

JACKSON TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION  
OFFICIAL BOARD MEETING  
APRIL 10, 2025  
JACKSON LIBERTY HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

An Official Meeting of the Jackson Township Board of Education was held in compliance with the Open Public Meeting Law and was called to order by Board President, Tina Kas, at 5:09 p.m. on April 10, 2025.

Present: Dr. Osmond (arrived at 5:10pm)  
Mr. Walsh  
Mr. McCarron  
Mrs. Rivera  
Mrs. Barocas  
Mrs. Gardella (arrived at 5:25pm)  
Mrs. Kas

Also present: Mrs. N. Pormilli, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. D. Baginski, Business Administrator/Board Secretary; Mr. R. Rotante, Assistant Superintendent; Dr. L. Godlesky, Assistant Superintendent; Carole Morris, State Appointed Monitor, and Mr. M. Zitomer, Board Attorney.

On a motion by Mrs. Rivera, seconded by Mr. Walsh, the Board of Education opened the Executive Session to discuss contracts; employment of personnel-terms and conditions of employment; pending litigation; investigations, and matters falling within the attorney-client privilege with respect to these subjects. This meeting was not open to the public. The Board would reconvene at approximately 7:00 p.m. in the Jackson Liberty High School Auditorium at which time action would be taken.

Exec  
Session

The Official Meeting of the Jackson Township Board of Education reconvened in compliance with the Open Public Meeting Law and was called to order by Board President, Mrs. Kas, at 7:07 p.m. On a motion by Dr. Osmond, seconded by Mr. Walsh, the Board closed public session to go back into a closed session meeting at 7:08 p.m.

Recon-  
vene

The Official Meeting of the Jackson Township Board of Education reconvened in compliance with the Open Public Meeting Law and was called to order by Board President, Mrs. Kas, at 7:40 p.m.

Present: Dr. Osmond  
Mr. Walsh  
Mr. McCarron  
Mrs. Rivera  
Mrs. Barocas  
Mrs. Gardella  
Mrs. Kas

Also present: Mrs. N. Pormilli, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. R. Rotante, Assistant Superintendent; Dr. L. Godlesky, Assistant Superintendent; Mr. D. Baginski, Business Administrator/Board Secretary; Carole Morris, State Appointed Monitor, and Mr. M. Zitomer, Board Attorney.

After the salute to the flag and the Certification of the meeting according to the tenets of the Open Public Meeting Law, the Board President, Mrs. Kas, made the following statement:

“This meeting is in compliance with the Open Public Meeting Law and has been duly advertised in the newspaper as an Official Meeting.”

Roll Call Vote: Yes: Dr. Osmond  
Mr. Walsh  
Mr. McCarron  
Mrs. Rivera  
Mrs. Barocas  
Mrs. Gardella  
Mrs. Kas

#### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

On a motion by Mrs. Rivera, seconded by Mr. Walsh, the Board of Education opened discussion to approve the agenda as submitted by the Superintendent of Schools.

Approve  
Agenda

Board Attorney Marc Zitomer read the change to the resolution that will replace Finance #1 on the agenda.

The Board voted to approve the agenda with the addition read by Attorney Mr. Zitomer.

Roll Call Vote: Yes: Dr. Osmond  
Mr. Walsh  
Mr. McCarron  
Mrs. Rivera  
Mrs. Barocas  
Mrs. Gardella  
Mrs. Kas

#### **MOTION CARRIED**

#### **SUPERINTENDENTS REPORT/INFORMATION ITEMS**

Being this is a special meeting, Mrs. Pormilli noted she has nothing to report tonight and turned the meeting back to Mrs. Kas.

## **PUBLIC FORUM**

Public  
Forum

On a motion by Mrs. Rivera, seconded by Mr. Walsh, the public forum was opened by acclamation.

Mrs. Kas made the following statement: "Please state your name and whether or not you are a Jackson resident. Each person has three minutes to speak. No person may speak more than once on a topic until all others have been heard."

Mrs. Kas asked if anyone would like to speak to please come up.

