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Comm. Releases Special Study Report

In October, 1974, the Board of Education approved formation of an Ad Hoc Committee to the Community Relations Committee. The Ad Hoc Committee, which numbered 19 volunteers, was asked to provide answers and recommendations to three questions: How can the Board better communicate its deliberations to the public? How can public knowledge and understanding of the budget be improved? and How can the Board better communicate to the public information on curriculum and curriculum change?

The Ad Hoc Committee responded to the three phases of its assignment with responses which were submitted from December, 1974 through March 1975. A final wrap-up report was four pages in length.

The Committee made a subtle change in its own assignment, directing itself to how the Board can better communicate its deliberations to the public, making its recommendations bidirectional - Board to public, and public to Board.

It was recommended that the Board act and reply to questions with honesty and forthrightness, providing direct answers to questions immediately or as soon as a response can be obtained. The group asked for more complete agendas for public meetings - agendas which include minutes of previous meetings, summaries of committee reports, texts of proposed policies and policy changes, budget status reports including unexpended committee funds, and results of bids.

Further recommendations

were for a regular community newsletter, with information on programs in progress and in the planning, statistics on enrollment and staff, and problems being encountered in the district; a brief synopsis of each area to be voted upon by the board, with the synopsis presented before the vote; a telephone "hot line" where residents could check out questions and rumors; a question and answer column which would appear on a regular basis in a local newspaper.

The 19-member Ad Hoc Committee asked for public discussion before adjournment of meetings so that public comment is part of the record. Along the same line, the group sought public input on items and issues before the Board votes. Final suggestions for the first question included publication of a set of goals and objectives, and an open forum meeting held thrice a year.

How can public knowledge and understanding of the budget be improved? The Ad Hoc Com-

Plans Feasibility Study Of Possible Recreational Complex

A Reminder!

Scotch Plains 2nd Quarter Real Estate Taxes are due May 1, 1975 and 1975 Dog licenses are OVERDUE.

mittee suggests greater detail. Budgeted and actual expenditure figures from two previous years should be included annually. The budget should be broken down into three groupings: elementary schools, junior highs and senior high, with further breakdowns into personnel, equipment, material and supplies, and other expenses.

In the budget area, the Ad Hoc group also saw need for much more breakdown in the instructional portion, suggesting individual school breakdown.

The district educational goals and objectives should be formulated with community input, and published periodically. The Committee's final recommendations in the budgetary area included use of volunteer citizen consultants to offer expertise at budget time, and continuation of the practice scheduling of pre-

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year, as well as general art and office supplies, but there were indications from Board President Richard Bard that a complete inventory of all supplies in all buildings will be initiated very soon. The inventory, which Bard said he and Acting Superintendent Perry Tyson agreed upon, will be done by non-staff personnel at no cost to the school district.

Shanni was the lone negative vote on the cleaning supplies, which include wax, cleaning solutions, toilet tissue, paper cups, facial tissue, mops and mop heads, etc., stating that there is no inventory to date, and it has been brought to his attention that some schools are not supplied with tissue. He wanted a month-by-month approval.

The Board in unison refused to allocate \$2,500 for the high school DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America) chapter to compete in the national

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Odyssey House Appeal Is Withdrawn

The Odyssey House appeal which had been continued by the Scotch Plains Board of Adjustment to tonight's meeting, has been withdrawn. The first stage of the appeal, which sought a variance to permit Odyssey House staff to farm an industrial tract land bordering Lake Avenue, was heard by the Board two weeks ago.

Mayor Will Name Committee To Sift Advisability Of Project

Within the next month, Scotch Plains Mayor Robert Griffin plans to appoint a Citizens' Recreational Advisory Committee to investigate the feasibility of establishing a recreational complex on the site of Scotch Hills Municipal Golf Course. The committee, which would ideally number about eight or ten citizens, will be requested to complete the study of the advisability of the project and to report back to the Township Council by November 30.

The Mayoral Committee will be asked to include in the study of possible uses of the existing course, the following specific recreational facilities: a municipal swimming pool, two nine-hole pitch and putt courses, a miniature golf course, tennis courts, paddle ball courts, platform tennis courts, and basketball courts.

Griffin said that in the event the committee finds a municipal pool is both feasible and advisable at this site, the members would determine the best way for the pool to operate. Undoubtedly, a municipal pool would require a membership basis, Griffin envisions, whereas some of the other possible facilities might require a minimal charge (pitch and putt, miniature golf), and others such as tennis and basketball courts might be free to residents.

Would a recreational complex necessarily hinge on a swimming pool? Griffin said no. It might be possible that the committee would find that a pool is not feasible, but that some of the other facilities might be desirable. He feels that the existing golf course would not be replaced for only one or two facilities, but might be eliminated in favor of a meaningful and substantial combination of offerings.

