

<p style="text-align: center;">BUDGET ADVISORY COUNCIL Meeting Minutes - Monday, February 22, 2021</p>
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Members Present: Chuck Allen, Sheila Buck, Regina DeCarr, Maria Hamilton, Dan Hentschel, Paul Hoak, Dan Knapp, Nancy Kula, Cheryl Lomedico, Jessica Mattice, Molly McLaughlin, Rhonda Morien, Ken Nelson, Gil Ong, Dave Patt, Lauren Purvee, Pamela Reinhardt, Millie Sefranek, Rachel Sherman, Dina Stathopoulos, Nhu Tran, Jessica Wackerman

Members Absent: Karen Arthmann, Philip Chang, David Drury, Carl Kirchgessner, Bob Logel, Molly McLaughlin, Betty Pum, Jim Schultz, Brian Usselman, Nathaniel Wright

Ex-Officio Members: Mary Ann Exler, Nichole LaPlaca, Andy Whitmore and Bo Wright

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

WELCOME

Bob Logel, Chairman of the Budget Advisory Council (BAC), was unable to attend the meeting. Bo Wright, Superintendent, and Andy Whitmore, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, co-chaired the meeting in Bob's absence. Bo welcomed the members and thanked them for being present for the meeting.

VOTE SURVEY RESULTS and BUDGET VOTE PROCESS

Andy explained that due to the lack of in-person voting because of the pandemic, there was no voter survey conducted at last year's budget vote. Typically, the residents of the district support the budget. The trend has been that in years with low voter turnout, the budget passes. We find that the majority of residents that vote are senior citizens without children currently enrolled in the district. The mail-in voting process resulted in 3 times more ballots being cast than usual and the budget was passed. The district is awaiting guidance on the process for conducting the budget this year. The mail-in voting process cost an additional @\$60,000.

BUDGET PROPOSALS

There are no budget proposals submitted for consideration this year.

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT STATUS

Bo reminded the members that the goal of the budget development process is to develop a budget that is educationally sound, equitable and fiscally responsible. To be educationally sound, the budget needs to provide funding to maintain current programs, absorb enrollment increases, and support the district's identified priorities of Equity and Inclusion, Mental Wellness, Instruction, and Special Education. To be equitable, the budget will recognize differences between schools and allocate resources to achieve consistent learning outcomes. To be fiscally responsible, the budget will stay within the tax cap and keep tax increases at a reasonable level.

Bo explained that the fiscal environment is still uncertain. There is some good news from New York State. Current year payments from the state are being reduced by 5% instead of the initial 20%. There will be an increase in state aid next year, however the increase is tied to federal stimulus funds and will create a budget gap the following year. The tough news from New York State is the wages paid to paraprofessionals and bus drivers during the school closure cannot be claimed for excess cost state aid as the employees were not working with students. The district is projecting a loss of revenue for 2021-22 but it does not look as bad as anticipated at the start of the budgeting process.

REVENUE AND EXPENSE PROJECTION

Andy reviewed the revenue and expense projections that were utilized for developing the base budget for 2021-22. The base budget is the amount needed to maintain all current programs and services while absorbing increases in employee benefits, contractual wages, tuition for special education at private schools and charter schools, and purchases of personal protective equipment and disinfecting supplies. Based on an increase in anticipated revenues an amount of \$890,000 has been added to the base budget. The additions will fund additional slots in the BOCES Career & Technical Program, Related Services for Special Education provided by BOCES and moving incremental building aid to the Capital Reserve.

TAX LEVY CAP CALCULATION

Andy reviewed the Tax Levy Cap Calculation. The calculation shows the maximum allowable levy under the tax cap to be almost \$87,000,000 resulting in an estimated tax rate increase of 1.95%. That would be roughly a \$56 per year tax increase for a home assessed at \$150,000. The members were asked to give their thoughts on how the community would receive a 1.95% tax rate increase. There was support from members but some members expressed concern that the tax rate was too close to the 2.00% cap and should be reduced to reflect the current economic situation caused by the pandemic. A tax rate increase of 1.5% was suggested. Board Member, Nicole Laplace, noted the members' perspectives and stated she would bring them to the Board of Education for consideration. Additional discussion topics included capital reserve funding, contractual wage increases, and the district's ability to return to 5 days of in-person learning.

REVENUE BUDGET

Andy reviewed the Revenue Budget to compare the budgeted revenues for 2020-21 and 2021-22. Proposed changes to the formulas used to calculate state aid may result in the combining of categories and caps on aid. While this year's aid projection is positive due to federal stimulus funding to NYS, a reduction in state aid may occur in future years without additional federal funding. The district will continue to monitor the situation and to look for additional revenue sources and/or expense reductions.

ENROLLMENT

Andy reviewed the Enrollment Projection for 2021-2025. While the district's total enrollment is expected to remain flat, growth is anticipated at both Vollmer and Burger. The Space Committee will continue to monitor the enrollment projection and make recommendations to the Board of Education.

Bo closed the meeting by thanking the members for their feedback and stated he will advise the Board of Education of the Council's discussion of the proposed tax rate.

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm.

The next meeting will be on Monday, 22, 2021 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Ann Exler, Budget Technician