Seeing no one else come forward, on a motion by Mrs. Rivera, seconded by Mr. Walsh, the public forum was closed by acclamation.

## **RESOLUTIONS FOR ACTION**

Based on the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resolutions were presented for formal approval by the Board of Education.

### **FINANCE:**

On a motion by Mrs. Rivera, seconded by Mrs. Kas, the Board of Education approved the following motions on Students.

1. The Board of Education approves the following Resolution for the Application Submission for Additional Expenditures and Tax Incentive Aid for the 2025-2026 Budget:

#### **Application Submission – Additional Expenditures and Tax Incentive Aid**

**Whereas**, in the proposed FY2026 State Budget, certain districts have the opportunity to apply to the Commissioner of Education to increase expenditures, including an allocation of Tax Levy Incentive Aid, in order to satisfy the thoroughness and efficiency standards established pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-46, and

**Whereas**, the Jackson School District is below local fair share and spending below adequacy to be eligible to participate in this program, and

**Whereas**, the Jackson School District is eligible to increase expenditures by up to \$32,473,687.00 and qualify for Tax Levy Incentive Aid in the amount of up to \$1,000,000.00, and,

**Whereas**, the Jackson Board of Education hereby *declines* to submit an application to the Department of Education to increase the tax levy beyond that which was approved by the Board of Education at its preliminary budget meeting on March 19, 2025 because the Board does not wish to tax its already overtaxed constituents;

**Now therefore**, be it resolved that the Board hereby declines to submit an application to the State because this Board has taken all reasonable steps to provide a thorough and efficient education to its students with no help from the Department of Education and a funding formula that has irreparably harmed the Jackson School District, and

**Now therefore**, be it **finally resolved** that a copy of this Resolution shall be sent to our local legislators, the New Jersey School Boards Association, the Commissioner of Education & Governor Murphy.

Mrs. Kas opened the floor to the Board for discussion.

Mrs. Gardella stated that Jackson had a 9.9% tax increase last year and our community was taxed through reconsolidation and reconfiguration. She said if the state came forward with a resolution to help us with some of our expenses that are out of our control or state mandates to help us, she would be in agreement. However, this tax incentive is saying it will bring us up to adequacy but she thinks we could raise our taxes through this but we have expenses that aren't going to maintain it. She wants someone to pay attention to us because this idea of raising taxes is nonsense. She asked where the legislation is that is going to help us keep up with all the expenses and state mandates that are out of our control. We would have to raise our tax levy every year to keep up. If state mandates are exceeding a certain dollar amount, going up to adequacy is not going to solve our sustainability problem. She is glad the Board is not being silent about not raising the tax levy because we need to be heard.

Mr. Walsh talked about the adequacy numbers he reviewed and where they came from and they make no sense. He said they use salary averages from 2022-24 and the value of homes from 2020-22 and these numbers don't match. So, somebody should look at how they formulated this adequacy number.

Dr. Osmond is glad the Board agreed to not do this application. She thinks we cannot accept the proposed tax levy incentive program and must also reject any tax increase that's higher than the tentative budget our community already expects. The job of the Board is to protect Jackson citizens and defend our rights to make local decisions without state interference. Another tax increase after the previous one-time 9.9% increase is unacceptable because this breaks the public's trust and it goes against responsible local control. The cap was created to stop school board members from putting too much of a tax burden on the community. It is a safety measure against financial irresponsibility and it gives the taxpayers stability. Our current problem is that the state doesn't share the money fairly. Additional tax increases will come across like we don't care about our community. The real problem is the state's unfair funding formula. She thinks we need to reject any temporary fixes and false promises like this tax levy incentive program which to her is an attempt to hide the state's failure with short-term unsustainable measures and false incentives. We can't keep relying on land sales and one-time bailouts. Our transportation expenses are just going to keep going up and there are laws giving people rights to certain funds. Until they fix that, we're never going making adequacy. She is proud of our board for standing up for this because the state needs to help us sustain in the long-term. We are a unique district with a unique population living in this town so our needs are not the same as every other town. Raising taxes is not helping and it doesn't seem right.