Griffin said the decision to name the committee is a followup on Democratic campaign statements that Scotch Plains needs a family-type recreational facility. Scotch Hills is a likely spot for consideration because the golf course is losing money every year, Griffin said. He indicated that the membership has fallen off, necessitating opening the golf to outsiders. This may be because it is a nine-hole course, and not a topnotch golf facility, he speculated. He'd rather see that municipal land used by thousands than by a very few people who hold membership. He noted that thousands use the county pitch and putt course at Ashbrook County course annually.

The cost of financing such a municipal pool would be through issuance of municipal bonds, which would be repaid by revenues taken in from the operation of the pool, the Mayor explained. There would be no additional expense to taxpayers anticipated for those who chose not to take advantage of the facility, he added.

There has been problems in the past when the question of a municipal pool has arisen, Griffin

said. If a municipal pool were put up for referendum vote, it would never pass because so many residents of the south side who have their own pools or belong to private clubs would vote against it. There has also been dissension about the location of a municipal pool in the past. Griffin said this time the consideration was limited to one single location. The question is whether or not a pool is suitable at Scotch Hills.

Any citizen with recreational expertise is welcome to offer his services to the Mayor for possible appointment. Appointees can include those with experience on the Recreation Commission or not, he indicated.

At present, Scotch Hills includes a nine-hole course bordering on Plainfield Avenue and Jerusalem Road. The present clubhouse has recently been improved. It is an historic building and undoubtedly would be retained whatever the eventual recreational use of the land, Griffin said.

Asks Delay On Reform Of Election Laws

The New Jersey State Bar Association is calling for a moratorium on election law changes until appropriate Senate and Assembly committees can recommend comprehensive revision of the state's entire election law.

Joseph M. Nolan, president-elect of the State Bar Association, is urging the Legislature to begin immediate analysis of a report by the N.J. Election laws. Legislators received the Commission's recommendations in late March.

Nolan called for prompt action so that a "meaningful, effective and comprehensive revision" can be enacted during the current session.

"The continuation of piecemeal amendments to our election statutes does not substantially contribute to a system of laws and procedures that are readily and fairly enforceable," Linett said. "A complete revision can strengthen the legislation and build a system which can be clearly understood by the public."

The New Jersey State Bar Association has offered the Legislature its complete cooperation in the study of the proposed election law revisions.

School Board Votes Temperature Controls But—No Ducts At Muir

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education put the skids on several projects last Thursday, and several members asked insistent and probing questions regarding the bills list, in what promises to be the beginning of an austerity period. With the budget cut \$180,000 for the 1974-75 school year, and \$820,000 to be trimmed again next year, there was considerable argument among the board members in several areas. The regular monthly meeting, which took place at Park Junior High School last Thursday, will be followed by a special meeting, called for tonight, Thursday, April 24, at which it is anticipated that the Board will take up the question of staff cuts for next year.

The question of Muir School renovation occupied the Board at length. Originally, renovations at the school had been planned in three annual stages. The first stage is almost complete, with only temperature controls and duct work for heating and air conditioning remaining to be done. The Board, in a split vote, approved a bid of \$6,397 from Honeywell for installation of the automatic temperature controls for the heating and air conditioning system. This was the third time bids were let. On past bidding, bids came in considerably higher, and the past Board turned them down.

The controls were approved by Board members Darrell Brownawell, Henry Schiwerling, Robert Carlson, Robbie Mason, and Richard Bard.

Vincent Shanni, who joined Thomas Fallon, Philip Labasi, and Frank Festa in voting against completion of Phase I work at this time, recommended that the money be put into an account, and not be spent at the moment. However, Frank Hicks, acting for absent Board Secretary Michael Klick, indicated that if the bid weren't awarded Thursday, it would be over the 30-day limit

allowed from submission to award, and the bid would be lost.

Although the temperature controls will apparently be installed in the walls, the ducts through which the controlled heat and cool air pass will be missing, since the Board followed up with a split negative vote on ductwork. The ductwork similarly was put out for bid three times. The first two bids were over the budgeted amount, and turned down. On the third time round, there were no takers. Therefore, the administration was recommending that the district function as its own subcontractor, appropriating an amount not to exceed \$10,000 for ductwork. On that vote, Fallon, Shanni, and Labasi were joined by Bard in the negative column. However, Festa, who led the probe of Muir school expenditures starting with his campaign, refused to vote on ductwork. Labasi felt expenditures in the school unwarranted at this time, while Shanni said no thermostat or ductwork would help a single child or save one teaching position.

The Board voted approval of a \$7,000 bid for cleaning supplies for the remainder of this