

**MILFORD BOROUGH DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION  
PRELIMINARY BUDGET WORKING MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 10, 2021**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

This meeting of the Milford Borough Board of Education was convened at 7:03 p.m. by Laura Hanson, Board President, who announced, "In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 19:4-6) adequate notice of this meeting has been provided to the Hunterdon County Democrat, the Express-Times, at the Milford Elementary School, the Borough Hall and filing in the Board Office with the Board Secretary."

**II. FLAG SALUTE**

**III. ATTENDANCE**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Ben Cramer, Teresa Kane, Laura Hanson, Nicole Kempf and Jill Seeland

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS:**

Dr. Rick Falkenstein, Superintendent  
Michele McCann, RSBA, School Business  
Administrator/Board Secretary

**PUBLIC:**

Elisa Yeager, Town Liason

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

*This is the portion of our meeting reserved for public comment pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(a), the Open Public Meetings Act. Members of the public are invited to address the Board according to the Board's policy and by-laws. Each participant shall be limited to three minutes duration. Please be aware that this portion is your opportunity to comment, and is not a forum for the Board to respond to your comments. However, the Board will certainly give all comments appropriate consideration.*

*Elisa discussed the snow issue that the town was aware and the situation of the amount of snow and COVID exposure compounded the issue of snow removal. A mailing next December will discuss the importance of clearing the sidewalk. The DEP is delaying the property but would like to have student ideas on how to utilize the property. The Town is working on the cost benefit analysis of joining the county library system for enhanced community use.*

**Action 21-026**

**RESOLUTION**

***BE IT RESOLVED*** that the Board of Education approves the following resolution:

***WHEREAS***, the Milford Public School Board of Education recognizes school staff and Board members will incur travel expenses related to and within the scope of their current



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Handwritten text in the upper right quadrant, possibly a date or a specific entry.

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Handwritten text in the middle right section, possibly a signature or a specific entry.

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Handwritten text in the lower right section, possibly a date or a specific entry.

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*responsibilities and for travel that promotes the delivery of instruction or furthers the efficient operation of the school district; and*

*WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12 et seq. requires Board members to receive prior approval of these expenses by a majority of the full voting membership of the Board and staff members to receive prior approval of these expenses by the Superintendent of Schools and a majority of the full voting membership of the Board; and*

*WHEREAS, a Board of Education may establish, for regular district business travel only as described in NJOMB Circular Letter 06-14, including amendments or revisions thereto, a threshold amount below which Board approval is not required; and*

*WHEREAS, the Board of Education establishes, for regular district business travel only, an annual school year threshold of \$150.00 per employee as described in N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3B and where prior Board approval shall not be required unless this annual threshold is exceeded in a given school year (July 1 through June 30); and*

*WHEREAS, the Board of Education finds that a mileage reimbursement rate equal to that of the NJOMB mileage reimbursement rate is a reasonable rate: and*

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED*** the Board of Education approves the amounts set forth for regular district business travel and statutorily authorizes travel expenditures, provided that such expenditures are within the annual maximum travel expenditure amount.

*Moved by L. Hanson, seconded by B. Cramer on roll call vote, resolution was ADOPTED as follows ayes, 5; nays,0.*

**Action 21-027**

**RESOLUTION**

***BE IT RESOLVED*** that the Board of Education approves the 2021-2022 preliminary budget:

*WHEREAS, the 2021-2022 preliminary budget includes sufficient funds to implement the proposed planning process as described in this district's Annual Report pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A and N.J.A.C. Title 6 and 6A and to provide curriculum and instruction which will enable all students to achieve the Core Curriculum Content Standards;*

***BE IT RESOLVED*** the Board of Education approves the 2021-2022 preliminary budget in the amount of \$2,919,016 and authorizes its submission to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools for approval as follows:

General Operating Expense	\$ 2,860,269
Special Revenue Fund	\$ 16,700
Repayment of Debt	\$ 42,047
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 2,919,016</b>

***BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED***, that the 2021-2022 preliminary budget is supported by the

following revenues:

<b>General Fund Revenue</b>		
<b>Local Revenues:</b>		
Local Tax Levy	\$ 1,983,200	
Miscellaneous Revenues	\$ 39,210	
<b>Total Local Revenue</b>		\$2,022,410
<b>State Revenues:</b>		
School Choice Aide	\$ 63,415	
Special Education Aide	\$ 52,412	
Equalization Aide	\$ 122,032	
<b>Total State Revenues</b>	\$	\$ 237,859
<b>Total General Fund Revenues</b>		\$ 2,260,269
<b>Special Revenue (Grants)</b>		\$ 16,700
<b>Debt Service Fund Revenues:</b>		
Local Tax Levy		\$ 42,047
<b>Total Revenues</b>		\$ 2,319,016

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Milford Public School Board of Education acknowledges that the 2021-2022 preliminary budget as described above results in a General Fund Tax Levy in the amount of \$1,983,200.00 and Debt Service Tax Levy in the amount of \$42,047.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the preliminary budget will be advertised in the Hunterdon County Democrat newspaper in accordance with the form suggested by the State Department of Education and according to law; and

**NOW, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a Board of Education meeting be held on April 28, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the budget for the 2021-2022 school year.

