

Public Statement – Town Council Meeting May 12, 2010

Acting Mayor Schatzle, Committeemen, and fellow community members as President of your Board of Education it is imperative that we discuss the facts surrounding the difficult situation we face with respect to our school budget. On April 20th our community voted on a school budget that included a reduction of 29 staff members, a reduction in state aid of over \$1million dollars, reductions in transportation, reductions in technology, reductions in extracurricular activities, elimination of field trips, elimination of late buses, and reductions or freezes to over 58% of all budget line items. Yes, our community voted this budget down, but the board believes this was more a result of the directive set forth by our Governor and less about the actual budget proposed.

There are those that believe we should close a school building, at this point in time your BOE does not. There are those that believe we do not need a principal in every building, your BOE does not. There are those that believe our teachers, staff, and administrators should take a wage freeze, given what lies ahead in their future, our unions do not. All of their contracts will have expired by June 2011. So where do we go from here???

Right now, your BOE is most concerned about one constituent group – the children of Colts Neck. We have met three times with the representatives assigned from town council, we have provided 5 years worth of budgets and audits which they have analyzed, our administration has answered hours worth of questions, and we have not come to a resolution. In our opinion, the amount that was proposed to us today would dramatically effect the education offered to our students. The proposed reductions would result in a tax levy increase far lower than the increase proposed on the town council's municipal budget. Therefore, we are requesting that all of our town council members discuss this issue in executive session, with two goals in mind. First, you must do what is right for the children of this town and second you must bring unity back to a school district and community that is severely divided. If we do not reunite this township we will quickly fall from the #1 place to live in Monmouth County back to our previous state ranking of 305 or maybe even worse.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to working towards a resolution.

Statement read by Andrea Giannopoulos