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| <p style="text-align: center;">BUDGET ADVISORY COUNCIL Meeting Minutes - Monday, February 28, 2022</p> |
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Members Present: Karen Arthmann, Andrea Catena, Kathryn DeLaVergne, Maria Hamilton, Clay Harris, Dan Hentschel, Dan Knapp, Nancy Kula, Nichole LaPlaca, Bob Logel, Cheryl Lomedico, Jessica Mattice, Suzanne Maxim, Ken Nelson, Pam Reinhardt, Millie Sefranek

Members Absent: Chuck Allan, Lisa Clar, Regina Decarr, Paul Hoak, Baldish Kaur, Molly McLaughlin, Lauren Purvee, Jim Schultz, Dina Statholopoulos, Brian Usselman

Ex-Officio Members: Scott Adair, Mary Ann Exler, Andy Whitmore and Lawrence "Bo" Wright

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

INTRODUCTIONS

Bo Wright, Superintendent of Schools, asked the members to introduce themselves and their affiliation with the district (Community Member, Union Representative, Parent Organization Representative, etc...). Bo proceeded to explain the unusual circumstances of this year's budget development process. We are receiving an influx of federal stimulus funds. With knowledge of the additional funds and additional needs created by the pandemic, the administrators submitted significantly more budget proposals this year.

PROGRAM & SERVICE REVIEW

The Program and Service Review was presented at last month's meeting. This document is the first step in the budget process. It outlines the expenses associated with maintaining our current level of programs and services and serves as the basis for the Base Budget. Members were encouraged to email their questions to Andy Whitmore, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations. Bob Logel also asked if anyone had questions regarding the Program and Service Review.

TAX CAP CALCULATION

Andy reviewed the Tax Cap Calculation for 2022-23. First, the Prior Year Levy is adjusted by applying the Tax Base Growth Factor and adding our Prior Year PILOT agreements. Then, the Adjusted Prior Year Levy is subjected to the Allowable Growth Factor (2% or the CPI whichever is lower), our PILOT agreements for the upcoming year and any carryover from the prior year are added. The result in the Tax Levy Limit that is reported to NYS. The limit for 2022-23 is \$88,494,334, which is a 4.63% increase in the levy and an estimated tax rate increase of 3.81%. At this time, we are considering proposing a tax levy of \$86,923,380 with which is a 2.78% increase in the levy and an estimated tax rate increase of 1.97%. This approach is consistent with the district's history of budgeting to provide continuation of programs and service and building reserves while remaining within the tax cap.

REVENUE BUDGET

Andy reviewed the projected Revenue Budget of \$151,305,968 for 2022-23. We expect to receive an increase of \$5.4 million in Foundation Aid from NYS and a \$1 million increase for our Universal Pre-K program. Our High Cost Excess Cost Aid, which is based on prior year expenditure, is decreasing by \$400,000. Our Local Aid from Real Property Taxes, the STAR Reimbursement, PILOT agreements and County Sales Taxes is projected to increase by \$2.5 million. We plan to use \$4.1 million of federal stimulus funds and reduce our Appropriated Fund Balance by \$1.8 million. No usage of reserve funds is planned.

BUDGET PROPOSALS

Andy explained that many budget proposals were submitted this year. After discussion and consideration, the following budget proposals are being recommended for inclusion in the budget:

Human Resources Clerical position
Additional Math Coaches and Math Specialists in Primary Schools
Counselors in Primary Schools
Additional funding for Music and Arts area (supplies, supervision, visiting artists)
Modified Cheerleading and Swimming
GPS on school buses
Instructional Specialists at Junior High Schools
Additional Youth Assistant

BUDGET OVERVIEW

Andy showed the members the recap of the Revenue and Expense Projections including @\$1.16 million of expense additions. This amount includes the recommended budget proposals and funds for additional teachers to support class-size reduction and special education students.

TOPICS FROM THE COUNCIL

Members of the council brought up the following topics during the meeting:

Does the use of federal stimulus funds for programs and services raise a concern about how long the funds will continue and what will happen when the funds run out?

Are we using the federal stimulus funds to address the issues the students are dealing with due to the pandemic?

Are we planning to continue the Remote Learning Academy?

Budget increases are reasonable and maintain conservative approach to budgeting.

Keeping tax rate increase to less than 2% is what taxpayers equate with staying under the 2% tax cap

What has been the effect of the 2% tax cap on the district's budgeting?

Have we received the assessed values from the Town yet?

It may be difficult for taxpayers to understand why we are increasing the tax rate to almost 2% when we are receiving the federal stimulus funds.

We should use examples of how much the rate increase will actually increase the tax to be paid when communicating the tax rate increase.

Communication of budget plan needs to focus on tax rate and growth in levy.

We need to be prepared to justify expense increase in budget at any level.

Program and staff cuts are very difficult. We need to maintain our budget to maintain programs and keep our reserve healthy for the future.

Additional support at Junior High Schools may be more effective in the form of AIS versus Teacher Coaching.

Are we planning to continue positions for Math Coaches/Specialists and Counselors at the Primary Schools beyond the availability of the federal stimulus funds?

How are we planning to maintain our reserves?

GPS on school buses sounds like a great idea.

Does GPS on school buses raise any security issues?

Will Class-size Reduction Teachers be only at Primary Schools?

The addition of positions in the budget raises concerns about sustainability and how to communicate to the taxpayers.

Youth assistants are struggling to handle student issues at the Senior High School due to expansive size of the building. Why are we only recommending one instead of the two that were proposed?

Are we anticipating any new sources of revenue in the upcoming years?

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

The next meeting will be on Monday, March 28, 2022 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Ann Exler, Budget Technician