Moved by L. Hanson, seconded by B. Cramer on roll call vote, resolution was ADOPTED as follows ayes, 5; nays,0.

**Action 21-028**

**RESOLUTION**

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves the following as part of the 2021-2022 Budget submission a \$600,000 capital reserve project withdrawal is reflected on the Recapitulation of Balance for removal and replacement of the underground storage tank. The project requires approval by the School Development Authority and will be bid according to all applicable laws and regulations.

Moved by L. Hanson, seconded by B. Cramer on roll call vote, resolution was ADOPTED as

*follows ayes, 5; nays, 0.*

**Action 21-029**

**RESOLUTION**

***BE IT RESOLVED*** that the Board of Education approves Motion to approve the following resolution:

***WHEREAS***, P.L.2020, c.44 ("Chapter 44") requires the School Employees' Health Benefits Program (SEHBP) to offer plans, beginning on January 1, 2021, for medical and prescription benefits coverage including the New Jersey Educators Health Plan (NJEHP); as adopted and implemented by the School Employees' Health Benefits Commission; and

***WHEREAS***, Chapter 44 established reduced premium contributions for any employee who selects, or is placed into, the NJEHP as his or her health care coverage option; and

***WHEREAS***, The SEHBP applies to the following employers who elect to participate in the SEHBP: local school district, regional school district, county vocational school district, county special services school district, jointure commission, educational services commission, state-operated school district, charter school; and

***WHEREAS***, The provisions of Chapter 44 also apply to these same employers even if they do not elect to participate in the SEHBP; and

***WHEREAS***, Many school districts had previously negotiated health benefit agreements with lower net costs compared to the plan design and cost-sharing requirements under "Chapter 44," and/or have staff that previously declined coverage but now are choosing to enroll in the NJEHP due to its low employee cost-sharing provisions; and

***WHEREAS***, A significant number of school districts will experience a net increase in their health care costs because the NJEHP premiums are higher than the premiums for the collectively bargained plans previously offered by the district, which is further exacerbated by reduced employee contributions under Chapter 44; and

***WHEREAS***, Other school districts will experience a net increase in their overall health care costs even if the NJEHP premiums are lower than that of the previous plan offerings because the reduction in employee contributions will offset any overall premium savings, resulting in increased net costs to the district; and

***WHEREAS***, The low employee contribution requirements under NJEHP encourage employees who had previously waived or declined coverage to enroll thereby increasing the districts' health benefit costs for the balance of fiscal year 2021, continuing into fiscal year 2022 and likely beyond; and

***WHEREAS***, These costs may exceed districts' ability to address within their budgets owing to the limitations of the 2% property tax levy cap; and

***WHEREAS***, Chapter 44 was a well-intentioned proposal that aimed to generate hundreds of

*millions of dollars in savings for school districts, school employees and taxpayers; and*

***WHEREAS, While some school districts may indeed be realizing savings due to the provisions of Chapter 44, many are experiencing the opposite effect and witnessing an increase in their health care costs, which may result in cuts to critical programs, services and staff in order to balance their budgets; and***

***WHEREAS, Since Chapter 44 essentially froze the level of health benefits and employee contributions for the seven-year period following the law's effective date, districts are unable to control cost increases through the traditional collective bargaining process; and***

***WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon the Legislature and Governor to address and correct the unintended financial consequences districts are experiencing due to Chapter 44 and ensure that all districts share in the anticipated savings.***

***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Milford Public School Board of Education requests that the State Legislature and Governor provide relief from the increased health care costs experienced by school districts due to the implementation of Chapter 44; and be it further***

***RESOLVED, that relief from Chapter 44 should include direct, short-term assistance from the state to ensure that all school districts are held financially harmless in both the current and subsequent fiscal years; and be it further***

***RESOLVED, that the Legislature and Governor should expeditiously begin to explore long-term structural reforms that reverse the unintended consequences of Chapter 44 and generate lasting savings for school districts, employees and taxpayers; and be it further***

***RESOLVED, that any proposals to amend or revise Chapter 44 include input from all affected stakeholders before moving forward, including feedback from representatives of local boards of education, school business administrators, superintendents, building-level supervisors and school employees; and be it further***

***RESOLVED, that this resolution be delivered to Governor Phil Murphy, State Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney, Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin; and the Milford Legislative District's representatives in the state Senate and General Assembly; and be it further***

***RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be sent to the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials and the New Jersey School Boards Association.***

***Moved by L. Hanson, seconded by B. Cramer on roll call vote, resolution was ADOPTED as follows ayes, 5; nays, 0.***

## **VIII NEW BUSINESS**

## **IX OLD BUSINESS**

**X RECOGNITION OF THE PUBLIC**

**Action 21-030**

**RESOLUTION**

**BE IT RESOLVED** *that the Board of adjourns the meeting at 8:08 p.m.*

*Moved by L. Hanson, seconded by N. Kempf, on roll call vote, resolution was ADOPTED as follows ayes, 5; nays, 0.*

Respectfully Submitted,



Michele McCann

School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Minutes remain unofficial until Board Approval on March 30, 2021

Approved:  
DocuSigned by:



Board President