to adopt Resolution #06-304.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Niederer, Sandahl, Mayor Sandom

NOES: None

ABSENT: Iorio, Murphy

R E S O L U T I O N #06-304

A RESOLUTION RESCINDING RESOLUTION #06-268

WHEREAS, on August 17, 2006, the Hopewell Valley Board of Education sent a letter to Hopewell Township purportedly "transferring" the obligation for non-mandated busing to the Township pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 18A:39-1.2*; and

WHEREAS, on August 21, the Township Committee adopted Resolution #06-268, authorizing a non-binding referendum to determine public opinion about the Township paying for non-mandated busing; and

WHEREAS, since the time that resolution was adopted, representatives of the school district have agreed to meet with representatives of Hopewell Township, Hopewell Borough and Pennington Borough, the three municipalities comprising the school district; and

WHEREAS, the three municipalities will form a Task Force to study the issues and costs relating to busing of students for safety reasons; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee has determined that it should not hold a non-binding referendum before the Task Force can study the issue and determine the scope of the problem.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Hopewell, that Resolution #06-268 is hereby rescinded, and the Township Clerk is directed to notify the Mercer County Clerk that the previously-requested non-binding referendum not be placed on the November ballot.

PUBLIC SECTION

There were no comments from the public.

EXECUTIVE SESSION RESOLUTION. Read into the record.

Mayor Sandom stated that the special meeting would not reconvene following the executive session.

Motion by Sandahl, seconded by Niederer to go to Executive Session to discuss legal matters.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

EXECUTIVE SESSION RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the Township Committee to discuss legal matters; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 permits the Township Committee to conduct a meeting from which the public is excluded in order to discuss such matters; and

WHEREAS, the time when and circumstances under which discussion conducted in executive session may be disclosed to the public is when appropriate.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, on this 20th day of September 2006, by the Township Committee of the Township of Hopewell, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey, that the Township Committee shall forthwith conduct an executive session to discuss the above.

At 5:21 p.m. the Executive Session was held.

At 5:31 p.m., Motion by Niederer, seconded by Sandahl to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

ANNE B. MOORE
DEPUTY MUNICIPAL CLERK