

**RIVERSIDE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
PUBLIC HEARING
MAY 2, 2019**

A Public Hearing for the 2019-2020 Budget of the Riverside Township Board of Education was held on Thursday, May 2, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in the Elementary School Cafeteria.

Present were: R. Gonteski, D. Graf, M. Holak, T. McElroy, J. Mongon, S. Parker,
M. Pinho, D. Potts, R. Ehrich, and J. Lennon

Absent was: J. D'Agostino

Mr. Potts led the flag salute.

Mrs. Lennon announced that adequate notice of the meeting had been given to the public by advertising in the Burlington County Times on April 12, 2019.

BUSINESS & FINANCIAL

Public Hearing on the 2019-2020 Budget

Ms. Ehrich and Mrs. Lennon presented the budget to the public.

Open to public comments:

Kim Clauss requested a separate meeting to discuss the security grant and safety concerns.

Christy Veasy asked at what point will the district look at having more security in our school – in addition to our SRO.

Monique Gale expressed concerns about people being able to walk into the building with a gun or a knife, and that the district needs to find a way to prevent this.

Lavena Pleva questioned what was in the security grant and requested that the district hire another security person.

Adoption of 2019-2020 Budget

On the motion by Mrs. Pinho, seconded by Dr. Parker, and carried unanimously, Be It Resolved that the Riverside Township Board of Education hereby approves the adoption of the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Statement which sets the amount of the total budget, with a tax levy as follows:

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Local Tax Levy</u>
General Fund	\$23,873,830	\$8,358,099
Special Revenue Fund	2,135,967	
Debt Service Fund	758,030	758,030
Total Base Budget	\$26,767,827	\$9,116,129

VOTE-Aye: R. Gonteski, D. Graf, M. Holak, T. McElroy, J. Mongon, S. Parker,
M. Pinho, D. Potts

Nay: 0

Carried

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Acknowledgement of Visitors:

Mr. Mongon read a statement:

The Riverside Board of Education and the Superintendent are aware of the concerns that have been expressed by various parents regarding the handling of a recent racial bias incident in the Riverside Middle School. We understand many of you are here tonight to voice those concerns during our public comment portion of the meeting. We welcome your feedback and will do our best to answer any remaining questions. We trust that your comments, positive and negative, will be delivered in a civil and respectful manner.

Nicolette Scruggs expressed her concerns as to why she wasn't notified about the issue and why school personnel was not aware. She feels the school is not being proactive.

Ms. Ehrich explained that she owns the decision of the timing of notice. Robert Muccilli, Esq. explained the school's responsibilities under the memorandum of agreement between the school and law enforcement.

Mr. and Mrs. Scruggs wanted to know if they will get earlier communication next time and Mr. Muccilli explained that each situation will have to be handled on an individual basis.

Lavena Pleva asked why parents couldn't know about the threat this time, if they were told last year when there was a threat.

Michelle Higginbotham questioned why Delanco parents received notice about the situation on April 4th and Riverside did not? She felt that all parents wanted was to know there was an issue.

Dalia Kiewell explained that children saw the threat and were terrified. It could not be swept under the rug because there was a group of people who were targeted and it needed to be addressed. She asked for communication about what steps would be taken to address it. She also said her children had anxiety about the extra police presence.

Monique Gale asked if May 1 would have to be made-up because of all the absences and that it was not fair to be recorded as an unexcused absence.

Mr. Muccilli explained that the state requires it be recorded as such.

Christy Veasy clarified the definition of absences according to the state.

Mr. Mongon thanked everyone who came out to the meeting and encouraged them to come to more meetings.

Ms. Ehrich stated that she heard the concerns expressed and will work to make the parents and students feel safer.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mrs. Pinho, seconded by Mr. Holak and carried unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jodi Lennon
Board Secretary