Mrs. Barocas stated she had a lot of time to look at everything discussed and questioned the adequacy. She noted in 2010 there was 2% tax cap signed into law, in 2018 S2 funding was signed into law that would cut your school funding and then there was an increase non-public transportation, multilanguage learners and in special education and inflation.

Mrs. Kas recalled the Governor and the commissioner claiming and boasting that all NJ districts were fully funded. She asked if that is true and all towns were fully funded, why would Jackson and other NJ towns have to raise their taxes to bring themselves to adequacy? Rising non-public, multi-language learners and special needs populations create substantial state mandated budget expenses so when these budget expenses supersede your public funding you're never going to get to adequacy. So, unless this formula is changed, we are going to keep falling behind. The State wants us to raise taxes for the mistakes that they made. If we raise taxes by 2% but our non-public costs increase by more than 2% annually, we are never going to get ahead. The Board members respect each other but she thinks the public thinks the Board makes arbitrary decisions and have received very negative emails and comments from people in town. She noted this has been a hard decision and noted the Board was elected into these positions by the people of this town and they don't make these decisions lightly. The Board reviews many micro pieces of information and decisions are made then, the State comes in and makes changes with short timelines. She needs our governor and our commissioner to recognize our students as students of this state not just students of this town.

Mrs. Gardella noted this decision is not going to make it easier because we are taking a stand hoping the State will listen. She thinks we need to come together and make noise to the people who can actually make a change. She noted we have staff members and parents that should be standing up and saying what's right. She noted no one is paying attention to our district.

Mrs. Kas noted Mrs. Pormilli has invited the commissioner and the Governor to our meetings and has never come. The commissioner doesn't want to really pay attention to us. Mrs. Morris' boss came and looked at everything but made no comments. No one wants to address Jackson and we don't know why. We stated all of the problems we didn't create and the state took away our funding for budget expenses and state mandated issues that we're required to pay.

Mrs. Gardella stated we are already paying income tax and we are not getting it back. According to our legislator, Jackson pays \$75 million in income tax and it only gets \$20 million of it back. So, if they gave us the \$35 million more needed, we would still be able to give to other districts who are in need.

Dr. Osmond agrees with Mrs. Gardella that Jackson is paying \$70 million in taxes and getting about \$22 million back. She does know the State gets to allocate it to other districts in need that don't have a tax base but it is insane that the ones paying the taxes is not even up to adequacy.

Mrs. Kas noted the State is giving a \$1 million-dollar incentive to the 300 districts that apply and raise their taxes and they can't give us any money. So, the State wants us to raise your taxes after already being taxed so they can give 300 districts a million-dollar incentive and they can't help us but they give to other districts.

Mrs. Gardella looked at the district organizational chart and asked who are we cutting. We still have a lot of students and we looked at every possible position and we don't have much room to cut. We need the people to say something in addition to this Board saying something because we need someone to pay attention.

Dr. Osmond noted we are not allowed to speak about other towns so we are not learning the lessons from what happened somewhere else. The State is not trying to figure out how to make this right and allocate funds more fairly. It is like the State is completely against us and doesn't want us to be able to dig out of this hole. She thinks the State is collecting enough money throughout New Jersey to take care of all of their school districts. She thinks we are watching the destruction of public education and it is not just Jackson having challenges; there are many schools under adequacy and the state is literally doing nothing. People need to stand up and be an informed voter and make a change at the voting booths.

Dr. Osmond clarified by voting yes to approve Finance #1, the Board is saying they are not doing the application. Mr. Zitomer confirmed she is correct.

Roll Call Vote: Yes:     Dr. Osmond  
                                 Mr. Walsh  
                                 Mr. McCarron  
                                 Mrs. Rivera  
                                 Mrs. Barocas  
                                 Mrs. Gardella  
                                 Mrs. Kas

**MOTIONS CARRIED**

**Board Comments**

There were no additional Board comments.

There being no further discussion, on a motion by Mrs. Rivera, the meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Daniel Baginski  
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Adjourn