

**BOROUGH OF WOODCLIFF LAKE
MAYOR AND COUNCIL MINUTES
September 20, 2010
7:00 p.m.**

CALL TO ORDER.

This special meeting, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Law, P. L. 1975, C. 231, has been posted, and two newspapers, The Record and The Ridgewood News, have been notified.

ROLL CALL.

Mayor LaPaglia was present. Councilmembers Bader, Camella, Glaser and Hoffman were present. Mr. Rosenblatt was absent. Administrator Sandve was absent. Attorney Madaio and Borough Clerk Sciara were present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor LaPaglia.

Mayor LaPaglia asked the Council and members of the audience to observe a moment of silence for Marijane Singer, wife of Frederick Singer, a former Councilman, Planning Board and Board of Education member. Mrs. Singer was a long time director of the wildlife museum located on the former Blauvelt estate in Oradell. She was very involved in many community and civic affairs.

Mayor LaPaglia stated that he has been involved with the regional school district funding formula since 2004. The Borough of Oradell has had the same issue with the inequity of the school funding formula between the per pupil cost paid by Oradell and River Edge. Mayor LaPaglia is not advocating class size reduction, the overall budget, or the number of students. He is against the school funding formula as dictated by the State of New Jersey. The funding formula worked very well for many years. The allocation was simple. An overall budget was formulated, divided by the number of students attending which was the average cost per student. The State changed the funding formula after a 1970's Supreme Court Hearing, Robinson vs. Cahill. To soften the impact from student enrollment to property taxes, the State permitted a 5 year phase in which was fully implemented in 1981. Woodcliff Lake historically encouraged corporate development as illustrated by the location of BMW and EASAI. Gradually, the formula began to show an inequity in the increase of the cost per student of Woodcliff Lake as compared to the other sending districts.

Mayor LaPaglia made a visit to the then Superintendent of Schools of the Pascack Valley Regional High School. The Mayor asked "what is it about Woodcliff Lake kids that cost so much more?" The then Superintendent answered, "Nothing, they all cost the same!" The Mayor continued that there is no greater potential savings to the residents of Woodcliff Lake than the possible change to the funding formula. Woodcliff Lake is not asking the other towns to

subsidize their children. In 1993 the State recognized the error of their Supreme Court decision and stated that any new school districts created could use the old formula. Mayor LaPaglia stressed that the voters of Woodcliff Lake need to send a message to the State over the current funding formula. He hopes that there is significant voter turn-out.

Mayor LaPaglia distributed a worksheet showing the budget allocation inequity between the sending districts of the Pascack Valley Regional High School District. The fundamental flaw in the Mayor's opinion is that property values do not drive school costs. The number of students dictates the number of classrooms, teachers, books etc.

Budget Allocation Inequity

Sending Town	Number of Students	Current Budget Allocation	Cost Per Student	Original Budget Allocation based on Avg.
Hillsdale	642	\$9,527,492	\$14,840	\$12,513,222
Montvale	454	\$9,942,305	\$21,899	\$8,848,914
River Vale	568	\$9,459,392	\$16,654	\$11,070,888
Woodcliff Lake	388	\$11,066,026	\$28,521	\$7,562,508
Rounding Difference				-\$317
Total/Average	2052	\$39,995,215	(avg) 19,491	\$39,995,215

PUBLIC FORUM.

Question and Answer Public Forum on the vote to change the school funding formula for the Pascack Valley Regional High School District

Motion to open the meeting to the public was made by, second by and approved unanimously by voice call vote.

Jane Grinch, 94 Woodcliff Avenue asked what the next step to this process is. The Mayor explained to the attending residents the study prepared by Vito Gagliardi, Esq., considered an expert in the dissolution process for the Borough of Montvale and Woodcliff Lake. He has successfully petitioned the State for the town of North Haledon in their fight for a more equitable funding formula in their school district. This referendum is a required next step in the process to be heard by the State Department of Education.

Mr. Camella stated that Woodcliff Lake and Montvale are trying to move the process along. It could put a great deal of pressure to Hillsdale and River Vale to reach a compromise. This

matter could go before the Supreme Court. The State Department of Education ultimately has the final say.

R. Newman, 189 Glen Road asked what the net changes would be if we were to split from Hillsdale and River Vale. Mayor LaPaglia stated that he did not know what the net changes would be by creating two regional high schools instead of one. Woodcliff Lake does not currently receive much State aid. Mr. Bader stressed that a possible split of the districts will not affect the level of education. Possible reductions could come from the reduction in the hierarchy of the school staff.

R. Nathin, 17 Hunter Ridge, Woodcliff Lake Board of Education President, stated that due to State aid cuts, any funding received for the Woodcliff Lake School District has been earmarked for special education.

Diana DiGiralomo, 19 Wright Street North stated that the savings by eliminating a superintendent and assistants could be significant.

Councilman Robert Rosenblatt arrived on the dais. The time is 7:58 p.m.

Fred Messner, 30 Ravine Drive, asked how the Council was going to publicize the importance of this vote. Mayor LaPaglia stated that the local newspapers have done an excellent job in reporting on this issue. There is information on the Borough's website, www.wclnj.com on this important issue. Mr. Bader stated that the best way to get people out to vote is by word of mouth.

Bert Taylor, 1 Stratford Court commented that River Vale and Hillsdale will fight this matter until the ends of the earth. Mr. Taylor asked if the other towns are paying their fair share of residential assessments. Mayor LaPaglia answered that this is the fallacy. Although Woodcliff Lake has more commercial rateables, this type of development does not generate students.

D. Baggio, 11 Mill Road Extension asked if there would be repercussions should we merge with Montvale. Mayor LaPaglia stated that we are classified as a "J" district as is Montvale. This is the highest educational group in the State.

Motion to close this portion of the meeting and to continue with the scheduled Mayor and Council meeting as announced at the Reorganization Meeting on January 4, 2010 made by Mr. Camella, second by Mr. Bader and approved unanimously by voice call vote.

There will be a 10 minute recess between the special meeting and the regular scheduled Mayor and Council meeting.